



# Museum on Main Street Legislative Outreach Requirements

## Contacting Elected Officials

As a condition of your Museum on Main Street (MoMS) grant, you are to write at least two letters of legislative outreach to federal elected officials. The first letter invites; the second one should thank. The Humanities Council provides a template that you may adapt to suit the context and your experience. In fact, the more personalized your letter, the greater its impact.

Copies of your letters of legislative outreach must be included as part of your concluding evaluation.

### 1. Invitation

Mayors, local elected officials, Chambers of Commerce, city Visitors Centers, regional media, prominent community leaders, influential educators in area schools – all are vitally important to your PR plan. But it's federal support that makes MoMS possible, so you must ensure that nationally elected officials are well-informed. Invite them to your ribbon-cutting. Let them know about exhibition-related events, and let them know about those in plenty of time for their schedulers to pencil you in. Closer to the event, you should reinforce the invite with a personal call or email directed to the scheduler by name. (If the elected official's website provides a generic email or a form for scheduling, call to get the scheduler's name and email.)

### 2. Thank You

Inviting your congressional delegation is only half of your legislative PR plan. Thanking your congressional delegates, whether or not they attended MoMS, is the culmination of outreach. Your letter of thanks should, in a specific yet succinct way, underscore the value of federal support for the public humanities. And it should underscore that value from your own MoMS experience. For some examples: Did schoolchildren visiting your opening or attendant programming learn something new? Did the project bring together diverse community members? Did it revitalize your town in some way? As you write, think in these terms: How can I qualitatively *show* that this program had a positive impact on my community (the legislator's constituents) and therefore like public humanities programs *deserve* further funding?

### 3. Other Important Considerations

**State** that MoMS is made possible by funding from the U.S. Congress and further supported by the North Carolina Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**End** with a call to action. For example, urge elected officials to make the humanities a cornerstone of public life by *[you fill in the blank]*. Or request that they ensure the vitality of North Carolina's cultures and communities by bringing other opportunities like MoMS to your community.

**Share** press releases, press clippings or memorable stories and quotes to drive home the impact of the MoMS experience. Or (in your second letter) include a MoMS photograph that speaks volumes.

**Encourage** MoMS participants (volunteers, visitors) to thank elected officials, and make it easy for them to do that by providing accessible contact information and sample letter templates.

**Letter Template: Invite****Your Letterhead or Personal Stationery**

Month, Day, Year

The Honorable [*Elected Official's Name*]  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear [*Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman/Representative Last Name*],

You are cordially invited to the opening of the traveling exhibition *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* at [*location*] on [*date*]. *New Harmonies* is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

*New Harmonies* tells a musical story with interactive kiosks devoted to American music genres. [*Your institution or city*] will develop programming and activities to complement the exhibit – musical performances, films, lectures, oral histories, and more.

The Museum on Main Street initiative is currently the only means by which rural communities can host Smithsonian Institution exhibitions and simultaneously generate locally-conceived and locally-directed public events that help support the arts, culture, and businesses in their regions. It is a way for geographically underserved portions of our state to shine.

For further information, please visit [*website*] or contact me at [*phone*] or [*email*].

Thank you for your continued support of the public humanities in North Carolina, and I hope to see you in [*city*] on [*date*].

Sincerely,

[*Name, Title, County or District*]