

Timed Transcript for LB21/NLG-L Applicant Webinar, July 21, 2020

0:04

Everyone. My name is Ashley Sands and I'm a Senior Program Officer in the Office of Library Services at IMLS. Today, I'm joined by my colleagues, Jill Connors-Joyner and Sarah Boonie.

0:19

We will briefly go over IMLS and its strategic priorities and provide an overview of the NLG and LB21 Programs today.

0:27

We will also review eligibility criteria, the project and Funding categories, take you through the application process, and provide you with some tips to help you make your application complete and competitive.

0:41

IMLS is an independent Grant Making Agency, and a primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums.

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IMLS helps ensure that all Americans have access to the Museum, Library, and Information Services. You can read our mission and vision on this slide, as well as on our website, imls.gov.

1:06

IMLS's Strategic Plan lays out several goals for the agency's work, and our first strategic goal supports learning and literacy for people of all ages through museums, libraries, and archives in our second goal and the strength of the capacity at museums, libraries, and archives to improve the well-being of their communities.

1:26

Third, IMLS makes strategic investments that increase access to information, ideas, and networks to libraries, museums, and archives. You can find the strategic plan, and, of course, much more information on our website.

1:42

Today we will be talking through two of our grant opportunities, both of which have a deadline of October 2, 2020.

1:51

The first is our National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program, otherwise known as NLG.

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This grant program supports projects that address significant challenges or opportunities facing the library and archives fields and has the potential to advance theory and practice.

2:09

Successful proposals will demonstrate national impact, they'll address critical issues facing libraries and archives, incorporate collaborations and shows relevant expertise to the topic at hand.

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It's particularly important to note this importance a national impact, in an NLG application.

2:30

Generally speaking, applications cannot only benefit a single individual or a single institution.

2:38

Competitive proposals will show the potential for far reaching impact across institutions.

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Note that we also do not accept applications that are strictly for digitization. And we cannot accept applications for construction.

2:57

The other program we're discussing today is the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, or LB21, for short.

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This program supports developing a diverse workforce of librarians to better meet the changing, learning, and information needs of the American public, through enhancing the training and professional development of the library workforce.

3:19

Developing faculty and library leaders and recruiting, educating, and retaining the next generation of library and archives professionals.

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Similar to NLG, successful proposals in LB21 will include broad impact.

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We'll address a critical issue facing libraries and archives.

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Excellent collaborative elements show relevant expertise about the topic at hand.

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And will broaden participation in the library and archives professions through the recruitment, retention, and education of a diverse workforce.

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Again, similar to NLG it's important to really note this broad impact in an LB21 application.

4:03

Generally speaking, again, applications cannot only benefit a single individual or a single library or archives.

4:10

Competitive proposals are going to show that potential for far reaching impact across institutions.

4:18

For both NLG and LB21, please keep in mind the October 2, 2020 will be the only deadline to submit preliminary proposals for fiscal year 2021.

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On the IMLS website, we have a landing pages for each of the Phase two programs.

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If you're on this webinar, it's likely you've already visited one or both.

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These pages provide an overview of the programs that links to the full Notices of Funding Opportunity or NOFOs, and also have relevant webinar recordings. So, if you want to refer back to this webinar, that's where you'll find it.

4:56

In addition, on each page, you can find a list of the relevant program staff you should contact with questions about the grant programs and the application process.

5:05

If you're unsure who to contact, simply reach out to one of us, and we will make sure you're connected to the program officer whose expertise best aligns with your project idea.

5:18

Your organization is eligible to apply if it is, one, a Unit, a State, or Local Government, or a 501 C 3 non-profit organization.

5:28

Two, is located in one of the 50 States or Territories, and 3, 1 of the six types of organizations, which we will list on the next slide.

5:40

Please also note that the LB21 Grant Program has some additional eligibility restrictions for some categories. So, definitely pay attention to that Notice of Funding Opportunity.

5:53

So, in addition to the first couple criteria from the previous slide, your organization is eligible to apply if you are one of the six types of organizations.

6:03

These include a library or parent organization, an academic or administrative unit, a digital library, or a library agency, a consortium association, or organization.

6:17

If you have any questions about your eligibility, please reach out to someone here on our program staff.

6:25

You are not eligible to apply to these programs if you are a federally operated institution, a for-profit institution, and individual, or a foreign country or organization.

6:39

Note that a federally operated institution does not mean an institution that may receive other Federal grants.

6:46

It means that you are a Federal agency, for example, the Library of Congress or the Smithsonian. We cannot fund you.

6:55

If you are ineligible institution, we encourage you to partner with an eligible institution.

7:01

So, while you cannot be the lead applicant, you can apply through a partnership with an eligible institution, and you may be able to receive funding in that manner.

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More information about this is provided in the guidelines on our website, but the point here is that it's important to figure out early if you're eligible to apply to the program, that is of interest to you.

7:25

Here, we've provided some guidance for those of you who are unsure whether your project idea fits into National leadership grants, or the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program.

7:35

If your project or research is primarily about education and training and information professionals, whether that's formal education or informal education.

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You should probably apply to LB21.

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If you're a non-tenure, tenure track faculty member, interested in research funding, you'll want to look at the early career research category in LB21.

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Otherwise, any other work of national significance to libraries, archives, and information science will likely fall into the NLG program.

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This table shows a few examples of projects and activities that would fall within each.

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Please make sure you read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully to ensure your project is aligned the correct grant program, and let you meet the eligibility criteria.

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If you're unsure, please feel free to contact one of our program staff for guidance.

8:32

On every application, you will be asked to select one Project category, Lifelong Learning, Community Catalyst, or National Digital Infrastructures and Initiatives.

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Note that each of these categories are defined slightly differently for LB21 as opposed to NLG.

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You should make sure to review the NOFO for the specific language about how the category applies to each program.

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Now, just to chat a little bit about each of these three categories.

9:01

So, the first project category you can apply under is lifelong learning.

9:05

This category is for proposals that impact either the libraries and archives or the Library and Archives professionals in LB21. Their ability to foster attitudes of discovery and cultivate critical thinking, innovation, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

9:26

The second category is Community Catalysts, this category is for proposals that build the capacity of libraries and archives or the capacity of library archives professionals to contribute to the well-being of communities.

9:42

And the third project category is National Digital Infrastructure and Initiatives. This category is for proposals that will increase libraries and archives or library and archives professionals, capacity to provide access to digital content, selections, and services. We particularly encourage you to take a look at our National Digital Infrastructures and Initiatives Report, which can be found on the website, and it's linked to in both of the programs Notices of Funding Opportunity.

10:13

I will now pass a law to my colleague, Jill Connors-Joyner, to tell you about the funding categories and application process.

10:26

Thank You, Ashley.

10:28

Now, I'm going to talk about the funding categories.

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All applicants will also have to select the Funding Category.

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These funding categories each have different limits on the length of the grant, which you can see in this table.

10:42

Planning grants are for preliminary project activity.

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Many people think about this as planning for a larger grant, but that's not a requirement.

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Planning activities may include conducting preliminary research, conducting an environmental scan, rapidly prototyping a new program or service, or working on creating partnerships to support larger future activities.

11:08

Planning grants may be 1 to 2 years.

11:12

National Forum grants are for convening experts and stakeholders around an issue of national significance.

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This could be to support one large meeting, or several meetings, focused on a particular area to establish a shared agenda or understanding.

11:28

National Forum Grants also can be between 1 to 2 years: Project grants and research and service to practice grants support implementation or development activities, as well as investigating key research questions and library and archives practice.

11:44

These are limited to 1 to 3 years.

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Please note that if you're applying to the LB21 program, Doctoral level projects can be up to four years long.

12:00

To give you a better sense of the scale, here are the maximum dollar amounts you may request, which are based on the funding category you select.

12:08

There is flexibility within the funding levels, but you should keep in mind that we have limited funding, and both programs are highly competitive.

12:16

We fund very few million-dollar projects, there is a value proposition that comes into play.

12:23

The higher the amount you are asking for, the more compelling your case must be for how your work will impact the entire field and represent a significant return on investment.

12:35

If you've applied for IMLS funding in the past, you may note that the cap for research and service to practice grants is \$750,000 in both NLG and LB21.

12:46

The notices of funding opportunity also spell out the funding cap along with the corresponding cost share requirements.

12:55

Along with the project categories, the LB21 program also requires all applicants to select a project type.

13:03

Pre professional is applicable to any programs that are focused on any part of the pre library school trajectory.

13:10

This could be training programs for college students, or even creating opportunities for students in middle school or high school to explore careers in library and information science.

13:21

Recruitment, mentorship, and service learning may all be key components of these types of projects, with the caveat that any grant activities should keep the goal of developing a diverse workforce in mind.

13:35

Master's programs educate the next generation of librarians and archivists in graduate library programs to meet the evolving needs of the profession and society.

13:46

We encourage applicants and the master's level category to address themes or gaps described in the recently released report, Positioning Library and Information Science Graduate Programs for 21st Century Practice.

13:59

The report is available on the IMLS website.

14:03

Doctoral level programs develop faculty to educate the next generation of library and archives professionals.

14:10

These programs should develop library and archives leaders to assume positions as managers, administrators, researchers, and faculty.

14:18

Early career development proposals provide funding to untenured, tenure track library and information science faculty to conduct research.

14:27

And the last project type is continuing education.

14:31

These projects improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of library and archives professionals in the field through formal and informal education opportunities.

14:41

This could include post-master's programs, residencies, internship, enhance work experiences, and blended learning opportunities, including mentorships, online learning modules, and other training programs for professionals.

14:59

Cost sharing is not considered in the review of applications, but it is an eligibility criterion.

15:05

Again, this is spelled out in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, so please look there.

15:09

Generally, a 1 to 1 cost share is required for both programs with few exceptions.

15:15

Applicants in the research in service to practice funding category, and those requesting less than \$249,999 are exempt from this requirement.

15:26

Additionally, LB21 applicants are not required to cost share the funds budgeted for student support.

15:33

Please remember that if a cost is unallowable for IMLS funds, it is also unallowable for cost share.

15:42

Each application must include an SF 424, which is generated in grants.gov, an IMLS supplementary information form, which includes the abstract, and that can be found on grants.gov.

15:56

An IMLS Library Discretionary program information form, which can be found on the IMLS website, and a two-page preliminary proposal narrative.

16:07

No other documents will be accepted.

16:09

Applications must be submitted through grants.gov before midnight eastern time on October 2, 2020.

16:18

Please note that grants.gov has adopted the workspace feature, which you may be required to use to submit your proposal.

16:26

We recommend you give yourself ample time to familiarize yourself with the system.

16:32

Also, IMLS has a new internal system for receiving applications through grants.gov.

16:38

While this will not alter your experience applying, it is crucial that you submit all documents in PDF form.

16:45

Any applications that include a non-PDF document will be bounced back by our system and will not be considered submitted.

16:53

We recommend ensuring all documents are in PDF format prior to submittal and submit early. Please don't wait until 11 PM on the night of the deadline to submit.

17:05

After proposals are submitted through grants.gov, IMLS staff screens them for completeness and eligibility.

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After that proposal's undergo peer review.

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After peer review, all applicants will receive reviewer comments and feedback.

17:21

The most competitive applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal for further consideration.

17:28

Applicants who are invited to submit full proposals will need to submit those by March 26th, 2021.

17:36

The required components for full proposals are much more extensive and are listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

17:43

These applications are also submitted through grants.gov and will similarly undergo a peer review process.

17:50

Both applicants will be provided reviewer comments and feedback, regardless of whether the project is selected for funding.

17:58

The IMLS director makes final funding decisions, which will be announced in July of 2021, Pending Funding Availability, and director discretion.

18:10

Here are some important dates you need to be aware of during this application.

18:15

The preliminary proposals are due October 2, 2020.

18:19

Their notification of status is going to be in February of 2021.

18:24

If you're invited to submit a full proposal, the full proposals are due March 26, 2021.

18:33

You'll be notified of funding in July 2021.

18:37

Projects must begin on either August first for September first, and you can choose your start date.

18:44

Please read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully to ensure you are meeting eligibility criteria and fulfill all of the application requirements.

18:54

There are three places where you must register your organization in order to be able to submit a proposal, DUNS, SAM, and grants.gov.

19:04

We strongly recommend immediately checking that all of these registrations are active as it can take some time to update or renew them.

19:12

First, your organization will need a DUNS number.

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The URL for acquiring a DUNS number is on the slide and also in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

19:22

Next, your institution must be registered with the System of Award Management or SAM.

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It's important to keep in mind that your SAM registration is good for one year and must be renewed annually.

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That's something you don't want to be doing right before the deadline, so we recommend checking your status early.

19:38

If it's not your job to track your SAM registration, we recommend you contact the person at your organization whose job it is, so you can make sure this is in place.

19:47

Finally, you'll need an account at grants.gov, which is the portal through which you will submit your application.

19:54

Allow plenty of time for the registration process here, and even if you know you're registered, make sure you know who is authorized for your institution and make sure they know their login information.

20:04

In fact, if you don't absolutely know for sure that this is all in place now, I'd recommend checking on it as soon as we get done today.

20:13

Again, it's not something you want to be trying to accomplish anywhere, close to the deadline.

20:19

For the final part of this webinar, we'll go over some tips for preparing a competitive application.

20:25

You should think about the preliminary proposal narrative as a movie trailer, providing the highlights of what a full proposal would include.

20:33

We recognize that it's quite challenge, fitting all of the information about your project into two pages, so you will want to be as succinct and specific as possible.

20:44

The preliminary proposal should follow the general sections of a full proposal narrative and address the Statement of Need, project design, and impact.

20:52

For LB21, it must also include a diversity plan, and a diversity plan is recommended for the national leadership grants for libraries.

21:01

Some elements you will want to address in your preliminary proposal includes clearly identifying the Project Director in any Project partners. This can easily, quickly be done in the first sentence.

21:13

For example, Institution X and institution Y will partner together to make A or accomplish B.

21:20

They request \$Z dollars from IMLS.

21:24

We recommend foregoing lengthy introductions and getting directly into the meat of what your project is about in the first sentence or two.

21:31

You also want to ground your project in current and relevant research and practice.

21:36

You will want to give an outline of your proposed work.

21:39

What will it look like? And how will it be accomplished? If it's a research proposal, you'll want to articulate specific research question and describe methodology.

21:49

You should make clear the relevance of your project to the selected project category, and also demonstrate the potential national impact and projected outcomes.

21:58

Please note the Budget Summary is required and must include the total anticipated cost of the project, including cost share, if it's required, and a breakdown of how funds would be allocated into different categories.

22:12

Proposals that do not include this information will be rejected without review.

22:17

We have posted the full and preliminary for proposals associated with the LB21 and NLG projects that have been funded over the past few years.

22:24

Which can be helpful to review as you start to work on your proposal. You can find them on the search awarded grants portal of the IMLS website.

22:32

IMLS program officers are also available to talk with you about your draft preliminary proposal.

22:38

If you'd like a program officer to take a look at a draft, please e-mail it to one of us by September 14th, 2020.

22:46

Sending it even earlier than that date is preferred, but September 14th will be the last day. We are able to accept that.

22:52

one of us will take a look at it, and then we can schedule a phone call with you to discuss your draft, answer any questions you might have.

23:00

Please refer to our contact sheet at the end of this PowerPoint. Identify the program officer whose experience best aligns with the subject matter in your proposal.

23:11

The Notice of Funding Opportunity specific Guidance for applications in the research in service to practice category, this slide lists some of the questions we ask you to consider, including thinking about the research questions, the radical framing, research, massive methods, and other aspects of your proposed project.

23:29

If you were applying for research and service to practice project, you must include some of these questions in your preliminary proposal.

23:41

Finally, here are some things that you can do to ensure you're submitting the most competitive proposal.

23:47

The first you've already accomplished by attending this webinar.

23:50

Next, you want to choose the grant program, program and categories that best align with your proposal.

23:58

Some other tips. Read through the preliminary proposals from last year to get some ideas of what was successful.

24:05

Articulate your project goals as quickly as possible and the preliminary proposal.

24:10

Include a budget paragraph and be sure you are submitting all of the completed and required documents in PDF form.

24:17

Program staff are available to discuss your project ideas with you, and to look over a draft of your preliminary proposal.

24:24

To take advantage of this opportunity, you must e-mail a draft of your proposal no later than the end of the day on Monday, September 14th.

24:32

You're more than welcome and even encouraged e-mail or contact us well in advance.

24:38

I highly recommend having a colleague unfamiliar with your project read through your proposal prior to submission.

24:44

We all get a little too close to our work and this will ensure that the proposal that you're submitting clearly communicates your project idea.

24:53

Most important of all, please communicate with us.

24:56

Our program staff are more than happy to chat with you about your project ideas prior to the deadline. Our job is to help applicants put together the most competitive applications they can.

25:07

We're here to help all applicants. So please be in touch.

25:11

You can see our contact information here.

25:14

Each of us works on specific content areas, and the Division of labor is provided here.

25:19

If you're not sure who to contact, please contact any one of us, and we will steer you in the right direction.

25:25

We want to thank you for joining us today, and please remember to reach out to any one of us if you have questions about your proposal. Thank you.