



**Native American/
Native Hawaiian
Museum Services**

**2006
Field Reviewer Handbook**

For information call
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The Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program Review Process

Thank you for offering to serve as a Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services (NANH) field reviewer. We have selected you to review this year's applications because of your professional experience in museums, cultural centers, or professional service organizations that serve museums, as well as your strong understanding of museum or cultural center operations and/or understanding of the creation and development of educational programming, professional development, and related museum services.

The staff at IMLS prepared this handbook specifically for field reviewers to ensure the fair and candid review of all eligible applications. It will provide you with the procedural and technical information you need. Please use it in tandem with this year's *Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Grant Application and Guidelines*.

Even if you have reviewed for other IMLS programs, you should review this booklet since the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program is a new grant offering and differs from other programs in various ways.

Goals of the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program

Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program enables Native American tribes and organizations that primarily serve Native Hawaiians to benefit their communities and audiences through strengthened museum services in the following areas:

Programming

Services and activities that support the educational mission of museums and museum related organizations, including, but not limited to, activities such as:

- Exhibits
- Research and interpretation
- Educational resources such as Web sites, curricula, digital content, and publications
- Educational demonstrations and performances, including workshops, classes, and presentations.

Professional Development

Education or training that builds skills, knowledge or other professional capacity for individuals who provide or manage museum services activities. Individuals can be paid or volunteer, and involved with museum services either currently or in the future. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Creation and offerings of courses, workshops, in-person or distance learning offerings
- Enrollment in courses, workshops, in-person or distance learning offerings

- Attendance at conferences or technical assistance to strengthen museum services and activities
- Organizational support for internships and fellowships (awards not made to individuals)

Enhancement of Museum Services

Support for activities that enable and improve museum services, including, but not limited to:

- Planning, including strategic planning, policy development, and disaster preparedness and risk management
- Improvement implementation, including technology and other resources, equipment purchase, security, public access. Construction projects not allowed.
- Heritage preservation, including collections care and management
- Hiring of temporary or permanent staff to support museum services

Applicants were asked to select one activity category reflecting their project goals. IMLS defined projects or programs in the widest terms possible. Although some applications may touch on all three goals, ultimately the project proposed should focus on the category indicated by the applicant.

Grants are intended to support activities in museums and museum-related organizations, such as cultural centers. However, the applicant is not required to have either entity established in order to apply to this program. For example, the program also supports museum-like activities that are relevant to applicant tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations, such as public programming, collections support, and language preservation.

Eligible Activities

IMLS sees the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program as an investment in strengthening museum services supported by federally recognized tribes and groups established to primarily service Native Hawaiians. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staffing
- Costs related to planning and maintenance of project partnerships
- Staff training
- Purchase of equipment, materials, supplies, or services
- Program development and implementation
- Exhibition research, design, and fabrication
- Travel
- Publications
- Integration of technology into exhibition or educational programs

- Research
- Collections care and management
- Publications
- Strategic planning and disaster preparedness
- Indirect or overhead costs

Grant funds may not be used to support:

- Acquisition of collections
- Ceremonies
- Construction
- Contributions to endowments
- Costs incurred prior to the start of the grant period
- Entertainment
- Social activities

The Program Process

1. Applicants receive the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grant application booklet; they complete the application and submit it to IMLS by the deadline.
2. IMLS receives the applications and checks them for eligibility and completeness.
3. IMLS identifies a pool of available field reviewers. IMLS will assign three museum/cultural center professionals to evaluate each application.
4. IMLS matches grant applications to field reviewers with appropriate expertise.
5. Field reviewers receive the applications, evaluate them, and return their reviews to IMLS.
6. IMLS process comments and scores. Reviewers' scores are mathematically standardized to mitigate the effect of those who always use low or high scores. A single standardized score is produced from each reviewer for each application. This score is used to rank the applications. The ranking is used to determine which applications are sent to the sitting review panel. The panel will make final recommendations based on the field review comments as well as their own experience.
7. The NANH sitting review panel meets to provide a second level of review and make final funding recommendations. The review panel is comprised of museum and cultural center professionals that have experience in tribal and Native Hawaiian museums, and are familiar with associated cultural issues. They will meet in Washington, DC, in July after the field review period. IMLS will ask panel members about issues

pertinent to this year's competition and about improving the grant program, its application and process.

8. IMLS reviews the financial/accounting information and the budget sheets of each potential grantee.

9. IMLS staff members provide a list of applications recommended for funding to the Agency Director for her approval.

10. IMLS awards Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grants. The Director of IMLS makes the awards and announces them in September. At that time, IMLS notifies all applicants by mail whether or not they have received an award. We also send a list of grantees to all participating reviewers. With their notification, all applicants receive anonymous reviews completed by field reviewers. Museum staff can benefit tremendously from your thoughtful, constructive comments.

How Are Your Reviews Used?

Your scores will determine the ranking of applications, and ultimately, those which will go to the sitting panel, and those which will not.

For those applications that go to panel review, your reviews will provide the basis for the panel review, guiding panelists to the strong and weak aspects of the application. If a panel-reviewed application is not funded, your review comments, along with those of panelists, will have the potential to assist the applicant as they consider whether they wish to revise their application for resubmission.

For those applications that are not ranked highly enough to go to panel, field review feedback will be the only guide as they consider whether or not they would like to resubmit their project activities.

Successful applicants point to good scores and positive comments as a stamp of approval for their program proposals. Museum administrators report that receiving IMLS awards enhances fundraising success with private foundations or state and local sources.

Application Review Instructions

First Steps

This section of the handbook contains detailed information on how to review a Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program application. If you think that you may not be able to review every proposal you received, do not begin the review process. Instead, contact an IMLS staff person:

Sandra Narva
Senior Program Officer
phone: (202) 653-4635
fax: (202) 653-4608
email: snarva@imls.gov

Mark Feitl
Program Specialist
phone: (202) 653-4634
fax: (202) 653-4608
email: mfeitl@imls.gov

Check Shipping Box

If you have not already done so, refer to the contents on the Reviewer Checklist. Contact IMLS immediately if any of the items listed are missing.

Conflict of Interest

Read the Conflict of Interest statement carefully. Then read through your list of applications to see if there are any potential conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest would be if you have a financial interest in whether or not the proposal is funded or, if for some reason, you feel that you cannot review it objectively. Contact IMLS immediately if you have a conflict, or what may appear to be a conflict.

Confidentiality

The information contained in grant applications is strictly confidential. Do not discuss or reveal names, institutions' project activities, or any other information contained in the applications. Contact IMLS if you have any questions concerning an application – do not contact an applicant directly.

Application Completeness

Check your applications to make sure that all required information is included. Use the application checklist in the *2006 Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Grant Application and Guidelines* as a cross-reference. We only check the original copy for completeness. If any application appears to be incomplete do not penalize the applicant by assigning a low score, rather, contact IMLS immediately at (202) 653-4634 or (202) 653-4635.

Read Applications

Read your applications to develop a feel for the range of responses. Before reading your applications, reread the narrative questions and guidelines in section 2.2 of the *2006 Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Grant Application and Guidelines*. The bulleted items under each evaluation criterion represent the types of information you should look for in the applicant's responses and should serve as

guideposts for your review. A Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program evaluation criteria list is included in your review package. Place this sheet in your workspace where you can easily refer to it throughout the review process.

Evaluate Applications

Read your applications again and take notes. Draft comments for each of the three narrative responses. We strongly recommend that you draft your comments using Microsoft Word, and then cut and paste them into the online review form (see page 8 for more details).

- Use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- Judge the application on its own merits. DO NOT base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- If you question the accuracy of any information, call IMLS to discuss it; DO NOT question the applicant's honesty or integrity in your written comments.
- Comments should be specific to the individual applicant; vague, general statements are not helpful.
- Address the applicant's *entire* response to each narrative question and provide feedback in your comments that is detailed and specific enough to provide concrete, constructive guidance to the applicant.
- Acknowledge and compliment strengths.
- Consider a project's strengths *and* weaknesses; acknowledge and compliment strengths; offer practical suggestions for improving weaknesses.
- Comments should *analyze* the narrative section of the application; summarizing or paraphrasing the applicant's own words will not help the applicant.
- Consider whether the applicant has the resources to successfully complete the project.
- Comments should be easy to read and understand.
- Comments should address both positive aspects as well as areas for improvement.

Remember that IMLS staff uses your comments to help applicants improve their future applications.

Qualities of a Good Proposal

A good NANH proposal will demonstrate how Native American tribes or organizations that primarily serve Native Hawaiians will benefit their communities and audiences through strengthened museum services.

Assign Scores: Start with 3

Assign preliminary scores to each narrative section. Use a scale of 1 to 5. 1 = Lowest; 5 = Highest (see scoring definition on page 8)

- Use whole numbers only
- Do not use fractions, decimals, zeros, or more than one number

We suggest that you use the *Start with 3* method to assign scores. If all field reviewers adopt this same approach, NANH panelists will see greater consistency in the use of our scoring definitions. If you have questions, please contact us.

IMPORTANT: To help applicants understand and benefit from your reviews, make sure that your scores accurately reflect your written comments.

- Finish drafting your narrative comments.
- Make sure that your comments accurately reflect your opinions.
- **3 = adequate (provides adequate support for project activities)**
- Consider a score of 3 to represent an adequate range of project feasibility— think of 3 as your starting point.
- Adjust up or down from 3 according to your written comments. If the project seems adequate or average (i.e., neither particularly strong nor particularly weak, but somewhere in the middle), retain the 3;
 - A little better than average, assign a 4;
 - Much better than average, assign a 5;
 - Minimally acceptable, drop down from a 3 to a 2;
- Reserve a score of 1 for what appear to be overall *extremely* poor projects and a score of 5 for *exceptionally* good projects.
- Be fair and objective.
- Applications are not ranked by the raw score you assign but by the relative performance of each application compared to all others. Awarding only high scores will not benefit those applicants; awarding only low scores will not penalize those applicants.

As you review, please keep the two following technical issues in mind: typeface and application format. **DO NOT** consider them when determining your scores. IMLS will assign penalties as needed. However if you have serious concerns about a project's eligibility within the IMLS guidelines, call the NANH staff immediately to discuss your concerns

Review Your Work

Review your draft comments and preliminary scores. When you are finished, proofread your reviews. A review with even one missing score or comment cannot be accepted by the online review system. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to more accurately reflect your written evaluation. Scores should support comments and comments should justify scores.

Write Specific Comments and Assign Scores

Type your final comments and scores (for narrative sections 1 to 3, as well as general summary comments) on your online review sheets. For each application you need to complete an online review containing:

- written comments about the applicant's narrative responses.
- a corresponding score for each response.
- general comments on the overall application.

Make use of all the space provided on the online review sheets.

Selecting Final Scores

After you write your comments, select an appropriate score from 1 to 5 (1=lowest; 5=highest) for each of the three narrative responses using the IMLS scoring definitions that follow. Enter the scores on your online review sheets. Your typed comments and corresponding scores should always support each other.

The definitions of the numerical scores are:

SCORE and DEFINITION

5 --- The applicant's response provides **exceptional** support for proposed project activities

4 --- The applicant's response provides **very good** support for proposed project activities

3 --- The applicant's response provides **adequate** support for proposed project activities

2 --- The applicant's response provides **inadequate** support for proposed project activities

1 --- The applicant's response provides **insufficient** information for evaluation

Important note -

- Assign only whole numbers to each of the three narrative responses.
- Do not use fractions, decimals, zeros or more than one number in scoring individual sections.
- Score all responses; do not leave any blank.

The Online Review Process

All reviewers will use the online review process. It is easy to do. All you need is internet access. There are no review sheets to type up on a typewriter or handwrite, or hard-to-read computer diskettes, or sheets that you have to reformat on your personal computer. You do not have to email or fax your reviews to us. When you complete your online reviews, IMLS can print out an anonymous copy to forward to the panelists and applicants. Just follow these steps:

Access this link: <https://e-services.imls.gov/grantapps/reviewers.aspx>
Your login is: your e-mail address that is on file with IMLS
Your password is: password, unless you already established a password in previous years.

When you log in and create your user account, you will need to create a new password.

The instructions for creating and submitting your reviews will be at your fingertips. When you visit the site, there is a hotlink for technical

questions. These questions will be sent directly to our computer technicians that are working with us to design this system. If you have other questions about reviewing, please contact IMLS staff at (202) 653-4634 or (202) 653-4635. When you have completed assigning scores and giving comments for each application assigned to you, you will submit the entire review to IMLS. Then, please remember to print a copy of each completed review to keep for your files.

Reminders

The online review process is a wonderful tool; however, there are a few points regarding its use of which you should be aware:

- When accessing this system you can only use the e-mail address we have on file for you.
- Once you submit your reviews, you cannot go back in and make revisions. To do so, you must contact IMLS and we will authorize your re-entry into the system so you can make changes. However, prior to submitting your reviews, you can repeatedly enter and exit the system without losing your information.
- The online review system seems to work best with these browsers—Netscape, Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari.
- Complete your online reviews by **June 2, 2006**.
- Fax your Direct Deposit Sign-Up form and signed Reviewer Contract to 202-653-4608.

Constructive and Effective Comments

As you formulate your comments, keep in mind the following characteristics of good, constructive remarks:

- They are presented in a constructive manner
- Concise, specific, easy to read and understand
- Specific to the individual applicant
- Correlate with the score that is given
- Acknowledge the resources of the institution
- Reflect the application's strengths and identified areas for improvement
- Directed to applicants for their use

Remember, both successful and unsuccessful applicants use your comments to improve their institutions and future applications. Each of the sample comments listed below is followed by an explanation of its good characteristics.

Criteria 1 – Statement of Need: “The proposal presents a clear and precise narrative of the need for the preservation of their important document collection and the dissemination of information relative to their cooperative documentary and language project. The project participants are uniquely familiar with the collection, its needs, and how best to utilize the material.” (Provides specific information)

Criteria 3 – Evaluation: “The evaluation plan includes both on-going evaluation of project implementation and of project outcomes for the participants. It would have been good to have a bit more information about the criteria that will be used to pre- and post-test workshop participants in order to evaluate the effectiveness of project activities.” (Provides specific information and a constructive comment)

Avoiding Poor Comments

Listed below are sample “poor” comments. Vague, derogatory, or extraneous remarks are not helpful to either panelists or applicants. These comments actually hinder the evaluation process rather than help it.

To avoid making poor comments, DO NOT:

- Make derogatory remarks. Offer suggestions for improvement rather than harsh criticism.
- Penalize an applicant because you feel the institution doesn’t need the money. Any eligible institution may receive funds, regardless of need.
- Penalize an applicant because of missing materials. If you are missing required materials, please contact IMLS immediately.
- Question an applicant’s honesty or integrity. You may question the accuracy of information provided by the applicant, but if you are unsure how to raise your question, contact IMLS.
- Offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information – your comments should concern only the information IMLS requests of applicants.

Each of the poor comment examples listed below is followed by an explanation of why it is a poor comment.

Criteria 1 – Statement of Need: “Not necessarily a highly polished application, which in this case is a strength. It adds to the expressed need.” (Insensitive and irrelevant)

Criteria 1 – Statement of Need: “This is clearly not the highest priority that the museum should identify. They should be focusing on educational outreach and not collections management.” (Not the reviewer’s job to determine the applicant’s priorities)

Criteria 2 – Project Purpose and Plan: “Good job – the project follows a plan.” (Vague)

Criteria 3 – Evaluation: “Evaluation is both financial compliance and administrative review.” (Vague, not evaluative)

Reviewer Material

Sign Reviewer Contract	Sign your reviewer contract and fax to IMLS along with your completed Direct Deposit Sign-up form.
Return Materials to IMLS	<p>You must fax back the enclosed Direct Deposit Sign-up form and reviewer contract to be paid for your services. Honoraria is paid electronically and the Direct Deposit form must be completed in its entirety, even if it was submitted in a prior year with the identical banking information.</p> <p>Please fax to (202) 653-4608</p> <p>Should you decide to use a private carrier rather than fax your reviewer contract and Direct Deposit Sign-Up form, please send to the following address:</p> <p>IMLS Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Office of Museum Services 1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor Washington, DC 20036-5802</p> <p>If you fax your materials then you DO NOT need to send us your originals.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Deadline for IMLS reviews is June 2, 2006</p>
Keep Copies Until	<p>Keep your applications and a copy of your review sheets until October 1, 2006 (in case of questions from IMLS staff).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review. ▪ After October 1, 2006, destroy the applications (you may keep optional attachments such as catalogs and brochures)

Thank you for serving as a NANH Field Reviewer!