

Learning Labs Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Program Contacts:

Nancy Rogers, (202) 653-4714, nrogers@imls.gov

Abigail Swetz, (202) 653-4692, aswetz@imls.gov

Media Contacts:

IMLS Press Contact

(202) 653-4630

Mamie Bittner, mbittner@imls.gov

MacArthur Foundation Press Contact

(312) 726-8000

Jen Humke, jhumke@macfound.org

1. What is the Learning Labs Project?

In support of President Obama's "Educate to Innovate" call to action, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and IMLS are working together to create new youth Learning Labs in libraries and museums across the country. Inspired by the new teen center at the Chicago Public Library called [YOUmedia](#) and the innovative experimentation spaces found in science and technology centers, these labs will help young people become makers and creators of content, rather than just consumers of it.

The design and construction of YOUmedia, which was supported through the MacArthur Foundation's digital media and learning initiative, was guided by research about the role digital media plays in kids' learning today. The new Learning Labs will be part of a network of libraries and museums throughout the country that use best practice principles, based on research and evidence about how young people learn today. The Labs will be spaces for experimentation for young people to engage with digital and traditional media to promote creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on, interest-based learning.

2. How much funding is available?

IMLS and the MacArthur Foundation are launching this project with \$4 million in funding. Funding is taking place in two phases, and two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are being issued:

Cooperator RFP

On January 18, 2011 the "[Cooperator to Manage the National Grant Competition for Learning Labs in Libraries and Museums](#)" RFP was released, with a deadline of February 28, 2011, for funding of up to \$1.5 million. On April 8, 2011, IMLS and the MacArthur Foundation

announced that the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), in partnership with the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), was selected as the cooperating partner.

ULC and ASTC will coordinate and manage the national grant competition that will fund the creation of up to 30 Learning Labs in libraries and museums across the country, as well as provide technical assistance to applicants and awardees; facilitate communication among the network of lab sites; convene grantees; help to define program outcomes; create an evaluation framework; report on the results; and develop and maintain an online toolkit of resources.

RFP for Learning Labs Applicants

In late May 2011, an RFP for “Learning Lab Applications” for eligible library and museum applicants will be issued, with a deadline of late July 2011 for grants of up to \$100,000 each. Selections will be announced in October/November 2011. A second and final deadline will occur in April/May 2012. A total of up to 30 Learning Labs in libraries and museums across the country will be funded over the two rounds of grants.

Eligibility: Applicant eligibility is based on the IMLS National Leadership Grants criteria. Libraries that fulfill the [general criteria for libraries](#) may apply. Museums that fulfill the [general criteria for museums](#) may apply.

3. Where can I get more information?

IMLS Webinar

The project cooperators will host a webinar in advance of the late July 2011 deadline for interested applicants to discuss the grant program, the application process, and respond to inquiries. Please visit the [MacArthur-IMLS Partnership Page](#) for more information in the coming months.

Online

Check the [MacArthur-IMLS Partnership Page](#) for updates [or subscribe to MacArthur Email Updates](#).

Resources

- [MacArthur-IMLS Partnership Page](#): News, multimedia, and other resources.

About the MacArthur Foundation’s Digital Media and Learning Initiative

The MacArthur Foundation’s [digital media and learning initiative](#) aims to determine how digital media are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life. The goal is to build a base of evidence about how young people learn today, in an effort to re-imagine learning in the 21st Century. More information is available at www.macfound.org/education.

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