



Museums Empowered:

FY 2022 Information Session

September 2021

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "IMLS Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff Fiscal Year 2022 Information Session."

My name is Mark Isaksen – I'm one of the program staff in the Office of Museum Services -- and speaking on behalf of rest of the staff, we are delighted that you are interested in preparing an application for the IMLS Museums Empowered grant program.



Agenda

- Where to Find Information
- Program Overview
- IMLS Funding Eligibility Criteria
- Choosing a Project Category
- Project Activities
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- Application Components
- Narrative Review Criteria
- Where to Learn More
- Application Tips & Next Steps

Here are the topics we will cover in today's webinar:

- Where to Find Information
- Program Overview
- IMLS Funding Eligibility Criteria
- Choosing a Project Category
- Project Activities
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- Application Components
- Narrative Review Criteria
- Where to Learn More
- Application Tips & Next Steps



Companion Webinar

IMLS OMS: Choosing a Funding Opportunity

- *Basic information for all applicants*
- <https://imls.gov/webinars/imls-office-museum-services-choosing-funding-opportunity-fy-2022>

This is one of a series of webinars designed to help you find the information you need to create a competitive application for IMLS museum funding.

“Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2022” is available as a video and as a PDF on our website at the link identified here. In that webinar, we cover the IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan. We also address institutional eligibility for applicants, provide a quick overview of ALL our funding opportunities, show you how to find information online with a focus on our website, and we cover the three places you must be registered in order to apply for an IMLS grant.

In addition to this webinar about Museums Empowered we are making available on-demand webinars for all our museum grant programs. A complete list of available presentations is available on the IMLS website by visiting www.imls.gov/webinars-archive.

Where to Find Information www.ims.gov



The IMLS website is an important place to find information

When you go to the website you will see a drop down menu for GRANTS on our home page. Click on the section titled “Apply for a Grant.” This section of our website is for you.

Notice of Funding Opportunity

The screenshot shows the IMLS website landing page for the 'Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff' grant program. The page includes a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'Grants', 'Apply for a Grant', 'Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff', 'About', 'Grants', 'Our Work', 'Data', 'News', and 'Contact'. The main heading is 'Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff'. Below the heading, there is a 'Deadline' of November 15, 2021, and a link to the 'Application' PDF. The 'Grant Amount' is listed as \$5,000-\$250,000, and the 'Grant Period' is up to three years. A 'Cost Share Requirement' is noted, stating that non-federal funds must be at least equal to the federal amount. The 'Program Overview' describes the initiative as a special program for museum staff. A list of project categories includes Digital Technology, Diversity and Inclusion, Evaluation, and Organizational Management. 'Program Contacts' are listed as Mark Isabson, Supervisory Grants Management Specialist.

The cover page of the 'MUSEUMS EMPOWERED: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSEUM STAFF FY 2022 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY'. It features a table with the following information:

Federal Awarding Agency	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Funding Opportunity Title	Museums Empowered
Announcement Type	New
Funding Opportunity Number	ME-FY22
Assistance Listing Number	45.301
Application Deadline	Submit through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on November 15, 2021.
Anticipated Date of Notification of Award Decision	August 2022 (subject to the availability of funds and IMLS discretion)
Beginning Date of Period of Performance	Projects must begin on September 1, 2022.

Below the table is a 'Table of Contents' with the following items:

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Each grant program has a landing page on the IMLS website. Here you will find a brief overview of the grant program, contact information for the IMLS staff assigned to this grant program – and your primary point of contact if you have questions – and link to the PDF of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (sometimes referred to as the NOFO) is the official instructions and guidance for how to prepare, complete, and submit an application for funding.

The text and information I am using in this webinar derive from the instructions and guidance found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. A NOFO is available for each of the grant funding opportunities.

Now let's discuss the Museums Empowered grant program in more detail.

Program Goals

Museums Empowered is a special initiative of the MFA grant program.



Designed to strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public.

Using the transformative power of *professional development* and training to generate *systemic change* within museums of all types and sizes.

Museums Empowered is a special initiative of the Museums for America grant program. It is designed to support projects that use the transformative power of professional development and training to generate systemic change within museums of all types and sizes. Projects are expected to involve multiple levels of staff, leadership, and volunteers in a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing a key need or challenge; reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about professional development; and generate measurable results.

Application and Award History

Summary of 2021 Grant Statistics

Number of applications: 63

Number of grants awarded: 22

Average Award amount: \$165,230

Total dollar amount awarded: \$3,635,041

Museums Empowered	2021 #	2021 %
Digital Technology	7	11%
Diversity & Inclusion	42	67%
Evaluation	7	11%
Organizational Management	6	10%
Total Applications	63	
Total Awards	22	35%

We are often asked about numbers of applications and funding success rates, and so here are the figures for the just completed Museums Empowered grant cycle. In FY 2021 we made 22 awards for a total of \$3,635,041

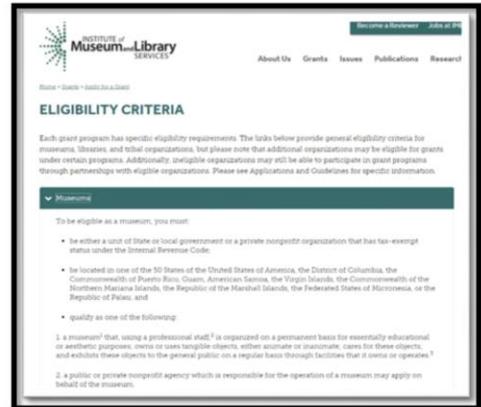
Summary of 2021 Grant Statistics

- Number of applications: 63
- Number of grants awarded: 22
- Average Award Amount: \$165,230
- Total dollar amount awarded: \$3,635,041

Museum Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization:

- A museum?
 - A non-profit organization?
 - A Unit of State or local government?
- ✓ If yes, then you may be eligible to receive funds.



General funding eligibility criteria for museums can be found on the IMLS website as shown in the screen shot image on the right side of this screen. This general eligibility criteria applies to most of the IMLS grant museum programs, including Museums Empowered.

To summarize: you are likely to be eligible to receive funding if you meet the IMLS definition of a museum (as described on our website) and are a non-profit organization, or part of a state or local government.

Project Categories



Digital Technology: Provide museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into museum operations.



Diversity and Inclusion: Support museum staff in providing inclusive services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.



Evaluation: Strengthen the ability of museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes.



Organizational Management: Strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture.

The Museums Empowered grant program provides support for professional development in four project categories:

Digital Technology: Provide museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into museum operations.

Diversity and Inclusion: Support museum staff in providing inclusive services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.

Evaluation: Strengthen the ability of museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes.

Organizational Management: Strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture

Why is your decision about which category to choose so important? For one thing, your application will be reviewed by museum professionals who have experience and expertise in these general categories. And for another, your application will be competing against others who have chosen the same category. In short, the entire review process incorporates an assumption that your project aligns with the category you've identified.

Digital Technology



- Support staff learning and integration of digital communication platforms and social media tools to enhance audience engagement and community outreach.
- Support staff learning and integration of digital tools and services that enhance access to museum collections.

So let's take a look at each category in a little more detail.

The Digital Technology category in Museums Empowered supports projects that provide museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into museum operations. This might involve activities that support staff learning and integration of digital communication platforms and social media tools to enhance audience engagement and community outreach; or activities that support staff learning and integration of digital tools and services that enhance access to museum collections. The emphasis here is on staff learning and integration of these new tools, not just on the acquisition of the new tools.

Diversity & Inclusion



- Create training and learning opportunities that increase cultural competency of museum staff and enhance relevancy of museum programs.
- Develop and implement inclusive fellowship, internship, and mentoring programs to increase support for emerging professionals from diverse communities entering the museum field.

The Diversity and Inclusion category in Museums Empowered supports projects help museum staff in providing inclusive services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.

This might involve activities that create training and learning opportunities that increase cultural competency of museum staff and enhance relevancy of museum programs; or activities that develop and implement inclusive fellowship, internship, and mentoring programs to increase support for emerging professionals from diverse communities entering the museum field.

Evaluation



- Increase staff knowledge of program evaluation methods and the usefulness of evaluation reports, tools, data and metrics.
- Provide museum staff with the tools and strategies to adapt evaluation methods to address a specific audience or institutional need.

The Evaluation category in Museums Empowered supports projects helps to strengthen the ability of museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes.

This might involve activities that increase staff knowledge of program evaluation methods and the usefulness of evaluation reports, tools, data and metrics; or activities that provide museum staff with the tools and strategies to adapt evaluation methods to address a specific audience or institutional need.

Organizational Management



- Develop comprehensive organizational learning opportunities that address one or more emerging priorities facing a museum.
- Develop programs that address the specific learning and growth opportunities identified by staff needs assessments.

The Organizational Management category in Museums Empowered supports projects that strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture

This might involve activities that help you to develop and implement comprehensive organizational learning opportunities that address one or more emerging priorities facing a museum; or activities that help you develop and implement programs that address the specific learning and growth opportunities identified by staff needs assessments.

Choosing a Project Category



Digital Technology



Diversity & Inclusion



Evaluation



Organizational
Management

1. Think carefully about what is “in the center” of your project. Who or what will benefit from your work? What will be improved once you’ve finished your project?
2. Decide who you want to review your application. What kind of skill set and experience do you want them to have?
3. List all the activities you plan to carry out and assign each to a category. Which category gets the most? Where will most of the resources be spent?

Sometimes it’s tough to choose a category, so here are a few strategies to help you select one that matches your project:

1. Think carefully about what is “in the center” of your project. Who or what will benefit from your work? What will be improved once you’ve finished your project?
2. Decide who you want to review your application. What kind of skill set and experience do you want them to have?
3. List all the activities you plan to carry out and assign each to a category. Which category gets the most? Where will most of the resources be spent?

Our advice is to choose one project category and write your proposal accordingly. As always, if you have questions, call the IMLS staff to discuss them.

Allowable Costs



2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

<https://www.ecfr.gov>

Subpart E—COST PRINCIPLES	
GENERAL PROVISIONS	
\$200.400	Policy guide.
\$200.401	Application.
BASIC CONSIDERATIONS	
\$200.402	Composition of costs.
\$200.403	Factors affecting allowability of costs.
\$200.404	Reasonable costs.
\$200.405	Allowable costs.
\$200.406	Applicable credits.
\$200.407	Prior written approval (prior approval).
\$200.408	Limitation on allowance of costs.
\$200.409	Special considerations.
\$200.410	Collection of unallowable costs.
\$200.411	Adjustment of previously negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rates containing unallowable costs.
DIRECT AND INDIRECT (F&A) COSTS	
\$200.412	Classification of costs.
\$200.413	Direct costs.
\$200.414	Indirect (F&A) costs.
\$200.415	Required certifications.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND INDIAN TRIBES	
\$200.416	Cost allocation plans and indirect cost proposals.
\$200.417	Interagency services.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
\$200.418	Costs incurred by states and local governments.
\$200.419	Cost accounting standards and disclosure statement.
GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SELECTED ITEMS OF COST	
\$200.420	Considerations for selected items of cost.
\$200.421	Advertising and public relations.
\$200.422	Advisory councils.
\$200.423	Alcoholic beverages.
\$200.424	Alumni activities.
\$200.425	Audit services.
\$200.426	Bad debts.
\$200.427	Bonding costs.
\$200.428	Collection of inter-agency payments.
\$200.429	Commemoration and convocation costs.
\$200.430	Compensation—personal services.
\$200.431	Compensation—fringe benefits.
\$200.432	Conferences.

We'll turn now to allowable and unallowable costs for your project. Be very careful in preparing your proposal and include only allowable costs in both your IMLS ask and your cost share.

We'll go through some common expenses that are allowable and unallowable, but for details, please see Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations covering Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, or "2 CFR 200" for short.

The regulations are available online in a searchable format on the U.S. Government Publishing Office website listed on the screen.

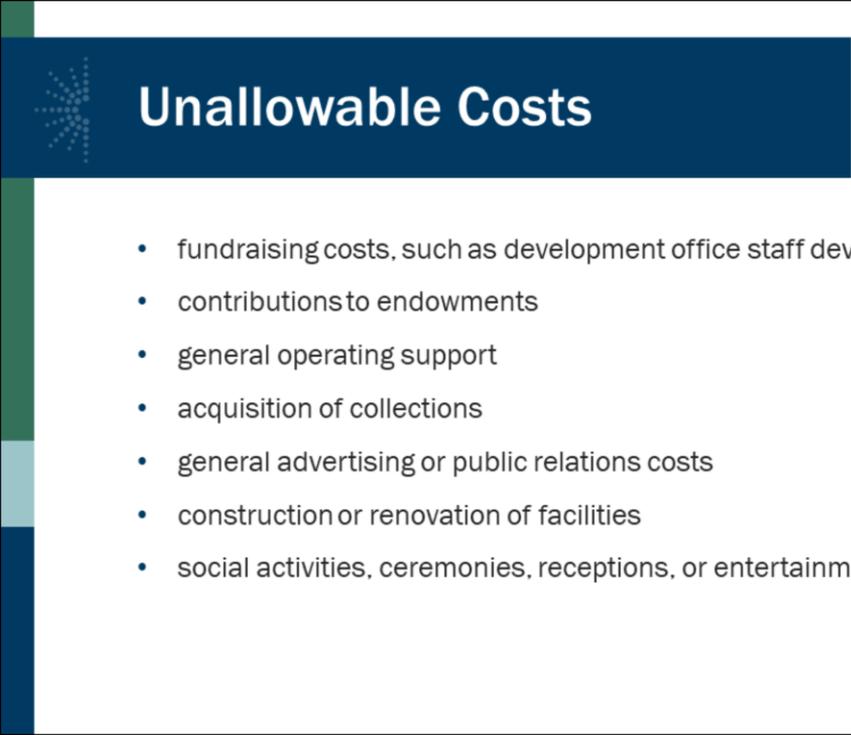


Allowable Costs

- personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- travel expenses for key project staff and consultants
- materials, supplies, software, and equipment related directly to project activities
- third-party costs
- staff and volunteer training
- internships/fellowships
- indirect or overhead costs

In the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a partial list of the most common examples of allowable costs as pictured here.

These costs may be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for and/or what you will pay for as part of your cost share. The rules about allowability apply to both sides.

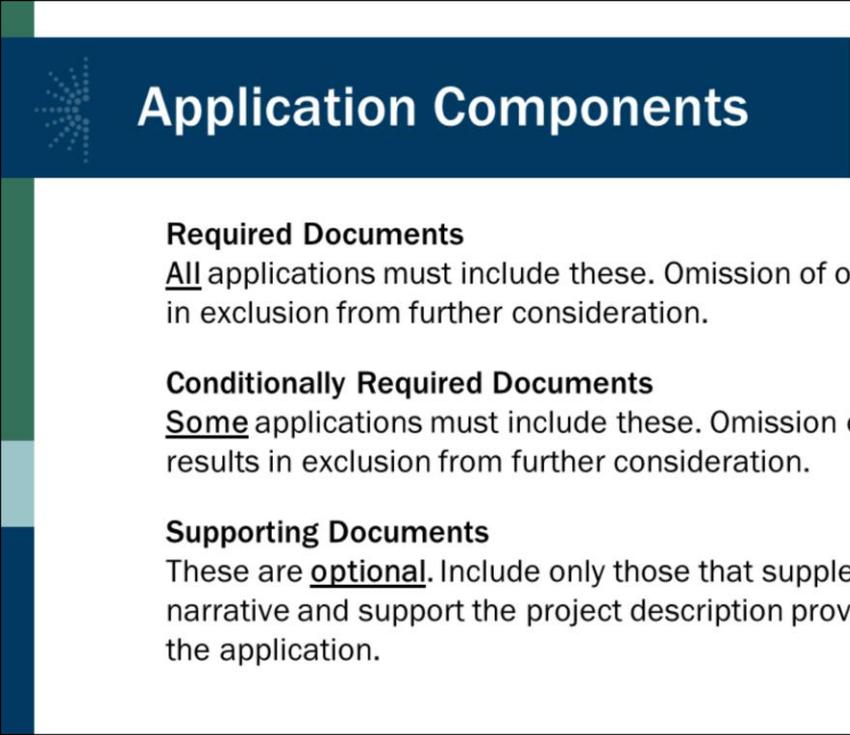


Unallowable Costs

- fundraising costs, such as development office staff devoted to general fundraising
- contributions to endowments
- general operating support
- acquisition of collections
- general advertising or public relations costs
- construction or renovation of facilities
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment

We also provide a list of generally unallowable costs, again both for IMLS funds and for cost share. These costs may NOT be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, NOR can they be part of what you will pay for as part of your cost share. In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal.

As you prepare your application, it's a good idea to compare your list of proposed expenses against these lists of allowable and unallowable costs and against the appropriate set of cost principles. If after that you have specific questions, please contact us and we'll be happy to help.



Application Components

Required Documents

All applications must include these. Omission of one results in exclusion from further consideration.

Conditionally Required Documents

Some applications must include these. Omission of one results in exclusion from further consideration.

Supporting Documents

These are optional. Include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description provided in the application.

Now that you have some basic framework on the amount of funding and the allowable costs for your project, let's review the multiple parts of the grant application that you will need to prepare. The application components are a series of documents you will upload in Grants.gov that together make up your application.

These application components fall into three categories. The first is that of **Required Documents**. **All applications must include these**. Omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The second group is that of **Conditionally Required Documents**. **Some** applications must include these. It might depend on the nature of your institution or some aspect of your project. In either case, omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The third group of application components are **Supporting Documents**. These are completely optional. Include only those that supplement your narrative and support the project description you provide in your application.

Application Components

Required Documents : All applications must include these.

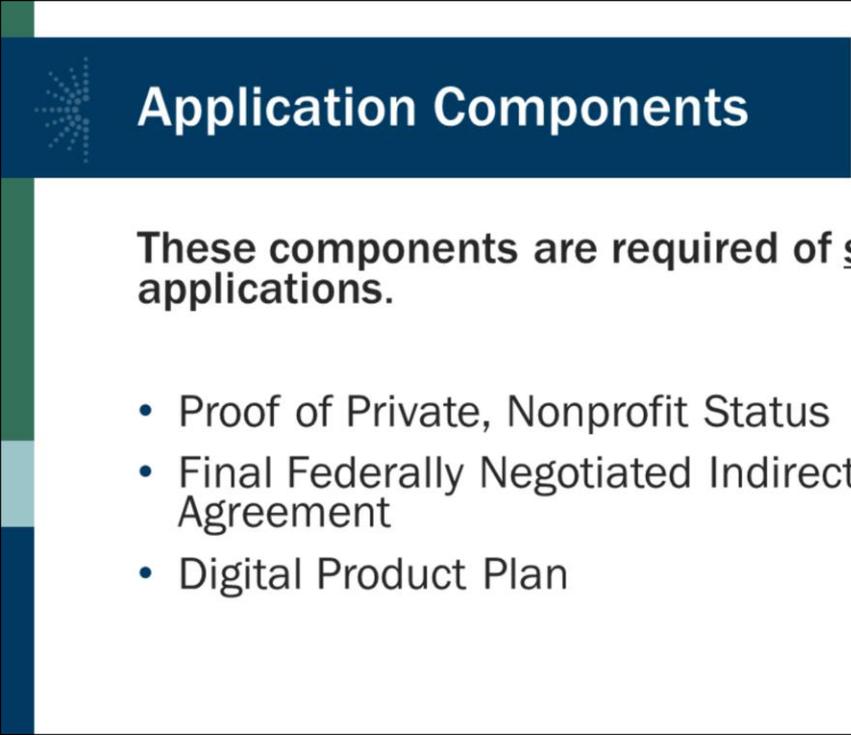
- Organizational Profile
- Strategic Plan Summary
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Performance Measurement Plan
- List of Key Project Staff
- Resumes of Key Project Staff
- Budget Justification
- Application for Federal Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)
- IMLS Supplementary Information Form (includes abstract)
- IMLS Museum Program Information Form
- IMLS Budget Form

Your application will consist of a series of individual documents, and it's very important to make sure you prepare and submit everything necessary to complete your application.

All applications must include the 12 required documents listed on this slide.

The 8 documents listed on left side of this slide are created by you, using a word document, and then saving this as a PDF. Instructions for all of these required documents are found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Many of these have page limits, and if you exceed the page limit specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we must remove the extras before your application goes out for review. Make sure your content fits into the page limits specified and make sure the number of pages holds when you convert your document to a PDF.

The 4 required documents on the right side of the slide include the Application for Federal Assistance, the IMLS Supplementary Information Form, and the IMLS Museum Program Information Form which are online forms you complete in the grants.gov environment. The IMLS Budget Form is a fillable PDF.



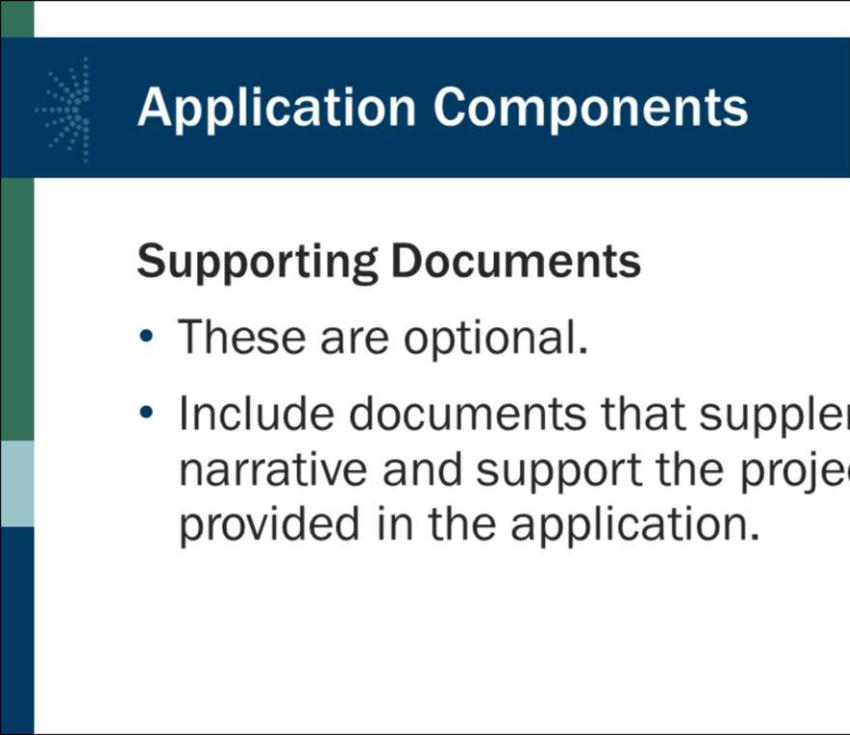
Application Components

These components are required of some applications.

- Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status
- Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Digital Product Plan

The second category of application components is that of **conditionally required documents**. **Some** applications must include one or all of these, and it's your job to figure out which are required for yours.

- If you are applying as a nonprofit, then you must include your proof of nonprofit status issued by the IRS.
- If you are using a federally negotiated indirect cost in your budget, then you must include a copy of your final rate agreement.
- If you will create digital products during the course of your project, then you must complete and submit a Digital Products Plan. The term “digital product” includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data. If you are creating any of these types of materials, you must include the plan with your application.



Application Components

Supporting Documents

- These are optional.
- Include documents that supplement the narrative and support the project description provided in the application.

The third group of application components is **supporting documents**. Supporting documents are completely optional. This is not the place to introduce new information.

Some common items in this section might be letters of support from key stakeholders and project participants, executive summaries from studies or reports that have helped to shape your project design and bolster the project justification, or simply just a bibliography of references and related documents.

We also recommend that you be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include extraneous material that is not directly relevant to your project. Being judicious really does work to your benefit.

Include what is important and helpful ... and stop there.

Strategic Plan Summary

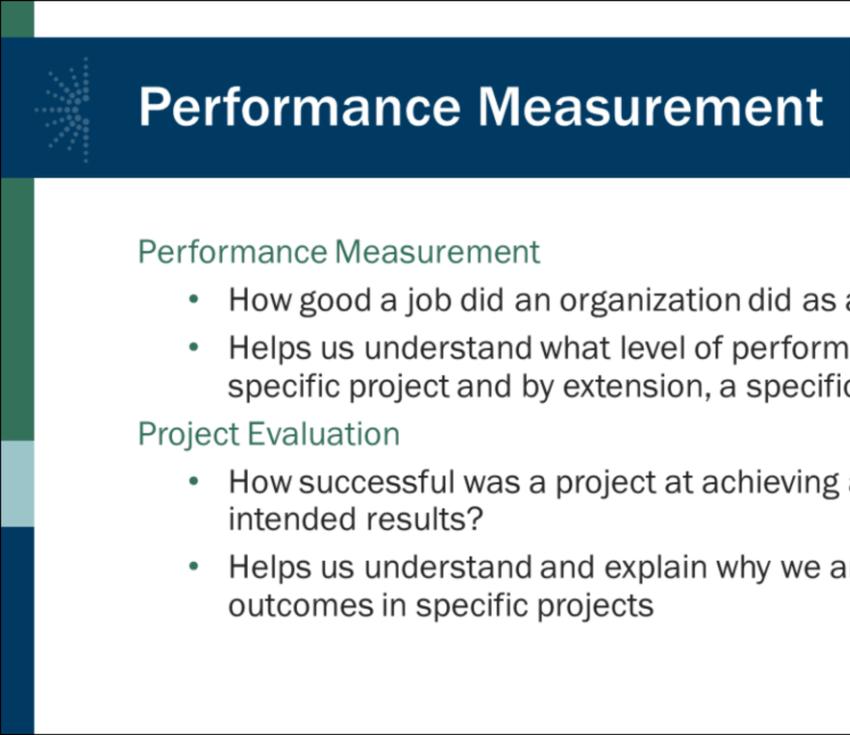
- Summary must be no more than two pages long
- Connect your proposed project activities to your institutional goals and objectives
- Identify the date and by whom the plan was approved
- Use a narrative format for your strategic plan summary



Let's turn to two specific documents that that are very important and about which applicants seem to have the most questions.

First is a **strategic plan summary**. IMLS wants to help you achieve your goals, and one of the characteristics of a successful Museums Empowered project is addressing a key need or challenge that faces your museum and is identified in your strategic plan. We ask for a summary of your plan—no more than two pages—so that reviewers will be able to understand how your proposed project's activities will further your institutional goals and objectives. We also ask that you indicate when and by whom the plan was approved. For some institutions this might be the Board of Trustees. For others it might be someone or a group representing the authority for a division or a department.

Use a narrative format for your strategic plan summary. Our reviewers tell us they find a well-constructed, thoughtful, written summary the best way to see the connection between your museum's strategic plan and your proposed project.



Performance Measurement

Performance Measurement

- How good a job did an organization do as a federal awardee?
- Helps us understand what level of performance is achieved by a specific project and by extension, a specific grant program

Project Evaluation

- How successful was a project at achieving a set of specific intended results?
- Helps us understand and explain why we are seeing the results or outcomes in specific projects

At the end of last year, the government added a new requirement to all federal awards. Agencies are now required to measure the performance of awardees. This Performance Measurement requirement is different from Project Evaluation, which is typically included in your project proposals.

Performance Measurement tells us how good a job you did as a federal awardee. It helps IMLS understand, manage, and improve our grant programs and the assistance we provide to applicants and awardees.

Project evaluation, by contrast, is all about your project intended results or outcomes. Project evaluation will be covered in the narrative part of your application, following the questions we ask in the NOFO, such as what need you are addressing and what associated results do you want your project to have, how you will track progress toward achieving your intended results, and how the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of your target audience will change as a result of your project.

But for now, let's turn now to our focus on **performance measurement** and how we will ask you to plan for it and report on it.

Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results	<i>Example: At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project.</i> <i>Example: At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results.</i>			
Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group	<i>Example: Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis.</i> <i>Example: Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system.</i>			
Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group	<i>Example: At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training.</i> <i>Example: We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user.</i>			
Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe	<i>Example: Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates.</i> <i>Example: Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.</i>			

In the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a sample chart which applicants may, but are not required to use. On the left side of the chart are four commonly used Performance Measures that IMLS has adopted for this effort:

- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results
- **Efficiency:** How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group
- **Quality:** How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group
- **Timeliness:** The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe

Across the top are the information points we're asking you to use in your statements with examples of each. For instance, with "Data We Will Collect" are listed counts such as, costs, weights, percentages, and hours, as well as qualitative measures such as observations, opinions, and feelings.

For each performance measure, we provide a couple of examples addressing issues that might turn up in museum projects. The blank space is where we suggest you write your own performance measure statements. We are looking for one statement for each required performance measure. You may provide more than one statement per measure, if you wish. Keep in mind the performance measurement plan is limited to two pages.



Narrative

In the Museums Empowered grant program the narrative is limited to 7 pages and is divided into three sections:

- **Project Justification**
- **Project Work Plan**
- **Project Results**

The questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are posted in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on the IMLS website.

Among the required components of your application, the Narrative is the section that reviewers are likely to spend the most time reading. So let's examine the narrative section of the application. In the Museums Empowered grant program the narrative is limited to 7 pages and is divided into three sections:

Project Justification
Project Work Plan
Project Results

The questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are posted in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on the IMLS website.



Narrative: Project Justification

Tell us:

- Which program goal/project category and associated objective(s) of Museums Empowered will your project address?
- How will your project advance your museum's strategic plan?
- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?
- Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?
- Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

Project Justification

In this first section of the narrative, you should lay out the reasoning for your project. Tell us in the clearest terms possible what you propose to do; what need, problem, or challenge you expect to address; who or what will benefit; how your project will enhance the capacity of your institution; and how your project will address the goals of the Museums Empowered program – using professional development to generate systemic change within the museum.

- “Target group” refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project. Identify the number of individuals in the target group or in each target group, if you identify more than one.
- “Beneficiaries” refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long-term by your project. They may or may not be the same as your “target group.” Identify the number of individuals who will benefit from your project in the long term, if reliable and defensible counts are possible. Otherwise describe the characteristics of the beneficiaries you expect to be served eventually by your project.



Narrative: Project Justification

Reviewers will look for:

- Has the applicant selected an appropriate program goal/project category and one or more associated objectives of Museums Empowered?
- Are the ways in which this project advances the institution's strategic plan specific and measurable?
- How well has the applicant used relevant data and best practices to describe the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed?
- Are the project activities designed to use professional development and training to generate systemic change within the museum?
- Has the applicant appropriately defined the target group(s) and beneficiaries, as applicable, for this work?
- Have the target group and other project stakeholders been involved appropriately in planning the project?

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well you explain your project; how well you've identified the need, problem, or challenge you will address and how well you've supported that with relevant evidence; whether you've clearly identified who or what will benefit from the project, and if this involves an audience of some kind, whether they've been appropriately involved in the planning.

Defining a need, problem, or challenge



- The federal government wants its investment to result in something getting better.
- Articulate what will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible.
- Identify why it is important that this change happens.
- Present data that support your problem definition.

Because the need, problem, or challenge is foundational in your application, keep these points in mind.

- The federal government wants its investment to result in SOMETHING getting better.
- As you define your need, problem, or challenge, articulate WHAT will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible. Will someone learn something, develop a skill, change an attitude? Will members of your community be better able to work together to solve problems? Will collections be better cared for? Will their lifespan be extended? Will access to your collections and the information surrounding them be expanded?
- Identify why it is important that this particular change happens.
- Gather and present data that support your problem definition.



Narrative: Project Work Plan

Tell us:

- What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?
- What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- How is the project team organized and structured to support engagement of all participants?
- What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?
- How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

The Project Work Plan is the part of the narrative in which you relay who will do what when and using what resources.

We ask you to tell us what specific activities you will undertake; who will plan, implement, and manage your project; when and in what sequence your activities will occur; what financial, personnel, and other resources you will need to carry out the activities; how you will track progress toward achieving your intended results; and how and with whom you will share your project's results.



Narrative: Project Work Plan

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the proposed activities informed by relevant theory and practice?
- Are the goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated?
- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?
- Is the proposed project team structured in a way that is equitable and mutually beneficial to those involved?
- Are the time, financial, personnel, and other resources identified appropriate for the scope and scale of the project?
- Is the proposed Performance Measurement Plan likely to generate the required measures of Effectiveness, Efficiency, Quality, and Timeliness?
- If present, does the Digital Products Plan reflect appropriate practices and standards for creating and managing the types of digital products proposed?
- Will the proposed methods for tracking the project's progress toward achieving the intended results allow course adjustments when necessary and result in reliable and measurable information about the results of the project?

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well your activities are informed by appropriate theory and practice; whether the goals, assumptions and risks clearly stated.

Reviewer want to see that the team you've put together has the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully; and whether your schedule is realistic and achievable. They'll also be looking at whether the time, personnel, and financial resources identified are appropriate for the scope and scale of the project. They will consider if you've described a clear methodology for tracking your progress and adjusting course when necessary.

Defining an activity



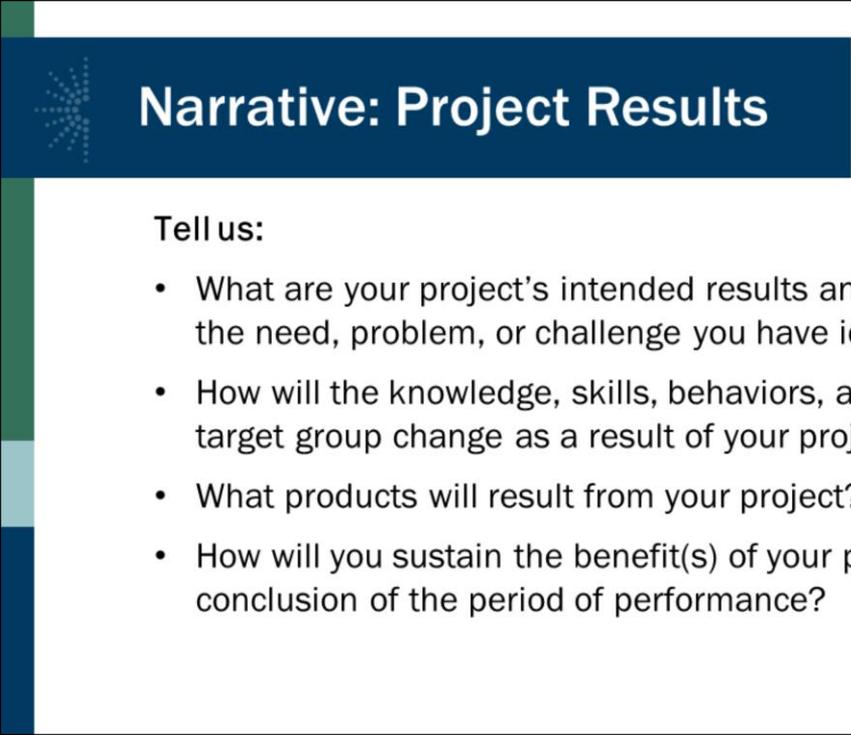
- An activity is something that someone does.
- It has a beginning and an end.
- You know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more.
- Aim for a reasonable level of detail in identifying your activities—not too much, not too little, just right.

Your work plan will be built on activities, so it's important to be clear about just what an activity is.

An activity is something that someone does. It has a beginning and an end (just like projects), and you know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more. It is no longer on your To Do List.

An activity is NOT a goal, a result, or an outcome. Rather it is something you do as part of striving to achieve those.

Aim for a reasonable level of detail in identifying your activities. Not too much, not too little, but rather just right.



Narrative: Project Results

Tell us:

- What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
- How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?
- What products will result from your project?
- How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

Project Results: The final section of your narrative should be devoted to articulating the impact of your project.

What specific results do you intend to achieve in order to address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified? Something will get better. Tell us what that is. Tell us about the tangible products that will result from your project, and how will you sustain the benefits of your project beyond the lifespan of this particular project?



Narrative: Project Results

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the project's intended results clearly articulated, realistic, meaningful, and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project?
- Is the plan to effect meaningful change in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes solidly grounded and appropriately structured?
- Is it clear that the federal investment made through this grant will generate identifiable benefits to society?
- Will the products created by the project be made available and accessible to the target group?
- Is the plan to sustain the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance reasonable and practical?

Reviewers will give us their opinions on how well you've designed a feasible plan for collecting and reporting data; how likely the improvements that you've proposed will be realized; will the tangible products you plan to create be accessible to the target audience you identified; and whether your plan for sustaining the benefits of the project are reasonable and practical.

Defining Intended Results



- Answer the question, “What will be better as the result of this work?”
- Consider how you will recognize success and how to measure it.
- Tie everything back to your need, problem, or challenge.
- Consider using a logic model to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

Let’s think back to the questions we referenced a couple of slides ago when we talked about defining the need, problem, or challenge that your project is addressing. Now is the time to answer the question “What will be better as a result of this work?”

If you said someone will learn something, how will you know? If your problem related to segments of your community being better able to work together, how will you know when that has been achieved? If collections will be better cared for, how will you be sure and how will you measure “better”? If you’re digitizing to expand accessibility, how will you know when you’ve done it?

All of your results should tie back to your need, problem, or challenge.

A logic model is a useful tool to help explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them. Many reviewers appreciate seeing a logic model included as a supporting document in an application.



Characteristics of Successful Applications

- ***Institutional Impact:*** The project uses the transformative power of professional development to generate systemic change within a museum.
- ***In-depth Knowledge:*** Applications reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- ***Project-based Design:*** Work plans consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge identified in your application.
- ***Demonstrable Results:*** Projects generate measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

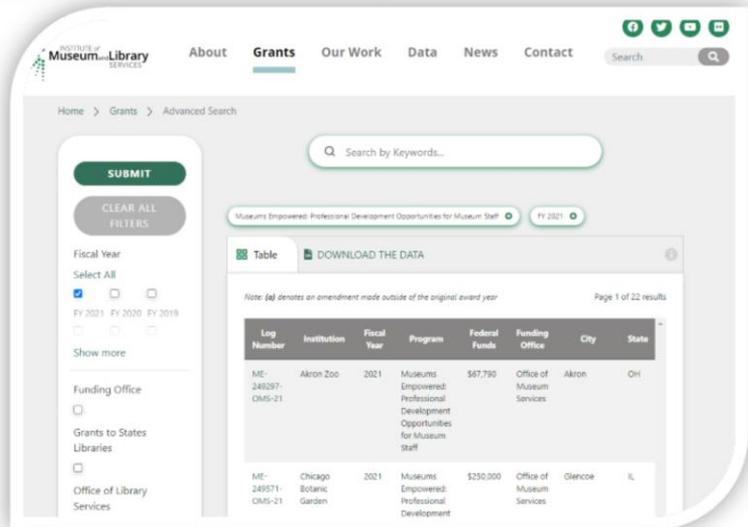
In summary, considering all the components of your application, there are four general characteristics of successful Museums Empowered applications that reviewers will look for. As you prepare your application, keep these characteristics in mind.

- ***FIRST, Institutional Impact:*** Your project should use the transformative power of professional development to generate systemic change within a museum.
- ***SECOND, In-depth knowledge:*** Your proposal should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- ***THIRD, Project-based design:*** Your work plan should consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge.
- ***AND FOURTH, Demonstrable results:*** Your project should generate measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

An application that has all of these four characteristics, will stand out in the review process, and will have the best chance of success for funding.

Awarded Grants Search

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants.

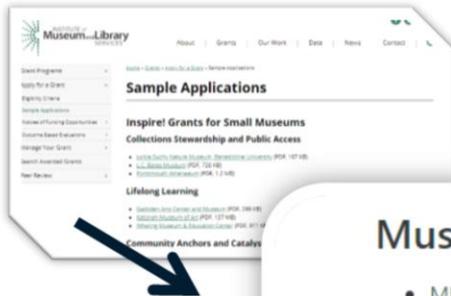


We want to share with you, the places to look for more information, such as the IMLS website, where you can find the awarded grants search to learn more about the projects we have funded through the Museums Empowered program.

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants that we have awarded in past years using a variety of criteria such as institution name, location, and keyword. Your search will basic information about the award and a brief description of the project. This can be extremely helpful as you put ideas together for your own project.

Sample Applications

Sample applications of recently funded grants are available on the IMLS website



Museums Empowered

- ME-249585-OMS Sample Application (PDF 396KB)
- ME-249571-OMS Sample Application (PDF 419KB)
- ME-249358-OMS Sample Application (PDF 226KB)
- ME-249537-OMS Sample Application (PDF 312KB)
- ME-249540-OMS Sample Application (PDF 617KB)
- ME-249264-OMS Sample Application (PDF 521KB)

We have also posted the narrative and schedule of completion from six successful applications from 2021. To find these examples, go to the Sample Applications on the IMLS website and scroll down the page to find the Museums Empowered examples. Looking at these proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own.



Application Processing and Review Timeline

Date	Review Activity
Nov 15, 2021	Applicants submit applications through Grants.gov
Dec 2021 - Feb 2022	IMLS staff review applications for completeness and eligibility
Feb - Jun 2022	Peer Review
Jul 2022	IMLS Director makes final award decisions
Aug 2022	IMLS notifies applicants of award decisions; provides reviewer comments
Sep 1, 2022	Awarded projects begin

This is the general schedule of events to show what happens to your application once we receive it. IMLS staff will review it for completeness and eligibility, and you will hear from us via email if there are any problems.

From February through June, your experienced and knowledgeable peers will provide scores and comments based on the criteria outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and IMLS staff will examine your budget, your financials, and your track record with past and current grants. We then prepare materials for the IMLS Deputy Director for Museums and the IMLS Director. By law, the IMLS Director is charged with the authority and responsibility to make final award decisions, and this happens in July.

In August, we will notify you by email of the award decisions and provide the scores and comments created by the reviewers.

And on September 1, 2022, funded projects begin.

Application Tips

Register early!

1. D-U-N-S® Number: www.dnb.com/us
2. SAM Registration: www.sam.gov
3. Grants.gov Registration: www.grants.gov



At this point, we'd like to share a few tips collected from our experience in working with applications submitted to the Museums Empowered program each year.

First on the list, is "Register early!" You must have a DUNS number, an active SAM.gov registration, and a current and functional Grants.gov registration. You must have a DUNS number to register with SAM.gov. You must have an active SAM.gov registration to register with Grants.gov. And you must have a functional Grants.gov registration to submit an application to IMLS.

It's also crucial to remember that your SAM.gov registration expires each year and you must renew it. You can log into SAM.gov at any time and find out your status. I would recommend doing that today.



Application Tips

- Do your background research.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.
- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit it.
- Be sure your application is complete.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.

Here are some application tips to make sure you meet the deadline...

- Do your background research. Make it easy for the reviewers to see that you are up to date and know what you're talking about.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and consider using the same headings to make it easy for reviewers to read.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon. The people who will review your application are experts, but they may not be totally familiar with your particular field's shorthand. Make it easy for them to understand what you mean.
- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit. Ask them to act like a reviewer who's seeing this for the first time.
- Be sure your application is complete. Check it against the Table of Application Components and then check it again.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.

Recommended Next Steps

Read

Read the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity at www.imls.gov

Check

Check your registrations on www.SAM.gov and www.Grants.gov

Connect

Connect with us: Talk with a program staff member.

Prepare

Prepare your application. Make sure it's complete.

Submit

Submit before the deadline, November 15, 2021 (by 11:59 pm ET)

So to recap your next steps:

1. Visit www.imls.gov and read the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully.
2. Check your organization's registrations with both [SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) and [Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).
3. Connect with us: Reach out to a program staff member and schedule a counseling call.
4. Prepare your application. Make sure it's complete.
5. Submit before the deadline, November 15, 2021 (by 11:59 pm ET)



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In closing our presentation today, I want to make sure you have the phone numbers and e-mail addresses for the program staff assigned to this grant program. Don't hesitate to contact either of us with questions or concerns.