



IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

FY 2021 Information Session

September 2020

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture Fiscal Year 2021 Information Session."

My name is Mark Isaksen – I'm a Senior Program Officer in the Office of Museum Services – and speaking on behalf of rest of the staff in the Office of Museum Services, we are delighted that you are interested in preparing an application for the IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture grant program. I will be referring to the program throughout the presentation as AAHC, the abbreviation of the program title.



Agenda

- Where to Find Information
- AAHC Program Goals, History & Statistics
- IMLS and AAHC Funding Eligibility Criteria
- Project Funding Levels
- AAHC Project Activities
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- Application Components
- Narrative Review Criteria
- Where to Learn More
- Application Tips & Next Steps

In this webinar I will cover the following topics:

- Where to Find Information
- AAHC Program Goals, History & Statistics
- IMLS and AAHC Funding Eligibility Criteria
- Project Funding Levels
- AAHC Project Activities
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- Application Components
- Narrative Review Criteria
- Where to Learn More
- Application Tips & Next Steps



Companion Webinar

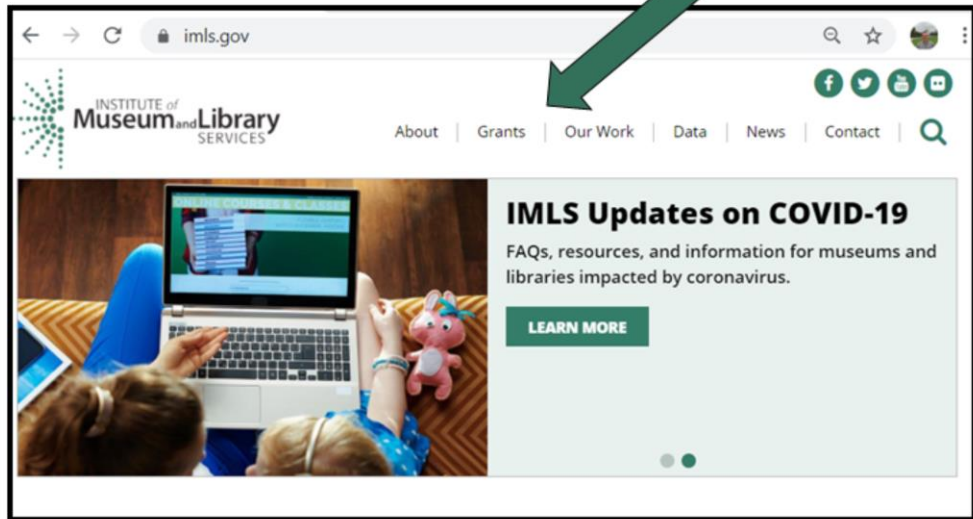
- IMLS OMS: Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2021
- *Basic information for all applicants*
- <https://www.ims.gov/webinars/ims-office-museum-services-choosing-funding-opportunity-fy-2021>

This is one of a series of webinars designed to help you find the information you need to create a competitive application for IMLS museum funding.

“Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2021” is available as a video and as a PDF of the slides plus a transcript on our website at the link identified here. In that webinar, we cover the IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan with an emphasis on how they influence our grant making. We also address institutional eligibility, provide a quick overview of all our funding opportunities, how to find information online with a focus on our website, and we cover the three places you must be registered in order to apply for an IMLS grant.

In addition to this webinar on the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture we are making available on-demand webinars for all our museum grant programs. A complete of available webinars can be found at www.ims.gov/webinars-archive.

Where to Find Information www.ims.gov



The IMLS website is an important place to find information

When you go to the website you will see a drop down menu for GRANTS on our home page. Click on the section titled “Apply for a Grant.” This section of our website is for you.

Notice of Funding Opportunity


[Home](#) • [Grants](#) • [Apply For a Grant](#) • Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Deadline: November 16, 2020
Application: The [FY 2021 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) (PDF, 407KB) is now available
Grant Amount: \$5,000-\$250,000
Grant Period: Up to three years
Cost Share Requirement: If your total request for federal funding is between \$5,000 and \$50,000, then no cost-share is required. If your request for federal funding is between \$50,001 and \$250,000, you must provide funds from non-federal sources in an amount that is equal to or greater than the amount of your IMLS request.

Program Overview:
The goals of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program (AAHC program) are to build the capacity of African American museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums.
The AAHC program supports projects that nurture museum professionals, build institutional capacity, and increase access to museum and archival collections at African American museums and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Organizations that fulfill the eligibility criteria specified in the FY2021 NOFO may apply.

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MUSEUM GRANTS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

FY 2021 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Each grant program has a landing page on the IMLS website. Here you will find a brief overview of the grant program, contact information for the IMLS staff assigned to this grant program – and your primary point of contact if you have questions – and link to the PDF of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (sometimes referred to as the NOFO) is the official instructions and guidance for how to prepare, complete, and submit an application for funding. The text and information I am using in this webinar derive from the instructions and guidance found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. A NOFO is available for each of the grant funding opportunities.

Now let's discuss the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture grant program in more detail.



AAHC Program Goals

The goals of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program are:

- to build the capacity of African American museums and
- support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums.

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The AAHC program supports projects that nurture museum professionals, build institutional capacity, and increase access to museum and archival collections at African American museums and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). IMLS welcomes applications from museums of all sizes and geographic areas whose primary purpose, as reflected in their mission, is African American art, life, history, and culture.



AAHC Program History

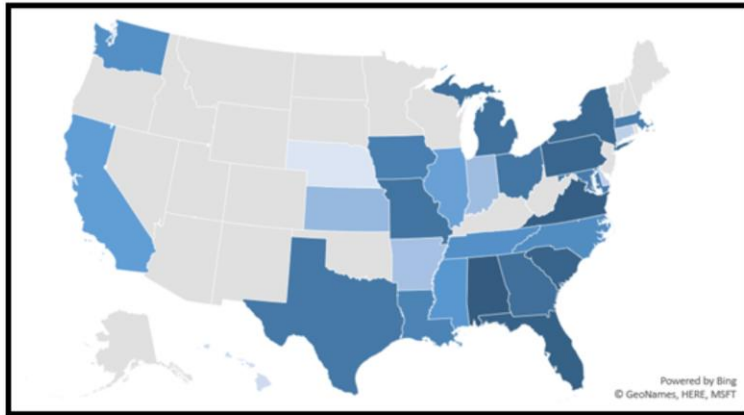
Museum Grants for African American History and Culture support projects that build the capacity of African American museums.

Created by an act of Congress in 2003 which authorized:

- the Smithsonian to create a National Museum of African American History and Culture and
- IMLS to create a grant program to improve operations, care of collections, and development of professional management at African American museums

The AAHC grant program was created by an Act of Congress in 2003 – the same act that created the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. The legislation that created the museum directed IMLS to create a grant program to improve operations, care of collections, and development of professional management at African American museums. The AAHC grant program is designed to strengthen the institutional capacity in the African American museum community.

AAHC Grants 2006-2020



Number of Applications: 576

Number of Grants Funded: 215

Total Funds Awarded: \$22,513,735

Total Cost Share: \$25,959,698

Peer Reviewers: 201

This map shows the range of IMLS AAHC grants from 2006-2020.

Number of Applications: 576

Number of Grants Funded: 215

Total Funds Awarded: \$22,513,735

Total Cost Share: \$25,959,698

Peer Reviewers: 201



AAHC Applications & Awards

| | Number of Applications | Number of Awards | Funds Requested | Funds Awarded | Average Award |
|---------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| FY 2020 | 58 | 22 | \$8,226,629 | \$2,731,000 | \$124,136 |

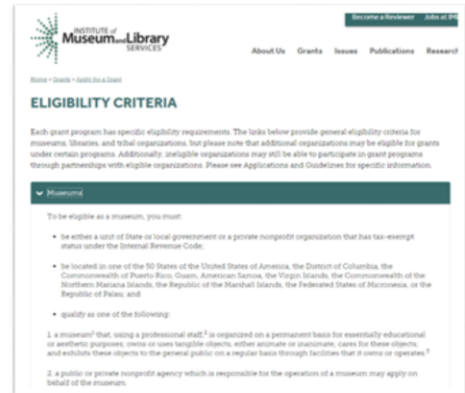
Here are the figures for the most recent application cycle. The amount of funding available in this grant program (and all IMLS grants programs) is determined by the U.S. Congress through the federal appropriations process. Although Congress has yet to pass a final budget for FY 2021 (which begins on October 1) we anticipate that the funding for this program will remain the same as the prior year.

In FY 2020 we made 22 awards for a total of \$2.7 million and the average size of each award was \$124,136.

Funding Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization:

- A museum?
 - A non-profit organization?
 - State or local government?
 - Institution of Higher Education?
- ✓ If yes, then you may be eligible to receive funds.
- ✓ If no, then partner with someone who is eligible.



General IMLS funding eligibility criteria can be found on our website, and as shown in the screen shot image on the right side of this screen. This general eligibility criteria applies to most of the IMLS grant programs, including AAHC.

To summarize: you are likely to be eligible to receive funding if you meet the IMLS definition of a museum (as described on our website) and are a non-profit organization, or part of a state or local government, or an institution of higher education. Individuals are not eligible to receive funding from IMLS – only the entities listed above are eligible.



AAHC Eligibility Criteria

- A **museum** whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is African American life, art, history, and/or culture, encompassing the period of slavery; the era of reconstruction; the Harlem renaissance; the civil rights movement; and other periods of the African American Diaspora;
- A not-for-profit **museum service organization** or association whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is to support museums identified above; or
- **Historically Black Colleges and Universities.**

In addition to the general IMLS funding eligibility criteria, the AAHC grant program has specific eligibility criteria that is described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. To be eligible for an award under the FY2021 Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program, you must qualify as one of the following:

- A museum whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is African American life, art, history, and/or culture,
- A not-for-profit museum service organization or association whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is to support museums identified above; or
- One of the 107 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. HBCU's qualify even if they do not have a museum.



Project Funding Levels

HOW MUCH?

Option 1: \$5,000-\$50,000 in federal funds with **no cost share required**

Option 2: \$50,001-\$250,000 in federal funds with **1:1 cost share required**

HOW MANY?

If you choose Option 1, you are limited to **one** application in this grant program

If you choose Option 2, you may submit multiple applications for different projects to this grant program.

Our next topic has to do with how much funding your project requires. The size of your project, and how much you are requesting in federal funds, will determine the cost share requirement and how many applications you are allowed to submit. There are two options to consider.

- Option 1 is to apply for an amount of federal funds between \$5,000 and \$50,000. If you elect Option 1, then you do not need to provide a cost share. This option is designed for smaller scale projects that require less than \$50,000 in federal funds.
- Option 2 is to apply for an amount of federal funds between \$50,001 and \$250,000. If you elect Option 2, then you must provide a 1:1 cost share. This cost share may be in the form of cash, staff or volunteer time, or third-party contributions. It may not be funds from another federal source.

The second question is how many applications may you file?

- If you choose Option 1 and request between \$5,000 and \$50,000 with no cost share, then you are limited to one AAHC application in this application cycle.
- If you choose Option 2 and request between \$50,001 and \$250,000 with a 1:1 cost share, then there is no limit on the number of applications your museum may submit this round to AAHC.



AAHC Project Activities

You may apply for projects including, but not limited to, the following activities:

- Fostering partnerships among museums and institutions of higher education to address challenges facing the African American museum community
- Providing professional development opportunities for museum staff, leadership, and volunteers
- Developing and offering workshops and training for museum staff, leadership, and volunteers
- Creating and supporting internships and fellowships, including recruitment, supervision, mentoring, and training for interns and fellows and understanding the importance and role of cohorts of interns and fellows

Next, let's consider the kinds of projects that are supported in the AAHC grant program. You may apply for projects including, but not limited to, the activities listed here.

Projects designed to support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums may involve: hosting paid internships at African American museums; or creating mentorship opportunities for emerging and mid-career staff to connect with, learn from and engage with senior leaders and founders in the African American museum community; or creating learning and growth opportunities for museum staff to build skills, enhance knowledge and expertise in museum-related subjects and areas of need.



AAHC Project Activities

You may apply for projects including, but not limited to, the following activities:

- Cataloging, inventorying, documenting, and registering collections
- Digitization of collections designed to enhance outreach, expand access, or improve collections management
- Developing collection plans, interpretive plans, or strategic plans using consultants, researchers, and other sources of professional expertise
- Implementing recommendations or action plans from planning activities
- Exhibition development, design, and fabrication
- Interpretive and educational programs, product development, and delivery
- Design and printing of educational resources including training manuals, toolkits, and curricula that support educational programs and exhibitions

Projects designed to build the capacity of African American museums may involve increasing the number of museum professionals working at African American museums to enable the museum to expand educational programs, engage the community, enhance organizational operations, or provide for enhanced care of collections.

IMLS encourages museum professionals and institutions to share and adopt best practices by creating skill-building and capacity-expanding programs that are applicable across all levels of museum staff to ensure the highest standards in all aspects of museum practices and operations.

Allowable Costs



2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

<https://www.ecfr.gov>

| UNIFORM COST PRINCIPLES | |
|---|---|
| GENERAL PROVISIONS | |
| 200.400 | Policy guide. |
| 200.401 | Application. |
| BASIC CONSIDERATIONS | |
| 200.402 | Composition of costs. |
| 200.403 | Factors affecting allowability of costs. |
| 200.404 | Reasonable costs. |
| 200.405 | Allowable costs. |
| 200.406 | Applicable credits. |
| 200.407 | Prior written approval (prior approval). |
| 200.408 | Limitation on allowance of costs. |
| 200.409 | Special considerations. |
| 200.410 | Collection of unallowable costs. |
| 200.411 | Adjustment of previously negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rates containing unallowable costs. |
| DIRECT AND INDIRECT (F&A) COSTS | |
| 200.412 | Classification of costs. |
| 200.413 | Direct costs. |
| 200.414 | Indirect (F&A) costs. |
| 200.415 | Required certifications. |
| SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND INDIAN TRIBES | |
| 200.416 | Cost allocation plans and indirect cost proposals. |
| 200.417 | Interagency service. |
| SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION | |
| 200.418 | Costs incurred by states and local governments. |
| 200.419 | Cost accounting standards and disclosure statement. |
| GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SELECTED FORMS OF COST | |
| 200.420 | Considerations for selected forms of cost. |
| 200.421 | Advertising and public relations. |
| 200.422 | Advisory councils. |
| 200.423 | Alcoholic beverages. |
| 200.424 | Alumni activities. |
| 200.425 | Audit services. |
| 200.426 | Bad debts. |
| 200.427 | Bonding costs. |
| 200.428 | Collectors of improper payments. |
| 200.429 | Commencement and convocation costs. |
| 200.430 | Compensation—personal services. |
| 200.431 | Compensation—fringe benefits. |
| 200.432 | Construction. |

We'll turn now to allowable and unallowable costs for your project. Be very careful in preparing your proposal and include only allowable costs in both your IMLS ask and your cost share. To do otherwise can hurt your chances of getting positive reviews and being recommended for funding.

We'll go through some common expenses that are allowable and unallowable, but for details, please see Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations covering Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, or "2 CFR 200" for short.

The regulations are available online in a searchable format on the U.S. Government Publishing Office website listed on the screen.



Allowable Costs

Examples of allowable costs

- personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- travel expenses for key project staff and consultants
- materials, supplies, software, and equipment related directly to project activities
- third-party costs
- publication design and printing
- staff and volunteer training
- internships/fellowships
- indirect or overhead costs

In the AAHC Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a partial list of the most common examples of allowable costs as pictured here.

These costs may be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for and/or what you will pay for as part of your cost share, if one is required. The rules about allowability apply to both sides.



Unallowable Costs

Examples of unallowable costs

- fundraising costs, such as development office staff devoted to general fundraising
- contributions to endowments
- general operating support
- acquisition of collections
- general advertising or public relations costs
- construction or renovation of facilities
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment
- research projects
- pre-award costs

We also provide a list of generally unallowable costs, again both for IMLS funds and for cost share. These costs may NOT be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, NOR can they be part of what you will pay for as part of your cost share. In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal.

As you prepare your application, it's a good idea to compare your list of proposed expenses against these lists of allowable and unallowable costs and against the appropriate set of cost principles. If after that you have specific questions, please contact us and we'll be happy to help.



Application Components

Required Documents

All applications must include these. Omission of one results in exclusion from further consideration.

Conditionally Required Documents

Some applications must include these. Omission of one results in exclusion from further consideration.

Supporting Documents

These are optional. Include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description provided in the application.

Now that you have some basic framework on the amount of funding and the allowable costs for your project, let's review the multiple parts of the grant application that you will need to prepare. The application components are a series of documents you will upload in Grants.gov that together make up your application.

These application components fall into three categories. The first is that of Required Documents. All applications must include these. Omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The second group is that of Conditionally Required Documents. Some applications must include these. It might depend on the nature of your institution or some aspect of your project. In either case, omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The third group of application components are Supporting Documents. These are completely optional. You may submit some or none. Think about including only those that supplement your narrative and support the project description you provide in your application. This is not the place to introduce new information. Be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include extraneous material that is not directly relevant to your project.

Application Components

Required Documents : All applications must include these.

- Organizational Profile
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- List of Key Project Staff
- Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants
- Budget Justification
- Application for Federal Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)
- IMLS Supplementary Information Form (including Abstract)
- IMLS Museum Program Information Form
- IMLS Budget Form

Your AAHC application will consist of a series of individual documents, and it's very important to make sure you prepare and submit everything necessary to complete your application.

All applications must include the 10 required documents listed here.

The 6 documents listed on left side of this slide are created by you, using a word document, and then saving this as document as a PDF. Instructions for all of these required documents are found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Many of these have page limits, and if you exceed the page limit specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we must remove the extras before your application goes out for review. Make sure your content fits into the page limits specified and make sure the number of pages holds when you convert your document to a PDF.

The Application for Federal Assistance, the IMLS Supplementary Information Form, the IMLS Program Information Form are online forms you complete in the grants.gov environment. The IMLS Budget Form is a fillable PDF.

All the other required documents are created by you, in a word document, and then uploaded as saved as PDFs in grants.gov.



Conditionally Required Documents

These components are required of some applications.

- Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status
- Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Detailed Condition Reports and/or Conservation Treatment Proposals
- Digital Product Form

IMPORTANT: The term “digital product” includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data. See the Digital Product Form for specific examples.

The second category of application components is that of **Conditionally Required Documents**. Some applications must include one, two, or even all four of these, and it’s your job to figure out which are required for yours.

- If you are applying as a nonprofit, then you must include your proof of nonprofit status issued by the IRS.
- If you are using a federally negotiated indirect cost rate in your budget, then you must include a copy of your final rate agreement.
- If you will create digital products during the course of your project, then you must complete and submit a Digital Product Form.
- If you are requesting support for conservation treatment, then you must include detailed condition reports and/or formal conservation treatment proposals.

Just like the required documents, omission of even one might result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

Please note that the term “digital product” includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data. Please see the form itself for more specific examples. If you are creating any of these types of materials, you must include the form with your application.



Supporting Documents

- These are optional.
- Include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description provided in the application.
- Varies depending on project activities.

The third group of application components is **supporting documents**. Supporting documents are completely optional. You may submit some or none. We urge you to make good decisions here and include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description you provide in your application. This is not the place to introduce new information. We also recommend that you be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include hundreds of pages of extraneous material that is not directly relevant to your project.

The kinds of supporting documents you may choose to include may vary depending on the type of project activities you are proposing in your application.



Supporting Documents

Projects that build organizational capacity by adding new staff may include the following types of supporting documents:

- Position description(s) for the new staff position, including assigned duties and required qualifications
- Estimated salary and benefits documentation for the new position that reflect industry standards and prevailing wages for the local area
- Organizational chart and/or a description of the leadership and supervisory structure of your organization, showing the new positions along with existing staff

Here are some specific examples of the kinds of supporting documents you may want to include in your application. These examples are some of things that peer reviewers who will be reading your application, will expect to see. These documents help support the case you are making in your application, that if funded, you can be successful in completing your project.

For projects that build organizational capacity by adding new staff, consider including the following types of supporting documents:

- Position description(s) for the new staff position, including assigned duties and required qualifications
- Estimated salary and benefits documentation for the new position that reflect industry standards and prevailing wages for the local area
- Organizational chart and/or a description of the leadership and supervisory structure of your organization, showing the new positions along with existing staff



Supporting Documents

Projects that support the growth and development of museum staff or interns may include the following types of supporting documents:

- Position descriptions including expected duties and learning outcomes for interns
- Recruitment plans, including letters of support from HBCUs or other institutions of higher education
- Training needs assessment, identifying knowledge gaps and areas of growth for museum staff
- Curriculum and learning objectives from identified training programs or career development experiences

For projects that support the growth and development of museum staff or interns may, consider including the following types of supporting documents:

- Position descriptions including expected duties and learning outcomes for interns
- Recruitment plans, including letters of support from HBCUs or other institutions of higher education
- Training needs assessment, identifying knowledge gaps and areas of growth for museum staff
- Curriculum and learning objectives from identified training programs or career development experiences



Supporting Documents

Projects that build capacity to enhance care and increase access to museum collections may include the following types of supporting documents:

- Summary of the scope and scale of museum collections.
- Specific benchmarks on the quantity of collection items to be processed, cataloged, and/or digitized in the proposed project
- Description of the intended audience and how the improved access to the collection will meet the needs of that audience
- Museum collections management policy

For projects that build capacity to enhance care and increase access to museum collections, consider including the following types of supporting documents:

- Summary of the scope and scale of museum collections, including baseline information on the numbers, types, and quantities of items held by the museum
- Specific benchmarks on the quantity of collection items to be processed, cataloged, and/or digitized in the proposed project
- Description of the intended audience that will gain access to the museum collection, and how the improved access will meet the needs of that audience
- Museum collections management policy or similar type of document approved by the governing board and/or leadership of your museum

These examples are some of things that peer reviewers who will be reading your application, will expect to see. These documents help support the case you are making in your application, that if funded, you can be successful in completing your project.



Narrative

In the AAHC grant program the narrative is limited to 7 pages and is divided into three sections:

- **Project Justification**
- **Project Work Plan**
- **Project Results**

The questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are posted in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on the IMLS website.

Among the required components of your application, the Narrative is the section that reviewers are likely to spend the most time reading. So let's examine the narrative section of the application. In the AAHC grant program the narrative is limited to 7 pages and is divided into three sections:

- Project Justification
- Project Work Plan
- Project Results

The questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are posted in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on the IMLS website.



Narrative: Project Justification

Tell us:

- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?
- Who or what will benefit from your project?
- How will your project build the capacity of your institution?
- How will your project address the goals of the AAHC program to build the capacity of African American museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals?

Reviewers will look for:

- *A clearly identified need, problem, or challenge supported by relevant evidence*
- *Involvement by stakeholders and/or people who will benefit from the project*
- *Sufficient detail and information about the collections and/or records that are the focus of the project*
- *Specific, actionable and measurable ways in which this project builds the capacity of the institution*

Project Justification: In this first section of the narrative, you should lay out the reasoning for your project. Tell us in the clearest terms possible what you propose to do; what need, problem, or challenge you expect to address; who or what will benefit; how your project will build the capacity of your institution; and how your project will address the goals of the AAHC program.

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well you explain your project; how well you've identified the need, problem, or challenge you will address and how well you've supported that with relevant evidence; whether you've clearly identified who or what will benefit from the project, and if this involves an audience of some kind, whether they've been appropriately involved in the planning; whether your project enhances the capacity of your institution in ways that are specific, actionable, and measurable.

Defining a need, problem, or challenge



- Remember that the federal government wants its investment to result in something getting better.
- Articulate what will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible.
- Identify why it is important that this change happens.
- Hone your problem definition carefully.
- Present data that support your problem definition.

Because the need, problem, or challenge is foundational in your application, keep these points in mind.

- The federal government wants its investment to result in SOMETHING getting better.
- As you define your need, problem, or challenge, articulate WHAT will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible. Will someone learn something, develop a skill, change an attitude? Will members of your community be better able to work together to solve problems? Will collections be better cared for? Will their lifespan be extended? Will access to your collections and the information surrounding them be expanded? Identify why it is important that this particular change happens.
- Hone your problem definition carefully in clear, succinct terms.
- Gather and present data that support your problem definition.

Narrative: Project Work Plan

Tell us:

- What specific activities will you carry out?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- In what sequence will your activities occur?
- What are the risks to the project?
- What resources will you need?
- How will you track your progress?
- How will you share your project's results?

Reviewers will look for:

- *Activities informed by appropriate theory and practice*
- **Team with sufficient experience and skills**
- *Realistic and achievable schedule*
- *Goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated*
- *Appropriate personnel and financial resources*
- *Clear methodology for tracking progress and adjusting course when necessary*
- *Effective plan for communicating results*

The Project Work Plan is the part of the narrative in which you relay who will do what when and using what resources.

We ask you to tell us what specific activities you will undertake; who will plan, implement, and manage your project; when and in what sequence your activities will occur; what financial, personnel, and other resources you will need to carry out the activities; how you will track progress toward achieving your intended results; and how and with whom you will share your project's results.

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well your activities are informed by appropriate theory and practice; whether the team you've put together has the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully; and whether your schedule is realistic and achievable. They'll also be looking at whether the time, personnel, and financial resources identified are appropriate for the scope and scale of the project. They will look at your proposed evaluation and performance measurements and will weigh in on whether you've described a clear methodology for tracking your progress and adjusting course when necessary. And last but not least, is your plan for communicating results and/or sharing discoveries appropriate and likely to be effective

Please note that in your budget you are required to add \$3,000 per year for travel to an IMLS-designated meeting. You will add this line item in the travel section of the IMLS budget form, on the federal grants funds side of the budget. This expense is used to cover your participation in convening of grantees and a place and location to be determined by IMLS.

Defining an activity



- An activity is something that someone does.
- It has a beginning and an end.
- You know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more (or it is no longer on your To Do List).
- It is not a "goal," "result," or "outcome." It is a thing you do as part of striving to achieve those.
- Aim for a reasonable level of granularity in identifying your activities—not too much, not too little, just right.

Your work plan will be built on activities, so it's important to be clear about just what an activity is.

An activity is something that someone does. It has a beginning and an end (just like projects), and you know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more. It is no longer on your To Do List.

An activity is NOT a goal, a result, or an outcome. Rather it is something you do as part of striving to achieve those.

Aim for a reasonable level of granularity in identifying your activities. That might be hard, but strive for not too much, not too little, but rather just right.



Narrative: Project Results

Tell us:

- What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
- How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the audience change?
- What data will you collect and report to measure your project's success?
- How will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records improve?
- What tangible products will result?
- How will you sustain the benefit(s)?

Reviewers will look for:

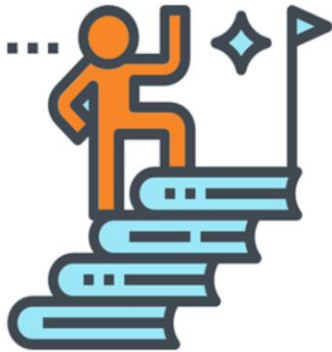
- *Results that are realistic, meaningful, actionable, and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project*
- *A well-grounded plan to effect change in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes*
- *An improvement in the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records*
- *A feasible plan to collect and report data*
- *Useful tangible products*
- *A practical plan for sustaining the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of this award*

Project Results: The final section of your narrative should be devoted to articulating the impact of your project.

What specific results do you intend to achieve in order to address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified? Something will get better. Tell us what that is. Tell us about the tangible products that will result from your project, and last but not least, how will you sustain the benefits of your project beyond the lifespan of this particular project?

Reviewers will give us their opinions on how well you've designed a feasible plan for collecting and reporting data; how likely the improvements that you've proposed will be realized; how useful the tangible products you plan to create will be; and whether your plan for sustaining the benefits of the project are reasonable and practical.

Defining Intended Results



- Answer the question, “What will be better as the result of this work?”
- Think through how you’ll recognize success and how you’ll measure it for each of your high-level activities.
- Tie everything back to your need, problem, or challenge.
- Include tangential benefits or positive outcomes, but make sure they are in addition to, not instead of, your original intended results.
- Consider constructing a logic model to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

We often hear that defining intended results and success measures is challenging for applicants, so it’s worth spending a bit of time on this here.

Let’s think back to the questions we referenced a couple of slides ago when we talked about defining the need, problem, or challenge that your project is addressing. If you said someone will learn something, how will you know? If your problem related to segments of your community being better able to work together, how will you know when that has been achieved? If collections will be better cared for, how will you be sure and how will you measure “better:”? If you’re digitizing to expand accessibility, how will you know when you’ve done it?

All of your results should tie back to your need, problem, or challenge. You may well experience tangential benefits and/or positive outcomes, but make sure you identify them as “in addition to” and not “instead of” your original intended results. Reviewers are likely to see that as a disconnect.

This focus on results and measuring success in meaningful ways is not new, but it hasn’t gotten easy. There has been a tremendous amount of work done on ways to measure success, and we encourage you to consider using a logic model to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.



Characteristics of Successful Applications

- *Institutional Impact:* The project builds the capacity of a museum and/or supports the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums and/or HBCUs
- *In depth Knowledge:* Applications reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- *Project-based Design:* Work plans consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge identified in your application.
- *Demonstrable Results:* Projects generate measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

In summary, considering all the components of your application, there are four general characteristics of successful AAHC applications that reviewers will look for. As you prepare your application, keep these characteristics in mind.

FIRST, Institutional Impact: Your project should build the capacity of your museum and/or support the growth and development of museum professionals at your museums or HBCU
SECOND, In-depth knowledge: Your proposal should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.

THIRD, Project-based design: Your work plan should consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge.

AND FOURTH, Demonstrable results: Your project should generate measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

An application that has all of these four characteristics, will stand out in the review process, and will have the best chance of success for funding.

Awarded Grants Search

The screenshot shows the 'Awarded Grants Search' page from the IMLS website. The page features a search form with the following fields: Grant Program (dropdown menu), Program Categories (dropdown menu), Institution Name (text input), City (text input), State (dropdown menu), Recipient Type (dropdown menu), Issue Areas (dropdown menu), Keywords (text input), Log Number (text input), and Fiscal Year (dropdown menu). There is a 'Filter' button and a 'Apply' button. Below the form, it indicates 'Showing 1 through 50 of 113 results'. There are two buttons: 'Download CSV' and 'Download DOC'. The first result is for the 'Amistad Research Center' with a log number of 100-00-19-0006-19, a fiscal year of 2019, and an award of \$104,468.00. The second result is for the 'Mosaic Templars Cultural Center' with a log number of 100-00-19-0007-19 and a fiscal year of 2019. A 'Screenshot' button is visible over the second result.

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants.

We want to share with you, the places to look for more information, such as the IMLS website, where you can find the awarded grants search to learn more about the projects we have funded through the AAHC program.

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants that we have awarded in past years using a variety of criteria such as grant program name, institution name, location, and keyword. Your search will basic information about the award and a brief description of the project. This can be extremely helpful as you put ideas together for your own project.

Sample Applications



Sample applications of recently funded grants are available on the IMLS website

Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

- [African American Civil War Museum](#) (PDF, 454KB)
- [Indiana University South Bend Civil Rights Heritage Center](#) (PDF, 544KB)
- [Amistad Research Center](#) (PDF, 334KB)
- [University of Maryland Eastern Shore](#) (PDF, 439KB)

We have also posted the abstract, narrative, and schedule of completion for a cross-section of successful applications from 2020. To find these examples, go to the Sample Applications on the IMLS website and scroll down the page to the AAHC examples. Looking at these proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own.

Important Dates



So, what happens after the application deadline? First, IMLS program staff review all applications for completeness and eligibility. The applications are then sent out for external peer review – to museum professionals around the country. Reviewers then meet at the IMLS office as a group to discuss each application. Reviewer scores and written comments are provided directly back to all applicants – to help you be more competitive in future application cycle – or for those application that were funded we know that the reviewer comments will often help the grantees be more successful with implementation of their projects.

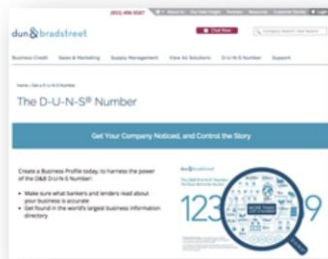
Experienced and knowledgeable peer reviewers provide scores and comments based on the criteria outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. IMLS staff examine budgets, financials, and look at your past performance record with past and current grants. We then prepare materials for the IMLS Deputy Director for Museums and the Director. By law, the IMLS Director is charged with the authority and responsibility to make final award decisions, and this happens in May.

In June, we notify all applicants by email of the award decisions and provide the scores and comments created by the reviewers. And on July 1, 2021, funded projects begin.

Application Tips

Register early!

1. D-U-N-S® Number: www.dnb.com/us
2. SAM Registration: www.sam.gov
3. Grants.gov Registration: www.grants.gov



At this point, we'd like to share a few tips collected from our experience in working with applications submitted to the AAHC program each year.

First on the list, is "Register early!" You must have a DUNS number, an active SAM.gov registration, and a current and functional Grants.gov registration. You must have a DUNS number to register with SAM.gov. You must have an active SAM.gov registration to register with Grants.gov. And you must have a functional Grants.gov registration to submit an application to IMLS.

It's also crucial to remember that your SAM.gov registration expires each year and you must renew it. You can log into SAM.gov at any time and find out your status. I would recommend doing that today.

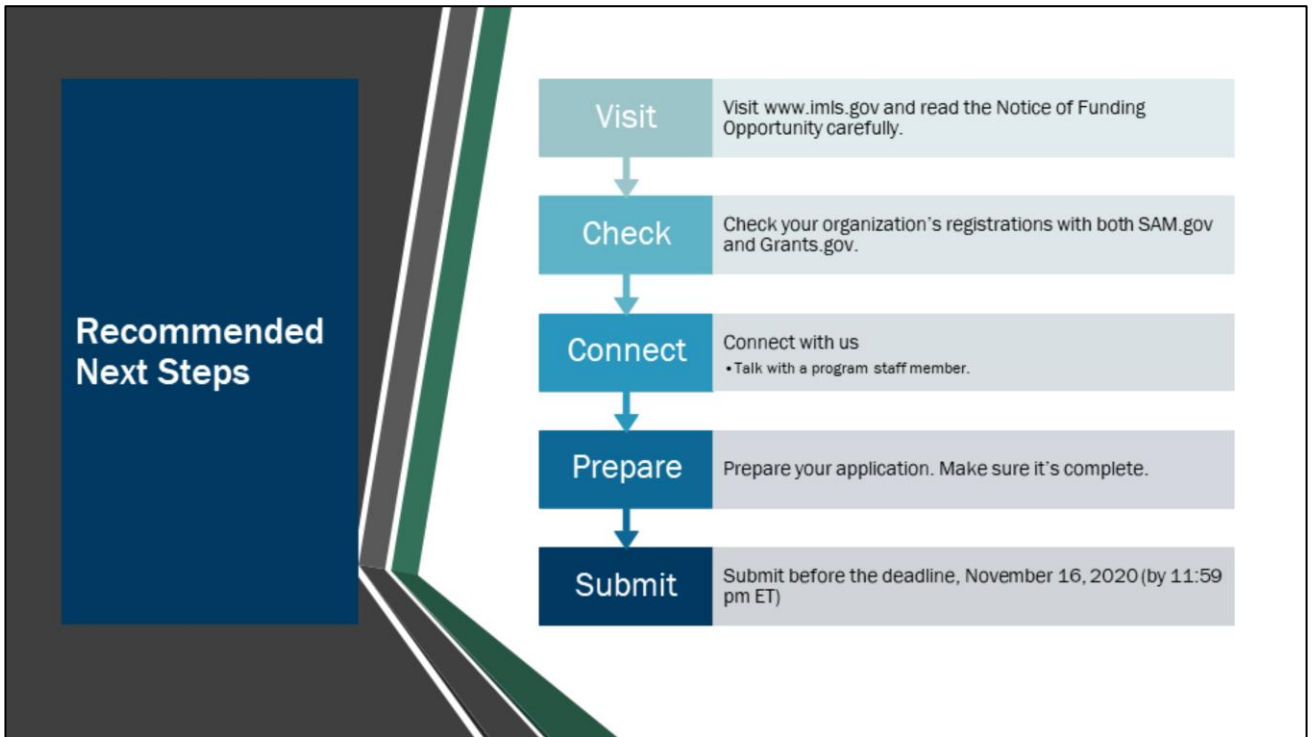


Application Tips

- Do your background research.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, using the same headings, subheadings, or numbered sections to make it easy for reviewers to read.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.
- Check your spelling, grammar, and math.
- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit it.
- Be sure your application is complete.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: Our legislation states that we can make grants only to eligible applicants that submit complete applications, including attachments, on or before the deadline. So...

- Do your background research. Make it easy for the reviewers to see that you are up to date and know what you're talking about.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and use headings or numbered sections to make it easy for reviewers to read.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon. The people who will review your application are experts, but they may not be totally familiar with your particular field's shorthand. Make it easy for them to understand what you mean.
- Check your spelling, grammar, and math. It counts!
- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit. Ask them to act like a reviewer who's seeing this for the first time.
- Be sure your application is complete. Check it against the Table of Application Components and then check it again.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.



So to recap your next steps:

- Visit www.ims.gov and read the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully.
- Check your organization's registrations with both SAM.gov and Grants.gov.
- Connect with us: Participate in free IMLS webinars. Talk with a program staff member.
- Prepare your application. Make sure it's complete.
- Submit before the deadline, November 16, 2020 (by 11:59 pm ET)



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In closing our presentation today, I want to make sure you have our e-mail address and direct phone number. Don't hesitate to call or email either of us with questions or concerns.