Reviewer Instructions
National Leadership Grants for Museums

Overview

- You will access the applications assigned to you by clicking on a link provided to you in an email message from your IMLS primary contact.
- You will enter your scores and comments through the IMLS Online Reviewer System.
- National Leadership Grants for Museums (NLG-M) field review uses a 7-point scale for each of three sections of the application narrative: Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results.
- Scores must be in whole numbers only. Fractions, ranges, decimals, and zeroes are not allowed.
- You must write a constructive and substantive comment of between 30 and 2000 characters in length for each section of the application narrative.
- All three sections of the narrative have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.
- Address your comments to the applicant, not to IMLS or to panel reviewers.
- Each comment should reflect the numeric score you provide for the corresponding section of the narrative.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Verify Access to Applications

Use the Dropbox link provided to you in an email message from your IMLS primary contact to access the applications assigned to you. Make sure you see all the applications referenced in the email, and then save them to your computer in a secure place that is not accessible to others. Call or email your IMLS primary contact immediately if any applications are missing or if you cannot open them.

> **Confidentiality in IMLS Peer Review:** 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.

2. Verify Access to IMLS Online Reviewer System

Go to the Museum Reviewer Resources page of the IMLS website by clicking here: https://www.imls.gov/grants/become-reviewer/reviewer-resources/museum-reviewer-resources. Then scroll to the bottom of the page to "Review Online," and click on the link to access the Online Reviewer System Login. Note that the system works best when accessed on a PC in Internet Explorer.

To login, enter the email address you have on file with IMLS, and use the default password: **password.** An **E-Review Security Screen** will appear. Read this page and click **OK.** Next, create a user account and establish your own password.

3. Assess Potential Conflicts of Interest

After you have created a new password, click **REVIEW GROUPS,** and your review

assignment will appear. To access the list of applications assigned to you, click **VIEW**.

Read through your list of applications again to see if there are any potential conflicts of interest. Please see "Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest."

CAUTION: Depending on your computer's operating system and/or the browser you use, you *may* see a screen with a column labeled "Conflicts" with a checkable box by each application. **Do not check any of these boxes** as doing so will disable access to the system and make it impossible for others in your review group to do their work. Instead, call or email your IMLS primary contact immediately if you have a conflict, or what may appear to be a conflict.
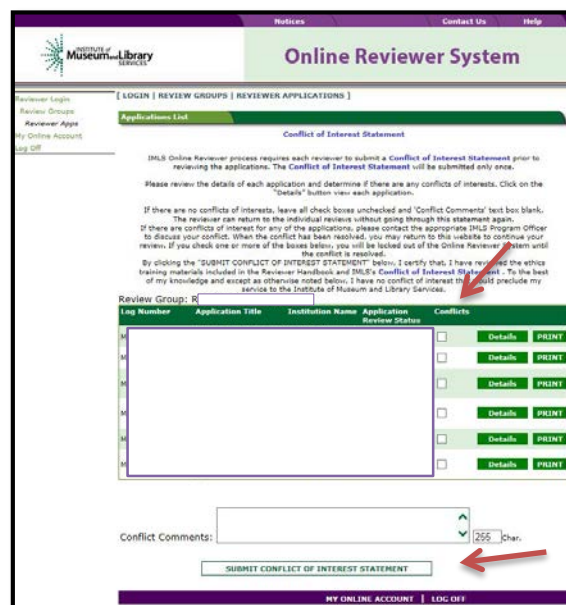
If you have no conflicts of interest with any of the applicants on the list, click **SUBMIT CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT** at the bottom of page.

4. **Read Applications**
   Review the Program Overview for NLG-Museums. The Overview states the goal of NLG-Museums to support projects that address critical needs of the museum field (rather than a single institution) and that have the potential to advance practice in the profession. It also highlights the goals of the four project categories (Advancing Digital Assets and Capacity, Diversity and Inclusion, Collections Care and Access, and Professional Development) and addresses the three funding levels (Non-Research Grants, Research Grants, and Rapid Prototyping Grants).

   You may be asked to review projects applying under varying project categories and funding levels so it is important to understand the goals and parameters of each. For

more information, please visit the NLG Notice of Funding Opportunities at https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/fy2018-oms-nlgm-nofo.pdf.

Then read the applications, keeping in mind the purpose of the grant program and the review criteria for each section of the narrative. You will not need to reference each bullet point in your comments, but these questions should guide your thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of each application. You can also access these review criteria as a separate document to keep handy as you read your applications. Note that you may come across well thought out and sound projects that do not meet the goals of NLG-M, or project submitted under the research funding level that do not respond to the Guidance for Research Projects. Please address this potential mismatch between proposed projects and grant program goals in your comments and scores.

About Performance Measurement
On the Program Information Sheet (Section 4), applicants were required to select at least one pre-determined Performance Goal that reflects a measurable change or outcome they intend their project to achieve. For those projects with goals in the Learning Experiences and Community Anchors categories, applicants were then required to select one or more specific Performance Measure Statements associated with specific information that they will be required to collect during the grant period and report at the end of their projects. These pre-determined Performance Measure Statements will help IMLS document the collective achievements of the projects we fund, and they may be found in Appendix Three on the NLG for Museums Notice of Funding Opportunity. For projects with goals in Collections Stewardship category, applicants were asked to write their own Performance Measurement Statements to reflect what success will look like upon the completion of their projects. Elements that you as a reviewer will evaluate in the Project Results section of each application relate directly to Performance Goal(s) and Performance Measure Statement(s).

5. ### Draft Comments
   You must write a constructive and substantive comment for each section of the narrative for each application you review. All three sections of the narrative have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.

   To organize notes for writing your comments, you may wish to use the "Field Review Notes Template" to record notes that will help you prepare your review comments. Your final review comments should be written in complete sentences and constitute strong, coherent, constructive, and substantive assessments of each section of the application narrative.

   Think about the review criteria for each section of the application, and be sure to consider all the required components of the application as well as relevant Supporting Documents as resources for your assessment. Draft your comments using a word-processing program for later copying and pasting into the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Remember that each comment must be between 30 and 2000 characters long.

When drafting your comments …

- use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- judge the application on its own merits, and do not base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- if you question the accuracy of any information, call us—not the applicant—to discuss it.

Effective comments …	Poor comments…
- are presented in a constructive manner. - are both substantive and easy to read and understand. - reflect the resources of the institution. - are specific to the individual application. - reflect the numeric score assigned. - highlight the application's strengths and identify areas for improvement. - are directed to applicants—not IMLS or panel reviewers—for their use.	- simply summarize or paraphrase the applicant's own words. - make derogatory remarks. - penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money. - offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information. - make vague or overly general statements. - question an applicant's honesty or integrity.

Make sure your comments justify the scores you provide. A highly complementary comment does not "remove the sting" of a low score, and a negative comment does not "even out" a high one. Comments and scores must complement each other and make sense as a whole.

Below are some examples of **effective** field reviewer comments:

Project Justification	
"You clearly identify the need within the museum field that this project addresses. The project partners add needed expertise and have been involved in the development of the project. Your intended results are well reasoned, well formulated, achievable, and will go a long way toward addressing the identified need. The proposed project is an excellent fit for an NLG Diversity and Inclusion grant."	*Comment is substantive, addresses the review criteria, and employs a positive tone.*
"You make a strong case for the museum to develop educational technology for the exhibit floor. However, I believe that the problem you identify is one based on a need in your museum rather than in the museum field, and therefore does not fit well within the National Leadership Grant program. Perhaps you should consider resubmitting your proposal to the Museums for America grant program."	*Comment correlates with the score of 1 and makes implementable suggestions for securing funding.*

Project Workplan	
"Your work plan is clear and outlines specific activities necessary for achieving your goals. Your consultants are well qualified to assist the project team with the complex data collection involved. I like the clearly described points at which you track the progress of your project and allow for course corrections. "You might consider building in more time to develop and test your survey questions since the success of the project hinges on obtaining valuable feedback."	*Comment provides a constructive assessment of the application and suggestions likely to benefit the applicant.*
Project Results	
"Your evaluation plan is very thorough and well thought out. The database and resources resulting from this project could be invaluable to the science museum field and, as you note, could be easily adapted for use by other disciplines. I would have liked to see more robust plans for continuing the dissemination of your work beyond the conferences you will attend during the grant period."	*Comment addresses questions from the review criteria.*

In contrast, below are some examples of **poor** field reviewer comments:

Project Justification	
"The museum plans to organize a symposium on the topic of after-school programs in art museums for at-risk students that will bring together museums professionals to discuss best practices. They will partner with the Parks and Recreations Department, the Boys and Club and other after school providers."	*Comment paraphrases the applicant's own words.*
Project Workplan	
"The work plan would be improved by putting in more time onsite."	*Comment is very brief and has little value to the applicant.*
Project Results	
"The design of this research study is wrong-headed and will not yield any useful data. The staff is woefully unprepared and will fail in the execution of this project. Targeting federal funds to this museum is a mistake."	*Comment is derogatory and does not provide useful feedback.*
"Strong results with very sustainable benefits."	*Comment is very brief and has little worth or value to the applicant.*

The chart below summarizes the most frequently asked questions from NLG field reviewers:

Should I consider … ?	Yes	No
Whether a project meets the high priority need in the museum field	X	
An institution's financial or staffing needs		X
Whether the project is well planned and the organization has the appropriate resources to complete the project	X	

Whether the applicant has included the information necessary for an adequate evaluation of its merits	X	
Whether a project is new or a resubmission		X
The size or age of the organization		X
An institution's indirect cost rate		X

6. **Assign Scores**

Assign a preliminary score to each of the three sections of the application narrative: Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results. Use a scale of 1 to 7, as described below. Use only whole numbers; do not use fractions, ranges, decimals, or zeroes.

SCORE DEFINITIONS	
7 – Exceptional	The applicant's response is exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.
6 – Excellent	The applicant's response is very strong with no more than one minor weakness in its support of the proposed project
5 – Very Good	The applicant's response is strong with only a few minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.
4 – Good	The applicant's response is adequate but with numerous minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.
3 – Some Merit	The applicant's response may have some strengths but has at least one moderate weakness in its support for the proposed project.
2 – Poor	The applicant's response is deficient and has at least one major weakness in its support of the proposed project.
1 – Inadequate/Insufficient	The applicant's response is either inadequate or insufficient to evaluate fully and/or has numerous major weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.
Minor	*An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project*
Moderate	*A weakness that lessens the impact of the project*
Major	*A weakness that severely limits the impact of the project*

7. **Review Your Work**

Review your draft comments and preliminary scores. A review with even one missing score or comment cannot be accepted by the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to reflect more accurately your written evaluation. Scores should support comments, and comments should justify scores.

8. **Enter Scores and Comments**

Go to the Museum Reviewer Resources page of the IMLS website by clicking here: https://www.imls.gov/grants/become-reviewer/reviewer-resources/museum-reviewer-resources. Then scroll to the bottom of the page to "Review Online," and click on the link to access the Online Reviewer System Login. Note that the system works best when accessed on a PC in Internet Explorer.

Login with the email address you have on file with IMLS and the password you created in Step 2. Go to your list of assigned applications and click **REVIEW** beside any of them to begin.

Copy and paste your comments into the appropriate blue blocks for each section of the narrative for each application. Choose a numeric score between 1 and 7 from the **SCORE** dropdown menu. Be sure to save each comment by clicking **SAVE** at the bottom of the page before you move on to the next one. Use the controls on the side or top of the screen to navigate between sections.

Once you have entered your comments for each section of the narrative, click on Application Overview. Enter any additional overview comments you wish, between 30 and 2000 characters. You may ignore the question, "Funding Priorities Addressed?"

Once you have completed assigning scores and providing comments for each application assigned to you, we recommend that you print a copy of each completed review to keep for your files. Then click on **I AM READY TO SUBMIT THIS REVIEW TO IMLS** to send all your work to IMLS.

At this point, you will not be able to re-enter the IMLS Online Reviewer System unless you notify your IMLS primary contact.

For all questions about reviewing, either technical or programmatic, please call or email your IMLS primary contact directly.

9. **Manage Your Copies**

Keep your applications and a copy of each review sheet until **September 30, 2018,** in case there are questions from IMLS staff. Continue to maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review by keeping electronic and paper copies in a secure place. After September 30, 2018, destroy the applications and the review sheets.

Appendix: Online Reviewer System Troubleshooting

When using certain browsers, including versions of Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari, or Opera, you may see text displayed in the Online Reviewer System superimposed on top of buttons or menus, making the buttons difficult or impossible to click. It may look like this:
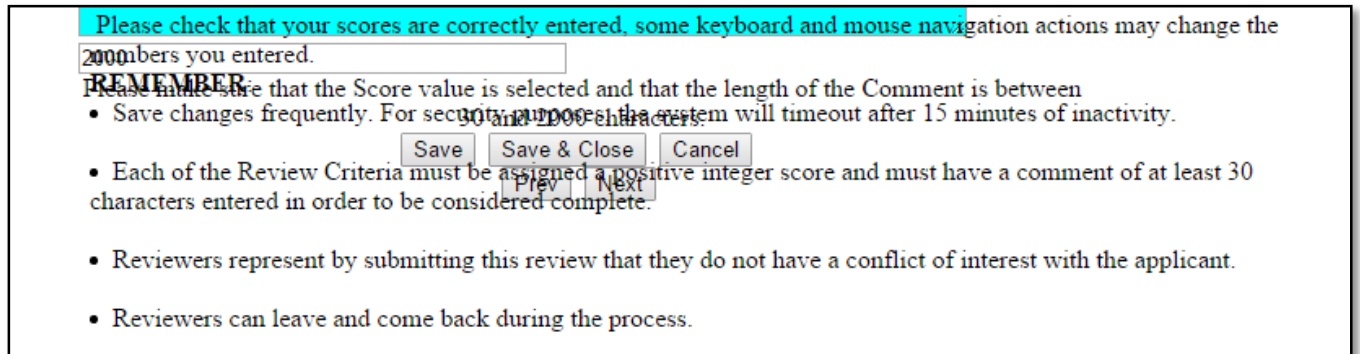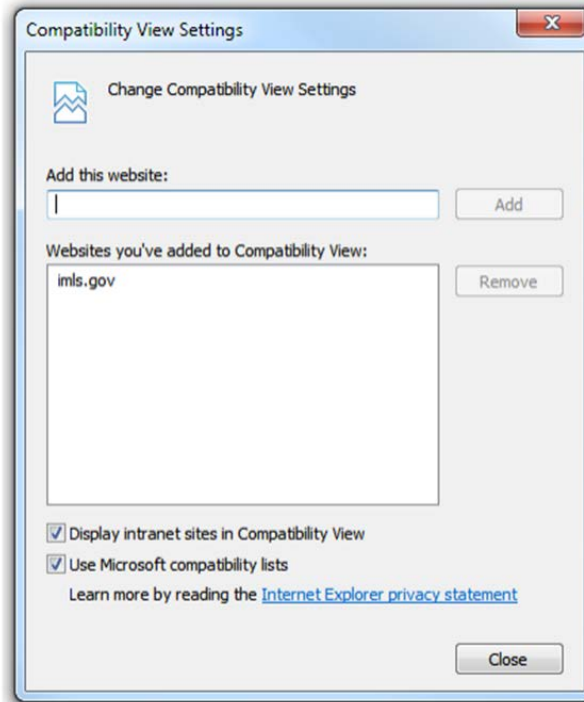

If you use **Internet Explorer (IE) with Compatibility View (or Compatibility Mode) enabled,** you may resolve this issue with the following steps:

1. Locate the Settings menu in the top right corner of the browser window and select Compatibility View settings.
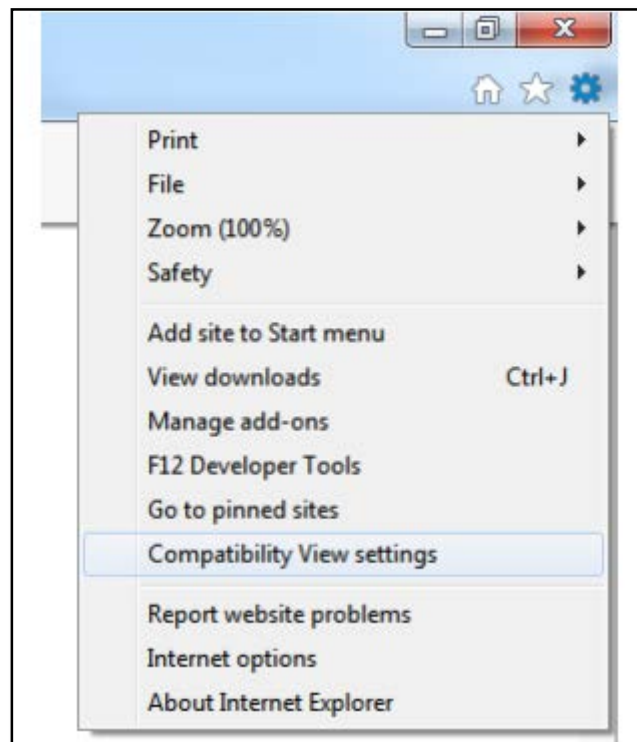
1. Type "imls.gov" in the **Add this website:** dialogue box, then click **Add.**

If you are using another version of IE, please refer to the help documentation for your version, or contact IMLS for assistance.

When you submit your comments and scores you may encounter the following error message:

I AM READY TO SUBMIT THIS REVIEW TO IMLS

Click on the "view" button to move to the review form for each application.
After you have completed entering the scores and comments for each application in the current review group, you can submit the completed review to IMLS.

Each of the Review Criteria must be assigned a positive integer score and must have a comment entered in order to be considered complete. Please also note that after the review is submitted to IMLS, you will not be able to view or modify the review.

Please print a copy of each review for your file and retain the copy for 60 days after you submit your E-Review.

Error occured while processing request:
Due to an internal error - an email was not successfully sent.
HTTP Error: The "SendUsing" configuration value is invalid.
System.Exception: Due to an internal error - an email was not successfully sent.
HTTP Error: The "SendUsing" configuration value is invalid. at IMLS.AppSettings.SendMail
(String sFrom, String sTo, String sSubject, String sBody, Boolean bOverrideSendBlock) in
C:\Inetpub\wwwroot\GrantApps\Classes\AppSettings.vb:line 121 at
IMLS.ctrlReviewerApplications.SendSubmitEmail(String astrReviewerEmail, String
astrReviewerFullName, String astrReviewGroup, String astrAdditionalComments) in
C:\Inetpub\wwwroot\GrantApps\Controls\ctrlReviewerApplications.ascx.vb:line 288 at
IMLS.ctrlReviewerApplications.cmdIMLSSubmit_Click(Object sender, EventArgs e) in
C:\Inetpub\wwwroot\GrantApps\Controls\ctrlReviewerApplications.ascx.vb:line 262

MY ONLINE ACCOUNT | LOG OFF

Don't worry. IMLS will have received your scores and comments if you receive this message.