

Program Overview – Museums for America

Museums for America (MFA) grants support activities that strengthen museums as active resources for lifelong learning, as important institutions in the establishment of livable communities, and as good stewards of the nation's collections. MFA grants can fund both new and ongoing museum activities and programs. Examples include planning, managing and conserving collections, improving public access, training, conducting programmatic research, school and public programming, producing exhibitions, and integrating new or upgraded technologies into a museum's operations.

There are three project categories within the MFA grant program:

Learning Experiences

IMLS places the learner at the center and supports engaging experiences in museums that prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society. Learning Experiences projects provide high-quality, inclusive, accessible, and audience-focused learning opportunities; provide access to collections, information, and educational resources; encourage the use of technologies; and develop programs for specific segments of the public.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Interpretive and educational program research, development, and delivery
- Exhibition research, development, design, and fabrication
- Website and social media content development, design, and delivery
- Publication research, design, and printing
- Training for staff, volunteers, and educators

Community Anchors

IMLS promotes museums as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality. Community Anchors projects harness a museum's expertise, knowledge, physical space, technology, or other resources in order to address a specific need originating in the community. Museums may undertake the project alone or in partnership with one or more community organizations.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Forums for community dialogue
- Community-driven exhibitions and programs
- Community events
- Planning activities
- Technology tools
- Training for staff, volunteers, and interns in community outreach and engagement

Collections Stewardship

IMLS supports exemplary stewardship of museum collections and promotes the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage. Collections Stewardship projects should address high priority collections care or conservation issues.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Planning for collections management, care, and conservation
- Cataloguing, inventorying, documenting, and registering
- Developing and enhancing collections databases
- Conservation surveys
- Conservation treatment
- Conservation environmental improvements for collections storage and exhibit areas
- Conservation research
- Training of staff, volunteers, and interns in collections care, management, and/or conservation