Support concerning Museums Connect

Program History:

*Museums Connect*, conceived and proposed by the Washington Museum Association (WaMA) in 2021 is a key statewide initiative to work with currently established networks to conduct this statewide survey in a three-year project. This will result in the creation of a state-wide inventory of rural, volunteer, and multidiscipline museums and place-based heritage groups.

The Need:

- Across Washington community museums have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, recovery hasn’t been equal because all businesses, especially in rural areas, haven’t had the same access to funding and information that drives reopening and recovery.
- This initiative provides an opportunity to better connect the most at-risk rural, volunteer-run, multidiscipline museums, into the broader professional, funding, and operational network across Washington State.
- Reaching many of these museums requires concerted and local outreach. A simple Google search will not suffice. WaMA is well-positioned to strengthen this network, and meet the needs of these institutions through its extensive community developed in conjunction with its membership base and annual conference. However, this network is constantly shifting. At this time no all-encompassing database or inventory exists and current datasets are incomplete.

The Solution:

- WaMA is excited for the opportunity to use its preexisting networks and knowledge to create a state-wide inventory of rural, volunteer, and multidiscipline museums and place-based heritage groups. WaMA’s Museums Connect Coordinator is currently working through our one-year goal of creating the statewide inventory and engaging museums across Washington State thanks to the support from the Washington State Legislature and our partnership with the Washington State Historical Society.

The Ask:

- WaMA is requesting $200,000 to fund years two and three of funding for this three-year initiative, and support the completion of an inventory of heritage organizations across Washington State.
- This funding would allow our year two and three initiatives to be completed, which are the following:
  - **Year Two**: Generate report on funding needs for heritage organizations, and a strategic plan to provide access to resources
  - **Year Three**: Distribute available resources to heritage organizations, and serve as clearing house for local, state and national funding.