



100 and Change Grant Proposal Review committee
MacArthur Foundation

Re: Montana State University Grant Proposal: Project Montana

Members of the committee,

I am writing this on behalf of the Veteran History and Arts Initiative, an action that is focused on preserving Montana's veteran history through the arts. I write this in full support of Montana State University's pursuit of 100&Change Grant. This is a personal honor, as I am a proud veteran who served in the Navy and with the Marine Corps for 9 years. This investment will help serve an estimated 85,000 Montana veterans in all 56 counties, which also includes 7 Native American reservations.

Our World War II veterans are passing away at an average of 300 a day, while Korean War veterans are not far behind them. The highest rates of veteran suicides come from our Vietnam era veterans and behind them are our newest cohort from the Global War on Terror. One of our goals is to passionately capture and archive our veteran's accounts before they are lost. Give them a voice of inspiration to future generations through a creative process of the arts. We are committed to giving our veterans an opportunity to share and create something outside of themselves, which in turn is cathartic for both the creator and the witness.

Our vision aims to document veteran accounts through recorded oral interviews to then be archived and later used as inspiration within the Arts and Humanities. That inspiration from our veterans will cultivate a stronger connection across multiple generations of diverse cultures, which both the public and veteran population share. Through our process of collecting historical accounts and evoking emotions from the arts can we provide different perspectives that promotes health, education, and a conduit of communication. We believe that through this process we will honor the sacrifices of our service men and women, and their sacrifice should not go unnoticed, uncelebrated, or forgotten.

Funding from 100&Change, through Project Montana, would allow this initiative to enhance our presence in rural communities by employing support staff and increasing travel funds. VHAI would be allowed to establish a facility for interviewing veterans, a gallery for art and music, storage for recording equipment and office space. Future funding will allow for more commissioned artist within our community while also finding venues statewide to showcase these stories. We would also establish a strong community outreach to preserve veteran memories, cultivate awareness, while exploring different avenues of communication and education.

Ultimately, the approval of this grant will enhance the capacity and efficiency to reach the underrepresented people and historical accounts that expand beyond Montana's borders and sets a standard with a national and international reach.

Very respectfully,

Marcus "Doc" Cravens
Director
Veteran History and Arts Initiative
Montana State University