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State awards \$9M to support museum, cultural programs

By [Abigail VanderMolen](#)



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Nearly two dozen museums and nonprofit foundations in Michigan will receive a total of \$9 million in state grants to support their educational programs.

The Michigan Community Grants from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity will go to organizations including the Detroit Zoo, The Henry Ford and Ford Piquette Avenue Plant to support artistic, cultural technological or scientific exhibits, according to a news release.

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The grant period runs Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept 30, 2029.

“Public funding helps (Michigan’s museums) expand access, engage more people, and deliver high-quality programs, while also attracting private investment that multiplies their impact,” Lisa Craig, Michigan Museums Association executive director, said in the release. “The grants awarded through this program will strengthen museums across Michigan and deepen their ability to serve their communities.”

ADVERTISING

Awarded \$819,200 each are:

- The Detroit Zoological Society, Detroit
- Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, Detroit
- Michigan Humanities, Okemos
- The Henry Ford, Dearborn

- Detroit Public Schools Foundation, Detroit
- Air Zoo Aerospace and Science Center, Kalamazoo
- Barry County

Additional grants in various amounts went to:

- Great Lakes Children's Museum, Traverse City
- John Ball Zoo, Grand Rapids
- Flint Children's Museum
- Flint Institute of Science and History
- IQhub, St. Johns
- Fenton Township
- Ionia County Historical Society
- Michigan Military Technical and Historical Society, Eastpointe
- Michilimackinac Historical Society, St. Ignace
- Troy Historic Village
- Dexter Area Historical Society
- Hamtramck Historical Museum
- The War Memorial, Grosse Pointe Farms

For the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, a historic site marking the birthplace of the Model T, “this is the most amazing, welcome news,” President and COO Jill Woodward said. The museum had to pause planned updates to its building in April after [losing \\$500,000 in National Endowment for the Humanities funding](#), and the new grant money will enable it to go through with the project.

“(The grant) gives us the time and breathing room to finish the fundraising, to finish the project,” Woodward told Crain’s.

The project, expected to take a minimum of two years, will result in the museum having new restrooms and a new passenger elevator, without changing its historic roofline, she said.

“We lost the money,” Woodward said. “Now we've got the money back and then some, and we can proceed with this project. But, you know, the most important thing is that we can continue to welcome visitors from all over the world.”

For The Henry Ford, the new grant will enable the reconstruction and preservation of [the Jackson Home in Greenfield Village](#), according to Senior Director of Media Relations Wendy Metros. The home, which The Henry Ford acquired in 2023 and plans to open to the public in 2026, was originally located in Selma, Ala., and served as a haven for civil rights leaders including Martin Luther King Jr. while they planned the Selma to Montgomery marches of 1965.

“This funding will help us to reconstruct this structure, create meaningful and impactful programming for audiences around the world and to amplify and make accessible this significant Civil Rights story,” Metros wrote in an email to Crain’s.

The Detroit Zoological Society, another grant recipient, plans to use the funds for building Discovery Trails at the Detroit Zoo, a 7-acre immersive educational experience giving visitors an up-close and interactive look at animals.

“The funding will support critical renovations to historic facilities, ensuring the Zoo remains a sustainable and accessible cultural asset,” Hayley Murphy, Detroit Zoological Society executive director and CEO, said in a statement. “Discovery Trails is expected to increase visitation, enhance educational impact and contribute to southeast Michigan’s economic vitality.”

The state considers museums an essential part of Michigan’s cultural and economic fabric, LEO Director Susan Corbin said.

"They spark learning, fuel creativity and strengthen communities — all of which support economic growth," she said in the release. "This funding shows our commitment to helping museums not just stay open but grow as vital spaces for lifelong learning and connection."

— *Crain's Detroit Senior Reporter Sherri Welch contributed to this report.*

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