INSTITUTE *of* Museum and Library SERVICES

FY 2022–2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Institute of Museum and Library Services
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Cover photo: Cuyahoga County Public Library, OH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 2

IMLS FY 2022–2026 Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals and Objectives 3

Stakeholder Engagement 3

Goal 1: Champion Lifelong Learning 4

Goal 2: Strengthen Community Engagement 6

Goal 3: Advance Collections Stewardship and Access 8

Goal 4: Demonstrate Excellence in Public Service 10

Cross-Agency Collaborations: Interagency Agreements and Cooperative Agreements 14

External Factors 17

Major Management Priorities and Goals 18

Evidence Building 19

About Us 20

Legislative History 21

Photo: South Carolina Aquarium, SC

Photo: Gwinnett County Public Library, GA

INTRODUCTION

As museums, libraries, archives, and the people and communities they serve continue to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, IMLS is dedicated to helping them navigate the ever-changing environment and building a promising future. We proudly support the continual efforts of our community anchor institutions to delight, enlighten, educate, and connect people from all walks of life across America. The sense of museums and libraries as second homes—refuges where individuals can contemplate, change, and broaden their own horizons, and also come together and feel at ease with each other—is more important now than ever. We are all, as individuals, communities, and a nation, on a journey, and IMLS is committed to its vision of:

A nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage.

IMLS continues on its own journey, as well, as you will read in the strategic plan below. We strive to become ever-better stewards of federal funds through data-driven decision making and continual improvement of our efficiency and effectiveness; further our partnerships to support museum, library, and information services; and foster an environment that cultivates respect at the core of how we interact with each other and with those we serve.

IMLS FY 2022–2026 MISSION, VISION, AND STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The **mission** of IMLS is to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development.

The Agency carries out its charge as it adapts to meet the changing needs of our nation's museums and libraries and their communities. IMLS's mission is essential to helping these institutions navigate change and continue to improve their services.

IMLS **envisions** a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage.

IMLS's new strategic plan goals and objectives frame how the Agency envisions meeting the essential information, education, research, economic, cultural, and civic needs of the American public over the next five years.

Stakeholder Engagement

Per the guidance in OMB Circular A-11, Section 230.16, and to ensure that Agency stakeholders were given an opportunity to comment on the Agency's strategic goals for fiscal years 2022–2026, we invited public comment on our strategic plan goals. IMLS also engages with a variety of stakeholders on an ongoing basis to review strategic priorities. We meet with and hear from museum, library, and archives professionals and associations; Native American Tribes, including through Nation-to-Nation Consultations and Listening Sessions; Chief Officers of State Library Agencies; the Administration and Congress; and members of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

FY 2022–2026 STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	
GOAL 1 Champion Lifelong Learning	Objective 1.1	Advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities for all.
	Objective 1.2	Support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.
GOAL 2 Strengthen Community Engagement	Objective 2.1	Promote inclusive engagement across diverse audiences.
	Objective 2.2	Support community collaboration and foster civic discourse.
GOAL 3 Advance Collections Stewardship and Access	Objective 3.1	Support collections care and management.
	Objective 3.2	Promote access to museum and library collections.
GOAL 4 Demonstrate Excellence in Public Service	Objective 4.1	Maximize public investments by cultivating a culture of planning, evaluation, and evidence-based practice.
	Objective 4.2	Increase the impact of IMLS through strategic engagement with public and private sector stakeholders.
	Objective 4.3	Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Agency operations.
	Objective 4.4	Build a workplace culture that fosters respect and collaboration, promotes open and transparent communication, and embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.

GOAL 1

CHAMPION LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning is an ongoing process fostering discovery, critical thinking, and creativity throughout our lives. Many rich and fulfilling opportunities are available outside the classroom, for people of all ages and abilities. Museums, libraries, and archives are pivotal places for adapting to new technology and sharing new experiences, whether in collaboration with formal education partners or providing informal learning experiences on their own.

Objective 1.1: Advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities for all.

IMLS is committed to supporting programs that reach communities large and small to engage people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Local museums, libraries, and archives are uniquely positioned to understand and address the needs of their communities. Additionally, with the advancement of technology and virtual content, institutions are able to expand their engagement to people across the country.

Strategies	• Support communities of practice that draw upon current research to develop effective informal and formal learning experiences in museums and libraries. • Accelerate innovation in lifelong learning by expanding the knowledge base in research, program evaluation, and the collection and dissemination of information to museum and library professionals and the public. • Support projects that use museum and library resources and information services to create learning opportunities in a variety of formats, including exhibitions, programs, publications, and websites. • Initiate and support communities of practice that draw upon current research to develop effective informal and formal learning experiences in museums and libraries. • Accelerate innovation in lifelong learning by expanding the knowledge base in research, program evaluation, and the collection and dissemination of information to museum and library professionals and the public. • Support projects that use museum and library resources and information services to create learning opportunities in a variety of formats, including exhibitions, programs, publications, and websites.	
Key Performance Goals	• Implement grantmaking that is equitable and focuses grant-funded programs on access. • Monitor meaningful collaborations, knowledge, and community building in the museum, library, and archives fields. • Create a community of shared practice in our grantee communities.	
Contributing Programs	• All OMS Grant Programs	• All OLS Grant Programs

Photo: El Pueblo History Museum, CO

Objective 1.2: Support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.

The ability for museums, libraries, and archives to serve their communities is rooted in having trained and knowledgeable staff and volunteers. IMLS supports institutions in ensuring their staff have the skills necessary to provide their users with critical programming and services.

Strategies	• Create a talent pipeline of next generation of library workers through early exposure to library and information science careers, educational opportunities, and the development of recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies. • Develop and enhance professional development programs for librarians and the library workforce, including the enhancement of curricula within nationally accredited graduate library and information science programs. • Support the growth and development of museum staff and volunteers, through training and professional development opportunities that enhance museum services to the public and create a more diverse and inclusive museum workforce. • Lower barriers to entry into the field or to advancement in the field.	
Key Performance Goals	• Monitor awards made that support these types of educational programs. • Improve and increase the number of projects that provide training and professional development. • Maintain/increase the number of individuals who participate in professional development. • Increase geographic reach of training and professional development programs. • Measure how training and professional development programs and opportunities address equity issues and concerns.	
Contributing Programs	• OLS Grant Programs include: » Grants to States; » Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian; » National Leadership Grants for Libraries; » Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grants; and » Native Hawaiian Library Services.	• OMS Grant Programs include: » Museum Grants for African American History and Culture; » Museums Empowered; » Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services; and » National Leadership Grants for Museums.

GOAL 2

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Museums, libraries, and archives are places of community development, community self-awareness, and community coming together. They are where people go to join a community, to immerse themselves in a culture, to learn about other communities, and be inspired by nature, art, science, history, play, and reading. IMLS supports these institutions to open themselves up to all community members and visitors, bridging the gaps of distance, resources, or experience. Museums, libraries, and archives are unparalleled sources of educational, information, health, job, and cultural resources. Across the U.S., visitors come to these institutions to find out about others, to find out about themselves, and to grow what they know.

Objective 2.1: Promote inclusive engagement across diverse audiences.

Museums, libraries, and archives can bridge gaps, uplift communities, and give voice to those who have not been heard. IMLS supports museums, libraries, and archives to foster connections within the community to enhance dialogues surrounding inclusion and address barriers to resources and services. IMLS encourages these institutions to open up opportunities for engaging in new ways with audiences from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and with different needs and skills.

Strategies	• Support opportunities for equitable engagement, collaboration, and communications across communities. • Support projects that improve access to museum, library, and information services. • Support projects that help eliminate barriers that prevent individuals from using museum, library, and archives services effectively.		
Key Performance Goals	• Increase numbers of and funding amounts to equitable collaborations with CBOs. • Increase number of museums and attendees that adopt the Museums for All program. • Identify and track the engagement of specific underrepresented target populations in museum, library, and archives programs.		
Contributing Programs	• All OMS Grant Programs	• OLS Grant Programs include: » Grants to States; » Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian; » National Leadership Grants for Libraries; and » Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grants.	• Other supporting IMLS activities include: » Museums for All; » IMLS convenings; » Grants to States conference » State Data Coordinators (SDC) conference; and » Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG) conference.

Photo: National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorrain Motel, TN

Objective 2.2: Support community collaboration and foster civic discourse.

Museums, libraries, and archives can connect community members to develop or enhance a collective sense of place where everyone can feel respected and included. IMLS enables these institutions and their partners to foster dialogue that addresses and incorporates diverse community needs and experiences.

Strategies	• Support projects that enhance civic engagement, innovation, and collaboration in addressing community needs. • Support resource sharing and partnerships among museums, libraries, schools, and other community organizations. • Strengthen the capacity of museums and libraries to serve as important partners in building and maintaining vibrant communities.		
Key Performance Goals	• Increase the ability of libraries and museums to support civic engagement and collaborations with community organizations. • Use funding programs to prioritize partnerships and collaborations.		
Contributing Programs	• All OMS Grant Programs	• OLS Grant Programs include: » Grants to States, including community conversations and census-related programming; workforce development initiatives and early literacy initiatives; » Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian; » National Leadership Grants for Libraries; » Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grants; and » Native Hawaiian Library Services.	• Other IMLS activities include: » America250 and IMLS initiative on the Semiquincentennial; and » Evaluation of workforce development programs in libraries through the Measures That Matter initiative to examine, evaluate, map, and develop the landscape of public library data collection in the United States; now in the implementation phase after the release of the Measures that Matter Action Plan in April 2018.

GOAL 3

ADVANCE COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP AND ACCESS

Museums, libraries, and archives are responsible for preserving, managing, and providing the broadest possible access to the cultural, artistic, historical, natural, and scientific collections entrusted to their care.

Objective 3.1: Support collections care and management. IMLS supports projects for museums, libraries, and archives to advance the documentation, preservation, conservation, and storage of their collections. It is vital that these materials, from living and non-living collections to digital files, are maintained in appropriate environments to ensure their availability for future use. Digitization helps minimize the impact of handling and movement on original items and allows sharing with the broadest possible audience.

Strategies	• Support projects to provide optimal conditions for collections storage, exhibition, and use. • Support projects that train staff, volunteers, and community members to prepare for and respond to disasters and emergency situations. • Support projects that train museum, library, and archives staff and volunteers in collections preservation, conservation, care, and management. • Support projects to provide for conservation treatment, the physical improvement of collections items, living and non-living.		
Key Performance Goals	• Expand sustainable stewardship of the nation's collections. • Promote collections care in African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Latin American programs in culturally responsive ways.		
Contributing Programs	• OMS Grant Programs include: » Inspire! Grants for Small Museums; » Museum Grants for African American History and Culture; » Museums for America; » National Leadership Grants for Museums; » Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services; » Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP); and » Museum Assessment Program (MAP).	• OLS Grant Programs include: » Grants to States, including state and local archives preservation, digitization of newspapers and important community resources, FEMA disaster response work at state level; wildfire, flood, and hurricane response; » Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian; » National Leadership Grants for Libraries; » Native American Library Services: Basic Grants; » Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grants; and » Native Hawaiian Library Services.	• Other IMLS activities include: » Museums and Archives and HBCU Initiative: The History and Culture Access Consortium: in partnerships with the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Photo: L.A. County Libraries, CA

Photo: Museo de Arte de Ponce, PR

Photo: Roberto Gonzalez, courtesy of Orlando Science Center, FL

Objective 3.2: Promote access to museum and library collections.

As technology evolves, museums, libraries, and archives are taking advantage of opportunities to expand access to their collections through searchable databases, virtual exhibits, live and on-demand demonstrations, collections-based learning resources, interactive websites, and facilitated events for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

Strategies	• Advance the capability of museums, libraries, and archives to organize, process, and share information about their collections as digital content to be distributed as broadly as possible. • Support collaborative research and promote partnerships capable of generating ideas, tools, and models that lead to best practices in expanding the public's access to digital information and services. • Support remote and onsite projects to provide access to the resources and information services of museum, library, and archives in a variety of formats, including exhibitions, programs, publications, and websites, for individuals of all ages and abilities.	
Key Performance Goals	• Improve and increase digital engagement with collections. • Increase uptake of effective practices in digital access to collections. • Elevate visibility and value of culturally specific collections through African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Latin American programs. • Document continued diversification of format of service delivery by museums and libraries.	
Contributing Programs	• OMS Grant Programs include: » Inspire! Grants for Small Museums; » Museum Grants for African American History and Culture; » Museums for America; » National Leadership Grants for Museums; and » Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services.	• OLS Grant Programs include: » National Leadership Grants for Libraries; » Native American Library Services: Basic Grants; » Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grants; and » Native Hawaiian Library Services.

GOAL 4

DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

IMLS recognizes the importance of reflective practice and continual improvement in our commitment to the Agency's mission to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations. We are committed to the use of valid data to support decision making. We believe that engaging communities around local needs is an essential first step in all aspects of public service. We use thoughtful analysis and process improvement to strengthen our operational efficiency and effectiveness. And in support of all our activities, we are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace culture as foundational to excellence.

Objective 4.1: Maximize public investments by cultivating a culture of planning, evaluation, and evidence-based practice.
IMLS will strive to use evidence and data-based decision-making wherever possible to ensure that budget and grantmaking are being allocated as efficiently and effectively as possible. To that end, we will conduct evaluations, assessment, research, and data collection efforts with the goal of creating a culture where data use is an integral part of any operation within the Agency.

Strategies	• Support performance measurement, evaluation, and survey efforts that provide robust evidence for informing grantmaking and other types of Agency and federal policy decisions. • Support the research, data collection, use, and analysis needs of the museum, library, and archives sectors, stakeholders engaging with these institutions, and the communities they serve. • Share results of funded grant projects to leverage the federal investments to benefit a wide range of stakeholders. • Foster an Agency mindset that values data as a resource for effective decision-making and communication about the Agency's grantmaking, research, and data collection.
Key Performance Goals	• Publish results, products, and other information from final performance reports on the website in a discoverable manner. • Share results of our data collections, assessments, and research efforts. • Create and implement an Agency-wide system using keywords in application abstracts and performance reports to improve our efficiency in identifying funded projects by topic addressed, methodology used, and intended and achieved results. • Build staff capacity to effectively use application and award data.
Contributing Activities	• Establishment surveys like the Public Libraries Survey (PLS) and State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAA) Survey. • Annual and ongoing evaluations coordinated with program offices. • Agency performance monitoring and reporting. • Performance Measurement Plans required for applications; performance and financial reports required of awardees; interpreting results to improve grant programs.

Objective 4.2: Increase the impact of IMLS through strategic engagement with public and private sector stakeholders.

Strategic partnerships that are purposeful, intentional, goal-oriented, and thoughtfully selected expand the reach of IMLS's programs and services, allowing museums, libraries, and archives to maximize federal resources and programs to support their communities. We facilitate discussions among federal, state, local agencies, non-profit organizations, and foundations on diverse practices and strategies to support museums, libraries, and archives in supporting learning, engaging with their communities, and advancing collections care, management, and access.

Strategies	• Maximize our federal role to both help other federal agencies and offices understand and leverage the public service roles of museums, libraries, archives, and help facilitate access to and the effective delivery of museum, library, and information services to the public. • Engage with diverse stakeholders to help develop and inform strategies for museums, libraries, and archives to adapt to the changing needs of their communities. • Develop partnerships and agreements with federal agencies, foundations, and other organizations to leverage and catalyze the community power of museums, libraries, and archives.
Key Performance Goals	• Support broad-based efforts to provide museums, libraries, and archives with resources to advance digital access and inclusion. • Elevate the public service role of libraries and museums as sources of trusted information and to support civic engagement. • Promote access to, engagement with, and preservation of natural and cultural heritage. • Promote pandemic response and health resilience. • Improve and strengthen the diversity of the museum, libraries, and archives workforce.
Contributing Activities	See the Cross-Agency Collaborations section below for examples of how IMLS engages in interagency and cooperative agreements to expand our reach.

Photo: Prevention Research Center of Michigan, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, courtesy of InterUniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, MI

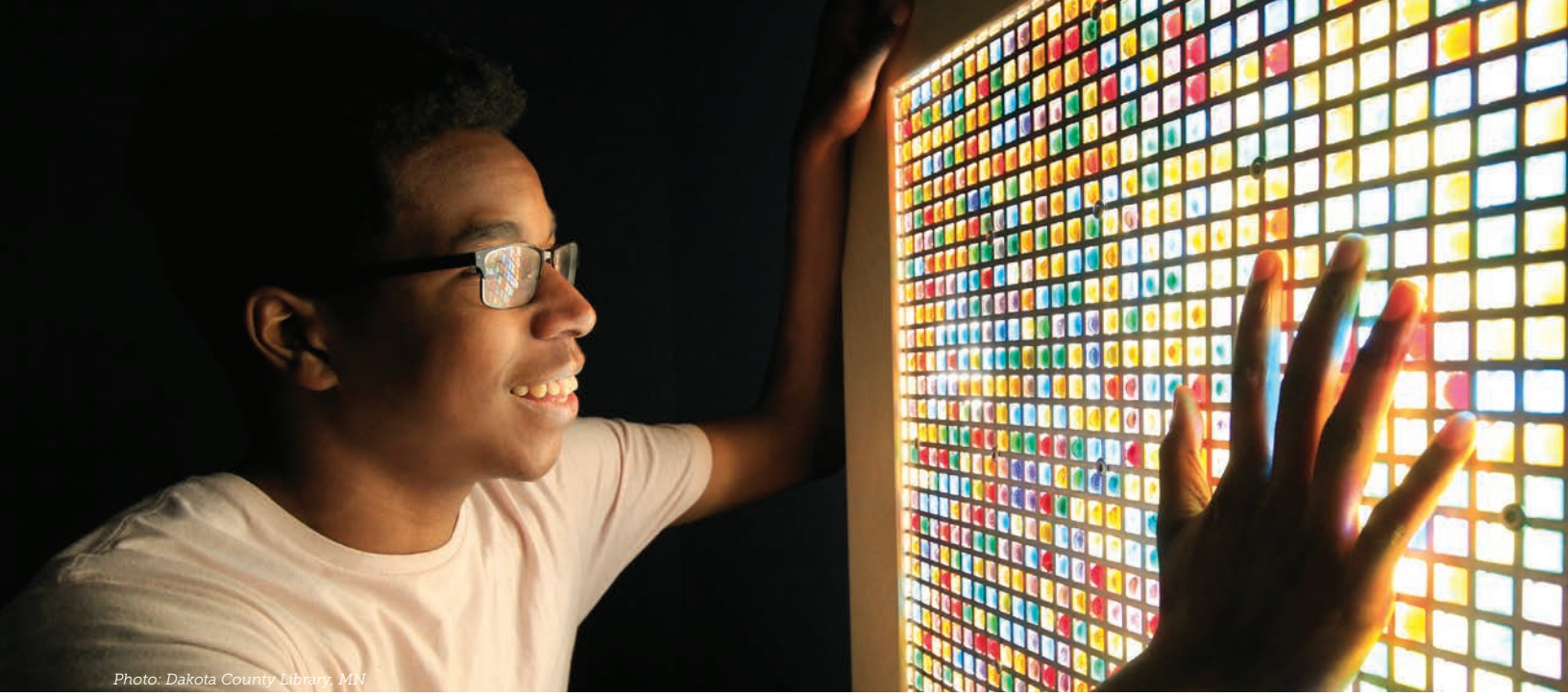

Photo: Dakota County Library, MN

Objective 4.3: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Agency operations.

As good stewards of federal administrative funds, IMLS strives to minimize risks and costs while generating maximum value for and meeting the expectations of the organizations we serve. Through careful management, priority setting, effective communication, and staying abreast of federal requirements and best practices, we aim to maximize our effectiveness in achieving our Agency's short- and long-term operational goals.

Strategies	• Build IT capacity to protect against cyber threats and integrate appropriate technologies into Agency functions. • Increase use of automation within the Agency to improve quality and increase efficiencies. • Improve coordination across offices to enhance staff's ability to perform the Agency's mission. • Develop metrics-driven approach to communicating about the Agency's grantmaking, data collection, and research. • Incorporate data and storytelling to effectively communicate the Agency's value to the public.
Key Performance Goals	• Increase efficiency of our grantmaking processes through the innovative adoption of technology. • Automate internal administrative workflows. • Establish timely and consistent processes that are incorporated into standard operating procedures for the Agency.

Objective 4.4: Build a workplace culture that fosters respect and collaboration, promotes open and transparent communication, and embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.

IMLS believes in cultivating a diverse and inclusive work environment where we value our employees' unique qualities, abilities, and achievements to inspire a motivating workplace culture to perform at our best. A diverse workplace that demonstrates respect and promotes collaboration across the organization increases engagement and yields creative solutions to problems, which benefits the Agency, the institutions, and the people they ultimately serve. Embracing diversity and inclusion as core values empowers teamwork and increases productivity and efficiencies in our workplace that exceeds expectations in meeting our Agency's mission.

Strategies	• Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan: Implement the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, ensuring DEI is integrated into the Agency's stakeholders, strategies, and initiatives. • Collaboration: Provide and enhance opportunities for innovation through collaboration across diverse groups of teams within the Agency. • Communication: Promote and demonstrate clear and transparent communication to ensure that all employees are provided information and communication channels to engage.
Key Performance Goals	• Carry out training to help understand unconscious biases in workplace processes. • Invite speakers from diverse and underserved communities to increase awareness in outreach strategies efforts. • Agency-wide training enhances collaboration, engagement, and recognizes learning differences.

Photo: Cathleen Allison/Nevada Photo Source, courtesy of Carson City Library, NV

Photo: Queens Museum of Art, NY

CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATIONS: INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Photo: Marathon Public Library, TX

As discussed above in Goal 4, Objective 2, IMLS believes that collaborations with partners across the federal government and the museum and library sectors are essential to increasing our impact. Below are some examples of how we interact with our partners.

The Museum and Library Services Act authorizes IMLS to enter into interagency agreements to promote or assist with the museum, library, and information services-related activities of other Federal agencies (20 U.S.C. § 9103). Recognizing the role of museums and libraries as anchor institutions, the Act also directs the Agency to coordinate and work jointly with other Federal departments and agencies on:

- initiatives, materials, technology, or research to support education, workforce development, economic and business development, and related activities and services undertaken by libraries;
- resource and policy approaches to eliminate barriers to fully leveraging the role of libraries and museums in supporting the early learning, literacy, lifelong learning, digital literacy, workforce development, and education needs of the people of the United States; and
- initiatives, materials, technology, or research to support educational, cultural, historical, scientific, environmental, and other activities undertaken by museums.

In addition to project support, the Director of IMLS holds several statutory positions, including on the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, with the American Folklife Center, and on the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission.

In addition to interagency agreements, IMLS uses cooperative agreements with non-governmental entities to increase its impact and further its mission.

Below is a discussion of some ongoing agreements.

Broadband

AMERICAN BROADBAND INITIATIVE

IMLS is a critical partner in the Administration's **American Broadband Initiative**, designed to identify and remove barriers to broadband access and digital resources. In collaboration with the **Departments of Interior (DOI)**, **Education, Commerce, and Agriculture**, IMLS has hosted an annual National Tribal Broadband Summit since 2019. The Summit provides a unique opportunity for Tribal leaders, representatives of Tribal libraries and cultural programs, federal programs managers, and policymakers at multiple levels of government to come together and share their innovations in expanding broadband access and adoption in Tribal communities.

COVID-19 Response

COMMUNITIES FOR IMMUNITY

IMLS entered into an interagency agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in order to boost COVID-19 vaccine confidence in communities across the United States. With support from the CDC and IMLS, the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC), in collaboration with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), will lead Communities for Immunity, which will provide funding to museums and libraries to enhance vaccine confidence at the local level. Building on the many ways they have supported their communities during the pandemic, the partnership will activate museums and libraries to create and deliver evidence-driven materials and develop resources, programs, and approaches specifically designed to help museums and libraries engage diverse audiences in building trust in the COVID-19 vaccine. ASTC and AAM are partnering with several museum and library associations, including the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of African American Museums (AAAM), the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM), the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC). Through this network, we can enable engagement across a broad and diverse set of communities, increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence in the short term, and work toward greater community health/resilience in the long term.

Conservation and Preservation

PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL COLLECTIONS: SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES

IMLS partners with the National Park Service, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts to support **Save America's Treasures**, a grant program designed to preserve and protect nationally significant historic properties and collections throughout the country. Congress appropriates funding for the Save America's Treasures grants from the Historic Preservation Fund, which uses revenue from federal oil leases to provide a range of preservation assistance without expending tax dollars. IMLS administers awards for collections-based projects.

DOI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The **Recovery Support Function Leadership Group (RSFLG)** is a federal interagency body established to improve the effectiveness and unity of effort in coordinating federal support to help communities recover from a disaster. IMLS is a supporting organization and participates in one of six Recovery Support Functions (RSFs): Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR). The NCR RSF brings together a variety of federal agencies under the leadership of the Department of the Interior to support the protection of natural and cultural resources and historic properties through appropriate response and recovery actions.

America250

America250 is a multi-year effort to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016, as amended, established a Commission of public and private partners to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate commemorative activities, culminating on July 4, 2026, but building community infrastructure for the future. IMLS partnered on the development of a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively on signature programs and activities that tap into the wealth of knowledge, historic assets, and tangible touchpoints comprising some of the country's leading cultural institutions and organizations. Director Kemper serves as an ex-officio member of the Semiquincentennial Commission.

Equity and Stakeholder Engagement

MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES AND HBCU INITIATIVE: THE HISTORY AND CULTURE ACCESS CONSORTIUM

IMLS is collaborating with the **National Museum of African American History and Culture** (NMAAHC) to provide training, mentoring, and support to the next generation of museum, archives, and academic professionals from population groups that have been underrepresented in these fields. NMAAHC, in partnership with five Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCUs), has created the History and Culture Access Consortium (HCAC) to strengthen member archives and museums and to bring their rare and unique collections into the public eye. IMLS will support intensive professional training and leadership development for emerging museum, archives, and academic professionals from traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as an evaluation of HCAC's progress and effectiveness in reaching project goals and the effectiveness of the consortium as a model that can be successfully expanded to other HBCUs.

MUSEUMS FOR ALL

Museums for All, a collaboration with the Association of Children's Museums, provides free or reduced admission to families receiving SNAP benefits through participating museums. Over the life of this initiative, it has grown from a pilot effort to a robust national network of more than 700 museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Through effective outreach to encourage museum participation and development of high-quality collateral—including the www.museums4all.org website and informational videos—more than 3 million visits have been reported to date. Participating museums report joining Museums for All as a key facet of their overall equity and access practice, and anecdotal visitor feedback reflects the importance of access to museums for families experiencing economic stress. Despite the operational challenges faced by museums due to the pandemic, museums continue to join the network, citing participation as an important tool for responding to community needs during this exceptionally trying time. While this program has gained national momentum, given the landscape of the museum field, there is still significant opportunity for growth and impact of the initiative.

Capacity Building

MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (MAP)

The **Museum Assessment Program (MAP)** is a cooperative agreement with the American Alliance of Museums to help small and medium-sized museums assess their strengths and weaknesses in order to meet professional standards, grow, and work towards sustainability. In 2019, a redesigned MAP program was launched, featuring five assessments with special focus to meet relevant needs of the museum in collections stewardship, community engagement, board leadership, education, and organizational capacity. Program improvements include an increase in the number of museums served each year; follow-up assistance for more participating museums; recruitment of new reviewers; and additional support, mentoring and resources.

COLLECTIONS ASSESSMENT FOR PRESERVATION (CAP)

The **Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP)** program provides small and mid-sized museums with funding to assist with a study of all of the institution's collections, buildings, and building systems, as well as its policies and procedures relating to collections care. Participants who complete the program receive an assessment report with prioritized recommendations to improve collections care. The program is administered by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation through a cooperative agreement with IMLS.

Photo: Roberto Gonzalez, courtesy of Orlando Science Center, FL

EXTERNAL FACTORS

There are several external factors that impact IMLS' ability to achieve its objectives. These factors include:

- COVID-19 uncertainty: As the pandemic evolves, it has proven to be unpredictable and longer-lived than anyone anticipated, and it impacts nearly every aspect of daily life. Impacts reach across the spectrum of IMLS business, affecting grantees, IMLS staff, the efficient execution of Agency strategic initiatives, and the general lengthening of grant execution schedules.
- Emphasis of different administrations and the ability to rapidly shift to new priorities.
- The general U.S. Government budgeting process impacts the timely execution of new initiatives given restrictions within the often regular and lengthy continuing resolution process.
- IMLS is a non–cabinet level independent Agency, which can influence the Agency's ability to effectively partner in large government initiatives.

In order to address these risks and issues, IMLS is tracking and managing each item within its Risk Management Council. Further, as IMLS continues to improve its performance measurement and analysis capabilities, these will be considered as IMLS develops measures and targets.

MAJOR MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND GOALS

IMLS has challenges that are both universal and unique to the Agency.

IMLS management and programmatic issues and risks include the following:

- Stimulus Bills: The CARES Act and ARP Act stimulus bills generated a significant amount of work without an equivalent increase in Agency support functions. The Agency successfully made awards in numbers that exceeded its previous volume, and each of these will need to continue to be serviced and monitored for up to five years.
- Cybersecurity and Information Management: In a hybrid work environment (remote, telework, and in-office), the complexities of protecting the Agency's IT infrastructure increase exponentially. Further, effective information management in such an environment necessitates skills and tools that are not yet commonplace within our workforce.
- Personnel: Competing for personnel within a highly competitive job market is by itself a challenge, which is exacerbated by losing top candidates due to an expectation of remote work.
- Agency Leadership: IMLS has a Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed Director who serves a four-year term. The frequency of these leadership transitions has a significant effect on the Agency. Programs with lifespans of four to five years can be out of alignment with emergent changes in the strategic direction of the Agency from the Director and Presidential Administrations. IMLS endeavors to balance achieving and tracking results while also shifting resources to focus on new programs.

IMLS risks and issues in areas of vulnerability to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, where a failure to perform could seriously affect the Agency's mission delivery and ability to achieve its goals. Examples include:

- Supporting smaller and/or less experienced grantee organizations frequently requires relatively high levels of assistance before, during, and subsequent to the grant periods of performance. As a micro-agency, IMLS has limited capacity to provide this type of technical assistance without additional resources.
- The Agency's capacity to internally assess and improve grantmaking and results within the Agency's grantmaking cycle is limited by resources. Resource challenges also directly affect the Agency's ability to support external evaluations.
- Similarly, the Agency's internal capacity to conduct analysis of "real time" performance measures to affect awardee activities and grant program improvement is limited. Measuring real-time impact remains a challenge.

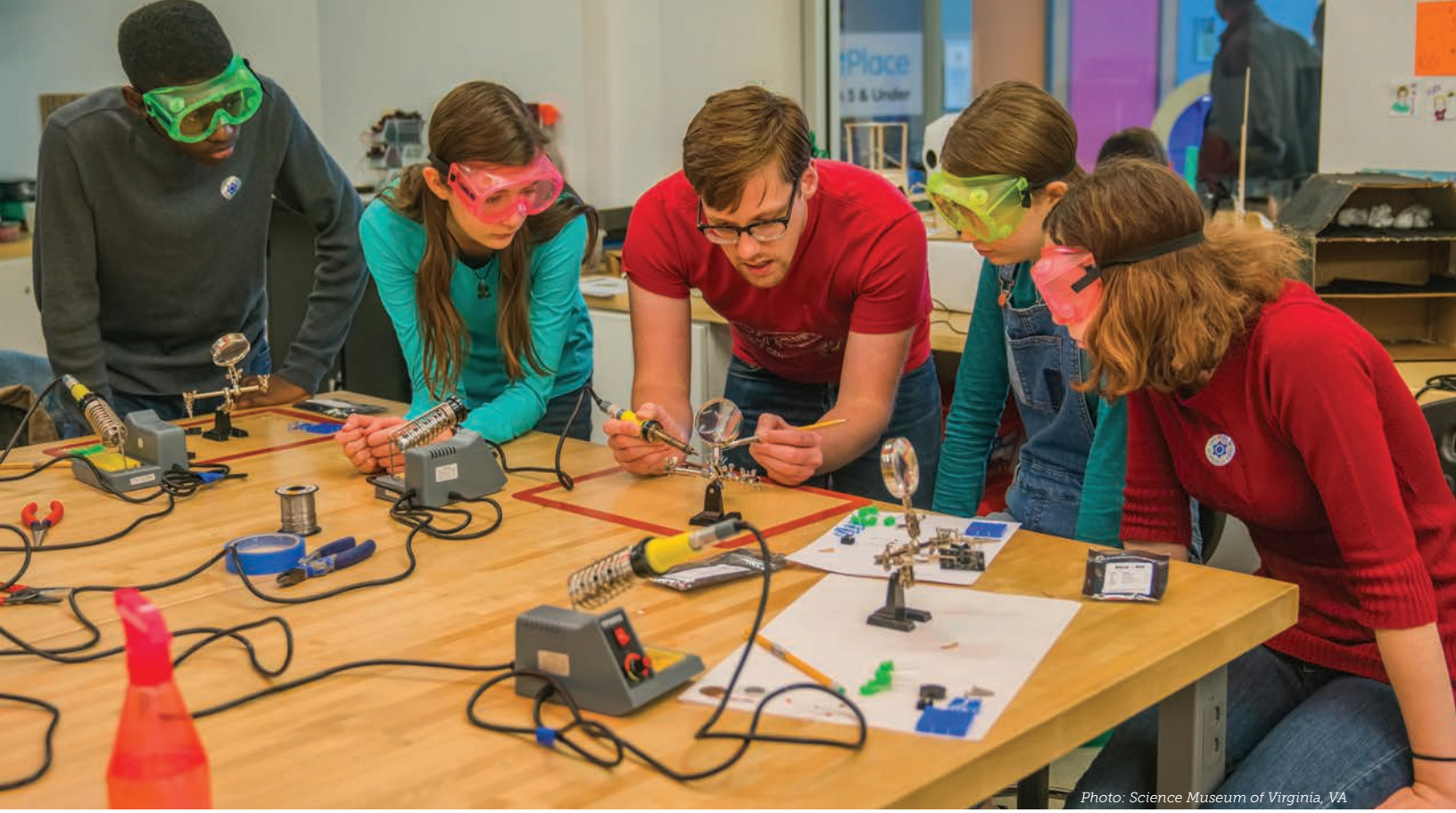

Photo: Science Museum of Virginia, VA

EVIDENCE BUILDING

The Agency will develop and implement a parallel Learning Agenda to correspond to the Strategic Plan. In developing the Agenda, the Agency will engage stakeholders inside and outside of the Agency in framing key learning questions to be addressed throughout the duration of the Strategic Plan and supporting annual performance targets. These questions, in turn, will inform learning activities towards evaluation, surveying, and research. Tailoring to varying needs of distinct audiences and building on IMLS's historic practices, the Learning Agenda will additionally inform development and dissemination of learning products, such as infographics and white papers.

Photo: Dakota County Library, MN

ABOUT US

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent grantmaking Agency and the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. IMLS was created with the passage of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996, which was reauthorized on December 31, 2018. The Agency has statutory authority to award financial assistance, collect data, form strategic partnerships, and advise policymakers and other federal agencies on museum, library, and information services. The Agency consolidates federal library programs dating back to 1956 with museum programs dating back to the Bicentennial Celebration in 1976.

The Agency helps to ensure that all Americans have access to museum, library, and information services, and invests in new and exploratory approaches, as well as proven and tested methods. IMLS funds work that advances collective knowledge, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. The Agency also builds capacity within the museum and library fields to enable better service to communities and to enhance community decision making by sharing trends and data.

IMLS has an expansive reach. The Agency is the largest source of federal funding for libraries in the nation, directing population-based funding to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the US territories, and Freely Associated States through its Grants to States program. The Agency's discretionary grants are selected through a highly respected and competitive peer review process, drawing on professionals located across the nation. This work enables museums and libraries located in geographically and economically diverse areas to deliver essential services that make it possible for individuals and communities to flourish.

IMLS is led by a director who is a presidential appointee confirmed by the Senate and advised by the National Museum and Library Services Board. The board, a 24-member advisory body that includes the IMLS director, the deputy director for the Office of Library Service, the deputy director for the Office of Museum Services, the general counsel, and 20 presidentially appointed individuals, advises on general policy and practices and helps with the selections for the National Medals for Museum and Library Service.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

2020 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN LATINO ACT

On December 27, 2020, the National Museum of the American Latino Act ("American Latino Act") (PL 116-260) was enacted into law. The legislation establishes grants and fellowship programs at IMLS to support American Latino Museums and related scholarship. It authorizes $15 million per year for IMLS to carry out its statutory purpose of recognizing, celebrating, and enhancing understanding of the important history and contributions of American Latinos.

2018 MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT OF 2018

On December 31, 2018, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (PL 115-410) was signed into law. It reauthorized the existing programs and functions of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and provided new authority, including to develop and support new museum, library, and information professionals.

2010 MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT OF 2010

On December 22, 2010, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2010 (PL 111-340) was signed into law. The legislation reauthorized the existing programs of the Institute of Museum and Library Services with some important changes. The updated language calls on IMLS to take an active role in research and data collection and to advise the President and Congress on museum, library, and information services. This Act also expressly recognizes how libraries and museums contribute to a competitive workforce and engaged citizenry. New language focuses on the development of essential 21st century skills.

2008 CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2008

Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 providing IMLS with the authority to carry out the functions of the former National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, to streamline the Agency, and strengthen library services and policy in the Federal government. In addition, the Act provided funding to enable the Institute to assume responsibility for two library statistics programs formerly housed at the National Center for Educational Statistics at the United States Department of Education.

2003 MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT OF 2003

On September 25, 2003, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2003 (PL 108-81) was signed into law. Recognizing the effectiveness of the new Agency, this legislation reauthorized federal appropriations for IMLS. But the framers of the 2003 law also sought to capitalize on lessons learned since 1996 by amending the initial MLSA in several ways, including the establishment of the National Museum and Library Services Board and incorporating new authority for research and evaluation.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE ACT OF 2003

On December 16, 2003, the National Museum of African American History and Culture Act was signed into law. In addition to providing authority to create a new Smithsonian museum for African American History and Culture, the Act authorizes $15M per year for IMLS to carry out its statutory purpose of enhancing the vitality and sustainability of museums of African American History and Culture and encouraging scholarship and careers in African American history and culture.

1996 MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT OF 1996

The Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) of 1996 established the Institute of Museum and Library Services within the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. The new Agency combined the former Institute of Museum Services and federal museum programs, which had been in existence since 1976, with the Library Programs Office and federal library program that had been part of the Department of Education since 1956.

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES