

Answer to Activity 1: Practice Writing Grant Proposals

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Who We Are And What We Do

The Norval Johnson Heritage Library has become a focal point for the growing number of tourists interested in the contributions of African-Canadians to the development of Canada. Housed in the British Methodist Episcopal church in Niagara Falls—the end of the Underground Railway for many blacks fleeing slavery in the USA—the library/museum hosts bus tours from all over the USA eastern seaboard and Mid-West.

Ontario's educators, eager to improve their Ministry-mandated presentations about Black history, have asked the volunteers to lead tours and to share the information housed in the collection.

Volunteers worked with the Ontario Historical Society, using a grant to establish the Library in 1991. Since then, the volunteers have co-operated with groups including The Friends of Fort George, the Canada Day Committee of Niagara Falls, Regional Niagara Tourism Council, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Committee for the Heritage Years, and The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation to establish the Freedom Trail. The Trail has been featured in the travel sections of major USA magazines and newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, *Essence*, and *Upscale*, and is attracting a growing number of bus tours.

There is already a large and growing collection of resource materials of interest to tourists, including a pamphlet about the Freedom Trail, a video *200 Years of Black Presence in Ontario*, and books including *Slavery and Freedom in Niagara* by Nancy Butler and Michael Power and *Niagara's Freedom Trail: A Guide to African-Canadian History on the Niagara Peninsula* by Owen Thomas. Tourists have purchased many of these items, as well as a freedom postcard. There is a great potential for increased sales.

Wilma Morrison and other supporters of the desire to share the knowledge about the contributions of blacks to Ontario's development are already leading tours of the Trail and the library and church. There are more requests for school visits and professional development for teachers than the existing volunteers can accommodate.

How Your Funding Would Enable Us to Do More

We believe that The Norval Johnson Heritage Library can become the stimulus for an expanded and self-supporting service to tourists and to Ontario school children. This proposal is for funding to initiate new enterprises.

We would like to hire five people to kick-start the new initiatives. We seek to hire and train unemployed social assistance recipients; we would especially target members of the Black community. The extensive and growing connections among groups interested in Ontario's black history will be useful in finding minority group members who are unemployed but have good potential to train to gain jobs in the tourism-promotion area.

Project Manager: We would like to hire a Project Manager who would oversee and support the various projects. Part of the job of the Project Manager would be to ensure that, to the extent possible, all job participants learn all the job skills.

Fundraiser: An important position would be Fundraiser. Supporters of the Norval Johnson Heritage Library have already been successful fundraisers, and visitors have pressed volunteers to take donations. Volunteers will provide on-the-job training to the fundraiser, and we would approach existing agencies with which we have co-operated in the past to provide practical guidance in fundraising. The funds raised would be used to pay for the activities of the Library.

Historical Research Co-ordinator: This person would learn from our volunteers how to continue acquiring donated records and artifacts to add to the collection. Volunteers are also engaged in tracing family roots, and the Co-ordinator's job would include continuing to draw more people from Canada and the USA into the historical research about the activities of early black contributors to Ontario. A major aim of this work is to present the rich story of black history that will draw tourists to travel from Uncle Tom's Cabin near Chatham, to Toronto, to Niagara Falls. To really explore this history would engage tourists for more than one-day stays.

Tour Guides/Interpreters: Two employees would develop the capacity to lead tours, including Black History tours, to interpret the artifacts in the Library, and to present to educators and students topics related to the development of an appreciation of cultural diversity by showing the more than 200 years of participation by blacks in the building of this country, particularly in the Southern Ontario area.

The Objectives for Our Project

These are the objectives for this initiative:

1. To build on the ongoing tourism-promotion work to attract more tourists to the Niagara peninsula through more research, responding to tourism inquiries, enticing under-represented tourist groups, and the creation of new tourist activities.

Many people are interested in the Freedom Trail, and there is a great potential to attract many more bus tours to our area and onto the Windsor and Toronto areas. We need additional research to produce more study materials that can be published as pamphlets. An example of the desired materials would include a guide to searching family trees using existing records held in this area.

We need timely, organized responses to tourism inquiries and outreach promotional activities to make more tour operators aware of the popularity of history exploration tours.

We want to create tourism activities that will attract new, non-traditional, under-represented tourist groups. The inspiring stories of Black soldiers fighting for Upper Canada during the War of 1812-14 and of the Underground Railroad can be marketed more effectively. Efforts could lead to activities such as historical re-enactments in conjunction with existing community organizations. Our aim is to generate enough revenue to become self-supporting. We see this request as a way of priming the pump.

2. A second objective of this project is to contribute to the promotion of harmony in this multicultural society by designing materials and training presenters to help educators teach the valuing of diversity in people.

3. Another objective is to provide employment training to members of the community who have often encountered barriers to training and employment. This is training for real, ongoing work. Already, volunteers have been offered work—more than they can manage—as tour guides and interpreters.

4. A fourth objective is to continue to develop the historical site. Fundraising activities continue with the aim to further reconstruct the library building and the nearby parsonage of the historical church. The parsonage could serve the dual purpose of an historical site and a headquarters for the activities of the Library.

How We Will Measure Our Success

The successful work already accomplished by supporters of the Norval Johnson Heritage Library bodes well for the greater success that can be achieved as more willing hands are available to do the work. This project will be assessed very

readily: Are our workers generating enough income to continue running the activities of the Norval Johnson Heritage Library? The skills that the participants are developing will also equip them to apply for jobs in the private sector as fundraisers and tour guides.

Our Funding Needs

Training:	We plan to use the talents of the existing volunteers and the offers of assistance from people like Mrs. Tabaka, Curator of Lundy's Land Historical Museum, and Dr. Doug Rogers from Niagara College.
Rent:	\$500/mo.
Phone:	\$200/mo.
Gas:	\$130/mo.
Hydro:	\$75/mo.
Water:	\$40/mo.
Computer Rental:	\$100/mo.
Office Supplies:	\$100/mo.
Mail:	\$100/mo.
Travel:	\$100/mo.
TOTAL:	\$24,210

Income will be generated from bus tour fees, fees for tour guiding, fees from school programs, sales of souvenirs, and the creation of a gift shop, but it is impossible to estimate the potential revenue.

The aim would be to generate enough income to pay for the salaries and operating expenses after the initiative funding.

The costs of the program may be lower than projected. If the Ministry approves the project, we will explore more concretely housing arrangements that will involve less-expensive shared accommodation.

Sincerely,

Wilma Morrison
Chair, Norval Johnson Committee