



2015



National Medal
for Museum and Library Service





INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

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From the IMLS Acting Director

I am pleased to present the recipients of the 2015 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums. It is a tribute to the ability of libraries and museums to make a difference in children, families, and communities across the country.

This year's ten honorees demonstrate a core commitment to public service through innovative programs and active partnerships. They were selected from more than 100 nominations describing work that inspires, educates, and engages.

Thirty institutions were recognized as finalists and were featured during the Share Your Story campaign on the IMLS Facebook page. We heard from hundreds of people who expressed gratitude for and shared memories about the many ways these museums and libraries touch their lives.

We are indebted to our partner StoryCorps, a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans, who will visit each of the medal winners and capture more community stories.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, together with the National Museum and Library Services Board, congratulates the winners of the 2015 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Sincerely,



Maura Marx, Acting Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services

IMLS would like to thank
HISTORY for their generous support
of the National Medals celebration.



The Institute is proud to partner with

StoryCorps[®]

to document stories that demonstrate
the ongoing impact of these award-
winning institutions.



Amazement Square

Lynchburg, VA

"The notion that museums are just places with objects is redefined by organizations like ours...the things we do outside these four walls are just as important. We aim to continue reaching out farther and farther, expanding the horizon of the museum."

Mort Sajadian, Ph.D., President/CEO



A Cornerstone of the Community

Amazement Square is a hands-on museum in downtown Lynchburg, Virginia, offering four floors of interactive exhibits designed to make learning fun. The museum places a strong emphasis on education, aligning programs closely with school curricula, as well as community engagement—even in the fabrication of its building. When the space was being constructed, staff gathered ideas from local artists, craftsmen, and tech-savvy residents so the museum would be built as a symbol of what the community has to offer, creatively and intellectually.

After the museum opened in 2001 in a repurposed 1863 warehouse on the National Register of Historic Buildings, its success convinced the community that it was worth investing in Lynchburg's neglected historic downtown riverfront. Since then, area businesses have increased by 205 percent and residential units by 48 percent, with more than \$159 million in private and government investment to date. Today, decaying buildings have been replaced by locally-owned restaurants, a boutique hotel, artist lofts, quaint shops, and a public park with an amphitheatre for concerts. In addition to driving an economic revitalization, the museum works to boost investment and activity in the downtown area by facilitating annual festivals and events and by partnering with local schools, social service organizations, and cultural entities. Initially designed to support an annual attendance of 45,000, today the museum serves more than 90,000 visitors per year.

Advancing Understanding and Promoting Health

As part of the museum's partnerships with the community, it has responded to calls for help in the areas of special needs, health, and early learning. In 2002, the museum opened a yearlong exhibition that emphasized the need for better public understanding of individuals with disabilities. Since 2003, Amazement Square has partnered with the LAUREL Regional Program, which serves students who are mentally or physically handicapped. The museum regularly adapts the environment of the museum to address these students' highly specific needs, and students learn to focus their creativity in new ways, adapt to new people and alternative environments, and improve their academic achievement through hands-on workshops that take place in the museum galleries.

Amazement Square also partnered with regional healthcare provider Centra to develop a comprehensive, curriculum-based health program for students in kindergarten through seventh grade to address Lynchburg's youth obesity ranking of 8th out of 187 metro areas in the country. In the past two years, over 8,000 children have participated in these programs, which teach vital information about maintaining health and well-being. The museum expects a new health gallery opening this year to draw the attention of over one million visitors.



Extending Resources and Experiences

Amazement Square expanded its partnership with the Lynchburg City School System in October 2013 to strengthen its engagement with pre-kindergarten children from economically disadvantaged communities. The museum implemented a new program for the recently opened Hutcherson Early Learning Center, which serves at-risk and special needs pre-k children, to provide experiential learning opportunities that would complement the school's work.

The museum presents monthly hands-on programs at the school, including experiences in the museum's portable planetarium, as well as free admission to the museum itself once a month. To help engage parents in their children's development, the museum has hosted multiple parent-focused activities, including a Family Night at the museum and a Life on the Farm-themed event at Hutcherson, for which Amazement Square education staff coordinated programmatic garden activities and a petting zoo with 13 farm animals.

Pictured, left to right: A visitor discovers the treasures of the museum community garden; the annual Amazing Mile Children's Run; visitors see a donkey for the first time; Amazement Square's historic 1860's building; all photos by Lucas Kelly.

Helping the Community Weather a Storm

Lynchburg was hit especially hard by the derecho that slammed the East Coast in June of 2012. The strong wind storm caused major power outages in much of the city, and Amazement Square was one of the few places with electricity. For two days, the museum admitted visitors for just one dollar and worked with area businesses to provide water in addition to air conditioning to keep residents hydrated and cool in 100-degree weather. Over 1,000 people attended each day.

Amazement Square

Address: 27 Ninth Street
Lynchburg, VA 24504-1422
Phone: 434-845-1888

Web: www.amazementsquare.org
President/CEO: Mort Sajadian, Ph.D.
Budget: \$1,533,000
Full Time Staff: 12
Part Time Staff: 20



Community Partners

21st Century Program: Bass and Heritage Elementary Schools and Dunbar Middle School, ARC of Central Virginia, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lynchburg, Centra Health, DePaul Community Resources, Dominion Kidz Daycare, HumanKind, Hutcherson Early Learning Center, Junior League of Lynchburg, LAUREL Regional Program, Lynchburg City Schools, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg Community Court Youth Programs, Lynchburg Department of Human Services, Lynchburg Public Library, Miller Home for Girls, Randolph College, Riverviews Artspace, The News & Advance, VA Ten-Miler



Cecil County Public Library

Cecil County, MD

“Public libraries have a powerful role in creating opportunities by keeping the doors to knowledge open, allowing creativity to flourish, and never letting barriers become insurmountable.”

—Denise Davis, Director



Navigating Recession and Fostering Economic Opportunity

Cecil County Public Library serves a predominantly rural area in the northeast corner of Maryland with seven branches and a bookmobile. The institution focuses intently on developing services and outreach that help to move the needle on tough problems within the community, such as gaps in education, workforce, and economic development.

The library's Small Business Information Center is an anchor for the local small business community, providing free information and individual assistance with the often complicated process of starting or running a small business. Librarian specialists in small business provide reference services through in-person or online private meetings, and connect entrepreneurs with information for marketing, business intelligence, or industry research for the development of their specific business plans. The center also offers technical training in social media and email marketing.

Engaging Youth in Literacy and Combating Summer Slide

To address educational challenges including a high dropout rate among lower-income students, the library established strategic partnerships with schools so its summer reading program reached more students in Title I schools, which have over 40 percent of students living at or near poverty. Finding that lack of transportation within the rural and suburban communities in Cecil County was a major factor keeping children away from the public library in

the summer, the institution developed outreach programs designed to build relationships of trust, interaction, and support with students—and get books into their hands.

Through the SPARK (Students Progress and Achieve with Reading Kits) program, Cecil County Public Library works with schools and school librarians to connect with students at Title I schools before they leave for summer vacation. Staff help children select five books based on their interests, which they are invited to take home—and swap with other students—over the whole summer with no fines. Since its launch in 2012, the SPARK program has connected 1,250 Title I students with high-interest reading materials over the summer.

The library also expanded the reach of its Summer Reading and Learning Program, using its bookmobile to circumvent transportation barriers and connect with 13 low-income housing neighborhoods in the county. Since 2008, participation in the program from Title I schools has increased by over 50 percent, with nearly a third of the county's Title I students now participating.

Skills Training and Support for Veterans

Cecil County Public Library has a transformational service model for equipping veterans with technology and employment skills. It addresses the critical access needs of former service members to help them transition to



successful civilian lives. With partner Perry Point VA Medical Center, the Perryville Branch of Cecil County Public Library developed a special focus on providing customized workforce development services for Perry Point veterans. In addition to providing Internet access and technology instruction classes for vets, the library houses a collection of resources for veterans and military families and offers the expertise of librarians who assist veterans through every step of a job search.

The library also partnered with local Aberdeen Proving Ground Federal Credit Union in 2014 to provide a series of financial literacy classes, and will soon provide small business workshops to veterans who have expressed interest in starting their own businesses. These services help meet the needs of nearly 500 veterans who reside in the area, providing assistance to overcome unemployment and homelessness. It has become an essential resource for veterans in the community, and Cecil County Public Library is now a leader in statewide efforts to develop services for veterans in public libraries.

Pictured, left to right: Army veteran Thomas Cousar, who found life-changing help at the library; the library's bookmobile overcomes transportation barriers; patron Cathy Parsons achieved her dream of opening a storefront, Best Vacations, with help from the library; the library's Central Branch in Elkton.

Promoting Individual and Community Success

At the onset of the economic recession, the library's Small Business Information Center experienced a surge in inquiries, from citizens who lost jobs to established business owners seeking help staying afloat. From January 2009 through August 2014, the center responded to 5,500 small business inquiries from entrepreneurs and businesses, large and small.

Cecil County Public Library

Address: 301 Newark Avenue

Elkton, MD 21921-5400

Phone: 410-996-1055

Web: www.cecil.ebranch.info

Director: Denise Davis

Budget: \$5,455,000

Full Time Staff: 53

Part Time Staff: 32



Community Partners

Cecil County Government, Cecil County Public Schools, Office of Economic Development, APGFCU, Chambers of Commerce, CCPL Foundation, Cecil Business Resource Partners, Maryland State Department of Education Division of Library Development and Services, Friends of Libraries, Maryland Library Association, MAPLA, PNC Grow Up Great, VA Maryland Health Care System, Perry Point VA Medical Center, YMCA, Early Childhood Advisory Council, Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers, Orbital ATK, Inc., Northeastern Maryland Technology Council, and other local businesses, agencies, towns, and nonprofits

Craig Public Library

Craig, AK

“Craig is a very small town...we don’t have a theater or a big arts community—everything is at the library. But we connect people on this remote island to the world. Their world. And we have watched patrons succeed beyond our wildest dreams.”

—Amy K. Marshall, Director



Strengthening Economic and Community Development

The Craig Public Library is a small institution in southeast Alaska on Prince of Wales Island. For nearly 80 years—predating Alaska’s statehood—the library has served the citizens of Craig and greater Prince of Wales Island, seasonal visitors, and a summer fishing fleet. In an area where 90 percent of children qualify for free or reduced school lunches, the library serves as a community resource so that families can access materials, bring their children to programs that teach literacy and science, and use public use computers and other technology.

In response to high unemployment rates, the library facilitates job readiness programs, interview and job skills training, and test proctoring for a variety of certification exams. The Alaska OWL (Online With Libraries) Program allows distance learning students and professionals to access classes. Library staff is able to support students by proctoring exams at the library, removing the barriers to education of having to travel to a university campus or an off-island site. Seasonal employees can obtain deckhand licenses for fishing or flagger (road building) certifications at the library.

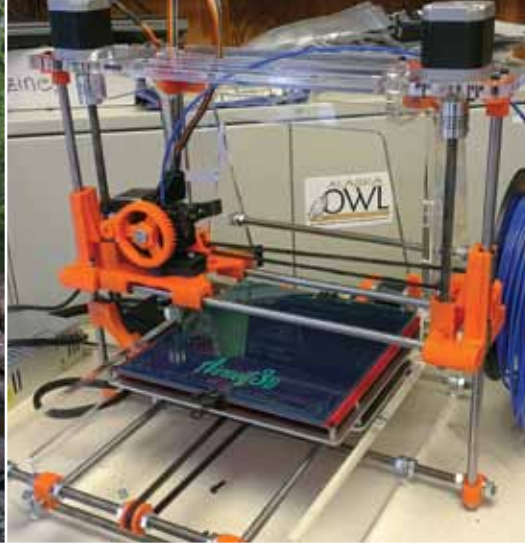
In the spring of 2014, library staff worked with a local Certified Public Accountant in partnership with the Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority to prepare tax returns free of charge for eligible senior citizens and low-income individuals and families. The library also assists patrons in preparation for GED tests and works with the local courts to create

opportunities for community service work so individuals can gain workforce skills that can be applied elsewhere.

Engaging Youth in Tech, Literacy, and Culture

Because of the limited offerings of activities on the island, as well as Craig’s rainforest climate that produces nearly 14 feet of rain every year, Craig Public Library is focused on providing a safe, nurturing place for children and effective, engaging programs to thwart “summer slide.” The library hosts an annual summer reading program for youth, which draws over 300 young participants from all over the island. Youth programs also include book clubs, a weekly Science Camp, robotics with LEGOs, and maker events. Classes provide access to early literacy technology for young learners, and social endeavors, such as Minecraft Monday gaming events, draw eager crowds.

Craig Public Library was the first public library in Alaska to make a 3-D printer available for patron use, which was made possible through a grant from the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) for a Teen Tech Week Project. As part of the institution’s outreach to teens and young adults, the library used the project to generate a sense of pride and ownership, as well as interest in making and STEM activities. Teen library patrons spent a week building the printer on site and then demonstrated how it works during a community-wide annual March 14th “Pi-Einstein Day” program, a



science-focused celebration of both the birthday of Albert Einstein and the number used to reflect Pi.

The library is currently partnering with the U.S. Forest Service and the Craig City School District to produce a virtual field trip program that will be staffed and scripted by local high school students and made available through the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration. The field trip will highlight the El Capitan Cave and other natural and cultural features of the island.

Supporting Neighbors

Craig Public Library's impact is felt throughout Prince of Wales Island. The library has taken on a leadership role island-wide, regularly assisting smaller neighboring communities with grants and materials. It supports literacy in areas without libraries including the city of Hydaburg on the south of the island and the new, still unofficial Edna Bay Library on Kosciusko Island northwest of Craig.

Craig Public Library

Address: 504 Third Street

Craig, AK 99921-0769

Phone: 907-826-3281

Web: www.craigpubliclibrary.org

Director: Amy K. Marshall

Budget: \$189,635

Full Time Staff: 1

Part Time Staff: 1



Community Partners

U.S. Forest Service—Tongass National Forest, HOPE (Helping Ourselves Prevent Emergencies), Craig City School District, Craig Emergency Medical Services, The Prince of Wales Players, Alaska Public Health, Craig Tribal Association, Craig Police Department, Prince of Wales Health Network, Community Connections, Art Center for Prince of Wales Island, The Bread Box, Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority, The Alaska OWL Program, 49 Writers, Alaska State Troopers, UAS/UAF Cooperative Extension Service, NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month)

Pictured, left to right: At a Sculpt-a-Saurus event, children create clay Stegosauruses after a presentation on dinosaur anatomy; representatives from the US Forest Service lead a field trip to Salt Chuck Mine; the library's first 3-D printer was built by teens and ready to use for Pi-Einstein Day; the library exterior at night.

Embudo Valley Library and Community Center

Dixon, NM

"Our modus operandi is to say yes when people in the community ask for our support."

—Felicity Fonseca, Executive Director



An Expanding Center for Community Engagement

The Embudo Valley Library is a nonprofit public library in Dixon, an unincorporated rural community in northern New Mexico. It is one of the few such libraries in the state that receives only a small portion of its budget from local government sources. It fundraises 60 percent of its budget every year from foundations and local donors. A true grassroots endeavor, the library has grown from a single rented room to a 1.5 acre property that currently houses the library, a neighboring community center, an orchard, and a park. Its expansive programs touch every corner of the community.

The institution serves a community of 1,428 people, and has 1,394 card holders. Over the course of 10 years, patron visits to the library increased from 6,600 to over 17,000 while the library has maintained the same budget and introduced new programs. It fills a key community need for literacy and education support and offers programs and services maximizing educational and economic advancement. The move to its new site in 2014 has allowed the library to introduce more public access computers; space for tutoring, distance learning, and quiet reading; expansion of its collection; improved facilities for adult and youth programming; a community center; and a radio station. Use of the community center is available free of charge to local nonprofit and educational groups.

Championing Youth Education

The Embudo Valley Library's afterschool and summer reading programs are the only youth programs in the area. The ¡Ahora! afterschool program is a collaboration with Embudo Valley Tutoring Association that offers academic support and creative enrichment activities. ¡Ahora! is designed to support achievement in the classroom, introduce new knowledge, raise awareness about the community and the world, and promote a positive perception of books, reading, and learning.

Caterpillar Club Early Literacy program is Embudo Valley Library's longest running program and serves children ages 0-5, who attend with their parents, grandparents, or caregivers. The village's only pre-kindergarten program, the program focuses on early literacy and school readiness with read aloud story time and activities that include crafts, movement, music, games, and outdoor activities. A new STEM-to-Read initiative explores books and activities centering on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It supports emergent literacy in children, educates families on the importance of reading to even the youngest children, and creates a support network for families with young children where parents and caregivers can connect and share information.



Adult and Lifelong Learning

With its new space, Embudo Valley library was able to significantly expand its adult programming, which is primarily driven by community volunteers. The library provides the space, infrastructure, and publicity for local residents to share their own expertise and passions. Following the opening, Embudo Valley Library offered 14 events with great attendance by the immediate community and surrounding areas, up from only three events the previous year. These include book readings by local authors, a screening of a documentary short that was filmed in the Embudo Valley, a Wednesday night movie series, discussions on palliative care and end of life issues for seniors, and archeology talks about the history of the region. The library has plans to add a computer literacy class for seniors and continue expanding programs to directly address the needs and interests of the small community.

Economic Development with a Grocery Co-op

Dixon Cooperative Market, a cooperative grocery store that serves local consumers and agricultural producers, is a tenant of Embudo Valley Library and Community Center. The library has partnered the technological and educational infrastructure of the library with the commercial infrastructure of the store to form a unique model of community investment for other rural areas.

Embudo Valley Library and Community Center

Address: 217A Hwy 75
Dixon, NM 87527-0310
Phone: 505-579-9181
Web: www.embudovalleylibrary.org
Executive Director: Felicity Fonseca
Budget: \$107,000
Full Time Staff: 0
Part Time Staff: 6



Community Partners

Rio Arriba Independent Libraries (consortium of Rio Arriba County nonprofit public libraries including Truchas Public Library, El Pueblo de Abiquiu Library, El Rito Library, and Embudo Valley Library), Embudo Valley Tutoring Association, Dixon Elementary School, Dixon Cooperative Market, Wise Fool New Mexico Penasco Theatre, Arid Lands Institute, Dixon Senior Center, and many others

Pictured, left to right: Baile Folklorico performance at the annual Fiesta de Santa Rosa, photo by Gaia Vashnov; public access computing, photo by Felicity Fonseca; kids learn how to use binoculars in preparation for a citizen science project, photo by Jennifer Goyette; the library's front entrance.

Los Angeles Public Library

Los Angeles, CA

“In addition to providing exceptional traditional public library service, we have opportunities to change people’s lives, address significant public issues, and welcome individuals into the community.”

—John F. Szabo, City Librarian



Providing a Path for New Americans

Los Angeles Public Library’s 73 locations serve the largest and most diverse population of any library system in the country. Los Angeles is a gateway for more immigrants than any other city, and the Los Angeles area has the largest number of residents—750,000 people—who are eligible to become U.S. citizens but aren’t participating in naturalization. To help immigrants navigate the often complicated process, the library launched new and expanded programs to increase citizenship and immigrant integration. Under the “Path to Citizenship” program, the library partners with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), social service agencies, nonprofits, and local governments to serve immigrant populations.

In every branch, Los Angeles Public Library designates “Citizenship Corners” with resources in multiple languages and staff members trained in the naturalization process who can provide advice and referrals to local service providers. It has also hosted more than 1,000 special workshops and classes with community partners to help patrons learn about the citizenship process and assist them in naturalization applications and test preparation. The program has initiated more than 13,500 people into the naturalization process, while making services available for immigrant integration. For example, to address immigrant needs for English language skills improvement, the library has also integrated its adult literacy services into the effort. USCIS and IMLS are currently using the “Path to Citizenship” program as a model for other cities.

Addressing Issues That Matter

The library works to reduce health disparities through “Health Matters,” an initiative that provides direct access to healthcare, programs to address communities’ specific health needs, and workshops that encourage healthy food choices and behavior. Los Angeles Public Library also facilitated access to flu shots, eye exams, and free prescription eyeglasses in underserved communities. Its healthcare information and sign-up workshops have helped more than 15,000 people navigate provider enrollment, and nearly 30,000 people participated in library workshops on heart health, nutrition, hypertension, childhood obesity, disease prevention, and other health issues.

Another focal issue that the library’s services directly address is the unbanked population; Los Angeles has the country’s largest population lacking access to traditional banking services. The “Money Matters” program aims to help these patrons get their finances into shape and resolve issues afflicting the unbanked population, including exclusion from economic development opportunities and vulnerability to costly and predatory financial products and providers. The library partners with community organizations to host hundreds of financial literacy programs, workshops, and events in neighborhoods throughout the city. It also offers a financial resource guide to point patrons to library and online resources providing information, education, and tools covering savings, credit, investments, budgeting, financial planning, and consumer protection.



Advancing Learning at All Ages

To boost family literacy, Los Angeles Public Library offers comprehensive, multigenerational literacy programming. Classes teach parents the importance of—and the skills for—building early literacy in their infants and toddlers, and learners in the adult literacy program participate in special story sessions to help create a positive association with reading for the entire family.

The library’s free college preparation workshops, practice tests, and resource-rich “Student Zone” areas also nurture student learning. Los Angeles Public Library became the first public library in the nation to offer adults the opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma and career certificate online. It also launched “Full STEAM Ahead,” which presents science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) programs for preschoolers and school-aged children to address the lack of free and low-cost science, technology, and math afterschool programs. Fun, hands-on learning opportunities in workshops incorporate robotics, coding circuitry, stop-motion animation, and 3-D printing.

Pictured, left to right: In January 2015, 80 children representing 23 countries were sworn in at naturalization ceremony at the Central Library; one of four Veteran Resource Fairs hosted by the library in 2014; this Financial Fitness Fair is one of more than 350 financial programs at the library; the Central Library.

Residents Voice Support

Los Angeles residents make up a 5,800-person volunteer base, support fundraising efforts, and cast their votes to express support of public libraries as an essential community resource. After the recession required cuts in services and threatened to shutter libraries, voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot initiative in 2011 to restore cut services and to secure the library’s financial future.

Los Angeles Public Library

Address: 630 West 5th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90071-2002
Phone: 213-228-7000
Web: www.lapl.org
City Librarian: John F. Szabo
Budget: \$123,316,839
Full Time Staff: 658
Part Time Staff: 959



Community Partners

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, California Community Foundation, Catholic Charities, Central American Resource Center, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Community Health Councils, Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamerica, Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, International Rescue Committee, Korean Youth & Community Center, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Opportunities Industrialization Center, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Vision y Compromiso, Weingart Center, and many other organizations

Louisiana Children's Museum

New Orleans, LA

"After Hurricane Katrina, there was a dramatic community effort to join together. We became very interested in listening to all voices—especially children's voices. This ability to listen more has influenced who we are and how we operate."

—Julia Webb Bland, Chief Executive Officer



Re-Evaluating Community Support

The past decade has dealt the city of New Orleans a series of disasters, starting with the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, followed by Hurricanes Rita, Gustav, Ike and Isaac; the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010; and the 2011 Mississippi River floods. The institutional challenges of these emergencies led the Louisiana Children's Museum to re-imagine its role in a community that felt traumatized. Accepting a new disaster-recovery role, the museum began to consider how it could better serve its neighbors.

The Louisiana Children's Museum examined major issues including low literacy rates, childhood obesity, and education needs, in addition to widespread post-traumatic stress disorder. Staff saw an opportunity to not only offer safe, engaging environments and occasions for families to connect, but to provide direct assistance to parents to foster healthy child development and promote literacy, health and wellness, and science and art education.

Focus on Families

The Louisiana Children's Museum studied child-centered approaches to address heavy duty problems through playful, interactive, and fun experiences. The staff felt it was important to support entire families in the community through its programs, even those who weren't able to visit the museum. They designed one program, Word Play, to stop the poverty cycle for children ages 3-5 and their parents. Museum staff delivered an IMLS-funded

early literacy curriculum to families at Head Start centers, where they focused on enhancing pre-literacy skills, awareness about the value of singing, playing, talking, interaction with children, and building language skills so by age five children are ready to enter kindergarten.

Another family literacy program offered in both English and Spanish, Prime Time, sends a set of books home each week with parents to reinforce "participatory reading" practices with their children. The museum also hosts a Parent Leadership Training Institute to train parents to become stronger advocates and organizers around their children's needs, while their children enjoy the museum exhibits after hours. The doors also stay open late for Sensory Friendly Family Nights, monthly events in partnership with Tulane Center for Autism and Related Disorders. The program provides a comfortable experience for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families, with full access to all exhibits and materials, as well as a registered art therapist.

The Power of Childhood Play

To help protect childhood and promote healthy development during a time of great turmoil, the museum accepted generous guidance and support from the Children's Museum of Manhattan and designed Play Power, a program helping children learn, develop, and heal through play. Since 2006, staff members have been embedded in public schools on a daily basis. Students



Making Services Accessible through Innovate Partnerships

Louisiana Children’s Museum will make its services available to more parents by relocating to a new Early Learning Village campus, which will break ground next year. An 8.5 acre site will serve as a community center in New Orleans City Park that provides access to services enhancing the school readiness of young children. In addition to the museum’s exhibits, the site will include centers for parenting, literacy, nature, gardening, and community gathering.

in pre-kindergarten through third grade cover a nine-month curriculum with museum educators focused on building resiliency skills through play-based art, literature, dramatic play, and community projects. This program helps students develop life skills such as collaborative planning, critical thinking, expressing fears or loss, and understanding different models for communication other than anger.

Since its inception, Play Power has reached more than 10,000 students on a weekly basis, and logged more than 42,000 staff hours. Following Hurricane Sandy, the museum created a toolkit for teachers in New Jersey and New York that replicated Louisiana Children’s Museum’s post-Katrina disaster recovery approach to healing young children. The American Alliance of Museums recognized Play Power for “Redefining Resiliency” at an Emerging Innovators Forum during its 2014 annual conference in Seattle.

Louisiana Children’s Museum

Address: 420 Julia Street
 New Orleans, LA 70130-9937
 Phone: 504-523-1357
 Web: www.lcm.org
 CEO: Julia Webb Bland
 Budget: \$1,861,288
 Full Time Staff: 17
 Part Time Staff: 20



Community Partners

Fit NOLA, Idea Village, Joseph Davies Elementary School, Kingsley House, Edgar Harney Elementary School, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, LSU AgCenter, Neighborhood Partnership Network, New Orleans Kids Partnership, New Orleans City Park, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans Geological Society, Orleans Public Education Network, Parenting Center, Stand up for our Children, STAIR, Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Tulane Center for Autism Related Disorder, Tulane Pediatrics, University of New Orleans, Urban League

Pictured, left to right: Play Power allows students to practice coordination, patience, and respect for others and themselves; the annual Children’s World’s Fair celebrates what is unique and universal to cultures across the globe; toddlers play with a cityscape exhibit; exterior of the museum building.



Museum of Northern Arizona

Flagstaff, AZ

"The Museum of Northern Arizona makes people feel a greater sense of understanding, ownership, and connection to this incredible place in the world."

—Dr. Robert Breunig, President



Engaging the Community of the Colorado Plateau

The Museum of Northern Arizona is an educational center and collections repository that serves the audiences in its diverse local community of northern Arizona, part of the Colorado Plateau region. It is the only museum dedicated solely to this geographic region. Its collections, exhibits, educational programs, publications, and active scientific research examine the ecology, paleontology, zoology, fine art, library archives, and many more facets of life and history on the Colorado plateau.

In addition to examining the area's past, the Museum of Northern Arizona also looks forward. The Future of the Colorado Plateau Forum lecture series is an initiative designed to bring the latest science on climate change and related topics to the northern Arizona community to foster a meaningful dialogue on the challenges posed by the changing environment in the Plateau region. In partnership with Northern Arizona University's philosophy department, the museum also hosts Hot Topics Café, a forum for civil discourse about matters of significance to the community. Participants share their views on potentially controversial issues such as climate change or gender equality in a neutral meeting ground with the guidance of a facilitator.

Connecting the Public with Native Cultures

Since its founding, the museum has maintained a commitment to being a resource and partner to adjacent Native communities. Its long running

relationships with these communities have resulted in programs and collaborations that benefit the individual tribes and create a direct line of cross-cultural communication with the non-native public. The Museum of Northern Arizona makes significant efforts to cultivate trusting relationships with regional Native American tribes, especially the Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni.

A key public program, the museum's Heritage Program, is specifically designed to fill the cross-cultural communication gap by creating a place where individual tribes and cultures can share their traditions and ways of life with the general public. Each year, heritage festivals express different aspects of Zuni, Navajo, Hopi, and local Latino culture, including history, language, philosophy, artistic traditions, dance, music, and agriculture. The museum works with each community on various aspects of the festival to make the cultures accessible to the public. Through close collaboration with tribal organizations and individuals, the museum helps to share and celebrate tribal and family histories, ceremonies, traditions, linguistics, and fine arts and crafts.

Fostering Discovery

For more than 35 years, the museum has offered its Discovery Program to local children. Throughout the year, the program engages youth, ages 4 to 18, in all aspects of science and provides enriching educational classes that use art and science to introduce students to new disciplines, diverse worldviews,



and encourage interest and exploration of their outdoor surroundings. The active youth program includes a summer day camp featuring nature walks, crafts, experiments, games, stories, field trips, and other activities. This year, Discovery will include 39 summer camps with a wide variety of experiences that are tailored to each age group.

One camp, called Diné Discovery, is a Navajo language immersion program that started from conversations with teachers of Navajo students. This unique summer language and culture class was created in collaboration with two of Flagstaff Unified School District's schools in lower income neighborhoods to help students retain Native language proficiency while learning about local geology, ecosystems, astrology, and traditional art forms. The program addresses the problem of children in bilingual Navajo schools losing some of their Native language skills over the summer with a camp that features hands-on activities, games, and outdoor field trips—all during which the Navajo language is spoken and taught.

Center for Sustainable Collections Stewardship

In 2009, the Museum of Northern Arizona dedicated the Easton Collection Center, a 17,823 square foot collections storage facility that features the first high-desert living roof constructed anywhere. It was certified LEED Platinum, and *Engineering News and Record Magazine* named the facility the greenest building in the U.S. that year. It continues to be recognized for its beauty, quality, and sustainability.

Museum of Northern Arizona

Address: 3101 N. Fort Valley Road

Flagstaff, AZ 86001-8348

Phone: 928-774-5213

Web: www.musnaz.org

President: Dr. Robert Breunig

Director & CEO: Carrie M. Heinonen

Budget: \$3,500,000

Full Time Staff: 27

Part Time Staff: 66



Community Partners

A:shiwi A:wan Museum & Heritage Center, Arboretum at Flagstaff, Arizona Archaeological Society, Bureau of Indian Affairs, City of Flagstaff, Coconino Center for the Arts, Coconino Community College, Coconino County Board of Supervisors, Coconino National Forest, Flagstaff Unified School District, Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan, National Park Service, Navajo Nation, Navajo-Hopi Relocation Commission, Northern Arizona University, Nuestras Raices, Pueblo of Zuni, Puente de Hozho Language Institute, U.S. Forest Service

Pictured, left to right: A member of the Nuvatukya'ovi Sinom Dance Group performs at the 81st Annual Hopi Festival of Arts & Culture; participants in the Diné Discovery summer camp; artist Shonto Begay shares his artwork with children and families; the Jaime Major Golightly historic courtyard during the 11th Annual Celebraciones de la Gente festival; all photos by Tony Marinella.

New York Hall of Science

Queens, NY

"We serve a diverse audience, and we're committed to creating the broadest possible entry into STEM fields as we can. We want every young person who visits the museum to have experiences that make them feel successful right out of the gate."

—Dr. Margaret Honey, President and CEO



Engaging the Neighborhood

The New York Hall of Science is located in Queens, New York, in one of the most diverse counties in the world. Also known as NYSCI, it was founded at the 1964 World's Fair and has since evolved into a center for interactive science with 450 exhibits, demonstrations, workshops, and participatory activities that explain STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) topics.

In 2011, the museum launched NYSCI Neighbors as an enhanced membership program to build relationships with local families and address summer learning loss among elementary school students in NYSCI's home neighborhood of Corona, Queens. NYSCI Neighbors has become a year-round, multifaceted initiative that supports community engagement by providing local children and families, many of whom are first-generation immigrants, access to NYSCI and its educational STEM programs. It has engaged more than 700 families in the museum's three neighboring communities of Corona, Flushing, and East Elmhurst, and has a network of 16 local school partners and 16,000 annual program participants who reside within a two-mile radius of the institution.

Design-Make-Play

NYSCI has embraced Design-Make-Play as the institution's guiding philosophy for creating exhibitions and programming. By encouraging

open-ended exploration, imaginative learning, personal relevance, deep engagement, and delight, this strategy is intended to broaden participation for all learners to engage in STEM activities, particularly for young people who do not think of themselves as interested in science.

The museum's Little Makers program engages families with young children in maker activities: tinkering, designing, and creating together. Two-hour workshops bring families with children ages 18 months through second grade to NYSCI to experiment with weaving, paper making, block printing, bubble-making, sound painting, ice-cream making, and more to encourage young children to make things. The program uses engaging, design-based challenges and science and technology experiences to foster creativity, innovation, and learning.

NYSCI's Maker Space, a learning environment where children, teens, adults, and families can experiment and create together, hosts Make Academy camps and afterschool programs. Programs reuse everyday materials in exciting ways and encourage experimentation and teach visitors that making mistakes is a great way to learn.

Cultivating STEM Professionals

The museum also works with high school and college students interested in pursuing careers in STEM to help them transition to the workforce through mentoring, professional development, and career preparation activities. Its



Learning Outside the Museum Walls

The museum created a suite of digital products and services for middle school STEM learning called Noticing by NYSCI. Each module includes a mobile app, curricular resources for use in classroom settings, online professional development opportunities, and ongoing support for educators. These tools embody the museum’s Design-Make-Play philosophy of making learning fun, relevant, and meaningful for learners.

30-year old Science Career Ladder program employs young people to work as “Explainers” on the museum’s floor, where they engage the public, conduct science demonstrations, and facilitate programs. The vast majority of Science Career Ladder participants hails from neighboring communities, with 76 percent from first- or second-generation immigrant families and 74 percent from low-income households.

A typical cohort of approximately 100 “Explainers” speaks, on average, 23 languages. Ninety-eight percent of Science Career Ladder alumni have completed college, and sixty percent of have gone on to pursue STEM careers. President Obama invited one of NYSCI’s “Explainers,” Caroline Placzek, to participate in the White House Science Fair in 2014. The rate of college graduation and entry into STEM careers among the alumni far exceeds local, state, and national percentages for students from comparable demographic groups.

Pictured, left to right: Little Mud Makers engage in hands-on activities; the newest experience is Design Lab, which consists of five activity areas; visitors work on engineering-themed projects where they see how much their aluminum foil boats can hold without sinking; building exterior; all photos by Andrew Kelly.

New York Hall of Science

Address: 47-01 111th Street
Queens, New York 11368-2950

Phone: 718-699-0005

Web: www.nysci.org

President and CEO: Dr. Margaret Honey

Budget: \$19,538,022

Full Time Staff: 102

Part Time Staff: 194



Community Partners

Raices Corona Senior Center, Queens Community House, Theresa Cervini Head Start, The Billini Cultural Association, Plaza del Sol Community Health Center, The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York Host Committee, The Latin American Cultural Center of Queens, The Parent and Teacher Associations of Corona, public schools 14, 16, 28, 92, 143, 307, and intermediate school 61

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

New York, NY

“Our institution has been the site for research used in some of the most transformative events in history, and as impetus for children to pursue careers in education. The fact that both things happen here speaks volumes about the power of libraries.”

—Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Ph.D.



Inspiring the Study of Black History and Culture

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, located in Harlem, is an innovative cultural arts and research center within the New York Public Library system. It is recognized as the world’s leading repository focusing on materials related to the global black experience. The center is dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of black life, history, and culture rooted in a tradition set forth by its namesake, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg—a historian, writer, and key figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

The Schomburg promotes intellectual discovery through research, programming, public events, cultural performances, and exhibitions. It contains over 10 million items including rare books, photographs, manuscripts, art, letters, recordings, and much more. The center provides the scholarly community and the general public with access to professional reference assistance in the use of its collections. It is dedicated to fostering literacy, arts appreciation, and awareness of the contributions of black culture.

Enriching Educational Experiences

The Schomburg’s educational programming engages both youth and adults in exploring culture and history. The Junior Scholars program uses black history as a lens through which it introduces youth to college-style learning, the arts, activism, and career readiness. It engages young people in film classes and

open discussion forums on race and politics, and it offers a platform to voice their thoughts, think critically about their role in society, and become leaders. A recent survey of past participants indicated that 100 percent of previous Junior Scholars matriculated to college after their senior year in the program.

Another program, Scholars-in-Residence, brings postdoctoral researchers and creative professionals together to encourage scholarly production of cutting-edge research in African-American and African Diasporan history and culture. The center funds fellowships for six-month residencies with access to Schomburg Center resources and other research centers of the New York Public Library. The program encourages research and writing on black history and culture, facilitates interaction among participating scholars, and provides widespread dissemination of findings through lectures, publications, colloquia, and seminars.

Celebrating and Exploring a Legacy

The Schomburg Center serves as a leading venue for exhibitions on the history and culture of people of African descent in the New York metropolitan area. Each year, the institution presents to the public numerous free, expertly-curated exhibitions on a range of topics. Popular exhibitions include “Africans in India: From Slaves to Generals and Rulers,” “Motown: The Truth Is a Hit,” and “Visualizing Emancipation,” which commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.



Researching Slavery of the Atlantic World

The Schomburg recently opened the Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery—funded by a generous \$2.5 million gift from Ruth and Sid Lapidus and matched by The New York Public Library. The center supports the work of researchers with long-term and short-term fellowships. To raise awareness and historical literacy, the Lapidus Center engages the public with a variety of programs, an annual nonfiction prize, exhibitions, conferences, and partnerships with local, national, and international institutions. The gift includes more than 400 rare items of printed material, making the Schomburg Center home to one of the world’s premier collections of slavery material.

Last year, two major exhibitions, “Question Bridge” and “i found god in myself: The 40th Anniversary of Ntozake Shange’s *for colored girls*” explored the identities of race and gender through the lens of personal narratives, histories, and politics.

The exhibitions are paired with public programming activities, such as conversations with the curators, public discussions with scholars, and exhibition tours with community groups, families, students, and the general public. In addition to engaging exhibits, the center offers dynamic public events, including monthly series ranging from a dance social called First Fridays and an adult education forum called Conversations in Black Freedom Studies, film discussion series, concert tributes, speaker panels and roundtables, and much more. The Schomburg began increasing the number of its events that are live streamed online last year, which has led to a tenfold increase in viewership.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Address: 515 Malcolm X Boulevard

New York, NY 10037

Phone: 917-275-6975

Web: www.schomburgcenter.org

Director: Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Ph.D.

Budget: \$11,189,000

Full Time Staff: 64

Part Time Staff: 20



Community Partners

Schomburg Society Members, The Schomburg Corporation, Ruth and Sid Lapidus, Valentino Carlotti, The Ford Foundation, David Dinkins, Gordon Davis, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Michael Ryan, Danielle S. Allen, The Studio Museum of Harlem, Citi, Howard Dodson, Roberta “Bobbi” Yancy, The Schomburg Junior Scholars, BNY Mellon, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, National Urban League, National Endowment for the Humanities, Rockefeller Foundation, The New York City Council, Inez Dickens, Congressman Charles Rangel

Pictured, left to right: Guests visiting the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, photo by Terrence Jennings; a young fan at the Black Comic Book Festival, photo by Terrence Jennings; Schomburg Curator Maira Liriano discusses the “Curators’ Choice: Black Life Matters” exhibition with a patron, photo by Bob Gore; Schomburg facade; all photos courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

The Tech Museum of Innovation

San Jose, CA

"There is something inherently valuable about every single person. When any person doesn't achieve their potential, it's an avoidable loss. We stand in the gap and try to prevent that loss."

—Tim Ritchie, Director



Maximizing Visitor Experience and Accessibility

The Tech Museum of Innovation, or simply The Tech, is a hands-on technology and science museum and learning resource aiming to inspire the innovator in everyone. Located in downtown San Jose, California, the museum encourages the development of innovative technology for a more promising future. The Tech tailors its exhibits and experiences to enhance engagement and learning. Visitors can create robots, build a structure to survive an earthquake, measure their own brain activity and use that data to improve their health, and starting in June, solve a cyber mystery after learning what it takes to stay safe online. The museum also plans to offer exhibits that allow visitors to manipulate synthetic DNA, discuss advances in innovations in healthcare, and explore how to live sustainably.

Central to The Tech's work is an emphasis on serving socioeconomically disadvantaged young people, about 335,000 of whom live in its six-county geographic area. Every year, The Tech raises funds to support museum visits for more than 70,000 students from low-income Title I schools to enhance their STEM education. More than half of all school field trips to the museum each year are from low-income schools. The museum also fundraises to provide deeper STEM experiences for about 21,500 of these underserved students through hands-on technology labs that connect science to the real world.

Fostering Future STEM Leaders

The Tech invites families from Title I schools to participate for free in its bilingual Family Math & Engineering program each fall. Designed to help parents with limited educational backgrounds learn how to reinforce math skills their children need to succeed in STEM learning, the classes bring parents and students together to develop logical thinking, creative problem solving, and number sense. In partnership with Technovation, TechGYRLS and Maker Ed, the museum is also working to set new standards and create new models for how to effectively engage girls in STEM and keep them moving forward along the STEM pipeline. The goal is to ultimately help increase the percentage of women in Silicon Valley making a difference in STEM fields.

In 2015, the museum is selecting select eight schools to be recognized as Tech Academies of Innovation. They will join a growing network of model STEM programs that will nurture the next generation of Silicon Valley innovators. The Tech's education staff, comprised of former classroom teachers and youth development professionals, will provide the schools three years of integrated engineering professional development. The Tech will select additional schools every year to expand this growing network of engineering educators who will support their schools, districts, The Tech Academy and communities overall.



Encouraging the Development of Technology to Benefit Humanity

Since 2001, the museum has hosted The Tech Awards, which salute individuals and organizations using technology to significantly improve human conditions in the categories of environment, education, health, and economic development. In partnership with organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, Catholic Relief Services, Ashoka, USAID, the Skoll Foundation, The Tech honors laureates from around the world each year.

Challenging Young Innovators

One of the museum's signature programs, The Tech Challenge, is one of the oldest engineering design competitions in California. Now in its 29th year, this program helps about 2,000 students every year develop lifelong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. It challenges teams of elementary, middle, and high school students to use creativity to solve real-world problems, collaborating to research, brainstorm, design, prototype, test, and then celebrate their successes—as well as their failures—by presenting their work in front of judges and thousands of audience members. The Tech Challenge stands out from other science competitions for its accessibility; more than 40 percent of participants are female, and more than 40 percent are from low-income schools.

Pictured, left to right: The “Body Metrics” exhibit lets visitors harness the power of wearable technology, photo by Na'im Beyah; Tech guests build a structure and then put it to the test in “Engineering for Earthquakes”, photo by Na'im Beyah; Thousands of kids compete every year in The Tech Challenge, an engineering design competition, photo by Don Feria; Tech Museum entrance, photo by Steve Whittaker.

The Tech Museum of Innovation

Address: 201 South Market Street
San Jose, CA 95113-2008

Phone: 408-294-8324

Web: www.thetech.org

Director: Tim Ritchie

Budget: \$17,002,969

Full Time Staff: 85

Part Time Staff: 46



Community Partners

Washington Elementary, Santa Clara County Office of Education, Franklin-McKinley School District, Third Street Community Center, City of San Jose, San Jose State University, Stanford University, Santa Clara University, RAFT, E-Nable The Future, TechGYRLS, MakerEd, Noyce Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Benesse, Microsoft, Palo Alto Networks, Kaiser Permanente, Cisco, SAP, EMC, Google, Applied Materials, TechShop, El Camino Hospital, and The Junior League of Palo Alto – Mid Peninsula

National Medal Finalists

This year, 30 institutions were named finalists for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Diverse institutions including a zoo, a fire/emergency library, a maritime museum, small town local libraries, science museums, public library systems, and more, from Washington to Texas, Arizona to New York, were among the honorees. Six finalists participate in the *Let's Move! Museums & Gardens* initiative. Through the Share Your Story initiative, thousands of community members highlighted ways finalist institutions impacted and changed their lives for the better.

Congratulations to the 2015 National Medal for Museum and Library Service finalists.

Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, New York
The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Massachusetts
Chabot Space & Science Center, Oakland, California*
Children's Museum of Brownsville, Brownsville, Texas*
Gladys Porter Zoo, Brownsville, Texas
Illinois Fire Service Institute Library, Champaign, Illinois
Madison Public Library, Madison, Wisconsin
Mid-Columbia Libraries, Kennewick, Washington
Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, New York
Nantucket Historical Association, Nantucket, Massachusetts
Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, Miami, Florida*
Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*
Phoenix Public Library, Phoenix, Arizona
The Strong, Rochester, New York*
Terrebonne Parish Library System, Houma, Louisiana
Tuckerton Seaport & Baymen's Museum, Tuckerton, New Jersey
Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa, Oklahoma
University of North Texas Libraries' Portal to Texas History, Denton, Texas
The Westport Library, Westport, Connecticut
The Wild Center, Tupper Lake, New York*

**Let's Move! Museums & Gardens* participants. Visit www.ims.gov/letsmove to learn more about this initiative.



About the National Museum and Library Services Board

The National Museum and Library Services Board advises the Institute's director on selections for the National Medals. This Board is an advisory body that includes presidentially appointed individuals with expertise in, or commitment to, library, museum, and information services. Informed by its collectively vast experience and knowledge, the board also advises the Institute's director on general policy, practices, and coordination with other federal agencies and offices.

Board Chairperson

Maura Marx, Acting Director, IMLS*

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About the National Medal for Museum and Library Service

Since 1994, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service has honored 152 outstanding institutions that have made significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Selected institutions demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. The winners are selected by the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in consultation with the National Museum and Library Services Board. Winners are honored at a National Medal award ceremony held in Washington, D.C.

Beginning with the 2009 awardees, personal stories demonstrating the ongoing impact of these award-winning institutions are being documented through a cooperative agreement between IMLS and StoryCorps, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.



About IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



