



Teacher Grant Application
Deadline: March 6, 2023

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Complete this document, answering all questions on pages 2 - 4. If you would like to be considered for the Charlie Baker Legacy Award, please complete the final page. If not, please just leave blank.
2. Once complete, save this document in **.pdf** or **.doc format** and include your name in the file name. For example: Joanna Smith Teacher Grant.pdf
3. Follow [this link](#) to submit an online application and attach this document. If the link doesn't work, cut and paste this URL into your browser: <https://airtable.com/shr6aIdVteQ25uf6T>
4. You will need to fill out a short online form, duplicating some of the applicant contact information. At the bottom of the form, you will find a link to upload your completed application.
5. Once your grant is submitted, you will receive an email confirmation to acknowledge receipt of the application and that everything uploaded properly. This may take 1 business day.
6. The Teacher Grant Committee will review the grants in Late March and Early April. The announcement of successful applications will be made by email in April, 2023.

If you have any questions, or need assistance in uploading your application, please call 617-232-3846 or email Jennie@brooklineeducation.org or Elizabeth_Ascoli@brooklineeducation.org.

Thank you for applying for a BEF Teacher Grant!

Additional Awards for Teacher Grants:

The [Charlie Baker Legacy Award](#) (\$1,000) is given to an exceptional Teacher Grant application in the areas of U.S. History or World Geography.

The [David E. Pradell Award](#) (\$500) is given to a middle school Teacher Grant recipient whose work will stimulate students' development of self-assurance, collaboration, and sense of social responsibility.

The [Adam Russell Gelfand Fellowship](#) (\$500) is given to a Teacher Grant recipient whose project is recognized by the committee for its excellence.



Teacher Grant Application for 2023-2024 Academic Year
APPLICATION DEADLINE: *Monday, March 6, 2023 at 5:00 pm*
Cover Page

APPLICATION MUST BE TYPED

Project Title	Cartagena: Afro-Latino history and culture in Colombia
Name of Applicant(s)	Erica O'Mahony
School and Grades/Subjects You Teach	Brookline High School, 9-12 Spanish
Telephone Number(s)	508-254-0146
Email Address(es)	Erica_omahony@psbma.org
Years Teaching in PSB, Total Years Teaching	5 11 (6 years at City on a Hill Charter High School in Boston)
Amount Requested	\$3,000.00
Are you applying for the Charlie Baker Legacy Award?	No
Please list previous BEF grants (year, title, teacher/collaborative)	

I understand that, should the Brookline Education Foundation fund my grant application, I am obligated to submit photographs documenting the grant, a written evaluation of my project at its completion and present the results of my grant at a BEF sponsored event. Evaluations of projects completed during the summer will be due by December 31, 2023. Evaluations of projects completed during the school year will be due by May 31, 2024. Photographs may be submitted at any time. I further understand that only educators employed by the Brookline Public Schools at the time the project is undertaken are eligible to receive funds.

Acknowledgement of Applicant(s): Erica O'Mahony Date: 2/21/23


Brookline Education Foundation
Teacher Grant Application for 2023-2024 Academic Year
Project Description Section

11. Project Summary (1-3 sentences)

I am requesting funding to travel to Cartagena, Colombia. One in four Latin Americans identify as being of African descent. With seventy percent of its population of African descent, Cartagena is an important city in South America, celebrated for its African history and culture. My goal is to learn about Afro-Colombian history, culture and people. The length of the trip is for the duration of February or April vacation of 2024.

2. Goal Statement

What are your explicit goals for the project? What would be the best outcome for the work you propose?

My first goal for this project is to expand my personal and professional knowledge about an important part of the Spanish-speaking world. While I have lived and spent a significant amount of time in Spain and Peru, I have never travelled to a country with a strong Afro-Latino presence. African-descendants have made significant contributions to the development of Latin America. Despite still facing strong racial discrimination, after living on the continent for more than 300 years, Afro-Latino influences are ever present in the regions in gastronomy, music, sports, arts, science, social and political organizations. With a population of nearly 200,000 African descendants, Cartagena has the highest relative representation of Afro-Colombians in the country and offers a wide-range of history. Founded in 1533, Cartagena became a major port city where great fleets stopped annually to take gold and other products from the Americas to Spain. The city became a center for the Inquisition and a major slave market. Palenque de San Basilio village, a nearby village, is famous for being the first free slave town in the Americas.

Secondly, I would like to incorporate Afro-Latino culture into the curricula of all of my courses, including a short novella set in Cartagena. I teach Spanish level II, III, and IV. While all levels have some Afro-Latino culture incorporated into the curriculum, it is definitely an area which could be strengthened. For example, Spanish 4Honor has a unit on street art. The graffiti tour I plan to take would likely fit into that unit and provide a natural way to incorporate more Afro-Latino culture into our curriculum. Spanish II has a unit on music from the Caribbean and Cartagena is known for its music and dance street performances. My major curricular goal, however, would be to write a short novella, which I outline further in the section below.

A final explicit goal is professional rejuvenation. Now in my mid-career as a Brookline High School Spanish teacher, I'm looking for new ideas and exciting experiences to engage and connect with Hispanic cultures beyond those I have already experienced in Spain and Peru.

3. Context

What experiences (inside or outside the classroom) have led you to apply for this grant?

The most important aspect of teaching is forming relationships. I have found that sharing my personal stories, both informally and through writing, creates the greatest engagement in my classes and strongest bonds with my students.

After completing a Master's degree in Latin American studies with a focus on the Peruvian Amazon, I moved to Quito, Peru. I spent a year working with Peruvian Biologists, who have collaborated with indigenous

communities for the past thirty-five years. While I was there, I managed La Casa Morey, a historically restored hotel from the rubber boom era. Four years ago, while I was teaching in Brookline, I returned to the Peruvian Amazon to visit, collecting more materials specifically geared toward my students. Last year, I wrote my first novella, “Secretos de La Selva,” a short novel designed for Spanish II high school students.

After teaching novice level readers for 11 years, I decided to write my own book. Most of the books available to students to learn another language are written by teachers who are not trained in writing. Therefore, unfortunately, many of the books are lacking sufficient character development and engaging plots for teens. My book, *Secrets of the Jungle*, is based on an indigenous community in the Peruvian Amazon, a place I have lived, worked, and studied. Working with a published author and writing coach, I aimed to write a book that would engage students in a story with sufficient conflict and relevant and relatable issues. The book was bought by Teachers Discovery, and is set to be published this April. For a synopsis of the book, see www.secretosdelaselva.com.

As previously stated, I have lived and travelled in many Spanish speaking countries. However, I have never spent time in a country or city with a strong Afro-Latino presence. I would like to write another novella that is engaging for our students and reflects the diversity of the Spanish speaking world. Cartagena is the perfect city both because of its historical prominence as a colonial port city and involvement in the slave trade and its present day reputation as a hub of Afro-Latino celebration and pride.

4. Project Description

Describe the structure of this grant. What is your time frame? When and where will you be working? With whom will you work? You may include copies of supporting material (e.g., conference brochure, tour itinerary). Links to websites may be used for supporting materials and are preferred, if available.

I plan on taking several tours. First, I will visit San Basilio de Palenque, also referred to as Palenque, the village is home to approximately 3,500 Afro-Colombians who are the direct descendants of African slaves. The word “Palenque” translates to “walled city”, which refers to one of many walled communities founded by escaped slaves for refuge in the 17th century in. Palenque is home to the first free slave town in the Americas and was proclaimed Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2005 because it encompasses social, medical, and religious practices as well as musical and oral traditions with African roots.

For other tours in the area, I plan to work with Alex Rocha, founder of the only black-owned tourism company in Cartagena. Alex Rocha launched his tourism company after several years at a different company. He specifically designs his own tours to help create authentic experiences for visitors to Cartagena by including the contributions from those of African descent. From Cartagena, Alex Rocha is committed to showing “the real Cartagena” and working with the community. “The Real Cartagena Tour,” for example, includes visiting local markets trying local fruits and foods while learning about the natives of Cartagena and the African influence. It also includes tours of traditional neighborhoods to understand the city from a geographic, cultural, social and economic point of view. The “Graffiti Tour” includes a tour of murals and street art in the walled city in Getsemani to understand the cultural and social atmosphere of the neighborhood.

In addition to tourism, Alex Rocha is involved in several community social justice projects. With his connections, I plan to not only take the typical tours of the city but spend a few days getting involved in his community projects and hopefully visiting a high school to talk with teachers and teenagers. For more information on Alex Rocha, see his website: <https://experiencerealcartagena.com/social-project/>

My aim is to travel alone, over the weeklong vacation in February or April of 2024. Ideally, I would book 7 nights in Cartagena as well as several tours listed above.

The following summer, I would write a novella in addition to incorporating materials from my trip into the Spanish II, III, and IV curriculum (see above for potential examples).

5. Impact

a. Describe as specifically as possible the impact of the work you propose:

- On Yourself - How do you expect this project will change you as an educator? How might this work impact future professional activity?

This project will satisfy a personal curiosity of mine about Cartagena, Colombia. I'll be able to speak confidently about the region, its history, and its culture. Armed with more first-hand knowledge, there will be more opportunities to build curricular units that include the Afro-Latino representation.

- On Your Colleagues - *What impact will your project have on your professional community, either directly or indirectly?*

I would be happy to serve as a resource to colleagues within the World Language (or Social Studies/History). I would be able to speak in classes or share images or Spanish-language documents/materials obtained ('realia' as we say in World Language).

- On Your Students - *How will your students benefit from this project in the short or long term?*

Whenever a language teacher travels to the country of the target language, the classroom is enriched. The last time I travelled to the Peruvian Amazon, I visited indigenous villages in the rainforest with a specific goal to collect materials for my classes. I was able to incorporate many aspects of this experience, including video interviews with the local people and cultural artifacts such as local handicrafts and utensils.

In a similar way, my students will benefit from this experience as much of what I learn and experience in Colombia will be directly incorporated into the classroom. Specifically, students will benefit from more exposure to Afro-Latino culture.

b. How will you evaluate the success of this project?

This will be a successful project if I come away from the travel experience with a new sense of energy around certain units and the incorporation of more Afro-Latino culture into our curriculum. Hearing first-hand from locals and particularly teenagers about their life would be another benchmark of success. Providing students with pictures and firsthand stories, such as what school is like there, types of food, and leisure activities in Cartagena is invaluable in terms of helping students relate to other cultures and create connections and comparisons to their own lives. The greatest benchmark of success will be if I have enough material to write a short novella set in Cartagena for our students. To see the types of novellas that are taught in Spanish classrooms, see this website: <https://www.teachersdiscovery.com/category/sp-readers-2>

6. Dissemination

How will you share your learning with others in your school and district community? For example, will you share it departmental or school meetings, in an online format, or design other forms of dissemination of your project?

There are plenty of opportunities to share knowledge with future students. Any materials, physical realia, and information will be shared with colleagues. Any materials that I design will be incorporated into the curriculum. The novella I write might be directly incorporated into the high school curriculum. If it doesn't fit there, however, I would potentially work with the 8th grade team to incorporate it into their curriculum. I have already met with Tayna Alvarado (K-8 World Language department chair) about the inclusion of a diverse set of novellas into the middle school classrooms.

Teacher Grant Application for 2023-2024 Academic Year
Budget and Finances Section

Expense	Purpose	Cost
Consultant		\$0
Materials and Supplies		\$0
Travel and Accommodations* <i>please include applicable taxes.</i>	R/t trip airfare to Cartagena with likely connection	\$1200.00
	7 night accommodation	\$1300.00
	Tours of Cartagena & surrounding areas	\$500.00
Conference Fee		\$0
Other		\$0
Substitutes**(please indicate days/hours needed)		\$0
TOTAL		\$3,000.00

*** Single rooms are acceptable, if preferred by the applicant.**

****The BEF's ability to pay for subs is limited; requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.**

Please be as specific as possible.

Finances

a. Will there be additional funding from other sources? Please describe.

No, there will be no other funding

b. Are resources needed to continue the work of the project after BEF funding ends? If yes, please describe how these resources will be obtained. If no, please describe how the work of the project will be funded or continued after completion of funding by the BEF.

No funding or resources will be necessary once travel is complete.

c. Do you foresee any potential challenges /obstacles and, if so, what is your strategy for dealing with them should they occur?

No.

d. Will you be able to complete the project if only partial funding is available? Yes ___ No
 If only partial funding is available, would you be able to redesign the project? Yes ___ No

Please explain:

e. For groups of three or more educators applying together: If the BEF can fund only a subset of your group, is there a reason this would pose a problem for you? ___Yes ___No

Please explain:

Brookline Education Foundation 
Teacher Grant Application for 2022-2023 Academic Year
Charlie Baker Legacy Award Section

If you are applying for the Charlie Baker Legacy Award (fully described in the Call for Proposals), please indicate how the additional \$1,000 funding would extend and/or enrich your project.

Please limit your response to one page.