Native American Library Services
Enhancement Grant Program

FY2015
Field Reviewer Handbook
Welcome to the Enhancement Grant Program Review Process

Thank you for offering to serve as an Enhancement Grant panel reviewer. We have selected you to review this year’s applications because of your professional expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- knowledge of and familiarity with Native American communities and their library services/information needs;
- education and training in library and information science;
- technical knowledge regarding computers, electronic information management, software, social media, or digitization.

We have prepared this handbook specifically for reviewers to ensure the fair and candid review of selected eligible applications and to provide you with the procedural and technical information you need. Please use it in tandem with the FY2015 Enhancement Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity available at:


Even if you have reviewed for IMLS programs in the past, you should read through this booklet for significant procedural changes with the online review system.

Purpose and Scope of the Enhancement Grant Program

The Enhancement Grant program provides federal grants through an annual competitive process. Enhancement Grant projects may enhance existing library services or implement new library services, particularly as they relate to the following goals in the updated IMLS statute (20 U.S.C. §9141):

IMLS Contacts

While you are reviewing the FY2015 Native American Library Service Enhancement Grant applications, please feel free to contact the IMLS staff below with any questions you have. We will be happy to answer questions and provide guidance for the reviewing process.

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Purpose and Scope of the Enhancement Grant Program

The Enhancement Grant program provides federal grants through an annual competitive process. Enhancement Grant projects may enhance existing library services or implement new library services, particularly as they relate to the following goals in the updated IMLS statute (20 U.S.C. §9141):
(1) Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals’ needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills.

(2) Establishing or enhancing electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. §9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.

(3) (A) Providing training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services, and

(B) Enhancing efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services.

(4) Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.

(5) Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.

(6) Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved.

(7) Developing library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

(8) Carrying out other activities consistent with the purposes of the Library Services and Technology subchapter of the IMLS statute (20 U.S.C. §9121).

**Application and Review Process**

1. Applicants submit their applications using Grants.gov.

2. IMLS receives the applications, and staff members check them for organizational eligibility and application completeness.

3. IMLS staff members perform an internal review of the applications and determine which applications will move on to Field review.

4. IMLS staff members identify a pool of available field reviewers with appropriate expertise and assign three reviewers to evaluate each application.

5. Field reviewers receive online access to the applications, evaluate them, and complete their reviews online.

6. After the field review, a panel meets in Washington, DC to provide a second level of review and make final funding recommendations. Panelists rely on field reviewers to point out specific technical strengths and weaknesses of each application. Panelists review applications from a broad perspective, identifying those that best meet IMLS program goals. They also provide insight into issues pertinent to this year’s competition as well as provide recommendations on improving the grant program, its application,
and its process.

7. IMLS staff members review the budgets and past performance of the highest ranked applications.

8. IMLS staff members provide a list of applications recommended for funding to the IMLS Director.

9. IMLS awards Enhancement grants in September. IMLS notifies all applicants whether or not they have received an award. With their notification, all applicants receive anonymous copies of the panel reviews. IMLS also sends notification of the awards to each participating reviewer.

How Your Reviews Are Used

Your scores inform the ranking of applications and are the basis for decisions about which applications receive funding. Your work helps the Director and IMLS staff understand the strengths and weaknesses of each application. Your comments also help unsuccessful applicants revise their applications for future grant cycles.

We greatly appreciate the amount of time and effort you commit to being a reviewer. By participating in the peer review process, you make a significant contribution to the Native American Library Services Enhancement grant program and provide an invaluable service to the entire community. Thank you!
Application Review Instructions

1. Verify Access to IMLS Online Reviewer System

The IMLS Online Reviewer System allows you to identify potential conflicts of interest and to enter your evaluative comments and scores for each application you review. See Appendix I on “How to Use the IMLS Online Reviewer System.”

Use the following link to verify that you have access to the IMLS Online Reviewer System:

https://e-services.imls.gov/grantapps/reviewers.aspx

To login, enter the email address you have on file with IMLS, and use the default password: password. An E-Review Security Screen will appear. Read this page and click OK.

Next, create a user account and establish your own password.

2. Assess Potential Conflicts of Interest

After you have created a new password, your review assignment will appear. To access the list of applications assigned to you, click VIEW.

Read through your list of applications to see if there are any potential conflicts of interest. Please see “Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest” included as Appendix II of this handbook. A conflict of interest would arise if you have a financial interest in whether or not the application is funded, or if for some reason, you feel that you cannot review it objectively. Call or email your IMLS contact immediately if you have a conflict, or what may appear to be a conflict. (Do not check the box in the “Conflicts” column. Doing so will block all of the reviewers in your group from viewing the applications.)

If you have no conflicts of interest with any of the applicants on the list, click SUBMIT CONFLICT OF INTERESTS STATEMENT at the bottom of page. This will electronically confirm that you don’t have any conflicts of interest with any of the applications you will review.

3. Verify Access to Applications Online

Your applications for reviewer are available for download via Dropbox. A link to your reading assignments is included in the e-mail sent to you by IMLS staff. Please let Madison Bolls know if you have any further questions or trouble using the Dropbox website and system.
Confidentiality: The information contained in grant applications is strictly confidential. Do not discuss or reveal names, institutions’ project activities, or any other information contained in the applications. Call or email your IMLS contact if you have any questions concerning an application. Do not contact an applicant directly.

Read Applications

Revisit the Enhancement Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity at http://www.imls.gov/applicants/nag Enhancement_nofo 2015.aspx. Then read the applications, keeping in mind that your thorough review of each will be the key to providing both insightful comments and ratings. On the next page is a quick reference sheet that lists the review criteria and should serve as a guidepost for your review.
Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant
FY 2015 Field Review Criteria Quick Reference

1. Introduction and Assessment of Need

- Briefly describe your community, including population profile, location, economy, educational levels, languages, culture, and other characteristics that you consider important.
- Describe the current role of the library in the community and the services it provides, (e.g., mission, goals, hours and days of operation, staffing, size and content of collection, number of registered patrons, circulation statistics, computer technology, Internet connectivity and access, public programs offered).
- Describe the purpose of the proposed Enhancement Grant project as it relates to a specific need that you have identified. What specific audience(s) will the library serve with this project? (e.g., particular age groups, underserved community members, other types of target audience).
- What type of assessment was conducted to identify this need as a priority for the library? Describe the results of the assessment, including baseline data that can be used to compare with final results to determine the project’s success. Why do you consider your approach to be the best solution to meet the needs of the targeted audience?

Review Criteria:

- The applicant should demonstrate that it has identified an audience, through a formal or informal assessment of the audience’s needs, that it is aware of similar projects completed by other institutions, and that it has developed a project and goals that are that best answer those needs.
- The proposal should provide evidence of innovation, shown by the degree to which the project results in more than incremental change.
- Research proposals should frame the project in the context of current research and explain what the project will contribute to the library or archive fields.

2. Project Goals and Expected Results

- Describe the goals that will be established to guide your project to completion. (Goals are statements of broad results that guide the organization’s design of programs, choice of projects, and management decisions.)
- What results do you want to see at the end of the project period? In other words, what new knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors do you expect to see in your audience? How will it specifically benefit the individuals or groups that you have served?

Review Criteria:

- Degree to which potential benefits of the project outweigh its potential risks.
- Degree to which evaluation plan ties directly to project goals through measurable project outcomes, findings, or products.
- Evidence that the project evaluation will provide reliable information on which to judge impact or base actions.
- For projects that involve building digital collections, software, or other technology products, in addition to the above criteria, evidence that the project demonstrates interoperability and accessibility in its broadest context and potential for integration into larger-scale initiatives.

3. Project Design and Required Resources

- For each project goal, describe in narrative form the specific resources you will need to achieve success (including permanent staff expertise and time commitment, temporary staff, consultants, materials, equipment, training, technology, partners, etc.). Also describe in the narrative how you will carry out the activities and services that you have planned in order to ensure your project’s success. Include a timeline of activities for each goal.
If your project includes digital products, the Specifications for Projects That Develop Digital Products form is a required document. Projects developing digital products may include the conversion of non-digital material to digital format, the repurposing of existing digital content, and/or the creation of new digital content.

**Review Criteria:**

- Evidence that the project proposes efficient, effective, and reasonable approaches to accomplish its goals and objectives
- Evidence that methodology and design are appropriate to the scope of the project
- Evidence that the project uses existing or emerging standards or best practices
- If products such as digital collections or software tools will be generated by the project, evidence that applicant has considered key technical details and has included the Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form

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### 4. Performance Goals, Communication, and Sustainability

Describe the intended performance goals and benefits of this project:

- What are the specific learning outcomes is the project designed to improve or enhance?
- What performance indicators will you measure for the learning outcomes identified in the prior question?
- What are the project targets for these performance measures? How will you measure success toward these targets?
- What tangible products will result from this project?

**Review Criteria:**

- Degree to which the project is likely to have a far-reaching impact
- Evidence that the project will create, implement, and document workable models that have the potential for successful, widespread adaptation where appropriate
- Degree to which potential benefits of the project outweigh its potential risks
- Degree to which evaluation plan ties directly to project goals through measurable project outcomes, findings, or products
- Evidence that the project evaluation will provide reliable information on which to judge impact or base actions

Describe the project’s communication plan. Include information such as the following:

- Description of the audiences you plan to reach and how you will reach them
- Plans for community building and/or audience engagement via discussion, involvement, collaboration or adoption
- Means to measure audience engagement and outcomes
- Staff assignments for outreach, promotion and dissemination
- Plans for technical documentation where applicable

**Review Criteria:**

- Evidence that the results, products, models, findings, processes, and benefits of this project will be communicated freely and effectively
- Evidence that communication activities will be ongoing throughout the project lifecycle rather than occur simply at the end of the project
- Evidence that the project will seek feedback from various stakeholders
- Evidence that the communities described in the Needs Assessment section can be reached and served through the proposed communications plan
Evidence that the project will make every reasonable attempt to communicate lessons learned and the results of the project beyond standard professional audiences and communities of interest

Describe how the applicant will continue to support the project, its results, and/or new models that are created beyond the grant period.

Review criteria:

- Extent to which the project’s benefits will continue beyond the grant period, either through ongoing institutional support of project activities or products, websites development of institutional expertise and capacity, working with members of the broader community to continue support for project activities or products, and/or through broad long-term access to project products
- Extent to which you have planned to build buy-in or adoption among others in the field
- Extent to which the project will lead to systemic change within the organization as well as within the archive and/or library fields
- Plans for preserving and sustaining any digitized collections, software and supporting documentation, information systems, and other technology tools

Draft Comments

Draft comments for each of the four narrative sections. We strongly recommend that you draft your comments using a word-processing program for later copying and pasting them into the IMLS Online Reviewer System (see Appendix III).

When considering your comments:

- Use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- Judge the application on its own merits. Do not base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- If you question the accuracy of any information, call us to discuss it. Do not question the applicant’s honesty or integrity in your written comments.
- Do not contact the applicants.

Characteristics of Constructive and Effective Comments

- They are presented in a constructive manner.
- They are concise, specific, and easy to read and understand.
- They acknowledge the resources of the institution.
- They are specific to the individual applicant.
- They correlate with the score given.
- They reflect the application’s strengths and identify areas for improvement.
- They are directed to applicants for their use.

Characteristics of Poor Comments

- They make derogatory remarks. (Offer suggestions for improvement rather than harsh criticism.)
- They penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money. (Any eligible institution may receive funds, regardless of need.)
They penalize an applicant because of missing materials. (If you believe an application is missing required materials, please contact your IMLS contact immediately.)

They offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information. (Your comments should concern only the information IMLS requests of applicants.)

They simply summarize or paraphrase the applicant’s own words.

Remember that successful and unsuccessful applicants use your comments to help improve their projects or future applications.

Assign Scores

Assign a preliminary score to each narrative section. Use a scale of 1 to 5, as described below. Use only whole numbers; do not use fractions, decimals, zeroes, or more than one number.

### SCORE DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – Exceptional</td>
<td>The applicant’s response is exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Very Good</td>
<td>The applicant’s response is strong with only a few minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Good</td>
<td>The applicant’s response is adequate but with numerous minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Some Merit</td>
<td>The applicant’s response may have some strengths but has at least one major weakness in its support for the proposed project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Inadequate / Insufficient</td>
<td>The applicant’s response is either inadequate or insufficient to evaluate fully and/or has numerous major weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Minor
An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project

### Moderate
A weakness that lessens the impact of the project

### Major
A weakness that severely limits the impact of the project

**IMPORTANT:** To help applicants understand and benefit from your reviews, make sure that your scores accurately reflect your written comments.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What should I do if I discover something missing in the application or if the applicant did not complete all parts of the application?**
   Call your IMLS contact immediately. We may be able to send you the missing materials if they were submitted as part of the original application. **DO NOT** contact the applicant.

2. **Should I consider need when evaluating an application?**
   No. Need is not a review criterion.

3. **To whom should the review comments be addressed?**
   Please address all comments to the applicant. While IMLS staff and panelists read the comments, it is important to write the comments to the applicant so they may use them constructively.

4. **What should I do if I find that I know someone mentioned in the application?**
   Contact your IMLS contact immediately and discuss the possibility of a conflict of interest. Not all cases are conflicts, but please call us to discuss your situation.

5. **Must I make comments for every question?**
   Yes. You must make a constructive and substantive comment for every question. This is the best way to help applicants improve all aspects of their applications.

6. **Is one part of the narrative more important than another?**
   No. All four sections of the narrative have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.

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Review Your Work

Review your draft comments and preliminary scores. A review with even one missing score or comment cannot be accepted by the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to reflect more accurately your written evaluation. Scores should support comments, and comments should justify scores.

**For all questions about reviewing, either technical or programmatic, please call or email your IMLS contact directly. Please do not use the IMLS Online Reviewer System Help buttons, as your question will not receive a response using this method.**

Once you have completed assigning scores and providing comments for each application assigned to you, we recommend that you print a copy of each completed review to keep for your files. Then click on the submit box to send the entire review to IMLS.

**Tips**
There are a few points regarding the use of the Online Reviewer System of which you should be aware:

- When accessing this system, use only the email address we have on file for you.
- Once you submit your reviews, you cannot go back in to make revisions. If you feel you need to make a change, you must contact your IMLS contact, and we will
authorize your re-entry into the system. However, prior to submitting your reviews, you may repeatedly enter and exit the system without losing your information.

**Deadline:** The deadline to submit Enhancement Grant reviews is **May 15, 2015.**

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**Submitting Materials to IMLS**

You received via email, a Peer Reviewer Services Agreement and the Direct Deposit Sign-Up form. Please print, complete, scan, and email the forms to Madison Bolls at mbolls@imls.gov. Honoraria are paid electronically, and you must complete the Direct Deposit Sign-Up form in its entirety, even if you submitted a similar form in a prior year with the identical banking information.

Should you decide to mail rather than email your Peer Reviewer Services Agreement and Direct Deposit Sign-Up form, please send both to:

IMLS
Office of Library Services
Attention: Madison Bolls
1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor
Washington DC 20036-5802

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**Managing Copies:** Keep your applications and a copy of your review sheets until **September 30, 2015,** in case there are questions from IMLS staff.

Please maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review.

After September 30, 2015, destroy the applications and review sheets.

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**Thank you for serving as an Enhancement Grant Field Reviewer!**