



May 9, 2026

Dr. Leroy Hopkins,
President of the Board
The Underground Railroad Museum of PA
430 Walnut Street
Columbia, PA 17512

Dear Dr. Hopkins,

I am writing in support of The Underground Railroad Museum of PA and the organization's plans to be the premiere museum and clearinghouse of information on the role that free Africans, women, as well as other groups played in helping freedom seekers in the state.

As executive director of the PA Humanities, I am familiar with their work to identify over 300 sites and 2,000 individuals and their goal to encourage visibility and visitation to explore the history of the anti-slavery campaign in the state. The museum is positioned to tell the specific Columbia story and emphasize the stories of self-emancipators who came to the Commonwealth not only to save their lives but to thrive.

I know that the organization is committed to mutually cooperative relationships and building bridges with a tapestry of partners, scholars, and educational institutions to strengthen each other and tell the whole story. I applaud such work that serves a diverse and engaged community, intentionally fostering a space where everybody belongs. Such initiatives are creative, sustainable, and put people first -- reflecting the kind of transformational work we strive to support at PA Humanities.

The Underground Railroad Museum of PA and their plans have my strongest endorsement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Laurie Zierer'.

Laurie Zierer
Executive Director