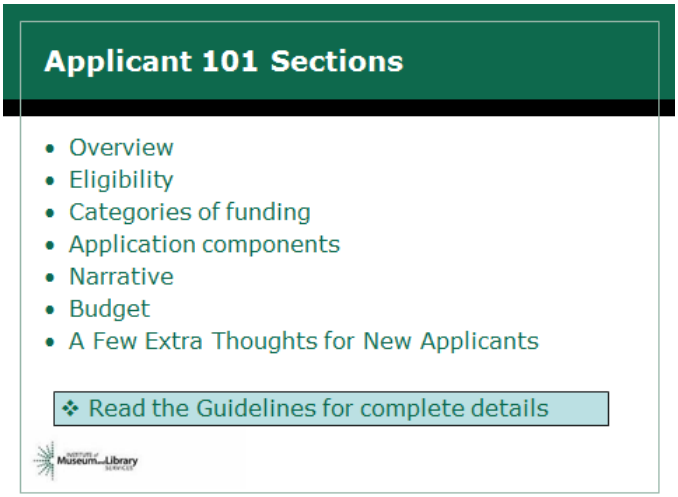
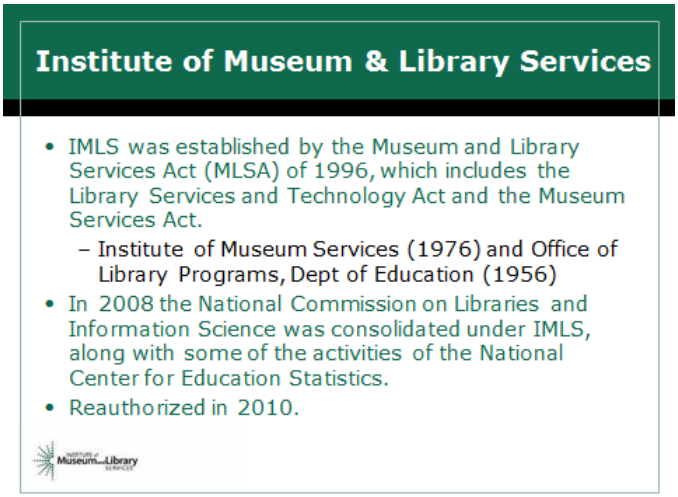
Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

Welcome to Applicant 101, a narrated web presentation designed to give you some basic information about the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant program for 2012.



Applicant 101 is made up of seven parts, this overview followed by ones on eligibility, categories of funding, application components, the narrative section, the budget, and a few extra thoughts for new applicants. Please remember to read the Guidelines for complete details. This web presentation only gives a brief overview.



It may be helpful for you to have some background about IMLS. The Institute was established by the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) of 1996, which includes the Library Services and Technology Act and the Museum Services Act. It incorporated the Institute of Museum Services, founded in 1976 and the Office of Library Programs in the Department of Education, created in 1956. Then in 2008 the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science was consolidated under IMLS, along with some of the activities of the National Center for Education Statistics. IMLS was reauthorized in 2010.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

IMLS's mission is to serve as the federal voice for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Through grant-making, convenings, research, and publications, we build the capacity of museums and libraries to serve the public.

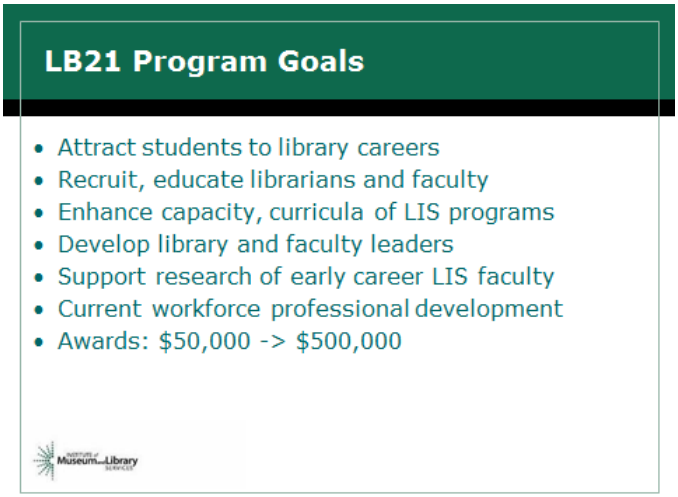
This slide shows a rough breakdown of the IMLS Fiscal Year 2011 total budget of $237 million:

$160 million for grants to state library agencies;
$15,000,000 for agency operation & administration;
$2,000,000 for research & policy activities;
$31,500,000 for competitive museum grants programs; and
$29,000,000 for competitive library grants programs.

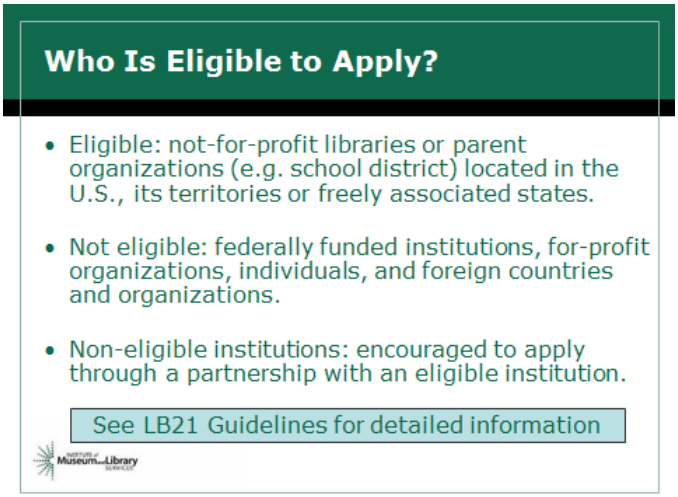
This slide shows a screen shot of the IMLS Web page for grant applicants and gives the URL below. The Grant Applicants tab is the first one on the left. This web presentation covers only some of the material available under the Grant Applicants tab, so be sure to check the IMLS Web site for more detailed information and answers.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

IMLS has a few competitive library grant programs; this presentation focuses on the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21).



LB21 program goals are to: Attract students to library careers; Recruit, educate librarians and faculty; Enhance capacity, curricula of LIS programs; Develop library and faculty leaders; Support research of early career LIS faculty; and Promote current workforce professional development. Awards range from $50,000 to $500,000.

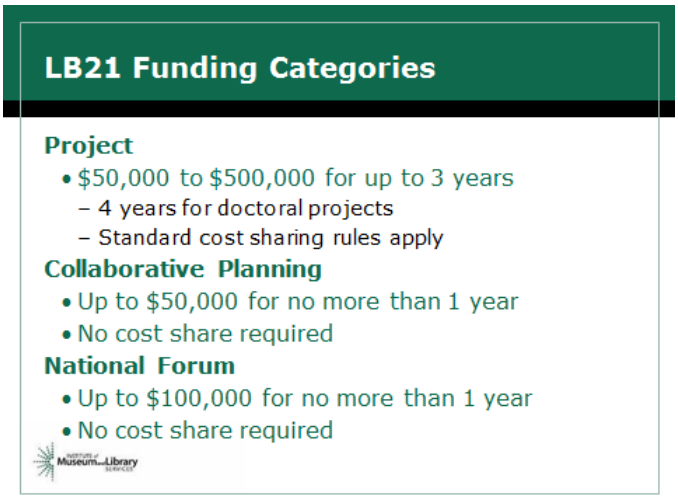


You are eligible to apply to LB21 if you are a not-for-profit library or parent organization (for example, a school district) located in the U.S., its territories or freely associated states.

You are not eligible if you are a federally funded institution, a for-profit organization, an individual, or a foreign country or foreign organization. However, non-eligible institutions are encouraged to apply through a partnership with an eligible one. See the LB21 Guidelines for detailed information.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

When you apply for an LB21 program grant you must designate both a Funding Category and a Project Category. I'll explain the categories more on the next few slides.



The three LB21 Funding Categories are Project, Collaborative Planning, and National Forum. The project category is the one most applicants apply under. Awards range from $50,000 to $500,000 for up to 3 years, or 4 years for doctoral projects. Standard cost sharing rules apply to project category grants. Collaborative Planning grants may receive up to $50,000 for no more than 1 year and no cost share is required. National Forum grants are up to $100,000 for no more than 1 year, and, again, no cost share is required.

LB21 has six Project Categories: Master's Programs; Doctoral Programs; Programs to Build Institutional Capacity; Research: Early Career Development; Continuing Education; and Scholarship Continuation. Awards will no longer be made in the Pre-professional project category. Instead LB21 has added the Scholarship Continuation grant category.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

Master's Programs

- Educate the next generation of librarians and archivists
- Nationally accredited graduate library programs and graduate schools that provide school library media certification programs
- Graduate programs must apply in a partnership that includes one or more eligible library entities

The goal of the Master's Programs category is to educate the next generation of librarians and archivists. The category is targeted at nationally accredited graduate library programs and graduate schools that provide school library media certification programs. These graduate programs must apply in a partnership that includes one or more eligible library entities.

Doctoral Programs

- Develop faculty to educate the next generation of library and archives professionals
  - Increase number of doctoral students
- Develop the next generation of library and archives management and administrative leaders
- Fund doctoral level scholarships and fellowships
- Graduate schools that offer doctoral degrees in LIS or School Media are eligible

The goals of the Doctoral Programs category are to:

Develop faculty to educate the next generation of library and archives professionals by increasing the number of doctoral students;

Develop the next generation of library and archives management and administrative leaders; and

Fund doctoral level scholarships and fellowships.

Graduate schools that offer doctoral degrees in Library and Information Science or School Media are eligible.

Programs to Build Institutional Capacity

- Develop or enhance curricula to better educate cultural heritage and information professionals
- Develop projects or programs of study to increase the abilities of library and archives professionals in developing the 21st century skills of their users, including information and digital literacy skills
- All graduate schools of library and information science and school library media graduate programs are eligible

The goals of the Programs to Build Institutional Capacity category are to:

Develop or enhance curricula to better educate cultural heritage and information professionals; and

Develop projects or programs of study to increase the abilities of library and archives professionals in developing the 21st century skills of their users, including information and digital literacy skills. All graduate schools of library and information science and school library media graduate programs are eligible.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

Research: Early Career Development

- Support innovative research by new faculty on any topic in library and information science
- Assistant professors in graduate schools of LIS and library media education programs
- Hold a doctoral degree
- Untenured and in tenure-track position
- Single principal investigator
- Letter of departmental endorsement
- Most competitive category
  - 22% funded in 2010; 8% in 2011

The goal of the Research: Early Career Development category is to support innovative research by new faculty on any topic in library and information science. Assistant professors in graduate schools of library and information science and library media education programs who hold doctoral degrees and are in untenured, tenure-track positions with both teaching and research responsibilities are eligible to apply as single principal investigators. You must have a letter of departmental endorsement. This is LB21's most competitive category with 22% of applications funded in 2010, and 8% in 2011.

Continuing Education

- Improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of library and archives staff through programs of continuing education, both formal and informal
- Any topic in library, archival, and information science may be addressed, in particular:
  - services to audiences with special needs
  - digital literacy skills and 21st century skills
  - digital curation
  - conservation science and practice

The goal of the Continuing Education category is to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of library and archives staff through programs of continuing education, both formal and informal. Any topic in library, archival, and information science may be addressed, in particular:

- services to audiences with special needs
- digital literacy skills and 21st century skills
- digital curation
- conservation science and practice

Scholarship Continuation Grants

- New category beginning in 2012
- Previously successful applicants (funded in the last 5 years) in either the Master's or Continuing Education categories are eligible
- Provide additional scholarships and other learning opportunities
- Streamlined review process
- Substantially reduced administrative costs on the part of the applicant

Scholarship Continuation is a new category beginning in 2012. Previously successful applicants, who were funded in the last 5 years, in either the Master's or Continuing Education categories are eligible to apply. The goal of this category is to provide additional scholarships and other learning opportunities through a streamlined review process with substantially reduced administrative costs on the part of the applicant.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

Before You Apply

- Register on Grants.gov
  - Allow at least two weeks
- Get a D-U-N-S® Number
  - Help in getting one is at www.dnb.com/us
- Register it with Central Contractor Registration (CCR)
  - Go to http://www.ccr.gov/
- Get your EIN (Employer Identification Number)
  - 9-digit number IRS assigns to business entities

Before you apply you will need to:

- Register on Grants.gov, allowing at least two weeks to complete the process
- Get a D-U-N-S® Number
- Help in getting one is at www.dnb.com/us
- Register it with Central Contractor Registration (CCR)
- Go to http://www.ccr.gov/
- Get your EIN (Employer Identification Number)
  This is a 9-digit number that the IRS assigns to business entities.

Advice When Applying

- Rule #1: Check your eligibility
- Rule #2: Read the guidelines
- Rule #3: Follow the guidelines
- Rule #4: Use format requested in the guidelines
- Rule #5: Leave yourself plenty of time
  - Institutional Review Board or Library Board
  - Director or Dean's letter of support
  - Online submission requirements
  - Federal government requirements (CCR, DUNS #)

Advice When Applying

Rule #1: Check your eligibility
Rule #2: Read the guidelines
Rule #3: Follow the guidelines
Rule #4: Use format requested in the guidelines
Rule #5: Leave yourself plenty of time to get approval from your Institutional Review Board or Library Board; obtain a Director or Dean's letter of support; negotiate online submission requirements; and conform to Federal government requirements (CCR, DUNS #)

Incomplete Applications

- If you submit an incomplete application the proposal **will not be reviewed**
- Complete applications must include all of the components described on the following slides.

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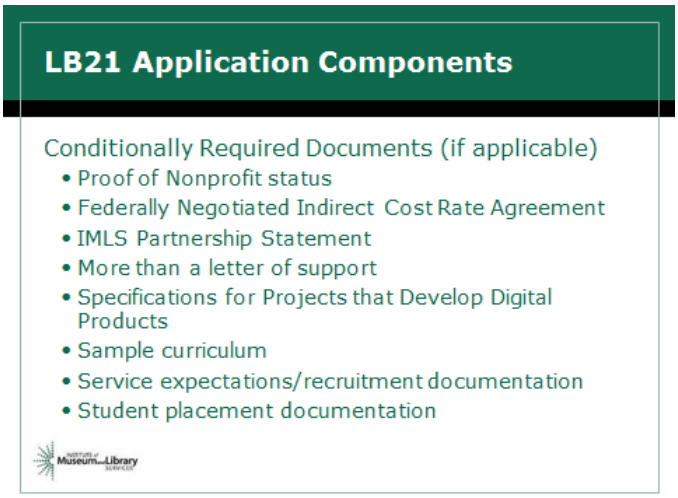
LB21 Application Components

First and foremost is the SF-424S, also known as the "Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form." This form is only available on Grants.gov. The SF-424S provides the link between Grants.gov and the IMLS grants management system.

Other LB21 Application Components are:

- Abstract, which should be no more than 1 page;
- Program Information Sheet, which contains its own shorter abstract;
- Organizational profile;
- Narrative of no more than 10 single-spaced pages;
- Schedule of Completion;
- Budget Documents
- Detailed, Summary, Justification; and
- Key Project Staff Documents
- List and resumes.



Your LB21 application may also include one or more of the following conditionally required documents (if applicable)

- Proof of Nonprofit status;
- Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;
- IMLS Partnership Statement, which is a more formal relationship than a letter of support;
- Specifications for Projects that Develop Digital Products;
- Sample curriculum;
- Services expectations/recruitment documentation; and
- Student placement documentation.

Narrative Components

- Statement of Need
- Impact
- Project Design and Evaluation
- Project Resources – Personnel, Time, Budget
- Diversity Plan
- Communication Plan
- Sustainability Plan

> ❖ Collaborative Planning grant proposals do not have to address either sustainability or dissemination
> ❖ National Forum grant proposals do not have to address sustainability

At ten pages, the narrative is the core of your application. Its components are:

- Statement of Need;
- Impact;
- Project Design and Evaluation;
- Project Resources, specifically, Personnel, Time, Budget;
- Diversity Plan;
- Communication Plan; and
- Sustainability Plan.

Budget Documents

- Detailed Budget form for each year
  - Include project costs charged to grant funds and those supported by cost sharing
- Budget Summary
- Budget Justification
  - Explains how the budget figures relate to project activities

Your application includes three types of budget documents:

- Detailed Budget form for each year, including both project costs charged to grant funds and those supported by cost sharing;
- Budget Summary;
- Budget Justification that explains how the budget figures relate to project activities.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

- Follow IMLS and government-wide cost principle rules regarding allowable costs
- Allowable cost examples
  - tuition and fees
  - course buyouts, summer session salary
  - project personnel
- Unallowable cost examples
  - fundraising costs
  - social activities, ceremonies, or entertainment
  - advocacy

It is critical to understand the difference between allowable and unallowable costs and to follow IMLS and government-wide cost principle rules regarding allowable costs.

Allowable cost examples are:

- tuition and fees;
- course buyouts, summer session salary; and
- project personnel.

Unallowable cost examples are:

- fundraising costs;
- social activities, ceremonies, or entertainment; and
- advocacy.

Matching (Cost Share) Requirement

- Project costs not charged to IMLS that support project activities, including contribution of property and services, and in-kind contributions, such as staff time.
- 1:1 match required for every federal dollar spent on non-student support activities
- Does not apply to the following categories
  - Research: Early Career Development
  - National Forum
  - Collaborative Planning

Matching (or Cost Share) Requirement

Cost share is the portion of project costs not charged to IMLS that support project activities, including contribution of property and services, and in-kind contributions, such as staff time. A 1:1 match is required for every federal dollar spent on non-student support activities. This requirement does not apply to the following categories: Research: Early Career Development, National Forum, or Collaborative Planning.

Indirect Costs

- Overhead or administrative costs to the organization that cannot be directly linked to a single grant, for example, heat or electricity.
- Cannot apply indirect costs to Collaborative Planning or National Forum
- LB21 Guidelines give the four Indirect Cost options
- You may apply a portion of allowed, indirect costs to your local match (cost share) requirement

Indirect costs are overhead or administrative costs to the organization that cannot be directly linked to a single grant, for example, heat or electricity. You cannot apply indirect costs to Collaborative Planning or National Forum grants. The LB21 Guidelines give the four Indirect Cost options. You may apply a portion of allowed, indirect costs to your local match (or cost share) requirement.

A Few Extra Thoughts for New Applicants

The following slides contain a few extra thoughts for new applicants.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

The Problem

- Problem provides motivation
- Start with an idea
  - Align organizational goals with LB21 categories
  - Create an elevator speech
  - Get internal support before proceeding
  - Explain how your organization is positioned
- Literature review
  - Show you know current research & practice
  - Where are the gaps?
  - How will your proposal fill those gaps?

The problem provides the motivation for your proposal. Start with an idea and align your organizational goals with LB21 categories. Create an elevator speech and get internal support before proceeding. Explain how your organization is positioned to address this problem. Conduct a literature review that shows you know current research & practice. Explain where the gaps are and how your proposal will fill those gaps.

The Need

- Needs assessment
  - Demonstrate the need for your proposal
  - Clarify its impact
  - Explain your assessment methodology
  - Use verifiable data from authoritative sources
    - Demographic
    - Socio-economic
    - Transactional
  - Who are the stakeholders?
  - What community will be served and how?

The need.

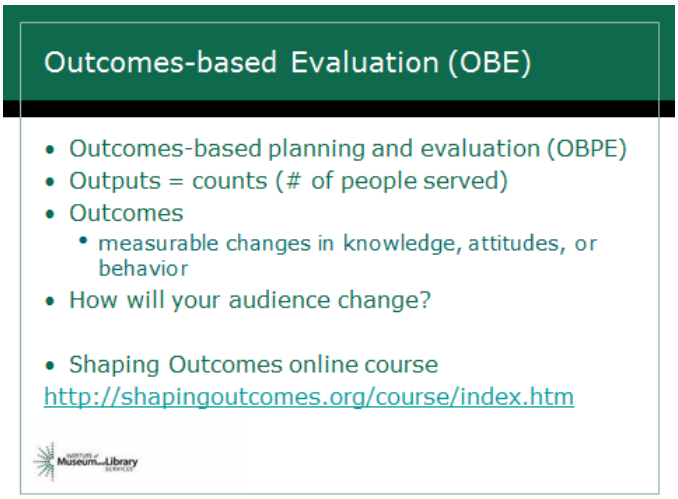
Write up a needs assessment that demonstrates the need for your proposal and clarifies its impact. Explain your assessment methodology and use verifiable data from authoritative sources, for example, demographic, socio-economic, or transactional. Who are the stakeholders? What community will be served and how?

The Solution

- Describe the proposed project
  - Activities
  - Timetable
  - Outcomes
  - Resources (people, tools, and money)
  - Evaluation
  - Sustainability
- Any potential partners or collaborators?
  - Strengths and contributions they bring

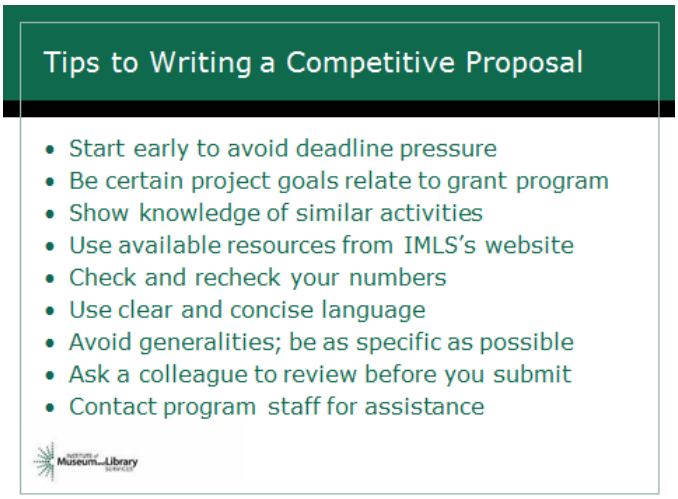
Explain the specifics of your solution. Describe the proposed project: its activities; timetable; outcomes; resources (people, tools, and money); evaluation; and its sustainability. Are there any potential partners or collaborators? If so, describe the strengths and contributions they bring.

Applicant 101: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

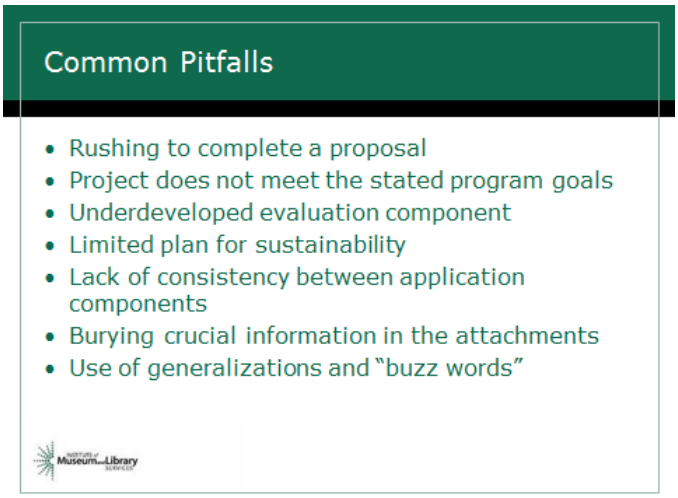


A strong application shows a mastery of Outcomes-based Evaluation (OBE), also referred to as Outcomes-based planning and evaluation (OBPE). You need to move beyond focusing merely on Outputs or counts (for example, the number of people served) to indicating Outcomes, which are measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behavior. You want to communicate how you expect your audience will change.

For more information, take advantage of the Shaping Outcomes online course, available at the following URL: http://shapingoutcomes.org/course/index.htm



Tips to Writing a Competitive Proposal
Start early to avoid deadline pressure;
Be certain project goals relate to grant program;
Show knowledge of similar activities;
Use available resources from IMLS's website;
Check and recheck your numbers;
Use clear and concise language;
Avoid generalities; be as specific as possible;
Ask a colleague to review before you submit; and
Contact program staff for assistance.



Common Pitfalls

Rushing to complete a proposal;
Project does not meet the stated program goals;
Underdeveloped evaluation component;
Limited plan for sustainability;
Lack of consistency between application components;
Burying crucial information in the attachments; and
Use of generalizations and "buzz words."

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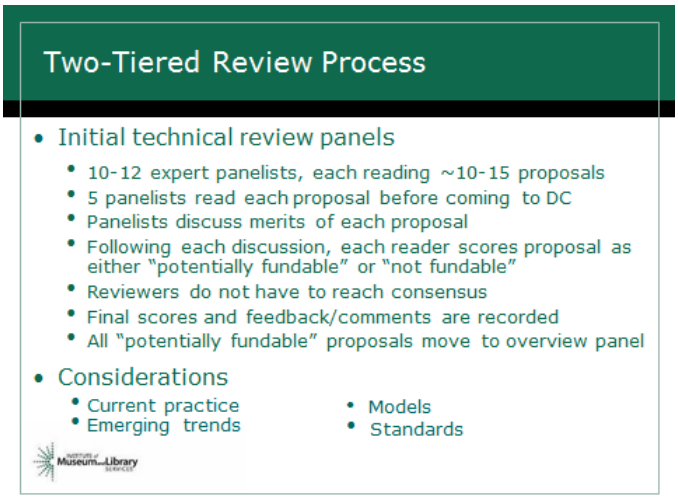
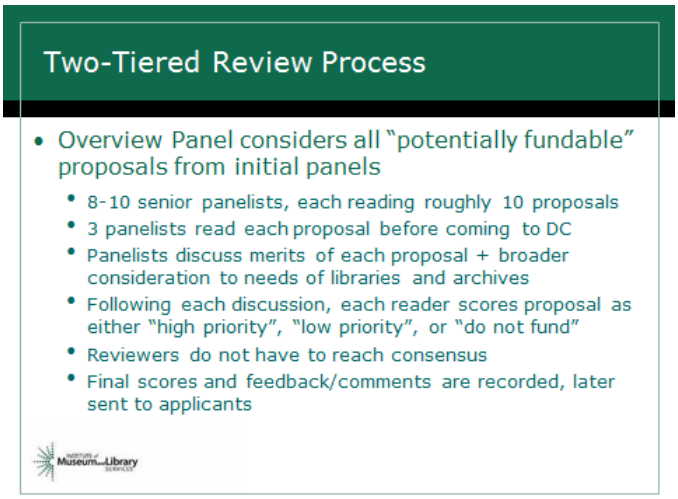
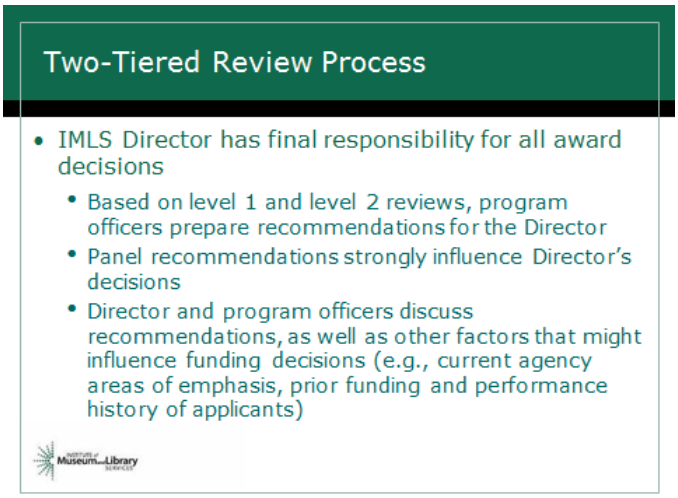


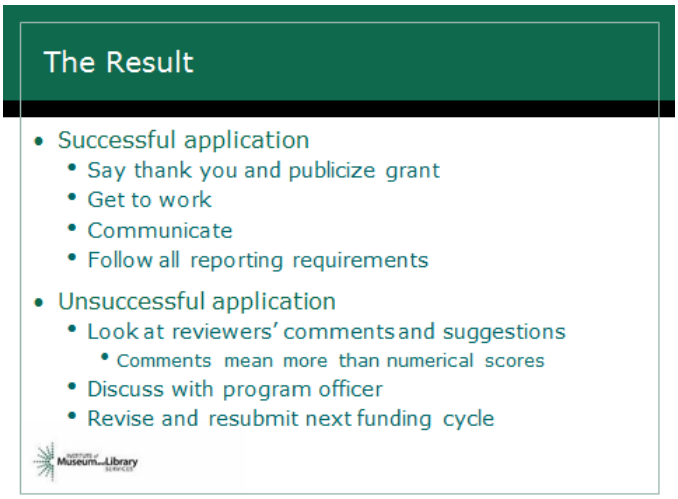
The LB21 program uses a two-tiered review process that begins with initial technical review panels of 10-12 expert panelists, each reading ~10-15 proposals. 5 panelists read each proposal before coming to DC. Panelists then discuss the merits of each proposal and following each discussion, each reader scores a proposal as either "potentially fundable" or "not fundable." Reviewers do not have to reach consensus. Final scores and feedback or comments are recorded, and all "potentially fundable" proposals move to the overview panel.



The overview panel considers all "potentially fundable" proposals from the initial, technical review panels. 8-10 senior panelists each read roughly 10 proposals. 3 panelists read each proposal before coming to DC and during the panel meeting discuss the merits of each proposal while giving a broader consideration to the needs of libraries and archives. Following each discussion, each reader scores a proposal as either "high priority", "low priority", or "do not fund." Again, reviewers do not have to reach consensus. Final scores and feedback or comments are recorded, and later sent to applicants.



The IMLS Director has final responsibility for all award decisions. Based on level 1 and level 2 reviews, program officers prepare recommendations for the Director. Panel recommendations strongly influence the Director's decisions. The Director and program officers discuss recommendations, as well as other factors that might influence funding decisions (for example, current agency areas of emphasis, prior funding and performance history of applicants).



The Result

If you have a successful application, remember to say thank you and to publicize your grant to others. Get to work on the project; communicate your progress; and follow all reporting requirements.

If you have an unsuccessful application, take the time to look at the reviewers' comments and suggestions. These comments mean more than any numerical scores. If you have questions, discuss them with a program officer. Based on the feedback you receive you may want to revise and resubmit your proposal in the next funding cycle. It is very common for applicants to use reviewers' suggestions to make a stronger application that is funded in a subsequent year.

We wish you the best of luck with your application. If you have questions about the LB21 grant program, please feel free to contact us using the following information:

Traci Rucker, Program Specialist, 202-653-4689, trucker@imls.gov;

Mary Alice Ball, Senior Program Officer, 202-653-4730, mball@imls.gov;

Kevin Cherry, Senior Program Officer, 202-653-4662, kcherry@imls.gov.