INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Institute of Museum and Library Services

Creating a Nation of Learners

Strategic Plan 2012–2016

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Creating a Nation of Learners

U.S. museums and libraries are at the forefront in the movement to create a nation of learners. As stewards of cultural heritage with rich, authentic content, they provide learning experiences for everyone. With built infrastructure in nearly every community in the nation and dedicated, knowledgeable staff, they connect people to one another and to the full spectrum of human experience. The nation's museums and libraries provide opportunities for powerful learning experiences that inspire people throughout their lifetimes and contribute to the civic life of our nation.

Trusted in their communities, libraries and museums play important roles in creating an informed and educated citizenry and transmitting the values of our democracy. Our role at the Institute of Museum and Library Services is to provide libraries, museums, and policy makers with the resources they need to ensure that the American ideal of open access to information and ideas flourishes, through leadership, data, analysis, and funding.

Museums and libraries help to level the playing field. They provide access to technology, strengthen community relationships, and offer an entrée to services and information that some individuals might not otherwise have. Without libraries and museums it would be more difficult, potentially impossible, for some Americans to seek employment opportunities, enhance their education, and lead healthier lives. Libraries and museums are not luxuries; they are fundamental to supporting the civic life and well-being of our nation.

A democratic society in the knowledge age demands that its citizens learn continually, adapt to change readily, and evaluate information critically.

Economic changes are causing reductions in all sources of public (state and local) and private (corporation, foundation, and individual) funding for libraries and museums. At the same time, public demand for library and museum services is increasing. As stressed public agencies cut back on service, communities are more fully leveraging the assets of libraries and museums and calling on them to fill the gaps by providing workforce services, afterschool programming, teacher training, and broadband access.

Although many libraries and museums are fully embracing new service opportunities, they are also facing difficult decisions. Serious questions must be addressed about how libraries and museums will continue to meet public demand. Reductions in staff have direct impacts on public service, such as reduced hours, less programming for hard-to-reach populations, and less capacity to support important learning outcomes. Changing information delivery services, new platforms, and outdated information policies are creating new challenges to provide critical materials, both print and digital, that are the foundation for all other services.

In 2010, against a backdrop of societal change and economic uncertainty, Congress passed and the President signed the reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act (the Act), giving IMLS unique federal responsibilities for "the development and implementation of policy to ensure the availability of museum, library, and information services adequate to meet the

essential information, education, research, economic, cultural, and civic needs of the people of the United States."

IMLS is charged with advising the President and Congress on library, museum, and information services and with supporting a wide range of programming that impacts the lives of millions of Americans. The law recognizes that U.S. libraries and museums are powerful national assets with capacity that must be developed and fully used to enhance economic development and lifelong learning. IMLS is charged with supporting the full range of museums, including history, art, science and technology, children's, natural history, historic houses, nature centers, botanical gardens, and zoos; and all types of libraries, including public, school, academic, research, tribal, and archival.

The Act clearly recognizes how libraries and museums contribute to a competitive workforce and engaged citizenry. It advances the roles of libraries and museums in education, early learning, preservation, and workforce development. The new law directs IMLS to actively strengthen the capacity of libraries and museums to improve Americans' access to 21st century skills and lifelong learning opportunities and to address the needs of people who are underserved.

The ubiquity of the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums, the trust invested in them by their communities, and their focus on learning and community engagement make them outstanding partners in furthering our nation's policy goals in a host of areas, including health, education, cultural preservation, the environment, and global awareness. The law recognizes IMLS's role as a partner with other federal agencies to enlist libraries and museums in achieving these policy outcomes.

This strategic plan was developed at a time when, as a nation, we are at risk of diminishing our support for libraries and museums and undermining the institutional supports that contribute to civic life in our nation, making it more difficult for Americans to find work, get an education, and lead healthy lives; more difficult and expensive for everyone—businesses, researchers, scientists, writers, and entrepreneurs—to find the information and data they need to build a strong economy and experience a rich quality of life.

Under the parameters of the new authorization, and with broad public consultation, including a social media platform that engaged more than 1,400 participants, we have developed our five-year strategic plan to purposefully provide leadership to help libraries and museums navigate significant cultural, economic, and technological changes and evolve their services to meet the demands of 21st century learners and communities.

With this strategic plan, we are building on IMLS's solid foundation and targeting five strategic goals. The goals focus on positive public outcomes for communities and individuals; support the unique role of museums and libraries in preserving and providing access to collections and content; and promote library, museum, and information service policies that ensure access to information for all Americans.

IMLS Vision

The vision of IMLS is a democratic society where communities and individuals thrive with broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and lifelong learning.

IMLS Mission

The mission of IMLS is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. We provide leadership through research, policy development, and grant making.

IMLS Guiding Values

We Value...

Working for the Public Good

- We foster strategic, innovative, and practical investments for the future.
- We recognize that IMLS is a steward of taxpayer dollars.
- We enhance opportunity and access for all.
- We create programs that make a difference.
- We measure impact and support communities of practice.

Integrity

- We are accountable; we make transparent decisions and openly share information.
- We actively listen to and communicate with our colleagues and the people we serve.
- We treat people with respect and courtesy.
- We uphold the public's trust by acting in an ethical manner.

Collaboration

- We work as a team, sharing and leveraging resources to achieve mutual goals.
- We recognize that diverse input leads to a better outcome.
- We encourage strategic partnerships.

Continuous Learning

- We embrace play, fun, creativity, discovery, and imagination as central to learning experiences.
- We promote personal, professional, and organizational growth.
- We promote creative, inquisitive, continuous learning.

IMLS Long-Term Goals

Strategic Goal 1: IMLS places the learner at the center and supports engaging experiences in libraries and museums that prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society.

Strategic Goal 2: IMLS promotes museums and libraries as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality.

Strategic Goal 3: IMLS supports exemplary stewardship of museum and library collections and promotes the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage.

Strategic Goal 4: IMLS advises the President and Congress on plans, policies, and activities that sustain and increase public access to information and ideas.

Strategic Goal 5: IMLS achieves excellence in public management and performs as a model organization through strategic alignment of IMLS resources and prioritization of programmatic activities, maximizing value for the American public.

IMLS Performance Improvement Model

The IMLS Performance Improvement Model establishes a clear framework that includes synthesizing lessons learned, promising practice, and trends; sharing best practices; aligning grant-making to best practices and research results; networking to build capacity; and assessing progress.

This approach builds on the agency's core competencies:

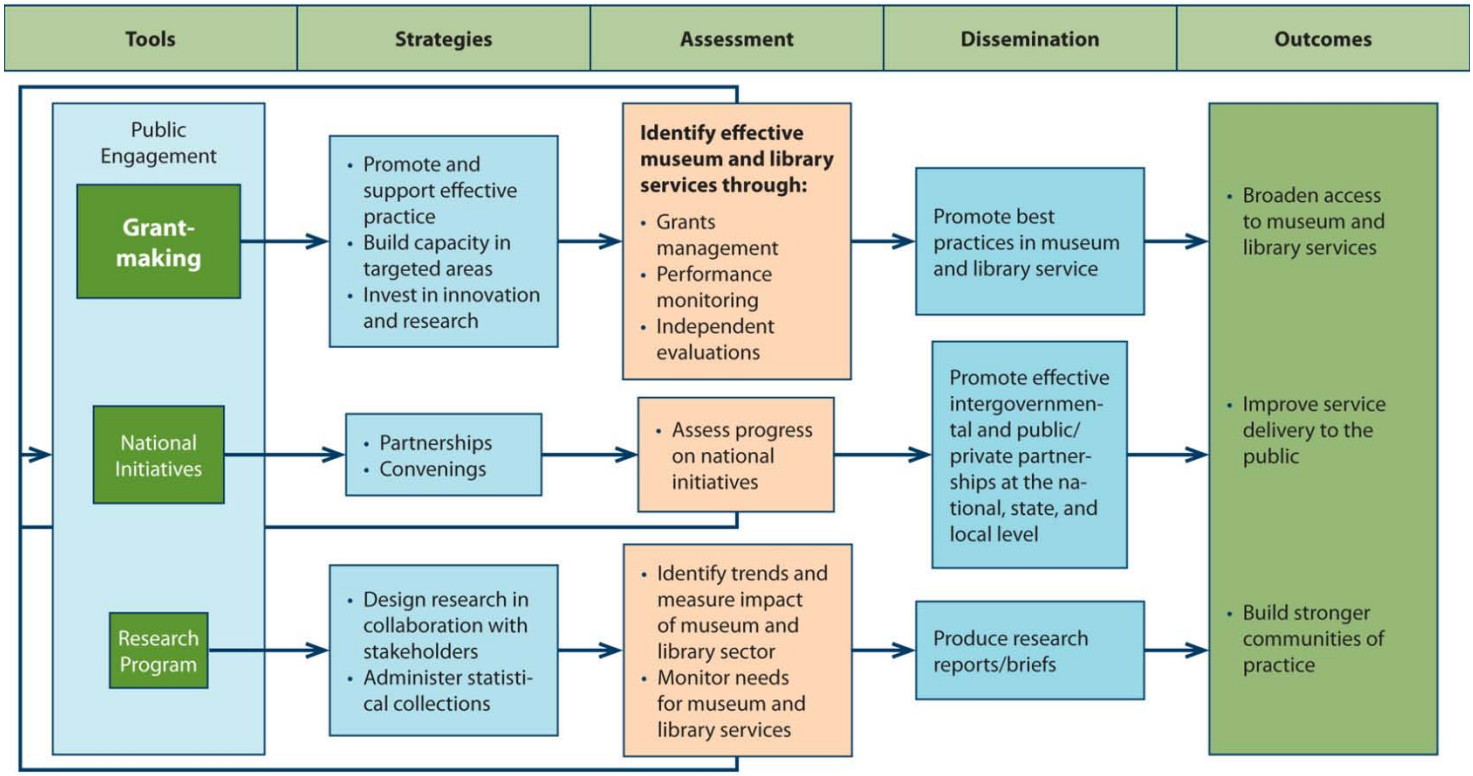
- IMLS has more than 15 years of experience as a grant maker, involved with thousands of grants across the country. The IMLS practice of rigorous peer-review confers a highly regarded quality status on competitively awarded grants. This rich grant portfolio provides us with a suite of options for furthering taxpayer investments using sound business practices.
- IMLS is the primary federal source of data about the library and museum sectors. The agency is a thought leader in the museum, library, and information sectors, with deep subject matter expertise in museum and library services and capacities for public engagement, program evaluation, strategic planning, and public policy research.
- IMLS is a neutral convener and sought-after partner that works with other organizations from the federal sector, with the states, and with private foundations to develop national initiatives and partnerships.

In developing this plan, IMLS is focusing on areas where it can best effect change. This plan signals an organizational shift away from obliging grantees to measure results of grants on a

case-by-case basis to establishing a broader framework for measuring progress on objectives for agency programs and initiatives, supported by the results of our investments.

Figure 1 draws on the three agency assets and applies them to a performance improvement model that frames the strategic direction of this plan.

Figure 1: IMLS Performance Improvement Model



As seen in the left side of the figure, the model begins with the organization's three principal tools: convening national initiatives/partnerships, leveraging through grant-making, and exercising thought leadership through research. These tools are applied to strategies that involve connecting with stakeholders, promoting and supporting effective practices, building capacity in targeted areas, and investing in innovation and future research and development. In turn, these strategies are combined with assessment (of grants, stakeholders, effective practices, programs, and trends) and communication (partnerships, dissemination of best practices, and research reports/policy briefs) to lead to tangible outcomes, stronger communities of practice, improved public service delivery, and broadened public access to services. The process is iterative, relying on research, communication, aligning of grant-making, capacity-building, and continuous results-focused assessment and adaptation.

Strategic Goal #1

IMLS places the learner at the center and supports engaging experiences in libraries and museums that prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society.

The education of children and adults, and today's imperative for continuous learning require "all hands on deck." Increasingly, policy makers and researchers are recognizing that we must create and coordinate a learning ecosystem of "life-long" "life-wide" opportunities for formal and informal learning. IMLS has long supported libraries and museums as parts of the learning ecosystem in the United States.

In our rapidly changing society and economy, individuals must continually update the skills required for active, informed participation in our increasingly globalized society. IMLS helps libraries and museums reach underserved audiences and develop learning experiences in every discipline, including science and engineering, history, art and culture; and basic, digital, health, and financial literacies.

Libraries and museums are leaders in delivering high-quality learning experiences to individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances. They are essential and trusted institutions that create accessible and audience-focused programs, environments, and services for lifelong learning. They are key partners with schools and universities, able to deliver services that complement and enhance learning. As learning institutions, libraries and museums have both the professional capacity and flexibility to adapt to an increasingly broad spectrum of learning needs and styles to benefit individuals directly. Not only can libraries and museums respond to increasing demand for learning services, they can facilitate active, engaged learning that provides individuals with the tools and methods to access and interpret knowledge and information throughout their lifetimes.

The Institute's **Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills** initiative underscores the critical role that our nation's museums and libraries play in helping citizens build such 21st century skills as information, communications, and technology literacy; critical thinking; problem solving; creativity; civic literacy; and global awareness.

Objective 1.1: Invest in projects that provide inclusive and accessible learning opportunities to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, special needs, and socioeconomic backgrounds

Promoting inclusive and accessible learning services for the American people is a critical role of the federal government, and IMLS is uniquely positioned to facilitate and highlight the work that libraries and museums do in addressing a wide variety of learning needs and providing services to increasingly diverse communities. IMLS plays a leadership role in promoting inclusive services that address the needs of the increasingly diverse populations of our country as well as the accessibility requirements of all users.

Activities and Evidence of Progress:

- Promote and share project outcomes and best practices to access and serve special populations and underserved communities; mechanisms will include the IMLS web site and other information-sharing platforms.
    - Starting in fiscal year (FY) 2012, IMLS will issue annual reports on trends and potential gaps in the availability and use of museum and library services among diverse populations.
- Direct a portion of IMLS discretionary grant funds to target library and museum services to support inclusive and accessible learning opportunities using identified best practices.
    - In FY13, IMLS will designate a portion of discretionary grant funds to target library and museum services that serve special needs populations and/or underserved communities using identified best practices.
- Develop consistent metrics from the program to the grant level that enable all IMLS grants to better assess their effectiveness, with special focus on inclusive and accessible learning opportunities.
    - By FY15, at least 90 percent of IMLS grantees will provide performance-based reports using consistent metrics.
- Assess progress and develop recommendations to guide future strategies for IMLS investments.
    - By FY16, IMLS will complete an assessment of efforts to promote and support inclusive and accessible learning opportunities with recommendations for the following five years.

Objective 1.2: Support communities of practice that draw on current research and evaluation literature to develop effective informal and formal learning experiences in museums and libraries.

There is growing research about how best to develop dynamic learning environments that enable individuals of all ages to engage in customized learning opportunities that are easily accessible and fulfill their specific information needs. To help libraries and museums apply the latest research, IMLS can seed and support dynamic communities of practice to aggregate and share project results, current research and evaluation studies, and continued conversation and discussion of "what works." IMLS promotes evidence-based practice in the delivery of learning opportunities in museums and libraries and consistent use of evaluation tools and techniques, and facilitates exchanges within and outside the museum and library sector on best practices for informal and formal learning experiences. With this approach, IMLS ensures effective agency investments and helps to scale up successful projects and to create better museum and library learning opportunities and experiences for the public.

Activities and Evidence of Progress:

- Synthesize research and evaluation findings from past IMLS grants around informal lifetime learning and formal education to identify trends, lessons learned, and best practices.
    - By FY13, IMLS will complete assessment of trends and best practices for informal and formal learning in museums and libraries.

- Promote and share project outcomes and best practices using the IMLS web site and other information-sharing platforms.
    - By FY14, at least 50 percent of Grants to States and discretionary grantees will adopt identified best practices in informal and formal learning in museums and libraries and share lessons learned, using the IMLS web site and other information-sharing platform.
- Require current and future IMLS grantees to share information to improve informal learning and formal education opportunities for the public through libraries and museums; mechanisms will include the IMLS web site and other information-sharing platforms.
    - By FY13, IMLS will revise reporting guidelines to more clearly identify project lessons and best practices in informal and formal education programming.
    - By FY16, at least 75 percent of grantees will have completed new reporting requirements that highlight project lessons and best practices.
- Develop stronger incentives for IMLS grantees to conduct formative and summative evaluation of informal learning and formal education projects, aligned with evaluation plans of the affected IMLS programs.
    - By FY14, at least 70 percent of grantees in targeted discretionary grant programs will use formative and summative assessments that correlate to measurable IMLS program objectives.
    - By FY15, 90 percent of Grants to States partners will have incorporated consistent metrics for assessing and benchmarking funded informal and formal learning experiences.
- Convene grantees and other stakeholders to review lessons learned and identify future directions to improve outcomes from informal and formal learning in museums and libraries.
    - By FY16, IMLS will have developed a set of detailed funding and project priorities to be addressed in informal and formal learning experiences in museums and libraries in the following five years based on stakeholder input through convenings and social media outreach.
- Assess progress and develop recommendations to guide future strategies for IMLS investments to further Americans' opportunities to better pursue lifelong learning and formal education through museums and libraries.

Objective 1.3: Facilitate partnerships among museums, libraries, and other education providers to expand learning opportunities for the public.

IMLS has found that partnerships that put "learners at the center" can dramatically enhance outcomes and organizational change for services provided to the public in museums, libraries, and other settings. Further, the explosion of digital technologies and the proliferation of mobile learning devices mean that the traditional boundaries between and among learning institutions are disappearing. Collaborations can leverage seamless 24/7 access to learning opportunities.

Effective partnerships among museums, libraries, and other education providers can increase the availability of high-quality educational experiences for individuals and allow partners to capitalize on organizational strengths to meet learners' needs. IMLS encourages effective

partnerships using a holistic approach to address the learning needs of all people in a community. This is particularly effective when there is a shared, learner-focused understanding of effective learning outcomes. Partnerships help to target, for example, senior citizens, early learners, teens, and people with special needs and realize cost efficiencies through resource sharing.

Activities and Evidence of Progress:

- Assess past library and museum projects supported with IMLS funds that included partnerships with formal education institutions and community organizations that provide informal learning.
    - By FY13, at least 80 percent of applicants and current IMLS grantees will systematically document the types and roles of partners in their projects.
- Provide best practice resources for museum and library partnerships with other community-based providers, drawing upon research in related fields.
    - By FY14, IMLS will have documented best practices on effective partnership for formal and informal learning in museums and libraries.
- Revise selected IMLS program and grant guidelines to incentivize the use of best practices for learning partnerships.
    - By FY15, at least 60 percent of IMLS grantees working in partnership with formal education and other community providers will adopt identified best practices.
    - By FY16, at least 80 percent of IMLS grantees working in partnership with formal education and other community providers will adopt identified best practices.
- Foster partnerships with other federal agencies, foundations, and the private sector that support comprehensive approaches to learning at the state and local levels.
- Continue to assess the impact of partnerships on the effective delivery of informal learning in IMLS grant programs and other agency initiatives, including efforts undertaken in the Grants to States program.
- Assess impact of grant making and make recommendations for the future.
    - By FY16, IMLS will complete reassessment of effectiveness of partnerships that have used best practices and make recommendations for the following five years.

Objective 1.4: Support the training and development of museum and library leadership to meet the needs of diverse publics in a rapidly changing environment.

Library and museum professionals strive to meet the learning needs of increasingly diverse service populations, and they are at the forefront of ensuring their institutions and their staffs have the resources, tools, and methods necessary to deliver effective services to communities. IMLS supports these leaders in identifying high-priority training needs and providing high-quality resources that help leaders assess their own communities' learning needs, and evaluate and enhance their institutions' capacity to meet them. IMLS also helps library and museum professionals develop unique competencies to teach essential 21st century skills, including critical analysis and information, media, and data literacy.

Activities and Evidence of Progress:

- Convene museum and library leaders in professional education and training with practicing professionals in the museum and library field to evaluate current investments and identify high-priority learning needs for current and future professionals.
- Develop an action plan to align educational opportunities with the current and future needs of the museum and library workforce.
    - By FY13, IMLS will complete an action plan with measurable objectives for education of professional museum and library staff, reflecting priorities identified through the stakeholder convening.
- Align IMLS museum and library workforce development grants to the goals and priorities of the action plan.
    - By FY14, at least 80 percent of applicants for professional development projects will align applications with the recommends of the action plan.
- Assess impact of projects and make recommendations for future investments.
    - By FY16, IMLS will complete assessment of the effectiveness of funded professional development projects in addressing the high-priority learning needs of the fields.

Strategic Goal #2

IMLS promotes museums and libraries as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality.

Healthy, thriving, sustainable communities need institutions that strengthen civic life, understand and respond to community needs, and provide common experiences that knit together diverse interests. Libraries and museums help local communities and our nation advance solutions to our most difficult problems. They are safe places for community gathering, centers for community vitality, a connecting point for community services, and a venue for cultural expression and lifelong learning.

The very definition of community is rapidly shifting and developing in the United States today. Demographic change, communications and other technological innovations, economic forces, and social and cultural shifts have at once brought individuals closer together and farther apart. But the desire for a sense of belonging and engagement in society remains strong. There is an increasing demand for safe spaces that can serve as anchor institutions by facilitating dialogue; fostering greater understanding of local, cultural and global issues; addressing common community challenges; and connecting individuals to vital information and resources including education, health, employment, and disaster response. Strong community anchor institutions are essential for improving the quality of life in cities and towns across the country.

Museums and libraries are unique community-based organizations that are well positioned to serve as these anchor institutions. They provide services that connect people to information and ideas. They encourage the participation and dialogue that are crucial to creating a sense of place and strengthening the link between individuals to their communities. They are more than just safe places for community gathering; they provide a center for community vitality, a connecting point for community services, and a venue for cultural expression and lifelong learning. Programs and services at libraries and museums enhance civic discourse, increase scientific literacy, and connect communities to information regarding health, education, job seeking and training, digital literacy, and early and intergenerational learning.

IMLS has deep expertise in supporting institutions that contribute to the development of healthy, thriving, and sustainable communities. Through its deep knowledge of the library and museum sectors, IMLS identifies and leverages innovative services developed in one community with similar service providers in communities across the country. Targeted federal investments can maximize use of private, state, and

Let's Move! Museums & Gardens
This national initiative provides opportunities for millions of museum and garden visitors to learn about healthy food choices and promote physical activity through interactive exhibits and programs.

Public Libraries and the Workforce
The U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and IMLS are working together to highlight effective practices and encourage additional collaboration between the workforce investment system and public libraries.

local funds; ensure that underserved populations are reached; and provide links to practice, research, and data across agencies working to address community needs.

Objective 2.1: Invest in projects that strengthen the role of libraries and museums as core components of a broader community learning and service infrastructure.

MLS makes important investments in museums and libraries that are highly trusted and safe gathering places. With IMLS support, libraries and museums enrich community members' knowledge and understanding of critical local and global issues, provide forums for community dialogue, and connect individuals to resources in the broader community service infrastructure through their programs and services.

Activities and Evidence of Progress:

- Identify best practices in assessing community impacts of museum and library services and promote those practices through IMLS communications platforms.
- Identify and assemble no-cost tools and resources for museums and libraries to use to conduct community needs assessments and promote evidence-based planning.
    - By FY13, IMLS will develop tools for museum and library stakeholders to conduct improved and systematic assessments to meet a range of social and economic needs.
- Require IMLS grantees to include community needs assessments for projects designed to address a local service issue, and to carefully evaluate those community-based projects.
    - By FY14, 80 percent of applicants for community engagement projects will use IMLS-provided community assessment tools in their application.
    - By FY15, 70 percent of funded museum and library community engagement projects will incorporate best practices in evaluation that align with measurable agency objectives.
- Review current investments and align targeted investments in community-based museum and library services with best practices and community needs assessment-based planning.
- Convene grantees and other stakeholders to review lessons learned and identify future directions to better integrate community needs assessment into library and museum service planning.
    - By FY15, IMLS will convene grantees and other stakeholders to review lessons learned from funded initiatives for addressing high-priority community needs.
- Assess impact of grant making and make recommendations for the future.
    - By FY16, IMLS will assess the effectiveness of grant making to address identified community needs and make recommendations for the following five years.

Objective 2.2: Partner with other federal agencies to leverage the resources of libraries and museums in advancing national priorities, including education, health, disaster preparedness, digital literacy and economic and workforce development.

Education, health, disaster preparedness, digital literacy, and economic and workforce development are among the greatest areas of focus for the federal government. They are the drivers of national strength, a healthy economy, and competitiveness in the global knowledge society. Coordination across agencies can broaden impact and reach individuals and communities through diverse channels, helping to deliver services more efficiently and effectively. Museums and libraries are centers of community activity and engagement that can play a key role in providing learning opportunities that enhance skills and connect families and individuals of all ages to critical local, state, and national information and services.

Activities and Evidence of Progress:

- Identify other federal agencies whose interests intersect with national priorities that can be addressed by the work of libraries and museums.
    - By FY13, IMLS will complete a scan of national priorities where the work of museums and libraries intersect with key priorities addressed by other federal agencies.
- Convene meetings with agencies that have intersecting priorities with IMLS, and identify ways for agencies to work together to solve community-wide problems and challenges and identify opportunities for coordination at the state and local levels.
    - By FY14, at least three formal interagency collaborations will be established to advance national priorities, detailing action plans and measurable performance objectives.
- Develop action plans to reduce barriers and maximize opportunities for state and local coordination of services that include formal partnerships, interagency agreements, complementary grant programs, or other formal interagency collaborations.
    - By FY15, IMLS will assess progress made in formal collaborations with IMLS; identify barriers to progress and develop strategies to address those barriers.
- Assess progress made and develop recommendations for the next five years.
    - By FY16, IMLS will assess the effectiveness of its interagency collaborations and develop recommendations for the following five years.

Objective 2.3: Ensure that public and private sector leaders have the information they need to make strategic policy and investment decisions that leverage the infrastructure and expertise of museums and libraries.

Museums and libraries are unique public gathering spaces with the resources, expertise, and infrastructure to enhance community development initiatives. Many have built strong and trusted community relationships with their public. Connecting museum and library leaders with local officials, chambers of commerce, foundations, and other private and public sector leaders can bring valuable perspectives and institutional knowledge to public and private sector decision making and problem solving.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Develop a taxonomy to categorize projects, to better identify target populations served and substantive areas of work, and to highlight the value of IMLS-funded investments and their intersection with other complementary public and private sector efforts.
    - By FY13, 70 percent of IMLS grants from FY2005 through 2011 will be categorized by project taxonomy and available on the IMLS web site.
- Modify grant forms to require current and future grantees to align applications to this taxonomy so that IMLS project data can readily demonstrate project impact.
    - By FY14, 90 percent of IMLS grants will identify their projects according the standardized project taxonomy.
- Develop research products targeted to public and private sector leaders, to identify successful practices and partnerships among museums, libraries, and public and private partners that address key national issues and highlight the value of museum and library participation in community-wide services.
- Promote research and best practice assessments that demonstrate to state and local policy makers in coordination with stakeholders in the museums and library sectors the key roles that museums and libraries play.
    - By FY16, more than 70 percent of database users will report satisfaction with the taxonomy and the availability of IMLS grant information for addressing their needs.
- Increase information sharing with city, county, and state officials as well as private funders and the general public about results of IMLS-funded projects that address community-wide issues.
- Assess progress made and develop recommendations for the following five years.

Strategic Goal #3

IMLS supports exemplary stewardship of museum and library collections and promotes the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage.

Access to museum and library collections helps to fuel innovation, inspire the development of new knowledge, and increase global understanding. Too many of the collections held in U.S. libraries and museums are at risk and in need of proper storage, emergency planning, and conservation treatment. IMLS is helping these institutions to embrace new opportunities to digitize and share their collections and develop new standards and protocols to preserve and provide access to "born digital" data and objects.

The collections held in public trust in our museums, libraries, and archives are our national memory; they connect us to the cultural, artistic, historical, natural, and scientific understandings that constitute our heritage. To provide wide accessibility to these materials, high standards and best practices in collections management and preservation are essential.

Many of the tangible collections in the nation's museums and libraries need treatment, proper housing, and documentation. Libraries, museums, and archives lack sufficient resources to address these needs. The majority of collecting institutions still lack emergency plans and trained staff to address disaster preparedness.

Digital formats are increasingly important for producing, sharing, and using information and knowledge. Online and networked digital information dramatically lowers traditional barriers to access and use of content and greatly expands the possibilities of who can use it and what they can do with it. Digital content, particularly born-digital data and information, is at great risk of immediate loss and inaccessibility because digital data are increasingly stored in highly mutable and extremely fragile formats. If humankind is to reap the full benefit of these resources, there is a great need for collecting institutions to better manage and preserve them.

Libraries and museums use their collections to inspire learning; foster creativity and innovation; and connect people to their collective past, present, and future. Professional management, conservation, and access mechanisms are essential to our national and individual potential for education, innovation, economic advantage, civic participation, and social well-being.

IMLS is proud to be partnering with seven national and international organizations as sponsors of the **Digging into Data** Challenge. As the world becomes increasingly digital, new techniques will be needed to search, analyze, and understand these everyday materials. Digging into Data challenges the research community to help create the new research infrastructure for 21st century scholarship.

Connecting to Collections

In response to the alarming findings of the Heritage Health Index, the IMLS launched Connecting to Collections, a call to action to help libraries, museums and archives:

- Give priority to providing safe conditions for the collections they hold in trust.
- Develop emergency plans.
- Hold staff responsible for collections care.
- Encourage private and public sector support for collections care.

IMLS provides federal leadership to share and promote effective practices across states and other cooperating entities. IMLS programs help to leverage local dollars and strengthen partnerships to support management, care, and access to collections and to the information, meaning, and content they represent. IMLS has made significant investments over the past five years through its grant programs, national initiatives, and partnerships to foster best practices in collections management, preservation, and digitization. Having gained this expertise, IMLS must develop effective regional and national strategies for collections care and access to content.

Objective 3.1: Support the care and management of the nation's collections, both material and living, to expand and sustain access for current and future generations.

According to the 2005 Heritage Health Index, "More than 4.8 billion artifacts are held in public trust by more than 30,000 archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, scientific research collections, and archaeological repositories in the United States. They are visited more than 2.5 billion times a year. These artifacts embody the richness and diversity of our heritage. They include rare books and manuscripts, photographs, documents, sound recordings, moving images, digital materials, art, historic and ethnographic objects, archeological artifacts, and natural science specimens."

Essential activities of stewardship, preservation, and conservation serve the learning needs of current and future publics by making collections widely and safely accessible. Nationwide strategies for collections care must facilitate best practices and systematic, holistic, logical approaches to the conservation, preservation, and documentation of both tangible and digital collections to sustain and improve public access.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Raise awareness at local, state, and regional levels regarding the importance of collections care and conservation for libraries, archives, and museums.
- Continue to support a comprehensive approach to collections care that includes assessment and prioritization, collections management, environmental controls, and treatment.
- Building on IMLS's successful work in its "Connecting to Collections" initiative, support the training of cultural heritage professionals who can share knowledge, skills, and expertise among museums, libraries, and archives.
    - By FY13, IMLS will develop an agency action plan to support training in collections care, with measurable objectives.
- Work with relevant organizations to publish and share best practice guidelines for the digitization of collections.
- Work with relevant organizations to publish and share guidelines for the digital curation (management and preservation) of collections.
    - By FY13, IMLS and partner organizations will publish and share consensus-based guidelines on the digitization and digital curation of collections.
- Sustain and expand funding for the digitization of museum, library, and archive collections with an emphasis on the adoption of standardized best practices.

    - By FY14, 80 percent of digitization applicants will include standardized best practices as part of their digitization project proposals. Assess progress made and develop recommendations for the subsequent five years.
    - By FY16, IMLS will complete assessment of progress made on digitization, digital curation, and staff development objectives, and make recommendations for the following five years.

Objective 3.2: Develop and implement a nationwide strategy to expand public access to the information, meaning, and content found in museum and library collections.

The work of museums and libraries in collections management, preservation, and digitization has often been sporadic and disconnected. In digitizing museum collections, in particular, there is a gap in standardized policies and practices throughout the field. There is much to be learned from the library community and important opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and skill among the library, archives, and museum sectors.

A nationwide strategy will make best use of limited resources, raise public awareness, and create a consistent message to support the need for compatible systems to enhance access to information, meaning, and other content found in collections.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Analyze IMLS-funded statewide planning and implementation grant results to document and disseminate findings and replicable practices.
- Convene statewide implementation grantees to share knowledge, challenges, and best practices, and to facilitate regional working groups to continue exchanges.
    - By FY14, IMLS will complete analysis and convene state and national stakeholders to define the national strategy to further expand access to museum and library collections.
- Build stronger communities of practice among museums, libraries, and other entities to document and share best practices in collections care and public access.
- Conduct research into the state of museum digitization practices and needs assessment.
- Convene public and private organizations to address global issues relating to digital content management and access.
    - By FY15, IMLS will publish a nationwide strategy with measurable objectives and regional benchmarks for progress in improving the nation's care for and access to museum and library collections.
- Partner with other federal agencies and public and private organizations to expand support for museums and libraries in carrying out stewardship to achieve the highest standards in care of collections.
- Assess progress made and develop recommendations for the following five years.

Strategic Goal #4

IMLS advises the President and Congress on plans, policies, and activities to sustain and increase public access to information and ideas through libraries and museums

From its founding, our nation has recognized that access to and use of information benefits the American public as well as the broader global community by promoting the advancement of knowledge, cultural understanding, civic engagement, economic growth, and the general welfare of society. Information needs are even more pronounced in the global information economy, where creating, accessing, utilizing, sharing, managing, and preserving information and knowledge are necessary to enable individuals and communities to achieve their potential and participate fully in society. Information policy is developed in a global context; the policies of our international colleagues can impact information access in the United States, as our policies can have international impacts.

In an economy powered by knowledge, libraries and museums play essential roles in ensuring equitable access to information. New technologies are changing the ways in which people access and use information. Without careful attention to the means by which the United States promotes equitable access, the foundation of our economy, our democracy, and quality of life are at risk.

Although the use of information technology is increasing in the United States, we are behind many other nations. The government and private sectors face difficult decisions about how to create and sustain library, museum, and information access. They need data about the library and museum sectors as well as analysis that examines public need for and use of museum and library services to make strategic policy decisions that keep our democracy and economy strong.

The provision of museum, library, and information services is affected by a wide range of policy areas, including telecommunications, intellectual property, and workforce development, and the IMLS actively coordinates with federal partners on these issues. To extend and improve the nation's museum, library, and information services, the Museum and Library Services Act authorizes IMLS to carry out policy research, analysis, and data collection. These activities are conducted in ongoing collaboration with national, state, regional, and other agencies and organizations. Specifically these activities are intended to

Creating Digital Communities
In response to the National Broadband Plan's recommendations for broadband adoption and use, IMLS is developing tools to help communities raise awareness about barriers to access and to help community leaders develop plans and take action so that everyone in the community can benefit from the economic, civic, and educational opportunities made possible by broadband technologies.

Public access computers in U.S. public libraries continue to be in high demand according to ***Who's in the Queue: Public Access Computer Users,*** a new IMLS research brief. People with and without access at home are going to the library to complete school assignments, find a job, learn more about health and wellness issues, access government information, and much more.

1. identify national needs for and trends in museum, library, and information services;
2. measure and report on the impact and effectiveness of museum, library, and information services throughout the United States, including the impact of federal programs authorized under this Act;
3. identify best practices; and
4. develop plans to improve museum, library, and information services of the United States and to strengthen national, state, local, regional, and international communications and cooperative networks.

Further, the Act provides the IMLS director with responsibility for developing and implementing policy to ensure the availability of museum, library, and information services adequate to meet the essential information, education, research, economic, cultural, and civic needs of the people of the United States.

In carrying out these responsibilities, the Director advises the President, Congress, and other federal agencies and offices on museum, library, and information services to ensure the creation, preservation, organization, and dissemination of knowledge; engages federal, state, and local governmental agencies and private entities in assessing the museum, library, and information services needs of the people of the United States; coordinates the development of plans, policies, and activities to meet such needs effectively; carries out programs of research and development, data collection, and financial assistance to extend and improve the museum, library, and information services of the people of the United States; and ensures that museum, library, and information services are fully integrated into the information and education infrastructures of the United States.

Objective 4.1: Promote federal policies that improve access to information services for underserved communities and help to remove barriers that prevent individuals from using these services effectively.

Ready access to information services makes it easier for people to succeed in school, find a job, obtain government services and health information, and create new ways to access and use information. Information access affects every aspect of society, from public safety and cultural understanding to health care. It makes businesses more innovative, increases the quality of civic life, and empowers the public to participate fully and meaningfully in public decision making.

The federal government has long recognized the public service role of museums and libraries in providing equitable and convenient access to information, paying particular attention to underserved communities. Most recently, Congress directed the Federal Communications Commission to develop a National Broadband Plan (NBP) to ensure that every American has "access to broadband capability." Issued in March 2010, the NBP noted the significant individual and societal costs of "digital exclusion" and warned that without action, these costs would grow. The plan recommended that IMLS take the lead in supporting libraries and community-based organizations as they improve digital inclusiveness.

IMLS must ensure that underserved communities and individuals with special needs have equitable and seamless access to information. Equitable access to information is a key factor in ensuring success for all members of society.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Survey challenges in access to information for underserved communities and differently abled individuals.
    - By FY13, IMLS will develop and report baseline measures for assessing challenges to information access for underserved communities and differently abled individuals.
    - By FY14, IMLS will develop an action plan to create and promote programs and initiatives that remove barriers to information access for target populations.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of programs in removing barriers to information access for underserved communities and differently abled individuals.
    - By FY15, IMLS will produce follow-up reports monitoring change in information access for underserved communities and differently abled individuals.
    - By FY16, IMLS will complete initial evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies and develop recommendations for the following five years.
- Advise the President, Congress, and other federal agencies and encourage collaboration on the federal level to promote fully equitable public access to information.

Objective 4.2: Identify trends and provide consistent and reliable data on museum and library services and use to ensure that federal policy makers, public and private sector leaders, and the public are aware of the critical role that libraries and museums play in our democratic society.

IMLS is the federal source for reliable, timely information about characteristics of the library and museum sectors and their use. In 2007, responsibility for collecting and managing the long-standing federal public and state library statistics program was transferred to IMLS. There is no reliable source for information about the characteristics of the museum sector, and IMLS is exploring the feasibility of collecting data about the U.S. museum sector.

In a short time, IMLS has taken a leadership role in providing data and analysis to inform policy makers at all levels. IMLS has released analysis in the following areas:

- Impacts of Budget Cuts on State Libraries
- Distribution of Public Access Broadband by Rural, Suburban, and Urban Areas
- Demographics of Public Library Computer Users
- Ten Years of Increasing Public Demand for Library Services and Decreasing Budgets
- Characteristics of Public Funding for Museums in the United States

The findings of these analyses have been used by Congress, federal agencies (including the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Commerce), foundations (including the Pew Research Center, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Mac Arthur Foundation), and local communities to deepen their knowledge and inform their investments regarding libraries and museums.

IMLS is committed to providing robust and accessible statistical reporting on the museum and library sector that can not only inform agency decision making, but also provide a foundation of statistical data for analysis and decision making for researchers and leaders in the museum and library sectors.

Museums Count
IMLS is developing a web-based census of museums in the United States, called "Museums Count." This project will produce an online, publicly available and searchable database updated on an annual basis.

"Museums Count" will enable the field to make statements about the capacity of museums in a city, state, or region and establish the known universe of institutions to inform museum research at the local and national level.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Collect and disseminate data on the public use of museum and library resources to identify trends and potential gaps in the availability and use of museum and library services.
    - By the end of FY12, IMLS will issue annual reports on the availability of museum and library services and demographics of users and nonusers to identify gaps.
    - By the end of FY12, IMLS will partner with stakeholders to complete a comprehensive review of the public and state library statistical collections.
    - By the end of FY12, IMLS reports on the rate of library and museum use by segments of the U.S. population will be available to the public.
- Increase the timeliness and availability of museum and library statistical reports to the public.
    - By FY13, IMLS will initiate annual user surveys to assess satisfaction and effectiveness of statistical products and reports.
- Develop state and regional reports on service and financial trends in museum and library services.
    - By FY14, IMLS will broaden current statistical research to include periodic, cross-sectional surveys on priority topics.
    - By FY14, IMLS will implement annual national, regional, and state reports on the state of the museum sector.
- Disseminate IMLS statistical data in a variety of formats to ease accessibility and promote use by lay audiences.
    - By FY14, all IMLS statistical collections on library and museum services and use will be integrated into federal statistical repositories.
    - By FY16, IMLS will assess the ability of the agency and other decision makers to use the statistical information to make timely, informed decisions and will make recommendations for potentially altering the program in the following five years.

Objective 4.3: Support and extend a national digital information infrastructure that leverages libraries and museums as key partners and providers of reliable, persistent, and widely available access to digital information and services.

Collaborative, shared, and sustainable solutions will be required to ensure that our nation's digital information and cultural heritage remain persistent and available as resources that support the fullest range of information needs. To fully promote greater creativity and exploit opportunities for innovation and leadership in learning and workforce development, communities and individuals need a robust, reliable, and widely available national digital infrastructure. This infrastructure will greatly increase opportunities for discovery, understanding, and creative re-use of information.

Developing such a national digital information infrastructure will require a large supporting network of trustworthy cooperating and contributing organizations who share compatible missions, values, and commitments to learning, workforce development, and public enrichment in an information-based society. Libraries and museums are trusted community anchor organizations that have demonstrated a strong commitment to building and maintaining useful digital collections and services that support all members of an information society.

Digital formats are increasingly important for producing, sharing, and using information and knowledge. Online and networked digital information dramatically lowers traditional barriers to access and use of content and greatly expands the possibilities for who can use it and what they can do with it. Digital content, particularly born-digital data and information, is at great risk of immediate loss and inaccessibility because digital data are increasingly stored in highly mutable and extremely fragile formats. If humankind is to reap the full benefit of these resources, there is a great need for collecting institutions to better manage and preserve them.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Work with relevant experts to identify necessary components and partners for a national digital information infrastructure, identify which parts already exist wholly or partially, and identify key gaps.
    - By FY13, IMLS will complete an action plan that (1) coordinates with similar efforts occurring in the federal government and elsewhere and (2) aligns a share of IMLS grant programs in support of development and promotion of a national digital infrastructure.
- More closely align and coordinate IMLS activities with external concurrent and complementary national and statewide efforts, and continue ongoing engagement with activities such as the National Digital Stewardship Alliance, the Interagency Working Group on Digital Data, and the Digital Public Library of America.
- Continue to focus relevant grant programs and other activities to emphasize and encourage key activities of building and extending a national digital information infrastructure.
    - By FY16, IMLS will assess progress made and develop recommendations for the following five years.

Strategic Goal #5

IMLS achieves excellence in public management and performs as a model organization through strategic alignment of IMLS resources and prioritization of programmatic activities, maximizing value for the American public.

IMLS continues its commitment to improving administrative efficiencies, focusing on its high-quality stewardship of public funds and outstanding public service. Traditionally, IMLS's grant making activities have been largely informed by trends in the library and museum sectors. The agency has begun to use social media and other "citizen-science-model" strategies to gather information on need, focusing on the services for which libraries, museums, and archives have a proven interest and positive track record. Our newly strengthened Office of Policy, Research and Evaluation remains committed to the formal collection of nonpartisan, evidence-based data to inform grant-making priorities. Our Office of Strategic Partnerships has demonstrated success in identifying productive partnerships to strengthen IMLS impact and leverage taxpayer dollars.

Since establishing IMLS's **Open Government Plan** in April 2010, the agency has taken steps to increase public participation in IMLS activities through the IMLS UpNext wiki on the Future of Museums and Libraries, the IMLS Twitter feed, the UpNext Blog, and a public comment period for the Strategic Plan through the IdeaScale platform.

IMLS has done significant work in promoting the need for a 21st century workforce in our libraries and museums. The IMLS workforce is a valuable asset and critical resource in achieving our goals; and the agency is committed to providing a learning environment for all staff that is based on continuous improvement in all our activities.

An expanded emphasis on monitoring and evaluation will further the agency's ability to understand, communicate, and increase the value of its service to the public, and will help grantees and future applicants strengthen and disseminate the results of their projects. Through efficiency, fiscal accountability, and a strengthened emphasis on impact and transparency, we will be well positioned to achieve our goal of excellence in the management of public funding.

Objective 5.1: Develop an exemplary model of efficient federal grants management.

IMLS is one of 26 federal grant-making agencies and is the primary source of federal support for the nation's museums and libraries. Efficient grants management makes better use of federal tax dollars, increasing the reach and impact of IMLS-funded activities in museums, archives, and libraries. Meeting this goal will further IMLS's efforts to meet its mission and vision, and serve as a basis for achieving all other IMLS goals.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Conduct process review of grant making across programs to identify efficiencies in IMLS grant review, grant management, and monitoring processes, and make appropriate changes based on the process review.
    - By FY14, IMLS will achieve a 40 percent decrease in the time to process an application from receipt of proposal to decision; by FY16, it will achieve a further 10 percent decrease.
    - By FY14, IMLS will achieve a 15 percent decrease in amount of time staff spend processing grant applications; by FY16 it will achieve a further 20 percent decrease.
- Transition to an enhanced grants management system that will increase performance monitoring capability, improve communications with applicants and grantees, fast-track grant award processing, promote greater technical and financial stewardship, and reduce inefficiencies and costs associated with delayed project implementation and repeated project extensions.
    - By FY14, IMLS will achieve a 20 percent decrease in number of grants that receive one or more extensions; by FY16, it will achieve a further 30 percent decrease.
    - By FY14, IMLS will establish baseline measures for grantee satisfaction with IMLS's new grant management information system.
    - By FY16, IMLS will achieve a 20 percent increase from baseline grantee satisfaction.
    - Develop online training for grantee reporting.
    - By FY13, IMLS will develop online training webinars for posting to the IMLS web site.
    - By FY13, IMLS will develop customer satisfaction surveys to accompany training webinars and collect baseline measures for grantee satisfaction.
    - By FY14, IMLS will have established a customer satisfaction baseline for online report training and will establish new targets for succeeding years.

Objective 5.2: Cultivate a culture of planning, evaluation, and evidence-based practice to maximize the impact of public investments.

The use of accurate and reliable data plays a critical role in increasing the transparency and efficiency of IMLS programs and in enhancing the agency's capacity to gauge program effectiveness. Sharing data with the public and other federal agencies helps to achieve better outcomes for the American public through more accurate evaluation of policy options, improved stewardship of taxpayer dollars, reduced paperwork burdens, and more coordinated delivery of public services. As advances in technology enhance tools for data sharing, IMLS will seek new approaches for identifying and sharing high-value data responsibly and appropriately to inform public policy decisions and improve program effectiveness.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Establish a data release and review policy.
- Use social media to increase the level and quality of dialogue with IMLS.
- Increase transparency and accessibility of IMLS data.

    - By FY14, IMLS will implement an interactive online clearinghouse for sharing planning and evaluation information for museum and library services.
    - By FY15, IMLS will conduct annual stakeholder/user satisfaction assessments through the planning and evaluation clearinghouse.
- Redesign performance reporting forms for discretionary grant programs in a manner that limits reporting to outcome measures that align with program priorities and relieves the overall reporting burden on grantees.
    - By FY13, revised planning and performance monitoring protocols will be implemented for 60 percent of the IMLS grant portfolio.
    - By FY15, planning and performance monitoring protocols will be implemented for 80 percent of the grant portfolio.
    - By FY16, planning and performance monitoring protocols will be implemented for 100 percent of the grant portfolio.
- Work with state library administrative agencies to develop a robust measurement system that tracks state (or local) progress toward the goal(s) of their five-year plans in alignment with IMLS's strategic plan, identifies effective and ineffective strategies, and ensures that cross-state data are standardized.
    - By FY12, 100 percent of the business plan for Grants to States performance monitoring will be complete.
    - By FY14, 100 percent of all states and jurisdictions will participate in implementing new performance reporting protocols.
    - By FY15, 100 percent of first annual reports will be completed using new performance reporting protocols with the establishment of baseline measures for guiding future assessments.
    - By FY16, 100 percent of three-year reports will be completed using new performance reporting protocols.
    - By FY16, a recommendations and best practices report will be developed for the forthcoming five years.

Objective 5.3: Promote greater transparency and accountability of IMLS operations.

Public trust demands transparency and accountability to ensure federal dollars are wisely invested. At each stage in the award process (pre- to post-award), transparency and accountability are essential. The evaluation and analysis of each program, including individual grants, are critical components in ensuring agency goals and programmatic objectives are achieved. The value of this work is directly tied to the manner and extent to which it is shared with the public.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Develop a robust plan for sharing grant information with the public, including applications, grant performance reporting, and post-award analysis of success in meeting objectives.
    - By FY14, at least 70 percent of reports from FY08 to FY13 will be posted on the IMLS web site; by FY16, 100 percent of reports from FY08 to FY15 will be posted on the IMLS web site.

- Initiate regular applicant and grantee customer satisfaction surveys with application and reporting guidelines.
    - By FY14, IMLS will establish a baseline measure of applicant and grantee satisfaction with IMLS grant-making processes; by FY16, IMLS will achieve at least a 20 percent increase in applicant and grantee satisfaction with IMLS grant-making processes.
- Develop and implement an improved, regularized customer satisfaction survey process for reviewers to monitor the efficiency of the review process and identify ways to improve IMLS grant making.
    - By FY14, IMLS will a establish baseline measure of satisfaction for reviewers to report satisfaction with IMLS grant-making processes; by FY16, IMLS will achieve at least a 10 percent increase in reviewer satisfaction with IMLS grant-making processes.

Objective 5.4: Encourage and promote an engaged and energized IMLS workforce.

IMLS's greatest assets in moving forward successfully with this strategic plan are its employees. They are dedicated to the agency's mission, its constituents, and the impact that federal dollars can have on the American public through support of museums and libraries. IMLS can successfully support its mission by maintaining and improving the IMLS work environment; empowering, engaging and energizing staff; and ensuring that they have the skills, knowledge, and resources to carry out the agency's goals.

Activities and evidence of progress:

- Assess the success of IMLS staff in supporting the strategic plan goals; ensure staff resources are strategically aligned to IMLS priorities to maximize the use of federal dollars.
- Increase use of IMLS staff library, museum, archive, and grant expertise to further excellence in agency operations.
- Develop agency-wide training that is tied to agency mission and goals.
    - By FY12, IMLS will identify high-priority training areas for all IMLS job classifications.
    - By FY14, IMLS will have at least 90 percent employee participation in IMLS-mandated high-priority trainings.
- Centralize IMLS training priorities to promote greater personal learning and development, increasing our subject matter experts to further the agency's mission and goals.
    - By FY12, IMLS will complete a plan with measurable objectives for engagement of the IMLS workforce.
    - By FY14, at least 60 percent of the employee engagement plan's objectives will have been achieved.
    - By FY16, at least 80 percent of the employee engagement plan's objectives will have been achieved.

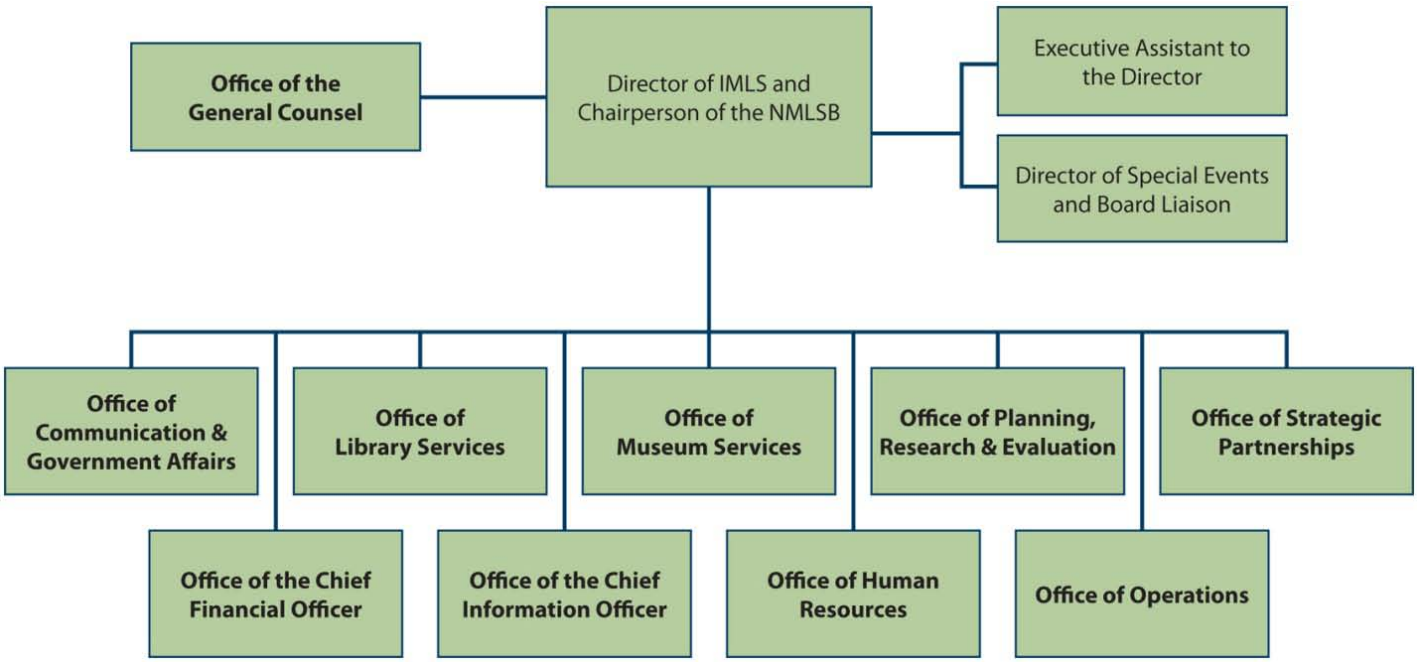
Assessment Methodology

This plan presents two evaluation approaches. First, there are formative evaluation strategies. These are targeted at improving the effectiveness of adopted strategies and actions based on continued assessments of a series of sequenced short-term and long-term objectives. Formative evaluations do not intend to assess whether a strategy is worthwhile. Rather, they seek ways to increase the effectiveness of any selected strategy. Summative evaluation approaches are targeted at accountability. They seek to judge whether a strategy, goal, or objective is worthwhile to continue, and if not, whether IMLS should alternatively withdraw or reduce resources devoted to it. As a general rule, formative evaluation dominates the assessments done in the early and middle parts of five-year strategic plans. By contrast, summative evaluation approaches dominate the latter part of the strategic plan, when IMLS decision makers will be faced with developing the next strategic plan using evidence from the strategies adopted here to identify what should be expanded, sustained, decreased, or withdrawn.

There is one particular challenge in incorporating this methodology into this strategic plan that deserves explicit mention. At present, IMLS does not have enough information to set measurable baselines in supplementing targeted short-term and long-term objectives for the goals articulated here. Instead, the planned approach is to continuously build the capacity of the agency and its partners to use performance-based results management to build such a capacity in the next five years. The approach adopted in this plan—conduct baseline research, communicate, align lessons to grant making, build capacities to successfully implement grant-making (and other) institutional efforts to achieve identified ends, and continued reassessment and adaptation—will work only if there are measurable objectives with metrics in place.

The logic of the strategic plan is to develop focused business plans for targeted grant programs and agency initiatives and partnerships that include measurable short-term and long-term objectives scaled to grant-making processes and reporting. With the transition from a business plan to grant making, attention turns critically to application of focused metrics that align results in performance of grantee projects with the desired results of IMLS programs, partnerships, initiatives, and other organizational efforts.

Appendix A. IMLS Organizational Chart



Appendix B. Strategic Planning Phases

The strategic planning team took several steps to complete this plan. The information in each phase was collected from a variety of sources.

Table 1: Strategic Planning Phases

Phase	Description
1. Environmental Assessment (Internal stakeholder's perspective)	The first step in the developmental process was to assess the external environment in which IMLS operates. This assessment included an interview with the IMLS director and three focus groups with the IMLS leadership team to examine the Political, Economic, Social, and Technological (commonly called a "PEST analysis") issues that are having an impact on IMLS (now and in the future). The analysis of the organizational context for IMLS included an examination of external factors as well as internal factors. In preparation for the interview and focus groups, carefully constructed protocols were reviewed and approved by the IMLS leadership team. Following the interview and focus groups, a detailed thematic analysis was conducted and reviewed by IMLS.
2. Environmental Assessment (External perspective)	Following the analysis and compilation of the PEST data, a meeting was held on June 13, 2011, with the National Museum and Library Services Board (NMLSB) members. The board members were provided a copy of the PEST thematic analysis in advance of the meeting and asked to review the data. During the meeting, board members validated the data and offered recommendations for clarifying information. The board members also participated in a visioning exercise in which they crafted descriptions of what a successful IMLS would "look like" in approximately 10 years. Immediately following the NMLSB meeting, an updated environmental scan document was presented to members of the library and museum public. This meeting was an open invitation to all members of the public and was attended by approximately 75 attendees. Audience members were encouraged to provide comments on the PEST data and then were led through a visioning exercise similar to the one that NMLSB members had participated in earlier that day.

Phase	Description
3. Strategic Planning Workshop	An intensive strategic planning workshop was held on July 5, 6, and 8, 2011, in Washington, DC. Twelve IMLS staff members and two NMLSB members participated in the workshop. They examined the data from the environmental scan and from the public comment meetings (e.g., the vision statements crafted by the public attendees and the NMLSB). Participants also reviewed lists of IMLS stakeholders and mandates. After these data were reviewed, the team participated in a drawing exercise to help them visualize what an ideally successful IMLS of the future might look like, given all of the information they had reviewed so far. Next, participants conducted a "SWOT analysis" to capture internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. Many of the external opportunities and threats were generated by incorporating data from the environmental scan. The information from the SWOT analysis was then organized into a two-by-two matrix that facilitated paring of external and internal factors in the four quadrants of the matrix. For example, in the "future quadrant," workshop participants considered the intersection of external opportunities with internal strengths. Essentially, they considered the question, "which of our internal strengths could we leverage in order to capitalize on an external opportunity?" Once these pairings were identified, strategic questions were formulated. The answers to these strategic questions formed the basis for the goals and objectives that IMLS would need to pursue in order to achieve its mission and vision. Further refinement of IMLS goals and objectives was conducted by IMLS planners in the weeks that followed the workshop. The workshop concluded by crafting an IMLS mission and vision statement using interactive activities that helped participants identify the most essential images that must be present in these statements.
4. Public Comment Period	Members of the public were solicited to provide feedback on the goals that IMLS created in the strategic planning workshop. They were given the opportunity to contribute and vote on ideas to provide a fresh perspective on the goals that would ultimately affect their organizations and work. This process was completed with the IdeaScale social networking tool.

Phase	Description
5. Strategic Map Development	Following the workshop, the IMLS team took the initial goals and objectives and created "strategic maps" that identified the proper sequencing of activities and objectives to achieve the higher-level goals. This was done by identifying a goal hierarchy and by considering the resources, including time necessary to achieve each goal. Underlying each strategic map is an implicit "theory of change" that reflects the mechanisms of cause and effect that IMLS intends to employ to attain its goals and objectives. Development of the strategic maps also facilitated the refinement of the goals and objectives developed in the workshop. Content from strategic maps is captured in an "Activities and Evidence of Progress" statement under each goal.
6. Metrics Development	After refinement of the goals and objectives, IMLS identified metrics and benchmarks by which progress toward and achievement of goals and objectives could be gauged.

Appendix C. IMLS Mandates

Mandates describe a collection of policies, rules, and legislation that must be taken into account by IMLS when making key decisions. These mandates include the legislative requirements that were established at the foundation of the organization, as well as changes that occurred as the organization matured. The following represents a sample of the principle mandates that were identified during the strategic planning process; however, there is clear recognition that many other mandates may affect the organization at different times.

Table 2: Formal Mandates

Source	Formal Mandate	Purpose
U.S. Code	Museum and Library Services Act (1996, 2003, 2010)	Authorization for IMLS and its activities. General provisions (information policy), the Library Services and Technology Act, Museum Services Act
U.S. Code	National Museum for African American History and Culture Act	Influences IMLS programs and policies
U.S. Code	The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act	Established the IMLS within the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities
U.S. Congress	E-Government Act	Establishes standards for management and promotion of electronic government services and processes
Executive Branch	Open Government Directive	Specifies principles of transparency, openness, participation, and collaboration between the U.S. government and U.S. citizens
U.S. Code	GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act) 1993, 2010	Requires federal agencies to establish standards measuring their performance and effectiveness
U.S. Code	Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996	To advance federal financial management by ensuring that federal financial management systems provide accurate, reliable, and timely financial management information to the government's managers.
U.S. Code	Federal Information Security Management Act	Provides a comprehensive framework for ensuring the effectiveness of information security controls over information resources that support federal operations and assets

Source	Formal Mandate	Purpose
Office of Personnel Management	HCAAF (Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework)	Strategic human capital management agenda to ensure agency mission requirements drive all human resource activity
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)	OMB Circular A130	U.S. government information policy

Appendix D: Public Engagement in the IMLS Strategic Planning Process

IMLS employed a social media instrument, IdeaScale, to both increase engagement and obtain focused, effective feedback from the public regarding the critical core component of its strategic plan: the IMLS strategic goals. IdeaScale is an online tool used by researchers to structure discussions that provide feedback (ideas) on specific topics. Data can be collected regarding the number of ideas posted by users about a topic, the number of additional users who comment on the ideas, as well as the number of users who vote positively or negatively on the topic and ideas. The public comment period on the IMLS goals was from July 15 until August 18, 2011. Comments received during the first two weeks are analyzed below; during this period, 125 ideas were submitted with 528 comments.

To provide the public with information about the IMLS strategic plan under development, the five strategic goals developed in the July workshop were listed in IdeaScale as "Campaign" headings and the strategic questions corresponding to each goal were included to prompt public response. In addition, a sixth open-ended question, "Have an idea that doesn't fit?" was asked in order to generate input on topics not covered in the goals. The strategic goals and questions were listed as follows:

Campaign 1 – Promote effective public access to physical and digital content.
Corresponds to Strategic Question 1 – How can IMLS leverage its resources, position, reputation, and relationships to promote effective public access to physical and digital content?

Campaign 2 – Promote policies that sustain information access for the American public.
Corresponds to Strategic Question 2 – How can IMLS leverage its resources, position, reputation, and relationships to promote information services policies that sustain access to the American public?

Campaign 3 – Support lifelong learning for a competitive workforce and engaged public.
Corresponds to Strategic Question 3 – How can IMLS leverage its resources, position, reputation, and relationships to support learners throughout their lifetime in order to produce a competitive workforce and an engaged public?

Campaign 4 – Promote museums and libraries as community anchor institutions.
Corresponds to Strategic Question 4 – How can IMLS leverage its resources, position, reputation, and relationships to help museums and libraries strengthen their roles as community anchor institutions to enhance the vibrancy and sustainability of their communities?

Campaign 5 – Model excellence in public management.
Corresponds to Strategic Question 5 – How can IMLS model excellence in public management and effectively align and leverage its resources to maximize the value of taxpayer investments?

Campaign 6 – Have an idea that doesn't fit?

The responses to these questions generated an Excel spreadsheet listing responses ("Ideas") to each question. All generated Ideas were then commented and voted on by other public users of the instrument. Using the Excel output file, the top 20 comments and suggestions (Ideas) for each goal were reviewed. These ideas and the workshop goals used in the IdeaScale effort were then aligned to refined versions of the workshop goals that had been developed by IMLS in parallel to the IdeaScale process. A high-level analysis of the responses received for each workshop goal is presented below. The final version of each goal, flagged as "IMLS Goal" and printed in italics, is also given. The topics listed under each goal are the general themes expressed by the user-generated ideas. These themes may be too specific to incorporate into the final strategic plan, but they provide insight into the concerns and subjects of public interest.

Campaign 1 – Promote effective public access to physical and digital content.
IMLS Goal: U.S. libraries and museums care for collections and use the power of technology to create and share digital content.

- Number of ideas generated by this goal: 37
- Number of ideas voted in the top 20: 3
- Topics of these ideas:
    - Preservation
    - Address the unique needs of each state
    - Develop and expand information infrastructure

Campaign 2 – Promote policies that sustain information access for the American public.
IMLS Goal: U.S. policies sustain and increase public access to information and ideas.

- Number of ideas generated by this goal: 8
- Number of ideas voted in the top 20: 3
- Topics of these ideas:
    - Raise awareness of national issues
    - Promote legislation that preserves access to information
    - Help libraries make transition to downloadable e-content

Campaign 3 – Support lifelong learning for a competitive workforce and engaged public.
IMLS Goal: The American public has engaging, empowering learning experiences in libraries and museums that prepare them to be active, creative, productive, and knowledgeable participants in their local communities and our global society.

- Number of ideas generated by this goal: 23
- Number of ideas voted in the top 20: 5
- Topics of these ideas:
    - Lifelong learning essential for children becoming lifelong readers
    - Promote lifelong learning through information literacy
    - Identify and disseminate best practices
    - Forge partnerships
    - Advocate school library programs

Note: This goal generated the most top 20 votes and the most ideas, reflecting a high level of public interest.

Campaign 4 – Promote museums and libraries as community anchor institutions.
IMLS Goal: U.S. museums and libraries are strong community anchors that enhance civic leadership, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality.

- Number of ideas generated by this goal: 16
- Number of ideas voted in the top 20: 5
- Topics of these ideas:
    - Create a culture of planning and evaluation
    - Promote local historical materials
    - Identify, disseminate, and promote adoption of best practices
    - Advance partnerships with federal agencies
    - Build the capacity of the museum and library workforce

Campaign 5 – Model excellence in public management.
IMLS Goal: Achieve excellence in management by strategically aligning IMLS's grant making, research capacity, program development and evaluation, data collection, policy leadership, and partnerships to create value for the American public.

- Number of ideas generated by this goal: 16
- Number of ideas voted in the top 20: 2
- Topics of these ideas:
    - Streamline the grants management process
    - Promote training and communication to create collaborative culture

Further analysis of the IdeaScale results revealed some consistent themes, though the user responses may have expressed common thoughts with different phrasing. Below are the percentages of IdeaScale users who voted for the mentioned themes.

Percent of Users	Theme
15	Funding or providing grant monies for museums and libraries
8	Developing partnerships and collaboration
7	Supporting the development and growth of collections
4	Providing for the preservation of materials
3	Children – specifically, promoting literacy in children or investing in school libraries

All of these themes are covered in the final Strategic Plan at the goal, objective, or implementation strategy level. It is interesting to note users' focus on funding and children. Achieving excellence in grant making is covered by strategic goal 5, but users clearly desire more funding for their programs. Providing children with opportunities to learn through libraries is a major concern for users. This theme is mentioned three times when evaluating the top 20

Ideas and 3 percent voted positively on this topic overall. The final version of strategic goal 1 subsumes this theme in its focus on providing learning experiences in libraries and museums.