



California State Library approves 22 project grants in the California Civil Liberties program

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[Sacramento, Calif.] – Twenty-two diverse projects across the state have received approximately \$1.5 million in grants from the California State Library to educate Californians about their civil liberties. The successful applications include museums, public media outlets, and community and arts groups.

A list of the grant recipients is attached.

The Civil Liberties Public Education program was created in 1998 to use the incarceration of U.S. citizens of Japanese American ancestry during World War II as a springboard to understanding Californians' civil liberties and the impact when those liberties are usurped.

"Fear and bigotry were the root cause of internment in World War II. Both are still around," said Greg Lucas, California's state librarian. "Better understanding of past mistakes and connecting them with current events helps make sure we remember we're always stronger together."

The current round of grants is paid for with part of part of a one-time budget allocation of \$5 million. This is the second round of grants from that funding. The program will accept a third round of applications in late fall 2023.

Among the projects receiving funding are plays, teen leadership programs, educational materials, photo and video projects, museum exhibits, and more.

Previous Civil Liberties projects include:

- [An interactive online experience of the hardships and decisions for Japanese Americans during World War II](#);
- [Comprehensive curriculum for students in civics and American history](#);
- [Documentaries](#) and [podcasts](#) from [public broadcasting organizations](#) and [nonprofits](#);
- [Performing and visual arts programming](#);
- [Teacher's guides](#) and [lesson suggestions](#) with [primary source materials](#).

A comprehensive list is available on the [California Civil Liberties program website](#). Historical information about the program follows the list of projects funded in this current round. Questions may be addressed to civil.liberties@library.ca.gov.

End of Press Release

About the State Library: Established in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for state government and the Legislature. In addition to acting as a steward of California's history, the State Library is investing nearly \$500 million to modernize and renovate the state's 1,127 local libraries, bringing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to every California child under the age of 5, and building a statewide eBook library with diverse titles in 80 languages. [State Library website](#)

List of funded Projects – Summer 2023 – \$1.54 Million

Projects utilizing a fiscal sponsor in a different city or with a satellite of a main office will have the fiscal sponsor's or main-office city followed by the project lead's or satellite's city.

Asian American Media Inc. – South San Francisco

Project: Los Kinjo

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$62,500

The incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II resulted in the loss of civil liberties and the disappearance of some 40 Japanese American *kinjo* (neighborhoods) in California. Through a series of videos, online articles, and first-hand accounts, Asian American Media Inc. will introduce its readers to some of these lost communities, the long-term impact of their disappearance, and why those that survived remain threatened. The articles will also examine the parallels between the *kinjo* and what is happening today in the Black, Hispanic, Native American and other Asian American communities.

Berkeley Society for the Preservation of Traditional Music, dba Freight & Salvage – Berkeley

Project: Golden State of Song

Category: Community Projects

Amount: \$50,000.

Freight & Salvage will expand the Golden State of Song school arts integration program focused on the culture and context of the World War II Japanese incarceration camps. With curriculum developed in partnership with the Berkeley Unified School District's Visual and Performing Arts department, the program provides an engaging musical element to explore history studies through songs from a multiplicity of traditions. Schools will experience a series of performances with contextual information focused on the music played by and for those held in California's World War II Japanese incarceration camps, illustrating communal traditions practiced during a dishonorable chapter of American history.

Chapman University – Orange

Project: Through Internees Eyes

Category: Education

Amount: \$100,000.

Through Internees Eyes: Japanese American Incarceration Before and After is an education project that utilizes images of incarceration taken and preserved by an incarcerated family at Heart Mountain as a model for learning and storytelling. Using these photographs to create an online photo essay of the family's life inside camp and their journey back to California as a case study, this project offers a digital storytelling model with detailed pedagogical materials on creating a family history photo essay for teachers and students who will learn how to tell their own digital stories.

Densho – Los Angeles, CA / Seattle, WA

Project: Densho Encyclopedia: The Next Decade

Category: Education

Amount: \$100,000.

Densho will review and update core articles as well as add new content to the [Densho Encyclopedia](#), the most comprehensive resource available on the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. The organization will draw on recent scholarship to update core encyclopedia articles, connect content to current events about civil liberties, and author additional articles with a California focus or connection. The organization will engage scholars, historians, and California K-12 and university educators to ensure the relevancy and success of this community resource on the history of the wartime incarceration.

Teatro Campesino – San Juan Bautista

Project: Valley of the Heart Project

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$125,000.

El Teatro Campesino, with TomKat MeDiA, will create a feature film entitled *Valley of the Heart* based on Luis Valdez' play, a national social impact media campaign, and free online curriculum. The film illuminates the impact of incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII, specifically on the

connections between Japanese American and Chicano families, and is based on Valdez' childhood experience working on a Japanese American owned farm during WWII.

Get Lit Words Ignite Inc. – Los Angeles

Project: Poetic Protests: Podcasts and Performances

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$125,000.

Poetic Protests: Podcasts and Performances is a multi-platform project featuring poems by Japanese American poets that explore the impact of internment, and poems by American authors of various cultural backgrounds that have experienced civil liberties injustices. The project will interweave three elements: 1) 25 bi-weekly episodes of Get Lit Minute, Get Lit's year 'round podcast focusing on all things poetic, poetry, and poets; 2) Classic Slam protest poems: a video series of Get Lit students performing classic poems and their poetic responses; and 3) a "Protest Poems" session for southern California educators at Get Lit's annual Poetic Convergence.

Intersection for the Arts / Write Now! SF Bay – San Francisco/San Francisco

Project: Hidden Histories of the Central Coast

Category: Community Projects

Amount: \$50,000.

The project explores the social, political, and economic pressures that led to the World War II removal of Japanese Americans from San Luis Obispo County, where 90 percent of the former residents never returned. The project will relate the incarceration to past and present civil liberties challenges of the Chumash, Latinx, African American, Filipinx and other marginalized populations in San Luis Obispo County through permanent interpretive signage in San Luis Obispo and Shell Beach, a museum exhibition at the History Center of San Luis Obispo County, online materials, a pictorial history book, and public programming and workshops.

Japanese American National Museum – Los Angeles

Project: Being and Becoming: Planning JANM's New Permanent Exhibition

Category: Museums

Amount: \$62,500.

Being and Becoming: Japanese in the United States, 1868-Present (working title), is a new permanent exhibition that introduces visitors to 150 years of the Japanese American experience. This exhibit will tell the story of the United States through stories of the Japanese American community, including the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. California Civil Liberties funding will support the creation and preservation of the exhibit, and contribute to the museum's educational efforts.

Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California / Nihonmachi Community Coalition – San Francisco/San Francisco

Project: Sharp Park Interpretive Panel and Informational Discussion

Category: Community Projects

Amount: \$30,500

During World War II, individuals of Japanese, Italian, German and Peruvian descent were illegally detained at Sharp Park, a public park owned by the City and County of San Francisco since 1905. Very little information and knowledge is available about this location and many, if not all, of those who were incarcerated at that time have passed away. The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California will fiscally sponsor a project by the Nihonmachi Community Coalition to create a permanent interpretive panel at the site and sponsor informational discussions to memorialize the incarceration of Japanese, Italian, German, and Peruvian Americans to educate the public about what occurred at this location 82 years ago.

Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California – San Francisco

Project: Japanese American Collaborative Historical Project

Category: Preservation

Amount: \$124,200

The Japanese American History Archives is the largest community-owned collection of rare Issei generation primary documents that survived the tragic loss of property due to Executive Order 9066. The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California will partner with the Hoover Institute at Stanford University to focus on preserving the Japanese American History Archives. The primary goal is to digitize a rare collection of personal diaries, journals, manuscripts, memoirs, one-of-a-

kind books and original art that can illuminate similar experiences of political fear, anti-immigration sentiment, suspicion and mistrust many communities experience today.

KALW Public Media – San Francisco

Project: Your Call's Japanese American Series

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$89,300

San Francisco's public radio station KALW, Rose Aguilar (Executive Producer/Host of Your Call which airs on KALW), and her production team, will create an eight-episode broadcast series exploring California Civil Liberties for Japanese Americans historically and presently. Each one-hour episode will feature a conversation—guests include journalists, professors, law experts, as well as two of the few remaining incarcerated Japanese Americans, and their family members. The series will ask: "What will it take to ensure this never happens again?"

Kizuna Little Tokyo, Inc. – Los Angeles

Project: Leadership in Action

Category: Community Projects

Amount: \$29,000

Kizuna's Leadership in Action Program is open to teens who are interested in exploring the subject of civil liberties and actively working to make a difference in their communities. Participants will attend a series of workshops, conversations and tours to prepare them for their own civil liberties project. Once projects are defined and approved, teens are given a stipend to fund and carry out their work.

KVIE Inc / Antonia Grace Glenn, Unwashed Masses Productions – Sacramento / Larkspur

Project: In Our Place: Three Communities

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$125,000

KVIE is fiscally sponsoring *In Our Place: Three Communities*, a feature documentary exploring the shared experience of uprooting and displacement across Japanese American, African American and Native American communities during World War II. In particular, the film focuses on two sites impacted by the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans in 1942: Japantown in San Francisco, which became a thriving Black cultural center known as the Harlem of the West, and the Gila River Indian Reservation, where a concentration camp was established to hold Japanese Americans, over the objections of the Gila River Tribal Council.

LA Theatre Works – Venice

Project: Innocent When You Dream

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$80,000

L.A. Theatre Works will produce and disseminate *Innocent When You Dream* by Ken Narasaki. The play explores the Japanese American experience across generations and will be professionally recorded in front of a live audience and broadcast on the LA Theatre Works national radio show. The performance will be digitally preserved for streaming and download through the LA Theatre Works website as part of the organization's robust Civil Liberties Collection.

Little Tokyo Historical Society– Los Angeles / Los Angeles

Project: *Shimbun* – Feature Film Development

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$62,500

The Little Tokyo Historical Society will help fiscally sponsor the production and creation of *Shimbun*, a feature film based on the real-life civil rights leader Sei Fujii (1882-1954). In the film, Fujii joins Black attorney Hugh Macbeth on a race relations campaign to combat the injustices the U.S. government imposes against Japanese immigrants, including forced incarceration during World War II.

Pasadena Educational Foundation – Pasadena

Project: Building Empathy

Category: Community Project

Amount: \$50,000

This project engages students and teachers in the Pasadena Unified School District in learning about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The project makes the connections

between this period in American history and contemporary civil rights struggles related to race, national origin, immigration status, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. Teachers and students will work together on the development of lessons, research, writings, interviews, visual art, and podcasts to inform and educate each other and the community about the importance of preserving civil liberties for everyone.

Poston Community Alliance – Pleasant Hill

Project: “The Blue Jay” Film

Category: Community Project

Amount: \$27,500

The Blue Jay film is part of an online educational multimedia project entitled Poston Live that informs high school and college students about the intersection of the Japanese American and Native American communities at the Poston Incarceration Camp located on the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation. The film is supplemented by a research document titled *Sharing a Desert Home*. Funds will cover costs of post-production and outreach and distribution to ensure a wide audience.

Public Media Group of Southern California (dba PBS SoCal, KCET) – Pleasant Hill

Project: *Snapshots of Confinement* Documentary Film

Category: Public Media

Amount: \$125,000

This original documentary, *Snapshots of Confinement*, tells the stories of Japanese-American families confined by the U.S. government during World War II through their first-person narratives and historical photographs. Many Japanese Americans used the camera as a tool of resistance and community-building by creating and preserving photo albums that embody their ongoing efforts to remember and address the injustices of incarceration. The Public Media Group of Southern California will co-produce and distribute this film.

The Regents of the University of California, Santa Cruz – Santa Cruz

Project: *Trekking to Topaz*

Category: Community Project

Amount: \$ 50,000

Trekking To Topaz is a videographic essay woven into a long-form documentary film about the Topaz incarceration of Japanese Americans. The project weaves together an essay by Karen Tei Yamashita, "Trekking to Topaz," with oral history interviews conducted by Yamashita and by Tim Yamamura. Other interviewees include people from Delta, Utah, and Japanese Americans in California and Salt Lake City connected to the Topaz concentration camp. These funds will assist with the film's post-production requirements.

San Francisco Study Center / Hispanic LA – San Francisco / Northridge

Project: The Ralph Lazo Project

Category: Community Project

Amount: \$38,505

The San Francisco Study Center will fiscally sponsor a project by *Hispanic LA*, a Spanish-language online newsmagazine to educate the Latino community about the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The project will explore the connections between this chapter in American history and the challenges facing the Latino community today, including the treatment of Spanish-speaking migrants seeking asylum in the U.S. The project will include articles, an essay contest for middle and high-school students, and two community events, which will be recorded in a video/documentary available to local libraries and educational institutions.

San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance – Fresno

Project: The Cycle of Exclusion in the San Joaquin Valley

Category: Community Project

Amount: \$ 41,990.81

This project focuses on the history related to the Japanese American internment, particularly as it relates to the Fresno area's involvement and local victims. The organization will utilize existing archives; interview survivors and their descendants; prepare content for dissemination via newsprint, radio, social media, and an informational website; and hold seminars at educational institutions. The peripheral effects of the internment on local Asian communities other than Japanese Americans will be a key component examined as well as the connections to similar issues today such as the large-scale incarceration of African Americans and the current immigrant experience.

Tulare County Fair Heritage Foundation – Tulare

Project: Tulare Assembly Center Monument

Category: Community Project

Amount: \$ 50,000

Students from Mission Oak High School’s Cultural History class have partnered with the Tulare County Fairgrounds to construct a monument to educate the community about Japanese American incarceration, and to honor the 4,978 people incarcerated at the Tulare Assembly Center in 1942. Although designated as a California Historical Landmark (No. 934), the fairgrounds do not have a memorial recognizing this history. This student-led project will construct a monument at the main entrance to the fairgrounds. It will consist of a 5’ x 8’ bas-relief bronze sculpture, education displays, and recognition walls of all those incarcerated. Funding from the California Civil Liberties program will help cover the cost of the bronze work and other aspects.

History of the California Civil Liberties Program

Prior to World War II, California was home to more Japanese Americans than any other state. In the wake of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, wartime hysteria led to President Franklin Roosevelt’s signing of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which incarcerated over 120,000 Japanese Americans – including whole families – in guarded compounds for more than 18 months based solely on their heritage. Congress later [investigated and published a report](#) detailing these civil liberties violations, and over 80,000 individuals received redress compensation.

When the state Legislature created the California Civil Liberties Public Education program in 1998, the state’s legislative body said the program’s purpose was “to sponsor public educational activities and development of educational materials to ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered so that the causes and circumstance of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood.”