



January 9th, 2018

IMLS Museums Empowered FY2018 Information Session



Left: Champlain Public Library; Middle: New York Botanical Garden; Right: Hill Museum and Manuscript Library at Saint John's University

RECORDING BEGINS

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "Museums Empowered Fiscal Year 2018 Information Session."

My name is Mark Isaksen, and speaking on behalf of rest of the staff in the Office of Museum Services, we are delighted that you could join us today and that you are interested in preparing an application for the IMLS Museums Empowered grant program.

Companion Webinars

Choosing a Funding Opportunity
Basic information for all applicants

<https://www.imls.gov/news-events/events/imls-fy2018-museum-funding-opportunities-webinar>

**IMLS OFFICE OF MUSEUM SERVICES:
CHOOSING A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR
FY2018**

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This presentation on IMLS museum grants will help you choose which funding opportunity is right for your project. We recommend that you view that presentation before participating in or viewing a program-specific webinar.

Date and Time:
Thursday, September 28, 2017 - 4:00pm

Transcript:
[IMLS Office of Museum Services: Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2018 Transcript](#)

Programs:
Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services
National Leadership Grants for Museums
Museums for America
Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Recording Link:
[IMLS Office of Museum Services: Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2018](#)

FY2018 Forms
Detailed tips on completing the forms required for all grant programs

<https://www.imls.gov/news-events/events/imls-office-museum-services-fy2018-imls-forms>

**IMLS OFFICE OF MUSEUM SERVICES:
FY2018 IMLS FORMS**

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[IMLS Office of Museum Services: FY2018 IMLS Forms](#)

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” and “FY2018 Forms” have been pre-recorded and are available as recordings and as PDFs of the slides plus transcripts on our website at the links pictured here.

In the first, we introduce the IMLS mission, and strategic plan with an emphasis on how they influence our grant making. We also address institutional eligibility, provide a quick overview of all our funding opportunities, 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 the second webinar, we provide information to help you complete the forms required for all IMLS grant applications.

We strongly recommend that you take a look and/or listen to both of these to get the complete picture of preparing and submitting a competitive application to Museums Empowered.

FY2017 Museums Empowered				
	Applications	Awards	Funds Requested	Funds Awarded
Digital Technology	27	5	\$2,534,359	\$252,591
Diversity & Inclusion	46	9	\$5,508,027	\$559,961
Evaluation	30	8	\$4,143,614	\$856,185
Organizational Management	44	6	\$4,574,030	\$329,747
TOTAL	147	28	\$16,760,030	\$1,998,484

Before we jump into the details, we are often asked about numbers of applications and funding success rates, and so here are the figures for the just completed FY2017 Museums Empowered grant cycle. As you can see, with just \$2M available, we were able to fund 19% of the applications we received by number and 12% by dollar amount.

Digital Tech = 19%

Diversity & Inclusion = 20%

Evaluation = 27%

Organizational Mgmt = 19%

Overview

1. Program Goals
2. Characteristics of Successful Projects
3. Important Dates
4. How Much and How Many?
5. Project Categories
6. Allowable/Unallowable Costs
7. Application Components
8. Application Tips
9. Review Process
10. Contacts

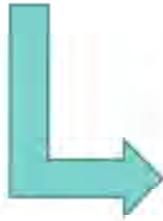


In this presentation, we'll be addressing the following topics:

- Program Goals
- Characteristics of Successful Projects
- Important Dates
- The questions of How much and How Many?
- Project Categories
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs—what you can and cannot include in your project
- Application Components
- Application Tips
- The Review Process
- IMLS Staff Contact Information

Program Goals

Museums for America (MFA) supports projects that strengthen the ability of an **individual** museum to serve its public.



Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff is a special MFA initiative with the goal of strengthening the ability of an **individual** museum to serve its public through **professional development** activities that cross-cut various departments to generate **systemic change** within the museum.

Let's begin with MFA's program goals. Museums for America is structured to support projects that strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public. The key concepts here that distinguish MFA from other IMLS funding programs are that the focus is on an **individual museum, its particular community or public, and its collections.**

MFA is all about what your museum needs in order to better serve your public. It may well be exactly the same as what the museum across town or in a neighboring state needs, and that's ok. The important thing here is that our support should help you make a local impact and improve your service to your public.

With this special MFA initiative, IMLS encourages applicants to invest in the professional development of museum staff, volunteers, and interns to enhance their skills and ensure the highest standards in all aspects of museum operations. We expect Museums Empowered projects will utilize comprehensive strategies and frameworks to support professional development. Projects should cross-cut various departments and result in systemic change within the museum.

Characteristics of Successful Museums Empowered Applications

- ***Institutional Impact:*** The project strengthens the ability of an individual museum to serve its public through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within the museum.
- ***In-depth knowledge:*** The project design reflects a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- ***Project-based design:*** The work plan consists of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge.
- ***Demonstrable results:*** The project generates measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

With this focus on supporting the individual museum, what are the characteristics of successful Museums Empowered applications? There are four, and successful projects exemplify all of them well.

In the first item, think about how your project strengthens the ability of your museum to serve its public through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within your museum. If reviewers see evidence of this in your narrative, it helps them to see how your project strongly aligns with the goals of this grant program.

It has been our experience that an unfunded application is one that has failed to deliver convincingly on one or more of these, so it is wise to think hard about how to structure your application to show how your project will be strong in each.

Important Dates



Applications are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on **March 1, 2018.**

Awards will be announced in **September, 2018.**

Projects must start **October 1, November 1, or December 1, 2018.**



We want to remind you of important dates for Museum Empowered applications. They are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 1, 2018. That is non-negotiable, and the time stamp is auto-generated by the Grants.gov system. We will say this over and over again, but **start early** and **submit early**. That way, if you encounter a difficulty of any kind when submitting your proposal, you'll have some time to resolve the problem.

Museums Empowered awards will be announced in September, 2018 and projects must be scheduled to start on the first day of October, November, or December, 2018. The choice is yours. If you feel you might need a breather between the date you find out about funding and the start of your project, then you might want to opt for a November 1 or December 1 start date. If you can gear up in a few days, then October might be your choice.

How much and how many?



HOW MUCH?

Option 1: \$5,000-\$25,000 with **no cost share** permitted

Option 2: \$25,001-\$250,000 with **1:1 cost share** required

HOW MANY?

If you choose **Option 1**, you are limited to **one** application in the FY2018 Museums Empowered grant program.

If you choose **Option 2**, there is no limit on the number of applications your museum may submit to Museums Empowered.

Our next topic has to do with how much funding may you request and how many applications are you allowed to submit.

Regarding how much money may you request, there are two options. Option 1 is to apply for an amount between \$5,000 and \$25,000. If you elect Option 1, then you do not need to provide a cost share, and in fact, you may NOT provide a cost share. When we say no cost share is permitted, we mean that your application will be removed from consideration if you provide one.

Option 2 is to apply for an amount between \$25,001 and the maximum \$250,000. If you elect Option 2, then you must provide a 1:1 cost share. This cost share may be in the form of cash, staff or volunteer time, or third-party contributions. It may not be funds from another federal source.

The second question is how many applications may you file? If you choose Option 1 and request between \$5,000 and \$25,000 with no cost share, then you are limited to one application in the FY2018 round. If you choose Option 2 and request between \$25,001 and \$250,000 with a 1:1 cost share, then there is no limit on the number of applications your museum may submit this round to Museums Empowered .

Project Categories

There are four project categories in Museums Empowered.



Digital Technology: for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.



Diversity and Inclusion: for museum staff to develop cultural competency and support museum relevancy in their communities.



Evaluation: to expand museum staff's capacity to evaluate programs, practices, and products and determine measurable outcomes.



Organizational Management: for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, innovation and managing change.

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

Digital Technology: for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.

Diversity and Inclusion: for museum staff to develop cultural competency and support museum relevancy in their communities.

Evaluation: to expand museum staff's capacity to evaluate programs, practices, and products and determine measurable outcomes.

Organizational Management: for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, embracing innovation and managing change

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. It's an important choice, and it's important to get it right.

Digital Technology

Museums Empowered Digital Technology projects might include:

- Training programs for museum staff to become more effective and efficient users of digital technology
- Developing fellowships, internships, and mentoring programs to attract and retain a tech savvy workforce and cross-train museum staff
- Developing strategies and enhancing staff capacity to use digital technology for audience engagement and community outreach
- Hosting workshops with experts, thought-leaders and practitioners in the digital technology field to help museum staff address a specific issue facing the museum
- Developing institutional digital strategies to leverage big data and provide the training and support for staff to sustain and maintain open data resources



Projects may be introductory, intermediate or advanced in nature depending on the size and needs of the applicant institution.

So let's take a look at what kinds of activities a project in each of these categories might include.

IMLS supports the work of museums in adopting and adapting the use of existing and emerging digital technology to transform audience engagement, collections care and management, communication and general operations.

Recognizing the transformative and pervasive nature of digital technology, IMLS welcomes applications to develop training and professional development learning opportunities for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.

Projects may be introductory, intermediate or advanced in nature depending on the size and needs of the applicant institution. Projects should reference current research, incorporate best practices, and use models with proven outcomes.

Diversity & Inclusion

Museums Empowered Diversity & Inclusion projects might include:



- Development and implementation of recruitment and retention programs (e.g., webinars, workshops, or outreach materials) designed to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Building the capacity of museum staff to develop, support, and sustain inclusive fellowship, internship and mentoring programs to attract diverse emerging professionals
- Enhancing the skills and ability of museum staff to develop and deliver inclusive programs and outreach activities to engage with diverse audiences
- Participating in immersive cultural competency opportunities

Projects may be introductory, intermediate or advanced in nature depending on the size and needs of the applicant institution.

IMLS supports the work of museums in engaging with communities and providing inclusive services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.

Recognizing the changing demographics across the nation, IMLS welcomes applications for staff professional development and museum capacity building projects that increase cultural competency within a museum and support relevancy through projects that connect, engage, and strengthen the museum's ties with diverse communities.

Projects may be introductory, intermediate or advanced in nature depending on the size and needs of the applicant institution. Projects should reference current research, incorporate best practices, and use models with proven outcomes.

Evaluation

Museums Empowered Evaluation projects might include:

- Implementing training programs for museum staff on evaluation tools, strategies and techniques customized to address a specific institutional or audience need
- Developing and strengthening competencies among staff in formative evaluation techniques that will help shape museum programs and exhibits
- Developing and strengthening competencies among staff in summative evaluation techniques that will help measure the impact of museum programs and exhibits
- Building staff capacity to create a robust museum evaluation program by developing logic models and frameworks to differentiate between output-focused and outcomes-based data



Projects may be introductory, intermediate or advanced in nature depending on the size and needs of the applicant institution.

IMLS supports the use of robust formative and summative evaluation of museum programs, practices and products to help museums best serve their intended audiences and demonstrate their impact to stakeholders.

Recognizing the many challenges and resources needed to develop and sustain an evaluation program, IMLS welcomes applications that will help a museum expand its evaluation capacity by providing training and professional development opportunities in audience research and evaluation for museum staff.

Projects may use new tools, software, training, or consultants to develop a strong and integrated museum evaluation program. Evaluation activities should incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data, indicators and impact. Projects should reference current research, incorporate best practices, and use models with proven outcomes.

Organizational Management

Museums Empowered Organizational Management projects might include:

- Creating a more resilient workforce through training programs for museum staff on topics such as project management, strategic thinking, and managing change
- Creating a more innovative workforce through training programs for museum staff on topics such as design-thinking, human-centered design and rapid prototyping
- Building staff capacity to develop a succession plan for key staff positions
- Supporting the growth and development of museum staff in the process of revising a strategic plan supported with measurable outcomes and a continuous improvement plan



Projects may be introductory, intermediate or advanced in nature depending on the size and needs of the applicant institution.

IMLS supports museums' efforts to develop resilient organizations with the goal of long-term sustainability and relevancy. IMLS welcomes applications to develop training and professional development opportunities for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, embracing innovation and managing change in order to foster continued growth, relevancy and vitality.

Projects may use replicable models within the museum field as well as look beyond the museum field for transferrable techniques and strategies to build the capacity of the museum and support its long term sustainability. Projects should reference current research, incorporate best practices, and use models with proven outcomes.

Choosing a Project Category



Digital Technology



Diversity & Inclusion



Evaluation



Organizational Management

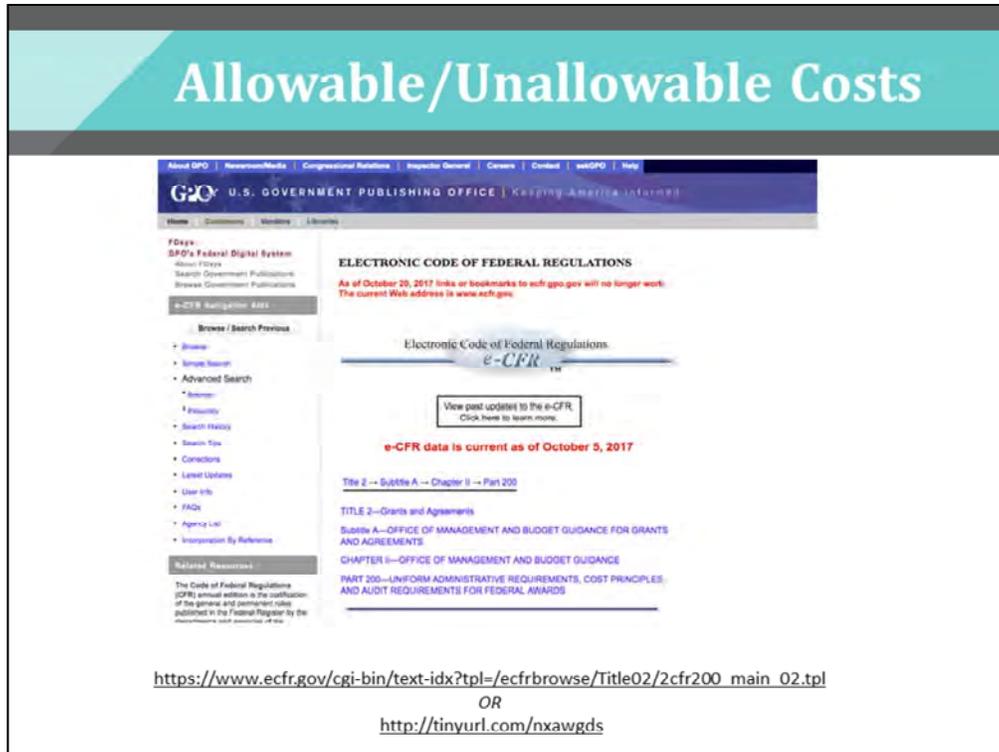
TRY THESE:

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?

Before we close our discussion of project categories, we want to mention our guidance for projects that could belong logically in more than one. Sometimes it’s tough to choose, and you might be tempted to think that the best strategy would be to align with more than one—two, and maybe even three! Here are three strategies to help you choose the best category for 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 most heartfelt advice, then, is to choose one project category, study the instructions for preparing an application as well as the review criteria for that category, and write your proposal accordingly. As always, if you have questions, call the IMLS staff to discuss them.



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. To do otherwise can hurt your chances of getting positive reviews and being recommended for funding.

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. Of particular interest is Subpart E—Cost Principles.

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

Allowable Costs

Examples of 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
- equipment to improve collections storage and exhibit environments
- third-party costs
- publication design and printing
- 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, if one is required. The rules about allowability apply to both sides.

Unallowable Costs

Examples of unallowable costs

- general fundraising costs, such as development office staff or other staff time 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
- research projects
- pre-award costs



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 can result in your exclusion from further consideration.



- Application for Federal Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)
- Abstract
- IMLS Program Information Sheet
- Organizational Profile (1 page)
- Strategic Plan Summary (2 pages max.)
- Narrative (7 pages max.)
- Schedule of Completion (1 page per year max.)
- IMLS Budget Form
- Budget Justification
- List of Key Project Staff and Consultants
- Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants (2 pages max. each)
- Digital Product Form

Next up are application components. Your application will consist of a series of individual documents, and it's very important to make sure you prepare and submit everything you should.

These application components fall into three categories. The first is that of **required documents**. **All applications must include the documents listed here.** Omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration. Also important to note are page limits. 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.

Our pre-recorded webinar, "IMLS Office of Museum Services, FY2018 Forms," provides detailed guidance on completing the forms highlighted here in red: The Application for Federal Assistance, the IMLS Program Information Sheet, the IMLS Budget Form and associated Budget Justification, and the Digital Product Form. We strongly recommend that you listen to and/or read the transcript of that webinar. The link to it is on the slide at the beginning of this webinar and on the landing page for the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Application Components

Conditionally Required Documents

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



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

The second category of application components is that of **conditionally required documents**. **Some** applications must include one, two, or all three 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.

Just like the required documents, omission of even one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

Application Components

Supporting Documents

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



- Letters of commitment, support
- Bibliography, references
- Reports from planning activities
- Photographs
- Floor plans
- Contractor quotes
- Equipment specifications and price quotes
- Products or evaluations of previous projects
- Web links
- Needs assessments

The third group of application components is **supporting documents, and here is a partial list of examples**. Supporting documents are completely optional. You may submit some or none. We urge you to make good decisions here and include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description you provide in your application. This is not the place to introduce new information. We also recommend that you be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include hundreds of pages of 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 should be no more than two pages long
- Focus: Helps connect your proposed project's activities to your institutional goals and objectives
- Shows date and by whom the plan was approved

Let's turn to two specific documents that you will need to prepare from scratch, and by that we mean they are not forms. As you've seen, these are not ALL the documents you will need to submit, but they are very important ones and the ones about which applicants seem to have the most questions.

First is a **strategic plan summary**. As you read the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity, you will see frequent references to your organization's strategic plan or strategic goals. IMLS wants to help you achieve your goals. 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. To verify its legitimacy, we ask that you indicate when and by whom the plan was approved. For some institutions this might be the Board of Trustees.

Narrative: Project Justification

Tell us:

- What do you propose to do?
- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?
- Who or what will benefit from your project?
- How will your project advance your institution's strategic plan?
- How will your project address the goals of the Museums Empowered special initiative?
- How will your project align with one of the four project categories?

Reviewers will look for:

- *Clear explanation of the project*
- *Evidence to support the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed by the project*
- *Clear identification of the beneficiaries and their involvement in planning where possible*
- *Specific, actionable, and measurable ways in which the project advances institution's strategic plan*
- *Project activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within the museum*
- *Alignment of activities with one of the four project categories*

Now let's talk about the narrative of your proposal. You have seven pages to cover three very important issues, and the Notice of Funding Opportunity provides lengthy guidance on what the narrative should cover. On the left side of the slide are the questions we ask you to address in your narrative, and on the right side are the points we ask reviewers to evaluate. It's good practice to consider both sides.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

In this section of the narrative, you should lay out the reasoning for your project. This is where you describe the problem that you're setting out to solve or the need that you're going to address, and you tell us how you know it deserves attention. You might do this by citing published research, previous studies, or data gathered by your organization or by others. You should be crystal clear in identifying who or what will benefit from your project, because every activity that you identify in the work plan and every result that you propose to achieve should have an obvious connection to this problem and the beneficiaries you identify.

Narrative: Project Work Plan

Tell us:

- What specific activities, including evaluation and performance measurements, will you carry out?
- What are the risks to the project and how are they accounted for?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- When and in what sequence will your activities occur?
- What resources will you need to carry out the activities?
- How will you track your progress?
- How and with whom will you share your project's results?

Reviewers will look for:

- *Activities informed by appropriate theory and practice*
- *Goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated*
- *Appropriate evaluation activities and performance measurements*
- *Team with sufficient experience and skills*
- *Realistic and achievable schedule*
- *Appropriate time, financial, personnel, and other resources*
- *Clear methodology for tracking progress and adjusting course when necessary*
- *Effective plan for communicating results and/or sharing discoveries*

This is where you identify who will do what, when, and using what resources. We also ask you to think about risks that are inherent in your particular project and to tell us how you've taken that into account in your planning. Think of it as answering the question, "What if?"

When you are describing the activities you'll carry out, be as concrete as possible about it. You should know when you've started an activity, and you should know when you've finished it. That will make it easy to put on a schedule of completion (another required document) and to report on it in your performance reports. It will also help you with tracking progress and measuring success. **An activity in this sense is not a goal; it's a thing you do as part of striving to achieve a goal or an outcome.**

Aim for a reasonable level of granularity in identifying your activities. If you are too general and all encompassing, it will be hard to track real progress. If you are too detailed, you can get lost in the minutiae and this makes it difficult to see the bigger picture.

Narrative: Project Results

Tell us:

- How will you collect and report the data required for the performance goals and measure statement(s) you have chosen?
- What are your intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
- What do you expect to change and among whom as a result of your project?
- How will the institution's internal capacity be strengthened as a result of this project?
- What tangible products will result?
- How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project?

Reviewers will look for:

- *Well designed and feasible plan for collecting and reporting data*
- *Clearly articulated, realistic, meaningful, actionable results linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed*
- *A solidly grounded and appropriately structured plan to effect meaningful change*
- *Evidence of strengthened staff capacity*
- *Useful tangible products*
- *Reasonable and practical plan for sustaining the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of the grant*

The third section of your narrative should be devoted to articulating your project's intended results. This is your chance to convince the reviewers that your project will result in something getting better. The need or problem you identified in your project justification will be addressed, and it will be diminished or eliminated altogether.

This is also the place where you will describe how you will collect and report the data that will document this improvement, and it will connect to the performance goals and performance measure statements you choose on the IMLS Program Information Sheet.

Consider using a logic model to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them. Many applicants use them, and reviewers appreciate their conciseness and focus. There are many excellent resources available to help you construct a logic model. Among these are IMLS's "Shaping Outcomes," a free online course available to anyone.

So, to recap: Your narrative has three sections—Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results. They're all equally important, so don't give any of them short shrift. Write clearly, address what we ask you to address, and keep an eye on those review criteria. We're telling you here exactly what the reviewers will look for, so make it easy for them to find it and understand it.

Application Tips

Check your registrations, user names, and passwords.

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 gleaned from our collective experience in working with applications submitted to IMLS each year.

First on the list, make sure your registrations are complete and your passwords and user names are current. You must have a DUNS number, an active SAM.gov registration, and a current and functional Grants.gov registration, and if you are just starting out, you'll need to acquire them in that order. In other words, you must have a DUNS number to register with SAM.gov. You must have an active SAM.gov registration to register with Grants.gov.

It's crucial to remember that your SAM.gov registration expires each year and you must renew it. You can check your status at any time by going to www.sam.gov. In addition, your Grants.gov password expires every 60 days, and leaving accounts inactive for a year or more can result in the removal of all account roles. So ... make sure you know who your Grants.gov Authorized Organization Representative is and be sure the username and updated password are in place.

Both websites have robust help features and FAQs.

Application Tips

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: We can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline**. So...

- Start early.
- Become familiar with Grants.gov's Workspace.
- Do your background research.
- Revisit the grant Notice of Funding Opportunity frequently, and follow the narrative outline it provides.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.
- Check your spelling, grammar, and math.
- 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.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: Our regulations state that we can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline**. Those are the concepts we must live by. So here are some tips to help ensure that your application is aligned with these concepts.

- Start early.
- Become familiar with Grants.gov's Workspace. Check out the tutorials on www.grants.gov now.
- 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.
- Revisit the grant Notice of Funding Opportunity frequently, and follow the narrative outline it provides. Use headings, subheadings, or numbered sections 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.
- Check your spelling, grammar, and math. It counts with reviewers!
- 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 in the Notice of Funding Opportunity...and then check it again.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors and avoid any trauma created by technology challenges.

Review Process



Date	Review Activity
March 1, 2018*	Applicants submit packets through Grants.gov
March-April 2018*	IMLS staff review applications for completeness and eligibility
May – July 2018	Review period
August 2018	IMLS Director makes final award decisions
September 2018*	IMLS notifies applicants of award decisions; provides reviewer comments
Oct/Nov/Dec 1, 2018	Awarded projects begin

This is the general schedule of what happens to your application once we receive it. The times that you will hear from us are marked with asterisks--in March, when you'll receive an email that your application has been received by Grants.gov and that it has been forwarded to IMLS; in late March, you'll receive an email from us with basic summary information with an application log number, which is what we will use to track your application. If your application is found to be incomplete or your institution is ineligible, you'll hear from us in March/April.

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

In September, we notify all applicants by email of the award decisions and provide the scores and comments created by the reviewers. Project Directors and Authorizing Officials of funded applications receive award packets. Projects may start on October 1, November 1, or December 1.

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Thank you very much for your interest in IMLS and in Museums Empowered, and we hope you have found the information in this webinar helpful. Here is a listing of the names, email addresses, and direct phone numbers for program staff in the Office of Museum Services, and we encourage you to contact us with any questions you might have about what you've heard or seen in this webinar or in the online Museums Empowered materials. We'll be very happy to help.

Good luck and we look forward to seeing your application in March.

Your turn...

