

Historical Marker Grants as Library Programming



Student-led NYS Historic marker for Willow Shop, in Liverpool, NY, applied for by the Liverpool Public Library as part of a program called "Homeschool Teen/Tween Research Project: Local Historical Marker Initiative".

Overview

Welcome to the Pomeroy Foundation's guide to applying as a library or running a library program that results in a fully-funded historical marker grant.

What We'll Cover:

1. Who we are, what we do, and how marker grants can benefit libraries
2. Important things to know during the program planning phase
3. Things to keep in mind when running the program
4. After the program follow-up, timeline, and responsibilities

Who are we and what do we offer?

The William G. Pomeroy Foundation fully funds historical markers for communities across the nation. Since 2006, we have funded over 2,000 markers across all 62 counties in New York.

Libraries can apply for grant funding directly or run programs for adults and teens that turn local history into tangible historical markers. If working with teens, [our Pomeroy Education Program](#) is specially designed to facilitate student applications, exempting the applicant from our grant round deadlines.

Applying for a historical marker grant can be a great way to provide instruction on primary source research or be just a fun local history research program that can engage your community and have a tangible result. If you have library users interested in their local history and wanting to get involved in their community's America 250 initiatives, this can be a great way to offer them that opportunity.

As non-profits, libraries are eligible to apply for all six of our Signature programs: [NYS Historic](#), [Hometown Heritage](#), [Hungry for History](#), [Historic Transportation](#), [National Register](#), and [Legends & Lore](#). Most have two grant rounds per year.

We also offer [Patriot Burials](#), in partnership with SAR chapters in 10 states, to commemorate Revolutionary War Patriots final resting places.



Patriot Burials marker in Seymore, IN



Public Library marker for the Hamilton Public Library, Hamilton, NY

Why run a run a historical marker research program?

Markers can educate the public, enrich student learning, promote tourism, and encourage pride of place. Each marker tells a story that commemorates a legacy, and strengthens the fabric of a community.

For students specifically, applying for a marker can be a chance to gain group work, leadership, and project management experience. It can be a service-learning project that allows students to gain experience with grants, and connect with local professionals in the history and civic fields.

For libraries, historical marker grants provide a chance to offer programming for teens and adults that teaches them skills in research, as well as enables them to contribute to the community in a tangible way. It combines instruction with community service, and it can be a fun way to spark interest in local history.



Students with two markers they were awarded in Albion, NY

Program Planning Phase

The following suggestions can help guide you as you plan your program:

1. Historical markers are a public good, and as such they should appeal to all the stakeholders a library has- taxpayers/library users, local governments, etc. When seeking approval to run the program, emphasize the dual benefits- the library teaches participants useful research skills and about grants, and the community gains a tangible, permanent historical resource.
2. This can be a very low-budget program, since most libraries already have subscriptions to research databases, and we fund the full cost of the marker, pole, and shipping. The highest cost is in time and space.
3. Visit the Pomeroy Foundation website, www.wgpfoundation.org/history. Each program has its own page with guidelines and requirements. After selecting the right program, ensure you are familiar with the program and what is needed for it.
4. Every marker requires a land use permission letter. You may want to secure this before running the program, to have the attendees/students focus on the research and application. Sometimes, they take a long time to acquire.



National Register marker for the B. F. Jones Memorial Library, Aliquippa, PA

Program Planning Phase, Ctd.

1. Utilize your local history collections (if available). Selecting topics for attendees to learn about that are relevant to the wider community is advised, but not necessary. For younger groups, selecting a list of topics with an abundance of sources for them to discover is advisable.
2. The research will likely take more than one session. We recommend a series, starting with a session on available library resources, then sessions on selecting a topic, delving into the sources, and then composing the marker text and filling out the application.
3. The Pomeroy Education Program provides curriculum resources for high school and higher education classes. These lessons could be adapted to a program series. Contact us to request the lesson plans.
4. Connect with local historians, SAR/DAR representatives, local officials, or other possible guest speakers who can join a session to teach about their work or help guide the research. The SAR/DAR and local historians are likely to know about local 250th history and topics that could be worthy of commemoration and can provide inspiration for topic selection.
5. We have multiple helpful guides for applying- these can be used as handouts or as part of instruction. Our Tips for Finding Primary Sources, How to Apply Guide, Proving Inscriptions with Primary Sources, and Historical Marker Criteria guides could be highly useful, and all are freely available on our website.



NYS Historic Marker for Bovina Library in Bovina Center, NY

Running the Program

The following suggestions can help guide you as you promote and run your program:

1. Learning to conduct primary source research on local history topics can appeal to both students and adults alike. For students, this can also be a resume-builder, providing both grant experience and a community volunteer opportunity.
2. If running the program for teens, consider involving the local school district or social studies teachers in getting the word out, and encouraging signups.
3. Promote through the library calendar, email updates, and social and print media.
4. If contacting local or municipal historians to be guest speakers, consider asking them to promote the program through their networks as well.
5. Have fun! Instruct the participants in what primary sources are, how to find them, how to compile them, and how to use them to apply for our grant.
6. Provide computer access if using online research databases. We recommend having participants compile and send you the sources, plan the text and location, and then you can submit the application to our online grant portal for them.



National Register Marker for the Edith B. Ford Memorial Library in Ovid, NY

After the Program: Following Up

The following suggestions can help guide you after the program has concluded:

1. Historical marker applications can take up to *3 months* to be evaluated, and then markers take *12-16 weeks* to be fabricated after funding approval. You will need to manage the post-research and post-approval process.
2. You may need to work with the Foundation's historians as they review the application to ensure it has everything it needs for approval.
3. Once you have your marker, you'll want to plan a dedication ceremony. These events are great ways to engage the community and are often very fun celebrations of local history and the library. Invite the participants back to receive honors and celebrate their work. Involve the local media in sharing the new community resource and to celebrate the programming work the library is contributing to America 250.
4. Work with us to promote the dedication and gain the public recognition the markers deserve! We can help every step of the way.



Student-led NYS Historic marker for Mud Lock 5, in Liverpool, NY, applied for by the Liverpool Public Library as part of a program called "Homeschool Teen/Tween Research Project: Local Historical Marker Initiative".

More Information

For more information, please visit our website. We have additional PDFs and guides listed on each marker program's webpage.

If you need further assistance, please contact us at info@wgpfoundation.org or 315-913-4060, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (EST).

Thank you and we look forward to reviewing your application.



Student-led marker for Amenia Conferences in Amenia, NY