

Mobilizing Community Resources to Bring Schools to Your Museum

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Our program is currently called *Hometown History on Wheels* and it enables Campus Martius and Ohio River Museums in Marietta to reimburse Washington County schools for the cost of school buses for trips to the museums. Our program is instituting a name change to *Travels through History*, during this academic year.

In the last academic year (2016-2017), *Hometown History on Wheels* raised more than \$4,000.

The program will support repeat visits by the same districts and schools, for different grades. It's not uncommon that 1st grade classes will come for programs/activities, and then 2nd, 3rd, and/or 4th for different ones, and then 8th grade for the museum's Civil War program – as well as high school groups. Some schools may come for 2 visits because we have 2 museums. But I didn't include separate trips in the totals, just the number of schools/grades that participated.

It reimbursed all 7 school districts in Washington County and paid a total of \$4,703 for trips by school buses. Many grade levels, many times a year. Send invoice. Once a month. No invoice, no pay. We had 28 visits from the school districts in Washington County last year, which averages about 4-5 different grades per district. St. Mary's Catholic School is small and is K-8 so they generally only send one grade (4th) and they walk. That's why the figures seem strange because some districts have one grade school and some have more than one. Each school and each grade is responsible for their own field trips. Plus 2 of Marietta's 4 elementaries walk. They aren't district-wide field trips except for the 8th Grade Civil War Day and the 8th grades are all at one site in each district.

This does not include additional visits from schools outside the county. We had 34 out of county and out of state schools visit last year.

I write letters to individuals, businesses, and organizations who are potential funders to solicit funds. We don't ask for specific donation amounts. We are grateful for any amount we receive.



Local fourth-grade students tour the Rufus Putnam House at Campus Martius Museum.



These fourth-graders are learning about mussels and the human impacts on them at the the Ohio River Museum.

After classes visit, at the end of each month, the museum calls each school for an invoice from the school(s) to be submitted for reimbursement for bus transportation costs. The donations are deposited in a special earmarked account for the program. We pay school bus grants from that account. Stewardship is very important – we have a volunteer who sends out thank you's to donors.

How do we deal with home school groups from Washington County? If any? We don't offer this to home school groups. It's too complicated.

Details: Reimbursements only pay the bus transportation costs, not admission to the museum or any program fees. Children's families, the school, and / or PTOs pay admission and program fees. However, teachers, bus drivers, and aides are free.

Bookkeeping Nightmare: Funds from a specific community funder set aside to support a school bus grant from that specific community. Instead, grants made by groups in the county are used for schools in the county. The trick is to raise enough to meet the needs of every school that wants to participate.

Campus Martius' program makes grants on a first-come, first-served basis to schools in Washington County, whose clubs and residents support

the program. If the program received substantial support from organizations in other counties or states, those school buses would be eligible for grants.

The grants can be used to pay for buses to visit other attractions in Marietta in addition to Campus Martius and the Ohio River Museum, as long as the field trip includes a visit to Campus Martius and / or the Ohio River Museums – a must, since the grants are made possible by the museums. BUT, they have to spend sufficient time at the museum, doing programs/activities and touring. We won't fund schools that are trying to fill a half hour just so we will pay for their buses. Yes, I have had to turn a school down ONCE who asked to do just that. In the last 10 years, no school in Washington County has had to pay for a bus to visit the museums.