



**PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE AWARDED \$496,860 IMLS CARES ACT GRANT TO ADAPT MOBILE-MAKERSPACE PROGRAMMING AND DELIVER STEM EDUCATION TO 45,000 NORTH TEXAS YOUTH FROM DIVERSE, UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS**

*Perot Museum is one of only two Texas institutions and eight science museums in the nation to receive one of 68 grants awarded in response to the coronavirus fallout*

**DALLAS (Oct. 22, 2020)** – The Perot Museum of Nature and Science was recently awarded a \$496,860 grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as part of its [IMLS CARES Act Grants](#) program to support the role of museums and libraries in responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

IMLS received 1,701 applications requesting \$409.2 million and awarded a total of \$13.8 million to 68 organizations. Less than 4% *nationally* of all applications were funded, and the Perot Museum's award was among the largest, with \$500,000 being the maximum. Only two Texas institutions – the Perot Museum and the Texas Historical Commission – and just eight U.S. science museums were selected for the grants.

The Perot Museum will use the funding to deliver STEM education to 45,000 youth from neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of poverty and lower rates of educational attainment, as outlined in the 2018 Dallas Economic Opportunity Assessment. The Museum plans to adapt its mobile makerspace program – known as *TECH Truck* – to in-person and virtual formats that require minimal handling of materials by more than one person. Also, the Museum will launch a pilot program with 12 select partners to determine if ongoing, deeper and sustained engagement has measurable effects on learning.

“Thanks to the IMLS CARES Act Grant, the Perot Museum will greatly expand its ability to safely deliver science to more than 45,000 children – those most adversely affected by the COVID-19 fallout – and keep fun and relevant STEM learning going during these difficult times,” said Katherine Stenesen, chief development officer of the Perot Museum. “Our *TECH Trucks* and virtual education programs are driving STEM to where it's needed most.”

*TECH Truck* – a mobile innovation program launched in 2015 to deliver science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning to a broader and more diverse audience in the Dallas/Fort Worth region – provides more opportunities for the community to engage in museum experiences through free, out-of-school educational and interactive programs, including drop-in sessions and workshops, using no- and low-tech activities as well as high-tech experiences.

Utilizing three custom-outfitted vans, the popular program has been nicknamed *TECH Truck*, an acronym based on the program's mission to inspire youth to “**T**inker, **E**ngineer, **C**reate, and **H**ack.” Specially trained Perot Museum educators work on a full-time basis to instruct children to solve design challenges through hands-on making, tinkering and creative problem solving.

Offered free of charge, the IMLS grant will fund three key educational components:

1. **IN-PERSON INTERACTION WITH THE TECH TRUCK ONSITE**: Participants will take a deep dive into a hands-on project that explores a STEM-based subject. Prior to arrival, the partnering organization will select one or two options from a predetermined list of station activities, such as Engineering Challenge, Robotics, Coding, and Electronics & Technology. Activities will be abbreviated to 45-60 minutes, with a 15-minute cleaning period between

sessions. Participants will utilize single-use kits that will be handled by only one person. Maximum capacity will be based on social distancing capabilities, likely 12-15 participants per session if outdoors. The TECH Truck will be staffed by two TECH Truck Educators and, depending on the number of participants, 6-12 additional onsite volunteers provided by the partnering organization when possible.

2. **VIRTUAL:** Through an interactive, live-streamed video session with a TECH Truck educator, participants will tackle a hands-on project at a partner location. The activity will last 45-90 minutes, depending on the age group and the topic chosen. The maximum number of participants would depend on the limitations of the digital platform. Multiple sessions could be offered. Materials for the activity will be shipped to the partner site ahead of time.
3. **PILOT PROJECT:** The grant will also allow the Museum to pilot a smaller project to determine longer-term growth in STEM learning with a select group of partners serving students in underserved communities. **Up to 12 partners will be selected** to receive TECH Truck programming on a monthly or quarterly basis, with student tests being conducted to measure the program's impact over a 9-12-month timeframe. This pilot project will allow the Museum to determine the impact of deeper, sustained engagement with a group of students

These grants were an element of the supplemental funding that IMLS received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law in March 2020.

"As pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow," said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. "IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants as they educate and enhance their communities."

The Perot Museum is located at 2201 N. Field Street in Dallas, Texas. For parking information and other details, visit [perotmuseum.org](http://perotmuseum.org) or call 214-428-5555.

**NOTE: To obtain the news release, Perot Museum fact sheet, photos and more, please go to [perotmuseum.org/press](http://perotmuseum.org/press).**

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**About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science.** *The top cultural attraction in Dallas/Fort Worth and a Michelin Green Guide three-star destination, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational organization located in the heart of Dallas, Texas. With a mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the Perot Museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor and outreach experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. The 180,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park opened in December 2012 and is now recognized as the symbolic gateway to the Dallas Arts District. Future scientists, mathematicians and engineers will find inspiration and enlightenment through 11 permanent exhibit halls on five floors of public space; a children's museum; a state-of-the art traveling exhibition hall; and The Hogg Foundation Theater. Designed by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects, the Victory Park museum has been lauded for its artistry and sustainability. To learn more, please visit [perotmuseum.org](http://perotmuseum.org)*

**About the Institute of Museum and Library Services.** *The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**Becky Mayad**  
214-352-1881 work  
214-697-7745 cell  
[becky@mayadpr.com](mailto:becky@mayadpr.com)

**Taylor Mayad**  
214-435-7756 cell  
[taylor@mayadpr.com](mailto:taylor@mayadpr.com)