



Latino Museum Studies Program Graduate Fellowship 2025 Practicum Descriptions

Practicum 1: National Museum of the American Latino (NMAL) Fundraising Research & Proposal Development

About: [The National Museum of the American Latino](#) advances the representation, understanding and appreciation of Latino history and culture in the United States. The museum provides resources and collaborates with other museums to expand scholarly research, public programs, digital content, collections and more. The museum operates its Molina Family Latino Gallery, the Smithsonian's first gallery dedicated to the Latino experience, at the National Museum of American History.

Mission: The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Latino honors the dreams, challenges, and triumphs of U.S. Latinos, elevating those stories within the nation's narrative. We create transformative experiences, foster a deeper understanding of American history and culture, and connect communities nationwide.

The NMAL is undertaking fundraising efforts to build a national community-centered museum in the nation's capital. The museum's Advancement team has various focus areas to reach this milestone, including upcoming exhibitions and collecting priorities. One of these focus areas is Latino foodways. The LMSP Fellow will collaborate with the Advancement team to research previous and upcoming exhibitions on Latino foodways to identify prospective foundations, corporate, and individual donors and compile information for future proposals, as well as exhibition themes, foodway trends, and history.

Practicum will include the following activities:

- Researching the history of Latino foodways in the U.S. to be able to convey the importance and relevancy of the subject to prospective donors
- Compiling information on foundations, corporate and individual donors that have supported exhibitions with themes around Latino foodways in the U.S.
- Learn about multiple workflows in overlapping categories/departments such as advancement, exhibitions, collections, and the Latino Initiatives Pool (LIP).

Practicum Goals:

- Develop writing skills for proposal submissions and research skills
- Learn about past exhibitions related to Latino/a food history
- Gain an understanding of the museum fundraising process

Practicum 2: National Museum of the American Latino (NMAL) – Collections Management and Material Culture Research

About: Legislated in 2020, the Smithsonian's new [National Museum of the American Latino](#) (NMAL) honors the dreams, challenges, and triumphs of U.S. Latinos, elevating those stories within the nation's narrative. The museum creates transformative experiences, fosters a deeper understanding of American history and culture, and connects communities nationwide. The museum operates its Molina Family Latino Gallery, the Smithsonian's first gallery dedicated to the Latino experience, at the National Museum of American History. Currently, NMAL is in the process of developing a phased, 10-year collecting plan focusing on over 30 subject areas to build the museum's foundational collection.

Although targeted collecting has yet to begin, the museum has accessioned a small collection of objects primarily through the inaugural exhibition, *¡Presente! A Latino History of the United States*, and pilot collecting initiatives. During the practicum, the fellow will work with the existing collections to conduct background research on their histories, research and document pertinent information relating to the materiality of the objects, and completely and accurately catalog this information within the museum's collections information system, The Museum System (TMS). The fellow will also have the opportunity to explore NMAL's overarching collecting plan to contextualize existing collections and recommend further areas to target in the future.

Some of these collections include Spanish language materials. Though not required, fluency in reading and understanding Spanish is preferred.

Practicum will include the following activities:

- Conduct background research on existing NMAL collections
- Learn to accurately update The Museum System (TMS) object records
- Research and add/update relevant constituent records (object makers/manufacturers, artists, users, donors, etc.) within TMS
- Write sample label text for collections objects
- Draft an acquisition proposal for a potential object donation (if the opportunity arises)
- Master basic object handling skills

Practicum Goals:

- Complete thorough documentation of select accessioned collections within TMS.
- Highlight the contributions of Latinos to the larger narrative of U.S. history through the objects researched and documented.
- Contextualize existing collections and identify intersections with multiple subject areas (e.g. foodways, military history, religion, etc.).
- Within the scope of the broader collecting plan, propose new stories to target for additional research and collection.

Practicum 3: Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum (ACM) Archival Research and Collections Cataloguing

About: The archival research opportunity with the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum (ACM) supports the 1994 landmark exhibition [*Black Mosaic: Community, Race, and Ethnicity among Black Immigrants in Washington, D.C., and*](#) the symposium that was held in 2014 to celebrate the exhibit's 20th anniversary. The exhibition and the symposium collectively generated a rich collection of oral history and research files that explore themes such as identity, migration/immigration and community life in Washington, D.C.

The exhibition's collection has been processed at a minimum level to facilitate access via an online descriptive record. However, collection contents are described collectively, rather than individually. The LMSP fellow will create full online catalog records of the oral history interview transcripts and audiovisual records of the collection. The fellow will also conduct research relating to the subjects and locations mentioned in the interviews, including AfroLatino stories, in the exhibition, and recommend terms to broaden access and increase discoverability of the collections.

Some of these collections include Spanish language materials. Though not required, fluency in reading and understanding Spanish is preferred.

Practicum will include the following activities:

- Conduct background research on oral history transcripts in the collection
- Learn to accurately update ArchivesSpace (Aspace) object records
- Research and add/update relevant subject terms and agent records within ASpace
- Write a Scope and Content note for interview transcript and audiovisual recording
- Draft a proposal for potential terms to use for cataloguing Latino/a materials
- Master basic cataloguing skills

Practicum Goals:

- Complete thorough documentation interview transcripts within ASpace
- Create catalog records of symposium records
- Identify the experiences of Latinos in the larger narrative history of Washington, D.C. through the analysis and of the collection materials
- Propose potential terms to use to identify Latino/a materials within Washington, D.C. history records



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Practicum 4 – National Museum of American History (NMAH) Curatorial Research and Cataloging

About: The National Museum of American History (NMAH) is devoted to the scientific, cultural, social, technological, and political development of the United States, the museum traces the American experience from colonial times to the present. One of the various Divisions of the museum is that of [Work & Industry](#) which brings together collections in the history of technology, work, business, communications, food, energy, agriculture, numismatics, and visual cultures. The division cares for collections that originated in the 19th century and include the earliest known objects and images in the Smithsonian's holdings.

Included in the Division is a vast collection of photographic reference files from the 1880s to the 1950s. The prints represent a variety of sources related to the international collections in transportation history. A selection of the collection includes Non-U.S. created forms of transportation as identified by curators in the early part of the Twentieth Century. The LMSP fellow will conduct research to create more in-depth information of these images into the museum's database, as well as identify and highlight a number of these images for a museum blog bringing attention to these stories. They will also gain experience in curatorial research, database management, and writing for public audiences.

Practicum will include the following activities:

- Develop familiarity with the Museum's Work & Industry Division, including collection, staff, and projects
- Contribute to accessibility of photographs not currently available on Museum's databases through research, documenting, scanning and updating records
- Write a blog on the Museum's website highlight photographs as identified by the fellow

Practicum Goals:

- Creatively present photographic history into public history for a wider audience
- Advance the understanding of the use of reference files for curatorial projects
- Learn about NMAH's collection database
- Understand the process of culling collections resources and identifying historical significance
- Learn how to write for a public audience from the perspective of a focused topic



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Practicum 5 – SI OUSE (Smithsonian Institution Office of the Under Secretary for Education) 3D Object-Driven Research and Narrative Generation

About: The [Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past \(RWORP\)](#) is a pan-Smithsonian initiative that seeks to build a shared future through interdisciplinary scholarship, creative partnerships, dialogue, and engagement.

One of the cornerstone projects of the Initiative is centered on 3D Digital Collections, a multi-year collaboration with the Smithsonian's Digitization Program Office (DPO). Together, the Smithsonian team is creating high fidelity 3D scans of physical collections centered around race, history, and culture. The Smithsonian's goal is to make its historic collections accessible to the public and give a behind-the-scenes look at the 3D process of digitizing the Smithsonian's collections.

In support of this project, the LMSP fellow will conduct pan-Smithsonian archival and museum research to identify collection objects related to U.S. Latino history and culture to be scanned by the DPO. Along with identification, the fellow will write short info points on the scanned object (named articles), that then support visitor experience in understanding how the objects provide insight into the U.S. Latino experience.

Practicum will include the following activities:

- Conduct museum, archival, and media research on objects identified with the Latino/a experience
- Write several “articles”, or informational point narratives that focus on a specific object
- Produce a bibliography with relevant resources

Practicum Goals:

- Make accessible Latino/a related material to a wider public
- Gain experience utilizing 3D scanned objects as a public history tool
- Experience collaborating with multiple Smithsonian units