



IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

FY 2023 Information Session

August 2022

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture Fiscal Year 2023 Information Session."

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



Agenda

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

In this webinar I will cover the following topics:

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



Companion Webinar

IMLS OMS: Choosing a Funding Opportunity

- *Basic information for all applicants*
- <https://imls.gov/webinars/imls-office-museum-services-choosing-funding-opportunity-fy-2023>

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

“Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2023” is available as a video and as a PDF on our website at the link identified here. In that webinar, we cover the IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan. We also address institutional eligibility for applicants, provide a quick overview of ALL our funding opportunities, show you how to find information online with a focus on our website, and we cover the places you must be registered in order to apply for an IMLS grant.

In addition to this webinar about the AAHC program we are making available on-demand webinars for all our museum grant programs, which are available on our website.

Where to Find Information www.ims.gov



The IMLS website is an important place to find information

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

Notice of Funding Opportunity

The screenshot shows the landing page for the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture. It includes the IMLS logo, navigation links, and key information:

- Deadline:** November 15, 2022
- Application:** The FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (PDF 741KB) is now available.
- Grant Amount:** \$5,000-\$500,000
- Grant Period:** Up to three years
- Cost Share Requirement:** If your total request for federal funding is between \$3,000 and \$100,000, then no cost share is required. If your request for federal funding is between \$100,001 and \$500,000, you must provide funds from non-federal sources in an amount that is equal to or greater than the amount of your IMLS request.
- Program Overview:** The Museum Grants for African American History and Culture (AAHC) program is designed to build the capacity of African American museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums.
- Program Contacts:** Mark Isobian, Supervisory Grants Management Specialist, misobian@imls.gov, 202-453-4967. To schedule a time to talk to Mark Isobian, [click here](#).

The screenshot shows the title page of the FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity document. It includes the IMLS logo and the following information:

- Federal Awarding Agency:** Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Funding Opportunity Title:** Museum Grants for African American History and Culture
- Assessment Type:** Modification of FY2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Funding Opportunity Number:** AAHC-FY23
- Assistance Listing Number:** 45.909
- Application Deadline:** Submit through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on November 15, 2022.
- Anticipated Date of Notification of Award Decision:** June 2023 (subject to the availability of funds and IMLS discretion)
- Beginning Date of Period of Performance:** Projects must begin on July 1, 2023.

The document also includes a Table of Contents and a footer with the IMLS contact information: IMLS Contact No. 2027-0986, Expiration Date: 07/24/2025.

Each grant program has a landing page on the IMLS website. Here you will find a brief overview of the grant program along with contact information for the IMLS staff assigned to this grant program. Our contact information includes a link you can use to directly schedule on our calendar a 30 minute counseling call with a program staff person. Counseling calls are an opportunity for you to discuss your project ideas and raise any questions you have about the application process. We encourage you to use this link to schedule a time to talk with one of us. We know that applying for a federal grant can be a complex and time-consuming process, and we want you to feel confident in moving forward with an application.

Also on the grant program landing page you will find a link to the PDF of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (sometimes referred to as the NOFO) is the official instructions and guidance for how to prepare, complete, and submit an application for funding. The text and information I am using in this webinar derive from the instructions and guidance found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. A NOFO is available for each of the grant funding opportunities.

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



AAHC Program History

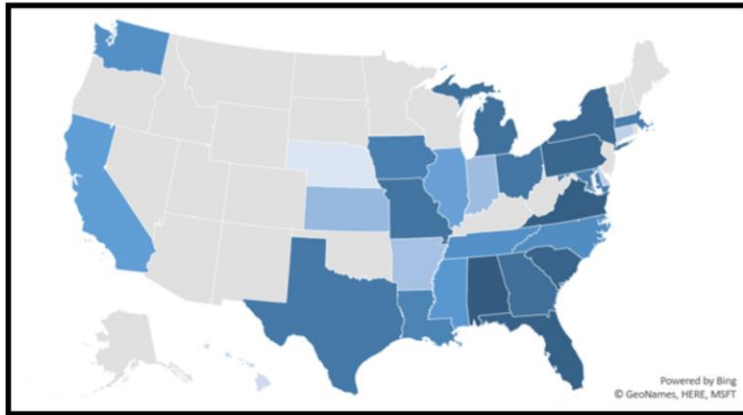
Museum Grants for African American History and Culture support projects that build the capacity of African American museums.

Created by an act of Congress in 2003 which authorized:

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

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

AAHC Awards 2006-2022



Number of Applications: 694

Number of Awards: 272

Total Funds Awarded:
\$29,714,804

Total Cost Share:
\$32,754,920

Peer Reviewers: 226

The first awards for the AAHC program were made in 2006. This map shows the range of awards from 2006 to our most recent set of awards in 2022.

In that period of 17 years, we have funded **272** projects consisting of **just under \$30M** in funding. We've also had the opportunity to work with **226** peer reviewers in that time.

Total Number of Applications: 694

Total Number of Grants Funded: 272

Total Funds Awarded: \$29.7M

Total Cost Share: \$32.7M

Number of Peer Reviewers: 226

AAHC Applications and Awards

	Number of Applications	Number of Awards	Funds Requested	Funds Awarded	Average Award
FY 2020	58	22	\$8,226,629	\$2,731,000	\$124,136
FY 2021	72	24	\$11,273,876	\$3,231,000	\$134,625
FY2022	46	33	\$5,919,809	\$3,970,069	\$120,305

Here are the figures for the three most recent application cycles. In FY 2022, we received 46 applications and we've made 33 awards, for a total of \$3.9 million and the average size of each award was just about \$120,000.

The amount of funding available in this program (and all IMLS grant programs) is determined by the U.S. Congress through the annual federal appropriations process. Although Congress has yet to pass a final budget for FY 2023 (which begins on October 1), we anticipate that the funding for this program will either remain the same or potentially increase.

[The FY 2023 budget REQUEST is for \$6 million in funding for AAHC.]



Museum Eligibility Criteria

All IMLS grant applicants must be either:

- a unit of State, local, or tribal government or
- a private nonprofit organization

To be eligible for funding as a **museum**, applicants must:

- ✓ use a professional staff;
- ✓ be organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes;
- ✓ own or use tangible objects, either animate or inanimate;
- ✓ care for these objects;
- ✓ exhibit these objects to the general public on a regular basis; and
- ✓ conduct these activities in facilities that it owns or operates.

Now let's take a quick look at eligibility. Funding eligibility criteria are detailed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, but I will briefly summarize here. All IMLS grant applicants must be either a unit of state, local or tribal government, OR be a private non-profit organization. In addition to be eligible for funding as a "museum," an organization must also:

To explore that point just a bit further, to be eligible for funding as a "museum," an organization must also:

- use a professional staff – it employs at least one staff member, or the full-time equivalent, paid or unpaid, primarily engaged in the acquisition, care, or exhibition to the public of objects owned or used by the institution.
- be organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes;
- own or use tangible objects, either animate or inanimate;
- care for these objects;
- exhibit these objects to the general public on a regular basis, at least 120 days a year; and
- conduct these activities in facilities that it owns or operates.

Museums as defined here may stand alone as independent organizations, may be non-profit organizations responsible for the operation of a museum, or they may be administered by a governing body, such as a college, university, or a state or local government.

AAHC Eligibility Criteria

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



In addition to the general IMLS funding eligibility criteria, the AAHC grant program has specific eligibility criteria that is described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. To be eligible for an award under the FY2022 Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program, you must qualify as one of the following:

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

AAHC Program Goals

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

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



Your application to the AAHC program should align with one of the grant program goals – to build the capacity of African American museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums. Let's take a closer look at those goals now.

AAHC Program Goals

Goal 1: Build the capacity of African American museums and their ability to serve their communities.

- Develop or expand public programs, exhibitions, and/or school programs.
- Enhance professional management.
- Improve care of museum collections and expand access to collections and associated data.
- Foster partnerships and collaborations among museums and institutions of higher education.



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

Some examples of the kinds of project activities that you may apply for are:

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

AAHC Program Goals

Goal 2: Support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums.

- Develop and implement internship, fellowship, and mentoring programs structured to support emerging professionals entering the museum field.
- Develop and implement equitable and inclusive staff recruitment and retention programs.
- Create learning and growth opportunities designed to build skills, enhance knowledge, and provide opportunities to share expertise.



Projects designed to address Goal 2, supporting the **growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums**, may involve developing and implementing internship, fellowship, and mentoring programs to support emerging professionals entering the museum field. They can involve developing equitable and inclusive staff recruitment and retention programs, as well as creating growth opportunities for staff to build skills, enhance their knowledge, and share expertise.

Some examples of the kinds of project activities that you may apply for are:

Working with consultants and training providers to develop and offer workshops and training for museum staff, leadership, and volunteers

Creating and supporting PAID internships and fellowships, including recruitment, supervision, mentoring, and training for interns and fellows

Providing professional development and career growth opportunities for museum staff, leadership, and volunteers

Project Funding Levels

Small Scale Projects:

If your total project budget request is **under** \$100,000 in federal funds, then **cost share is not required**

Large Scale Projects:

If your total project budget request is **over** \$100,000 in federal funds (up to the maximum of \$500,000) a **1 to 1 cost share is required**.

You must provide an equal amount of non-federal funds as a cost share.



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

For **small projects** requesting an amount of federal funds less than \$100,000, you do not need to provide a cost share. This option is designed for smaller scale projects that require less than \$100,000 in funds from IMLS.

For **larger projects** that are requesting an amount of federal funds greater than \$100,001 (and up to a maximum of \$500,000) you must provide a 1:1 cost share.



Cost Share

Cost share is that portion of the project costs that is not paid by IMLS funds.

Common examples of cost share include cash outlays; contribution of property and services; and **in-kind contributions, such as staff or volunteer time that support project activities.**

All expenses, including cost share, must be incurred during the award period of performance.

Cost share is the portion of the project costs that is not paid by IMLS funds. Common examples of cost share include cash outlays; contribution of property and services; and in-kind contributions, such as staff or volunteer time that support project activities. Cost share must come from non-federal sources; it may not be funds from another federal grant. All expenses, including cost share, must be incurred during the project period.

Allowable Costs



2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

<https://www.ecfr.gov>

UNIFORM PRINCIPLES	
General Provisions	
§200.400	Policy goals
§200.401	Application
Basic Considerations	
§200.402	Computation of costs
§200.403	Factors affecting allowability of costs
§200.404	Reasonable costs
§200.405	Allowable costs
§200.406	Applicable credits
§200.407	Prior written approval (prior approval)
§200.408	Limitation on allowance of costs
§200.409	Special considerations
§200.410	Collection of unallowable costs
§200.411	Adjustment of previously capitalized indirect (F&A) cost rates containing unallowable costs
DIRECT AND INDIRECT (F&A) COSTS	
§200.412	Classification of costs
§200.413	Direct costs
§200.414	Indirect (F&A) costs
§200.415	Required certifications
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND INDIAN TRIBES	
§200.416	Cost allocation plans and indirect cost proposals
§200.417	Emergency services
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
§200.418	Costs incurred by states and local governments
§200.419	Cost accounting standards and disclosure statement
General Provisions for Selected Parts of Cost	
§200.420	Considerations for selected items of cost
§200.421	Advertising and public relations
§200.422	Advisory councils
§200.423	Alcoholic beverages
§200.424	Alumni activities
§200.425	Audit services
§200.426	Bad debts
§200.427	Banking costs
§200.428	Collectors of improper payments
§200.429	Commemorative and convention costs
§200.430	Compensation—contracted services
§200.431	Compensation—fringe benefits
§200.432	Construction

We'll turn now to allowable and unallowable costs for your project. Be very careful in preparing your proposal and include only allowable costs in both your IMLS ask and your cost share.

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

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



Allowable Costs

Examples of allowable costs

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

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

These costs may be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for and/or what you will pay for as part of your cost share, if one is required. The rules about allowability apply equally to the entire budget – in other words whether a cost item is on the grant funds side of the budget or the cost share side of the budget, the same rules of allowability apply to all line items in the budget.



Unallowable Costs

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

We also provide a list of generally unallowable costs, again both for IMLS funds and for cost share. These costs may NOT be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, NOR can they be part of what you will pay for as part of your cost share. In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal. For example, construction costs are not allowed – so do not include those in your budget. You are allowed to hire new staff to work on the project – but do not include costs for development office staff in your budget.

Remember to focus your budget – and the cost items you include there – on expenses that will occur during the period of performance (the duration of the grant award) and on expenses that are directly related to the activities in your proposed project.

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



Application Components

Required Documents

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

Conditionally Required Documents

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

Supporting Documents

These are **optional**. Include only those that supplement the narrative and support the activities described in the application.

Now let's review the multiple parts of the grant application that you will need to prepare. The application components are a series of documents you will upload in Grants.gov that together make up your application.

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

The second group is that of Conditionally Required Documents. Some applications must include these. It might depend on the nature of your institution or some aspect of your project.

The third group of application components are Supporting Documents. These are completely optional. You may submit some or none.

Application Components

Required Documents : All applications must include these.

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

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

All applications must include the 11 required documents listed here.

The 7 documents listed on left side of this slide are created by you, using a word document, and then saving this as document as a PDF. Instructions for required documents are found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Many of these have page limits, and if you exceed the page limit specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we must remove the extras before your application goes out for review. Make sure your content fits into the page limits specified and make sure the number of pages holds when you convert your document to a PDF.

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

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



Performance Measurement

Performance Measurement

- How good a job did an organization do as a federal awardee?
- Helps us understand what level of performance is achieved by a specific project and by extension, a specific grant program

Project Evaluation

- How successful was a project at achieving a set of specific intended results?
- Helps us understand and explain why we are seeing the results or outcomes in specific projects

Recently, the government added a new requirement to all federal awards. Agencies are now required to measure the performance of awardees. This Performance Measurement requirement is different from Project Evaluation, which is typically included in your project proposals.

Performance Measurement tells us how good a job you did as a federal awardee. It helps IMLS understand, manage, and improve our grant programs and the assistance we provide to applicants and awardees.

Project evaluation, by contrast, is all about your project intended results or outcomes. Project evaluation will be covered in the narrative part of your application, following the questions we ask in the NOFO, such as what need you are addressing and what associated results do you want your project to have, how you will track progress toward achieving your intended results, and how the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of your target audience will change as a result of your project.

But for now, let's turn now to our focus on **performance measurement** and how we will ask you to plan for it and report on it.

Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results	<i>Example: At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project.</i> <i>Example: At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results.</i>			
Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group	<i>Example: Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis.</i> <i>Example: Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system.</i>			
Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group	<i>Example: At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training.</i> <i>Example: We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user.</i>			
Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe	<i>Example: Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates.</i> <i>Example: Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.</i>			

1

2

Examples

In the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a sample chart which applicants may, but are not required to use. On the left side of the chart are four commonly used Performance Measures that IMLS has adopted for this effort:

- Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results
- Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group
- Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group
- Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe
- Across the top are the information points we're asking you to use in your statements with examples of each. For instance, with "Data We Will Collect" are listed counts such as, costs, weights, percentages, and hours, as well as qualitative measures such as observations, opinions, and feelings.
- For each performance measure, we provide a couple of examples addressing issues that might turn up in museum projects. The blank space is where we suggest you write your own performance measure statements, and the chart can expand to allow as much space as needed. We are looking for one statement for each required performance measure. You may provide more than one statement per measure, if you wish. Just keep in mind that the performance measurement plan is limited to two pages.



Conditionally Required Documents

These components are required of some applications.

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

Moving from the required documents, let's consider application components that are **Conditionally Required Documents**. Some applications must include one, two, or even all four of these, and it's your job to figure out which are required for yours.

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

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



Supporting Documents

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

The third group of application components is supporting documents. Supporting documents are completely optional. This is not the place to introduce new information.

Include only those that supplement the narrative and support the activities described in the application.

We also recommend that you be respectful of your reviewers' time so include what is important and helpful ... and stop there.



Supporting Documents

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

- Position descriptions for new staff positions, including assigned duties and required qualifications
- Organizational chart and/or a description of the leadership and supervisory structure of your organization, showing the new positions along with existing staff

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

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

- Position descriptions for new staff positions, including assigned duties and required qualifications
- Organizational chart and/or a description of the leadership and supervisory structure of your organization, showing the new positions along with existing staff



Supporting Documents

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

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

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

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



Supporting Documents

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

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

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

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

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



Narrative

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

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

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

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

- Project Justification
- Project Work Plan
- Project Results

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



Narrative: Project Justification

Tell us:

- Which program goal and associated objective of Museum Grants for African American History and Culture will your project address?
- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?
- Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?
- Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

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

In this section of the narrative, you will notice a distinction is made between “target group” and “beneficiaries”.

- “Target group” refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project.
- “Beneficiaries” refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long-term by your project. They may or may not be the same as your “target group.”



Narrative: Project Justification

Reviewers will look for:

- Has the applicant selected an appropriate program goal and one or more associated objectives of Museum Grants for African American History and Culture?
- How well has the applicant used relevant data and best practices to describe the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed?
- Has the applicant appropriately defined the target group(s) and beneficiaries, as applicable, for this work?
- Have the target group and other project stakeholders been involved appropriately in planning the project?
- If applicable, are the collections and/or records that are the focus of the project and their current condition described and quantified in enough detail?

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

Defining a need, problem, or challenge



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

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

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



Narrative: Project Work Plan

Tell us:

- What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?
- What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

Note: You must include \$3,000 per year in award funds for travel to attend IMLS-designated meetings.

- How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

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

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

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



Narrative: Project Work Plan

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the proposed activities informed by relevant theory and practice?
- Are the goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated?
- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?
- Are the time, financial, personnel, and other resources identified appropriate for the scope and scale of the project?
- Is the proposed Performance Measurement Plan likely to generate the required measures of Effectiveness, Efficiency, Quality, and Timeliness?
- If present, does the Digital Products Plan reflect appropriate practices and standards for creating and managing the types of digital products proposed?
- Will the proposed methods for tracking the project's progress toward achieving the intended results allow course adjustments when necessary and result in reliable and measurable information about the results of the project?

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well your activities are informed by appropriate theory and practice; whether the goals, assumptions and risks clearly stated.

Reviewers want to see that the team you've put together has the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully; and that your schedule is realistic and achievable.

They'll also be looking at whether the time, personnel, and financial resources identified are appropriate for the scope and scale of the project. They will consider if you've described a clear methodology for tracking your progress and adjusting course when necessary.

Defining an activity



- An activity is something that someone does.
- It has a beginning and an end.
- You know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more.
- Aim for a reasonable level of detail in identifying your activities—not too much, not too little, just right.

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

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

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

Aim for a reasonable level of detail in identifying your activities. Not too much, not too little, but rather just right.



Narrative: Project Results

Tell us:

- What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
- How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?
- If applicable, how will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records that are the focus of your project improve?
- What products will result from your project?
- How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

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

What specific results do you intend to achieve in order to address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified? Something will get better. Tell us what that is. Tell us about the products that will result from your project, and how will you sustain the benefits of your project beyond the lifespan of this particular project?



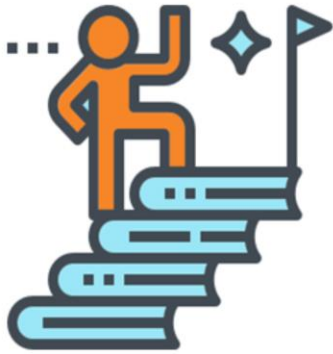
Narrative: Project Results

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the project's intended results clearly articulated, realistic, meaningful, and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project?
- Is the plan to effect meaningful change in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes solidly grounded and appropriately structured?
- If applicable, will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records improve as a result of the project?
- Is it clear that the federal investment made through this grant will generate identifiable benefits to society?
- Will the products created by the project be made available and accessible to the target group?
- Is the plan to sustain the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance reasonable and practical?

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

Defining Intended Results



- Answer the question, “What will be better as the result of this work?”
- Consider how you will recognize success and how to measure it.
- Tie everything back to your need, problem, or challenge.
- Consider using a logic model to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

Let’s think back to the questions we referenced a couple of slides ago when we talked about defining the need, problem, or challenge that your project is addressing. Now is the time to answer the question “What will be better as a result of this work?”

If you said someone will learn something, how will you know? If your problem related to segments of your community being better able to work together, how will you know when that has been achieved? If collections will be better cared for, how will you be sure and how will you measure “better”? If you’re digitizing to expand accessibility, how will you know when you’ve done it?

All of your results should tie back to your need, problem, or challenge.

A logic model is a useful tool to help explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them. Many reviewers appreciate seeing a logic model included as a supporting document in an application.



Characteristics of Successful Applications

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

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

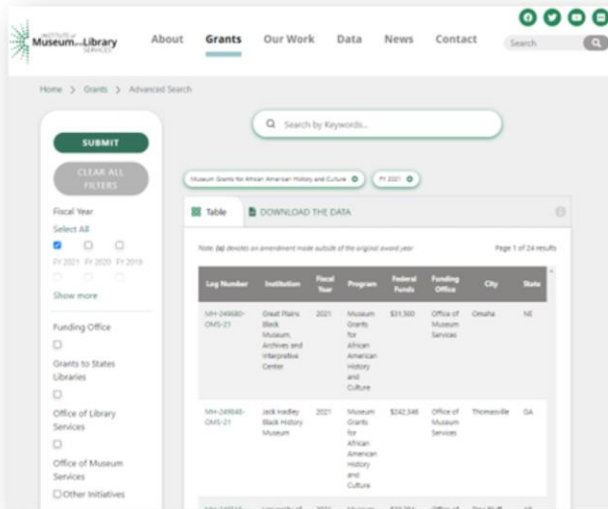
First, **Institutional Impact:** Your project should build the capacity of your museum and/or support the growth and development of museum professionals at your museums or HBCU
Second, **In-depth knowledge:** Your proposal should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about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

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

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

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

Awarded Grants Search



The screenshot shows the Museum Library Grants search interface. The search results are displayed in a table format. The table has the following columns: Log Number, Institution, Fiscal Year, Program, Federal Funds, Funding Office, City, and State. The search criteria are "Museum Grants for African American History and Culture" and "FY 2021".

Log Number	Institution	Fiscal Year	Program	Federal Funds	Funding Office	City	State
MN-049540-GRANT-21	Great Plains Black Museum and Interpretive Center	2021	Museum Grants for African American History and Culture	\$11,500	Office of Museum Services	Omaha	NE
MN-049540-GRANT-21	Jack Hedley Black History Museum	2021	Museum Grants for African American History and Culture	\$242,348	Office of Museum Services	Thomasville	GA

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

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

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

Sample Applications



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

Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

- Amistad Research Center (PDF, 431KB)
- Haitian American Museum of Chicago (PDF, 328KB)
- National Civil Rights Museum (PDF, 316KB)
- Oakwood University (Anna Knight Museum) (PDF, 368KB)
- SEEK Museum (PDF, 230KB)
- Whitney Plantation Museum (PDF, 248KB)

We have also posted the narrative and schedule of completion for a cross-section of successful applications from 2022. To find these examples, go to the Sample Applications on the IMLS website and scroll down the page to the AAHC examples. Looking at these proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own.

Sample Applications

MH 245065-OM5-21 Sample Application 2 / 10 100%

MLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture: Narrative
 Museum of the African Diaspora

1. Project Justification
What do you propose to do?

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) requests \$249,262 to expand its educational outreach program in the Classroom (MIC). The program, entering its eighth year of operation, is an evidence-based program serving 1,200 third grade students each program year. The design is consistent with recent research showing that participation in high-quality arts programs increases children's confidence and ability to learn, while adding to their depth of knowledge in critical content areas such as social studies and history. The core objective of MIC is to work collaboratively with San Francisco Bay Area public school classroom teachers and MIC Teaching Artists to build an integrated arts program highlighting the African Diaspora through art and culture. To increase program impact, MIC provides five professional development workshops for participating teachers with the goal of empowering Title I teachers and recently adopted California Teaching Performance Expectations (June 2016), which require teachers to use community resources including arts integration to make instruction individually and culturally relevant to students.

Due to the shelter-in-place orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was temporarily placed on hold in March 2020. Ongoing shelter-in-place orders in California and limited class sizes in the next school year, call for the program to rapidly create and expand digital assets in order to continue to our core student population. Current plans released by the five school districts served by the program that all schools will have reduced class sizes for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year and post-2021. The proposed project will not only allow the Museum to continue serving students in the classrooms, it will also allow the program to expand beyond MoAD's local geographic area through creation and delivery of high-quality digital content. Each year, the education department receives a grant from the state to support the program in areas outside of our immediate geographic area. While virtual experiences can never fully replace the in-person experience, digitizing the curriculum, placing instructional videos on the Museum website, and virtual 360-degree exhibition tours will substantially increase the ability for groups who cannot currently enroll in the MIC Program to join the program and access the lesson plans and activities. Moreover, should another shelter-in-place order occur in the future, currently enrolled MIC students will be able to access lesson plans and videos from the safety of their homes.

As one of the only museums in the world that exclusively celebrates the art and history of the African Diaspora, MoAD understands the importance of expanding the reach of MIC beyond our local region.

MLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture: Schedule of Completion
 Museum of the African Diaspora

Activities	2021					2022						
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Project Promotion & Recruitment												
Hire All MIC Teaching Artists												
Training and Group Meetings with MIC Teaching Artists												
Recruit and Enroll 2 Members of the Curriculum Advisory Committee												
Public Profile - Evaluation Activities												
Quarterly Meetings of the Curriculum Advisory Committee												
Hire Curriculum Writing Consultant												
Send Proposal Consultant to Designer and Printer												
Research & Write/Record Lesson Plans, Videos & Podcasts for online												
Launch Online Lesson Plans, Videos & Podcasts												
Annual Orientation with Classroom Teachers												
Workshops and Student Project with SF Public Library												
In-Class Activities with Students												
Classroom Teacher Professional Development Workshops (Monthly)												
Diversify Educational Materials Online												
Student Art Project Creation												
Annual Student Showcases, Award Ceremony and Family Celebrations												
Outreach to New Schools (Ongoing)												

Each PDF contains a copy of the 7 page narrative and also the schedule of completion.

Important Dates



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

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

In June, we notify all applicants by email of the award decisions and provide the scores and comments created by the reviewers. And on July 1, 2023, funded projects begin.

Application Tips

Register early!

1. SAM
Registration:
www.sam.gov

2. Grants.gov
Registration:
www.grants.gov



At this point, we'd like to share a few tips collected from our experience in working with applicants each year.

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

There is **no** cost to register on these sites, but it can take from several days to several weeks to get your registration established and validated. So pay attention to this requirement particularly if this your first time applying for a federal grant or if your SAM registration has expired or if you've have had a change in your point of contact for SAM – start that registration process as early as possible.

Your SAM.gov registration expires each year and you must renew it. You can log into SAM.gov at any time and find out your status. I would recommend doing that today.

Both SAM.gov and Grants.gov have their own help desks to assist you with resolving issues or tracking problems that might arise with your registration.

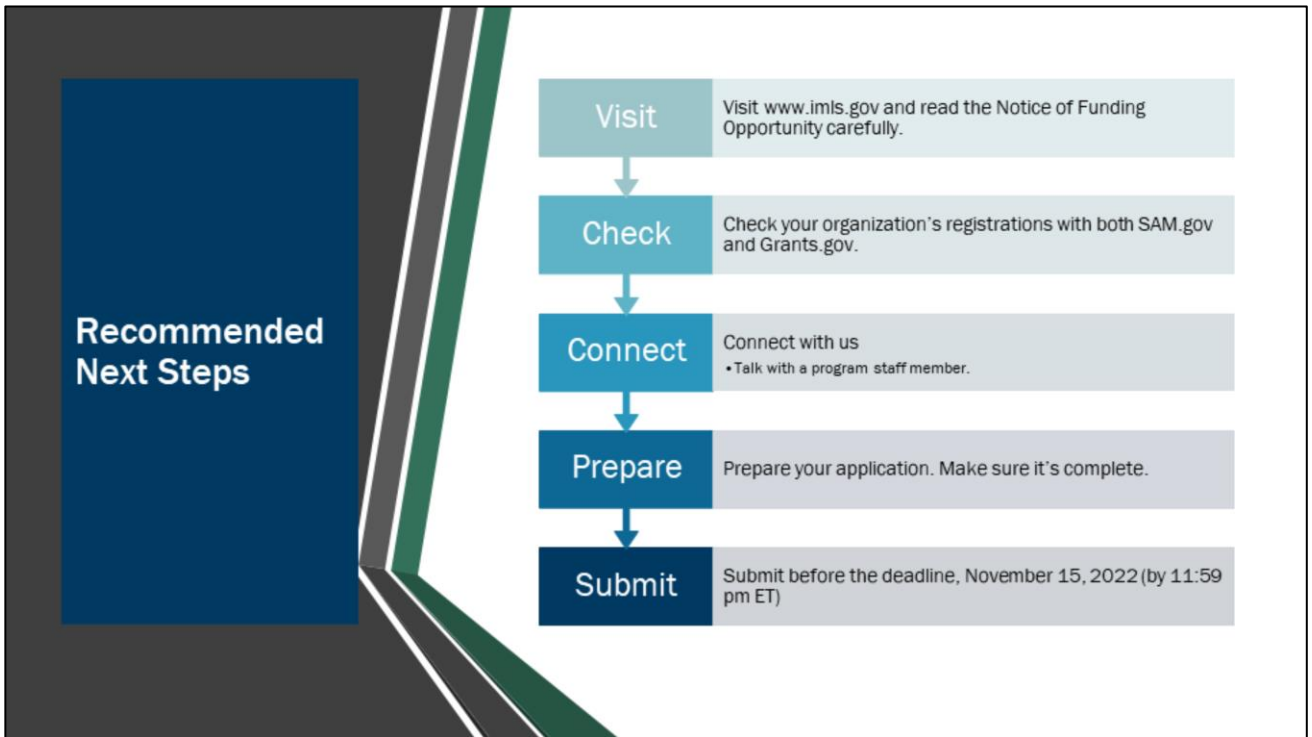


Application Tips

- Read the application guidelines (NOFOs)
- Schedule a counseling call with one of our staff
- Describe your museum well and vividly
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.
- Ask a colleague to read the narrative with fresh eyes.
- Be sure your application is complete.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.

Our final application tips:

- Read the application guidelines (NOFOs) – we know it’s a long document, but it contains essential information on how to prepare your application components.
- Schedule a counseling call with one of our staff – we are available to answer your questions, these often come at the start of the process (general questions), and later you may have a very specific or detailed question about a particular component – you can email or call us to ask your questions.
- Describe your museum well and vividly and use recent, relevant data to make your point. – reviewers will look at the application to try to understand your museum, be sure to give them a good description.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and consider using the same headings to make it easy for reviewers to read.
- Avoid acronyms and jargon. The people who will review your application are experts, but they may not be totally familiar with your shorthand. Make it easy for them to understand what you mean.
- Ask a colleague to read the 7 page narrative with fresh eyes. Ask them to act like a reviewer who’s seeing this for the first time, do this well in advance of the submission deadline so you have adequate time to edit the narrative if necessary.
- Be sure your application is complete. Check it against the Table of Application Components to be sure you’re not missing any required components.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you have time to correct any errors before the deadline.



So to recap your next steps:

- Visit www.ims.gov and read the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully.
- Check your organization's registrations with both SAM.gov and Grants.gov.
- Connect with us: Reach out to a program staff member and schedule a counseling call.
- Prepare your application. Make sure it's complete.
- Submit before the deadline, November 15, 2022 (by 11:59 pm EASTERN time)



IMLS Staff Contacts

Mark Isaksen
misaksen@imls.gov
202.653.4667



Ashley Jones
ajones@imls.gov
202.653.4782



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