



# NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Donna M. Abelli

Development & Marketing Manager

t. 413/542-5084

f. 413/542-2152

[dmabelli@emilydickinsonmuseum.org](mailto:dmabelli@emilydickinsonmuseum.org)

## Emily Dickinson Museum Awarded Prestigious IMLS Grant

AMHERST, Mass.—The Institute of Museum and Library Services has awarded the Emily Dickinson Museum a grant of \$105,703 to extend its interpretive plans for the Dickinson Homestead, The Evergreens and their shared landscape.

The museum was one of 169 museums which vied successfully with 543 applicants nationwide for funding from the highly competitive Museums for America grant program. The program helps museums sustain the world's cultural heritage, support lifelong learning and serve as centers of community engagement.

The Emily Dickinson Museum's three-year grant project will build on the research and recommendations of the architectural consulting firm Mesick, Cohen, Wilson, Baker, whose master plan for the museum will be completed by the end of the year. The IMLS grant, to be matched on a one-to-one basis by the museum, will fund the creation of a furnishings plan for The Evergreens and a furnishings and exhibit plan for the Homestead. Curatorial consultant Nan Wolverton will develop the plans for interpreting the two houses through the Museum's large collection, stored primarily at The Evergreens. Landscape consultant Marta McDowell will create a self-guided tour of the historic Dickinson landscape that allows visitors to explore the family's varied interests in nature, while also fulfilling the museum's long-term programmatic goal of offering a range of interpretive options to its visitors.

"The components of this project mark the culmination of a long process, begun more than 10 years ago, to determine the potential of the Dickinson houses and landscape to convey accurately and effectively the Dickinson family story," said Cindy Dickinson, the museum's director for programming and interpretation. "We are so pleased to have IMLS support for a project so fundamental to the mission of our museum."

"Museums for America grants help museums position themselves to play a vital role in the development of strong learning communities," said IMLS acting director Mary Chute. "The museums will match the federal dollars with an additional \$32,891,246 to fund educational and cultural exhibits, digitize and integrate collections for greater access, work with schools to develop curricula and programs and conduct research that will encourage civic participation, build 21st-century skills, invest in our youth and reach out to seniors. The grants are investments in museums and in America."

As IMLS's largest grant program, Museums for America provides more than \$16 million in grants to support the role of museums in American society. The grants build the capacity of museums to sustain our cultural heritage, support lifelong learning and serve as centers of community engagement. Museums for America grants strengthen the ability of museums to serve the public more effectively by supporting high-priority activities that advance the institutions' mission and strategic goals. The flexible grants can be used by a museum for ongoing activities, research, planning and behind-the-scenes work, new programs, the purchase of equipment or services or technology upgrades and integration to improve overall institutional effectiveness.

The Institute for Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities.

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, two historic houses in Amherst, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. The Dickinson Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson. Merged into a single museum in 2003, both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. For more information on the Emily Dickinson Museum, please visit the museum's website.

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