

Applicant (official IRS name): The Orange Show Foundation

(Read the instructions on page 47 before you start.) *NEA GRANT*

A) The Orange Show Foundation celebrates the extraordinary artistic expressions of ordinary people. This is accomplished through the preservation of The Orange Show monument, a library and a diverse schedule of cultural and educational programs for children and adults.

Jeff McKissack constructed The Orange Show using scavenged pieces of demolished Houston buildings found on his downtown mail route. Working from 1956 until his death in 1980, he transformed these found objects into a sculptural environment extolling the virtues of his favorite fruit and encouraging visitors of all ages to follow his ideas relating health and longevity to behavior, good nutrition and hard work. The Orange Show is one of the most celebrated folk art environments in America.

Foundation activities serve over 280,000 people annually and include(in bold):

**The Orange Show Monument** is maintained with an annual restoration that has become one of the model preservation programs in the United States. **Archive and Library** stores the largest database and collection of reference works of self-taught artists, folk and outsider art in the Southwest. **The Eyeopeners Project** documents folk art environments and artists. We share this information with the public through tours in Texas and around the country. **Folk Art Lecture** guest speakers have included John Beardsley, Herbert Hemphill, Allie Light and Rebecca Hoffberger. **Children's Education Program** helps children develop both basic and complex art skills through folk art based workshops, mural projects and art car activities. Guest artists have included Charile Lucas, Lonnie Holly and Mr. Imagination. **The Art Car Weekend** is the Foundation's largest outreach program, with an audience of 250,000 people and 1,000 participants annually. Three packed days celebrate the art car phenomenon and the drive to create. It is the first event of its kind in the country, and the largest ongoing art car event in the world. **On-site Orange Show Programs** include film, music, art workshops, dance and multi-media performances.

B) General Demographics

Location of our activities are in areas underserved in the arts. The Orange Show's neighborhood, the East End, is the industrial home base of Houston. It is home to major industries and families alike. The Orange Show is one of the few visual arts organizations in the East End. The Orange Show consistently offers community based programs that are free or minimal cost to families. Moreover, the nature of The Orange Show makes it more accessible to underserved audiences and our programming is geared to communities through the celebration of traditional activities and arts.

Over 30,000 people visit The Orange Show yearly. 10,000 school children participate in The Orange Show workshops. We work intensively with over 50 neighborhood youth a year who are at-risk or already involved in gang activity on long-term projects such as our mural program. Over 250,000 people line the streets of downtown Houston to watch Roadside Attractions: the Artists Parade. This year the Parade was broadcast live on a local ABC affiliate. 960,000 households watched from their house.

Of the 280,000 people who directly participate in The Orange Show's programming the demographics are as follows:

	Af-Am	Asian	Hispanic	Nat-Am	Cauc
Adults	14,200	2,300	39,400	600	91,650
Students	20,400	4,200	58,750	775	47,725
Total	34,600	6,500	98,150	1,375	139,375

Grand TOTAL = 280,000

15% of audience is elderly and 2% is disabled

C) The Art Car Weekend is our largest and most successful program that reaches a broad segment of the community – from those who participate in the creation of an art car (community groups, schools, folk and fine artists and the general public) to the those who watch this public art event via television and on site. Furthermore, media sponsorship of events has led to increased awareness and participation from diverse communities in our programming.

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(Read the instructions on page 49 before you start. You may attach up to two additional pages if necessary.)

The Orange Show is one of the most highly regarded folk art environments in America<sup>1</sup>. Like the Watts Towers of Los Angeles, the Land of Pasaquan in Buena Vista, Georgia or James Hampton's "Throne of Third Heaven of the Nations Millennium" now preserved in the National Museum of American Art, it was built by a self taught artist who worked obsessively for several decades to create a vast environment of found objects. Scholars have found The Orange Show to be an extremely fine example of the American folk art environment. Its preservation, by a grassroots community organization which has built up an extensive program of folk art education and outreach around it, is one of the oldest and largest programs in the country.<sup>2</sup>

In 1956, Jeff McKissack, a Houston postman, started construction on a 400 square meter piece of land across the street from his East End home. Planning at first to build a plant nursery, then a beauty parlor, he carried home discarded materials from demolished buildings found on his downtown mail route, combining them with objects collected over a lifetime of travel. By 1965, he was referring to the work as "The Orange Show." It is a multi-level construction that looks like an idiosyncratic amusement park, with flags flying over observation decks, narrative displays, steam engine, boat and pond, a museum and a maze. He conceived of the work as a "health show" in which thousands would visit annually to learn more about good health, nutrition and longevity.

By the late 70's, he and his Orange Show were well-known among Houston's art community. Houston artists drawn to working with found objects in the public arena particularly saw in his work a kindred spirit. When McKissack died at the age of 78 in 1980, a diverse group, ranging from Dominique de Menil to the rock group ZZ Top, formed to preserve The Orange Show. It was immediately determined that the newly formed foundation would promote a living monument; The Orange Show was to be an important part of Houston's cultural landscape.

The Foundation's first activity was to ensure the structural integrity of The Orange Show. A major restoration of the facility was conducted under the supervision of Barry Moore, an architect who specialized in historic preservation. In 1982, The Orange Show was opened to the public. Since then more than half a million people have visited this folk art monument and its programming has attracted international attention.

Today, The Orange Show's physical structure is facing some long term problems. It was built directly on Houston's gumbo soil, with no foundation. Some parts of this structure are now 42 years old and experiencing differential settlement. It is suspected that the current seasonal drought and extremely high Texas temperatures, on top of last summer's drought, has resulted in subsidence, with large cracks forming throughout the structure.

We propose to conduct a thorough assessment of the structure and to develop a plan to stabilize the structure under the direction of Barry Moore, a highly regarded restoration architect and Andrzej Dajnowski, a uniquely qualified conservator of sculpture. This team recognizes the dual nature of The Orange Show: a structure that operates as a work of architecture and art.

In addition to The Orange Show's first restoration, Barry Moore has been the principal architect for a number of important restoration projects including the Majestic Theater in San Antonio and the Jefferson County Courthouse in Beaumont, Texas. He is an Adjunct Professor and Director of the Center for Historic Preservation at the University of Houston School of Architecture and is President of the architecture firm SJKB in Houston. Andrzej Dajnowski is the Sculpture Conservator for the Chicago Park District, and has a private practice in which he has restored a number of other folk art environments for the Kohler Foundation, notably the Prairie Moon Garden and the Nick Engelbert Memorial Park., both in Wisconsin.

A second critical part of this project is the development of a plan for the conservation of the Beer Can House. This folk art environment was completed by John Milkovisch in 1988, just months before his death. It and The Orange Show rank as two of America's most important folk art sites.<sup>3</sup> The Beer Can House was an ordinary frame house in a residential neighborhood just east of downtown Houston when John Milkovisch began his work. In 1968, just after he retired from his job as an upholsterer for the Southern Pacific Railroad, he covered his lawn with concrete, embellishing the surface with marbles and painted blocks. He had been saving beer cans for decades in stacks, flattened and split at the seams, and began upholstering the cans to the side of his house. Finally, he strung together the tops of the cans, creating garlands of pop tops which he hung from the eaves of the house, creating the sensation

*We can substitute you!*

*Removed from project by NEA (since we don't currently have this environment)*