

Timed Transcript for IMLS Office of Museum Services Webinar: FY2023 Museum Grants for African American History and Culture Applicant Information Session

0:02

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

0:14

My name is Mark Isaksen, one of the Program Officers in the Office of Museum Services.

0:19

And speaking on behalf of the rest of the staff, we're glad that you're interested and preparing an application for the IMLS Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program.

0:30

I'll be referring to the program throughout the presentation as AAHC, which is the abbreviation of the program title that we use most often.

0:43

In this webinar, I will cover the following topics: where to find information, AAHC Program overview, IMLS and AAHC funding eligibility criteria, the goals of the program, and the objectives of the goals, Project funding levels, Allowable and unallowable costs, Application Components, Narrative review criteria, where to learn more, and we'll end with some tips and next steps.

1:19

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

1:28

Choosing a funding opportunity for FY 2023 is available as a video and PDF on our website at the link shown here.

1:35

In that webinar, we cover the IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan.

1:40

We address institutional eligibility for applicants, provide a quick overview of all of our funding opportunities and show you how to find information online with a focus on our website.

1:53

In addition to this webinar about the AAHC program, we're making available on demand webinars for all of our grant programs available on our website.

2:05

The IMLS website is an important information, place to find information.

2:10

When you go to the website, you will see a drop-down menu for grants on our homepage.

2:16

Click on the section titled Apply for a grant.

2:19

This section of our website is designed for you.

2:24

Each grant program has a landing page on the website.

2:27

You'll find a brief overview of the grant program along with contact information for the IMLS staff assigned to the program.

2:34

Our contact information includes a link that you can use to directly schedule on our calendar of 30 minute counseling call, We're the program staff person.

2:43

Counseling calls are an important opportunity.

2:46

For you to discuss your project ideas, raise any questions you have about the application process, We encourage you to use this link to schedule the time to talk with one of us.

2:57

We know that applying for a federal grant, it'd be a complex and time consuming process.

3:02

We want you to feel confident in moving forward with an application.

3:07

Also, on the grant program landing page, you'll find a link to the PDF of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

3:15

The Notice of Funding Opportunity, sometimes referred to as the NOFO, is the official instructions and guidance for how to prepare, file, and submit an application for funding.

3:27

The texts and information I'm using in this webinar are derived from the instructions and guidance found in the NOFO.

3:33

There's a no-show available for each of the grant funding opportunities.

3:38

Now, let's discuss the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture Grant Program in more detail.

3:46

Applications for the AAHC program should be aligned with a program goal and at least one of the associated objectives for that goal.

3:57

So let's take a look at the goals for the grant program in more detail.

4:03

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.

4:14

Legislation that created the museum directed IMLS to create a grant program, improve operations care of collections and development and professional management, and African American museums.

4:25

This program is now designed to strengthen institutional capacity in the African American Museum community.

4:35

The first awards for the AAHC program were made in 2006.

4:39

This map shows the range of awards from 2006 to our most recent set of awards, 2022.

4:47

In that period of 17 years, we've funded 272 projects, consisting of just under \$30 million in funding, and we've had the opportunity to work with 226 peer reviewers.

5:01

Here are the figures for the three most recent application cycles.

5:04

In 2022, for example, we received 46 applications and made 33 awards for a total of about three point nine million.

5:15

The amount of funding available in this program, and all IMLS grant programs, is determined by the US Congress, the annual Federal Appropriations process.

5:23

And although Congress has yet to pass a final budget for the next fiscal year, 2023, which begins on October first, we anticipate that the funding for this program will either remain the same, or potentially increase.

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Now, let's take a quick look at eligibility.

5:43

Funding eligibility criteria are detailed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

5:47

I'll briefly summarize here.

5:49

All IMLS grant applicants must be either a unit of state, local, or tribal government, or be a private non-profit organization.

5:59

In addition, to be eligible for funding as a museum, and organization must also use professional staff, that is, it employs at least one staff member or full-time equivalent, paid or unpaid, who is engaged in the acquisition, care, or exhibition to the public of objects owned or used by the institution.

6:24

You also have to be organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes.

6:29

Own or use tangible objects.

6:32

So, you can either be a collecting institution or non-collecting institution.

6:36

But you have to use those collections, care for those collections, those objects, exhibit those objects to the general public on a regular basis for at least 120 days a year.

6:47

That's in the 12 month period prior to the application deadline, and conduct those activities in facilities that you own or operate.

6:56

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

7:14

Now, in addition to the general IMLS eligibility criteria, the AAHC grant program has specific criteria that's described in the NOFO. To be eligible for an award under this NOFO in FY2022,

7:31

You must be a museum whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is African American life, art, history, and culture.

7:40

Or, you could be a non profit museum service organization, or association.

7:47

Whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is to support African American museums.

7:52

Or you could be one of the federally designated historically black colleges and universities. HBCUs may be eligible to apply even if they do not have a museum.

8:09

So, back to the AAHC program goals.

8:11

The first goal in this program.

8:15

Is for projects designed to build the capacity of African American museums.

8:22

Which may involve increasing the number of museum professionals working at African American museums to enable the museum to expand educational program, to engage with the community, to enhance professional management, and provide for improved care of collections, and some examples of these kinds of projects that you might apply for could be like exhibit development, exhibit design, and exhibit fabrication.

8:49

It may be new interpretive and educational programs, or developing collections plans or interpretive plans or strategic plans using consultants or other professional expertise.

9:03

Cataloging, inventorying, documenting collections, or even digitization of collections designed to enhance outreach, or expand access, or improve collections management.

9:17

All of these things help to build the capacity of African American museums, and help your museum better serve its community.

9:28

The second goal of the grant program, for projects designed to support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums.

9:40

This might involve developing and implementing internship programs or fellowship programs, or mentoring programs to support emerging professionals entering the museum field. It could also involve developing more equitable, inclusive staff recruitment and retention programs.

9:59

Or creating new opportunities for staff to build skills.

10:03

Some examples of the kinds of projects that you might apply for are maybe working with consultants and training providers to develop and offer workshops and training for museum staff, leadership, and volunteers.

10:16

Or creating and supporting paid internships and fellowships, including the support for recruitment, supervision, mentoring, and training for interns and fellows.

10:33

And providing professional development and career growth opportunities for museum staff, leadership, and volunteers. These are some examples of the things that you might fund in this grant program.

10:50

Now, once you've aligned your project with one of the goals in the program, you want to think about how much you might be needing to fund your project, and the activities that you're thinking about seeking funding for.

11:06

So, 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.

11:18

And there are two options to consider.

11:21

For small projects requesting an amount of federal funds less than \$100,000, you do not need to provide a cost share.

11:29

This option is designed for smaller scale projects that require less than \$100,000 in funds from IMLS.

11:37

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

11:54

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

12:04

So, common examples of cost sharing include the contributed property, services, in kind contributions, such as staff time or volunteer time, things that support project activities.

12:20

Cost share must come from non federal sources.

12:25

It may not be funds from another federal agency.

12:30

All expenses, including cost share, must be incurred during the project period.

12:35

The most common cost share that we see in this grant program are folks that are demonstrating the contributed hours and time of current staff and volunteers towards the project activities, the percentage of their time that's devoted to completing the project activities you've described in your narrative.

12:59

Now, let's turn to allowable and unallowable costs for your project.

13:04

So, as you think about the budget and the kinds of costs you're going to include, we want to be very careful preparing your proposal, in including only allowable costs in both the amount you ask for IMLS to pay for, as well as the amount of your cost share.

13:21

We'll go through some common expenses that are allowable and unallowable, but you always want to check with the 2 CFR 200, which is our shorthand for the Cost Principles and the federal guidelines.

13:33

There's a link here to that list.

13:35

These regulations are available online in a searchable format.

13:43

But in the agency Notice of Funding Opportunity, we do provide a partial list of the most common examples of allowable costs.

13:50

And these are pictured here.

13:52

And these costs may be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, or what you will pay for as part of your cost share if one is required.

14:00

The rules about allowability apply equally to the entire budget.

14:04

So, in other words, whether a cost item is on the grant fund side of the budget, or the cost share side of the budget, the same rules of allowability apply to all items in the budget.

14:15

The biggest expense we often see in these budgets are for personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for staff involved in the project.

14:24

So that is something you definitely want to include, or travel costs, or materials or supplies, things that will help you complete the project that you've outlined.

14:35

We also provide a list of generally unallowable costs. Again, both for IMLS funds and for cost share.

14:42

These costs may not be part of what you asked IMLS to pay for, nor can they be part of what you'll pay for as part of your cost share.

14:51

In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal.

14:55

For example, construction costs are not allowed, so do not include those in your budget.

14:59

You are allowed to hire new staff to work on the project, but do not include costs for development office staff.

15:07

And you'll see that that is one of the specific kinds of staff positions that we cannot pay for.

15:13

Remember to focus your budget and the cost items you include there on expenses that will occur during the period of performance, during that period of the grant.

15:26

And focus on expenses that are directly related to the activities in your proposed project.

15:35

And as you prepare your application, it's a good idea to compare your list of proposed expenses against a list of allowable and unallowable costs.

15:44

If after that, you have specific questions, please contact us, and we'll be happy to help.

15:52

Now, let's review the multiple parts of the grant application that you'll need to prepare.

15:57

The application components are a series of documents that you will upload in grants dot gov, and these together, make up your application.

16:06

Application components fall into three categories. The first is that of required documents.

16:12

All applications must include these omission of even just one may result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

16:21

The second group is that a conditionally required documents, in some applications, must include these.

16:27

It might depend on the nature of your institution or some aspect of your project.

16:32

The third group of our supporting documents, and these are completely optional, may submit some or not.

16:42

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

16:53

All applications must include the 11 required documents listed here.

16:59

The seven documents on the left side of the slide are created by you, using a Word document.

17:04

And then saving this document as a PDF.

17:09

Instructions for required documents are found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

17:14

Many of these have page limits. If you exceed the page limit specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we must remove the extras before your application goes through.

17:24

So make sure your contents fit into the page limits specified, and that that page number remains the same when you convert to a PDF.

17:35

On the right-hand side of the screen, you'll see four documents listed: the Application for Federal Assistance, the IMLS Supplementary Information Form, IMLS Museum Program Information form, and the IMLS Budget Form.

17:53

These are all forms that you will fill out either in grants dot gov, not create individually.

18:06

As I said, all the other required documents are created by you in a Word document, typically and then uploaded and saved as PDFs in grants dot gov.

18:21

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

18:36

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.

18:49

So let's look at performance measurement and how we ask you to plan for it and report on it.

18:58

In the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a sample chart which applicants may use.

19:04

And on the left side of the chart are commonly used performance measures, effectiveness, the extent to which the activities contribute to achieving the results intended, efficiency, how well the resources are used.

19:17

Quality, how well the activities meet the requirements, and expectations of the target group, and timeliness, the extent to which each activity is completed within the proposed timeframe.

19:29

Across the top are the information points we are asking you to use in your statements.

19:33

The examples of each, for instance, with data we will collect, are listed counts, such as costs or weights or percentages or hours.

19:43

And for each performance measure, we provide a couple of examples of how to address issues that might turn up in museum projects.

19:51

The blank space is where we suggest you write your own performance measure.

19:56

We're looking for one statement for each measure.

19:58

You may provide more than one if you wish.

20:01

Just keep in mind that the performance measurement plan is limited to two pages.

20:09

Now, let's move from required documents and let's consider application components that are conditionally required.

20:15

Some applications must include these.

20:18

If you are applying as a non-profit, then you must include your proof of non-profit status.

20:24

If you're using a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, you must include a copy of the agreement.

20:31

If you will create digital products during the course of your project, you must complete a Digital Product Plan.

20:39

And if you're requesting support for conservation treatment, you must include detailed condition reports or conservation treatment proposals.

20:47

And just like the required documents, if you omit, if you forget one of these, it might mean that your application is excluded.

20:56

The third group of application components is supporting documents. These are completely optional.

21:05

You should include only those things that supplement the narrative and support the activities described in the application.

21:11

You recommend that you'd be respectful of your reviewers time.

21:15

So, include what's important and helpful, and stop there.

21:20

Here are some examples of the kinds of supporting documents you may want to include in your application.

21:26

These are some of the things that peer reviewers who will be reading your application will expect to see.

21:31

These documents help support the case you're making in your application, and if it's funded, you can be successful in completing your project.

21:39

So, for example, if you're building capacity of your organization by adding new staff, you might consider including a position description for the new staff, or maybe an organizational chart, or description of the leadership and supervisory structure of your organization.

21:57

We can see how the new position fits into existing staff.

22:02

For projects that support the growth and development of museum staff or interns, you will also want to include position descriptions for the interns, because then we can see what are the expected duties for these positions and the learning outcomes for the interns.

22:20

You could include a recruitment plan.

22:23

So, if you're going to be reaching out to HBCUs to recruit entrance maybe a letter of support from an HBCU or another institution of higher education that you've already reached out to, and that is interested in working with you to provide interns.

22:41

Or even a needs assessment, sort of showing what are the training needs for your staff, if you're going to be developing new training programs.

22:48

Again, these are things that help reviewers see that you are ready to move forward with this project, and that you're more likely to be successful in implementing the project.

23:02

When we look at improving care and increasing access to museum collections.

23:08

There's some other kinds of documents you might want to consider including.

23:12

So, for example, a summary of the scope and scale of museum collections.

23:17

Including some baseline information on the numbers of types and quality and quantities of items held.

23:24

Specific benchmarks on the quantity of collection items to be processed and cataloged.

23:29

Alright, so we know the numbers of collection items you're dealing with, and you might not have room, for example, to put all that in your narrative.

23:37

So, putting it in a supporting document is a great alternative.

23:46

You can also include a copy of a collections management policy if there are some other kind of supporting document that will help us understand how you manage the collection. Again, these are things that peer reviewers who will be reading your application will expect to see.

23:59

And they do help support the case you're making in your application, that, if funded, you can be successful in completing your project.

24:09

Now, among the required components of your application.

24:14

The narrative is the section that reviewers are likely to spend the most time reading, so let's look at the narrative in a little more detail.

24:21

It's just seven pages, maximum. And it's divided into three sections: the project justification, the work plan, and the results.

24:30

And the questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are in the NOFO.

24:37

And this is the first section, the project justification part of the narrative.

24:43

This is where you should lay out the reasoning for your project, why it's important.

24:48

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.

25:01

Target Group refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project.

25:10

And the last, the fourth bullet there, to describe beneficiaries refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long term by it.

25:20

So, they may or may not be the same as your target group.

25:26

Now, reviewers also have a list of criteria.

25:30

And they'll use this to evaluate your proposal, and see how well you explained your project, how well you've identified the need, problem, or challenge you're going to address.

25:40

How well you've supported that with relevant evidence, and 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 involved with the planning.

25:55

Because the need, problem, or challenge is foundational in your application, keep these points in mind, that when you're describing the problem, remember that the federal government wants its investment to result in something that will get better.

26:09

And as you define your need, problem, or challenge, articulate what will get better as a result of your project.

26:15

Be as precise as possible.

26:18

Will someone learn something, develop a skill?

26:21

Will members of your community better able to work together to solve the problem or will collections be better cared for?

26:28

Will access to your collection and the information surrounding them be expanded?

26:33

Identify what is important.

26:35

Identify why it is important that this particular change happens.

26:40

And gather any data to support your problem definition.

26:45

Again, this is a key part of the project justification in your narrative.

26:52

The next part of the narrative is the Work Plan.

26:54

And this is the where are you going to tell us who will do what, when, and using what resources.

27:03

We will ask you to tell us what specific activities you will undertake, who will plan and implement and manage your project, when and in what sequence your activities will occur.

27:15

What financial, personnel, and other resources you'll need to carry out the activities.

27:20

And how you will track progress toward achieving your intended results.

27:28

Now, in this program, you must include \$3,000 per year for travel to an IMLS designated meeting.

27:38

You don't necessarily need to describe it in the Work Plan, but it is something you're going to want to include in the budget, and it is one of the expenses and activities that you want to build into your project.

27:49

This expense is used to cover your participation in a convening of grantees at a place and location to be determined by IMLS.

28:01

Then, when reviewers are looking at your Work Plan, they're going to evaluate your proposal on how well your activities are informed by appropriate theory and practice, and whether the goal's assumptions and risks are clearly stated.

28:17

Reviewers wanted to see that the team you put together has the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully, and whether your schedule is realistic and achievable.

28:28

They'll also be looking at whether the time, personnel, and financial resources identified are appropriate for the scope and scale of the project.

28:37

They'll consider if you've described a clear methodology for tracking your progress and adjusting course when necessary.

28:45

The Work Plan is built around the concept of activities.

28:50

So it's important to be clear about what an activity is.

28:53

An activity is something that someone does.

28:57

And it has a beginning and an end, just like projects. And this is project based funding, so you want to make sure that your activities that you're describing have a beginning and an end.

29:08

And there should be a way that you know when you finished it, because it doesn't need to be done anymore. The activity is completed. It's no longer on your to-do list.

29:17

Though, remember, an activity is not a goal or result, or an outcome, it's just something you do that's part of striving to achieve those goals or results.

29:26

Again, aim for a reasonable level of detail here, not too much or too little.

29:31

We want to have a sense that you know which activities, and in what sequence you're going to undertake those activities in order to complete your project.

29:40

The final section of the narrative is the results, and this is where you talk about the impact of your project.

29:47

What specific results do you intend to achieve?

29:51

Again, to address that need, problem, or challenge you identified in the justification. You want to make something better, so tell us what that is going to look like. Tell us about any products that you're going to create, and what will result from the project.

30:07

And also, what's going to happen after the end of the project? What's next?

30:14

What reviewers are going to do is give us opinions on how well you designed that feasible plan for collecting and reporting data, and how likely the improvements that you propose will be realized.

30:27

They'll want to know if the tangible products that you're going to create are going to be accessible to the target audience that you identified.

30:35

And whether your plan for sustaining the benefits of the project is reasonable.

30:44

So, let's take just 1 last slide here about results.

30:49

When I talked about results, we talked about a new problem or challenge that your project is addressing.

30:57

In this part of the narrative, you're going to answer that question, what will be better as a result of this work?

31:05

Now, if you said, someone's going to learn something, wow, you know, they learned it?

31:09

So, if your problem was related to improving the care of collections, well, how will you be sure, and how will you measure that improvement?

31:22

If you're digitizing to expand the accessibility of the collection, how will you know when you've done it?

31:28

So, all of your results should tie back to your need, problem, or challenge, and have something measurable.

31:36

Some folks use a logic model. It's a useful tool to help explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

31:44

If you are using a logic model, you can include that as a supporting document.

31:49

Many reviewers will appreciate seeing that.

31:52

It's not required, but if you're using a logic model as a tool to help you identify and articulate the results of your project, be sure to include it.

32:06

So, in summary, considering all the components of your application, there are four general characteristics of successful applications that reviewers will look for.

32:15

So, first is institutional impact. Your projects should, in some way, build the capacity of your museum and or support the growth and development of museum professionals at your museum or HBCU.

32:29

Again, this impact ties back to the goals or the purpose of this grant program.

32:35

To build capacity of museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals. So we want to see that impact.

32:42

Second, your proposal really should have a good understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.

32:49

What does that look like?

32:50

So if you're developing new program for schools, and you're adapting one that you know is successful, that another museum is used in another community, that's great.

33:01

It's knowing what works and adapting it for your current location.

33:05

If you're going to be creating something brand-new that's never been done before, that works, too.

33:09

But you want to make sure that you're aware of current practice in the museum world and using it to inform how you design the project.

33:20

Third is the project based design.

33:23

So, again, we talked about sets of activities that have a beginning and an end, and so your work plan should be a logical set of inter-related activities that are tied to addressing the need or challenge.

33:36

And fourth, are the results. So, we want to see that there's some sort of results at the end.

33:44

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

33:56

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

34:08

This Awarded Grant search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants that we have awarded in past years.

34:15

You can search by institution, name, location, or keyword.

34:19

It will give you basic information about the award, and a brief description of the project, and this can be helpful, as you put together ideas and you want to see what's been funded in the past.

34:28

We also encourage you to reach out to those organizations that have received funding before, give them a call, and say, we saw you got an IMLS grant, and tell us how that worked for you.

34:40

That's the kind of information sharing that can help you be successful in your application.

34:48

We've also posted the narrative and schedule of completion for a cross-section of successful applications from 2022.

34:55

And to find these examples, go to the sample applications page on the IMLS website and scroll down to it section for the agency examples.

35:05

When you look at these proposals, that might help you clarify your thinking about your own.

35:10

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

35:16

Again, this is designed to give you a sense of what a successful narrative looks like. What a good schedule of completion looks like.

35:26

These are ones that reviewers, when they were reading them, said, these are great reads.

35:30

They're well written, they gave us everything we needed to make a good assessment of this project.

35:40

So, what happens after the application deadline?

35:43

First, IMLS program staff review all applications for completeness and eligibility.

35:49

The applications are sent out for external peer review.

35:54

Reviewers then meet as a panel to discuss each application.

35:57

Reviewer scores and written comments are provided directly back to all applicants to help you be more competitive in future cycles.

36:06

For those applications that were funded, we know that the reviewer comments can help you be more successful with implementation.

36:14

Now, experienced and knowledgeable peer reviewers provide scores and comments based on the criteria outlined in the NOFO.

36:22

IMLS staff look at budgets and financials and past performance that you may have if you've had any current or previous grants with IMLS.

36:34

We then prepare materials for the IMLS Deputy Director and for the Director, and by law, the director is charged with the authority and responsibility to make final award decisions and this happens in May.

36:47

In June, we notify all applicants by e-mail of the award decisions and provide the scores and comments created by the reviewers.

36:56

And on July 1, 2023, funded projects begin.

37:04

Now, at this point, we're going to just share a few tips collected from our experience working with applicants each year.

37:11

First on the list is register early.

37:13

You must have an active SAM dot gov registration to register with grants dot gov, and you must have a functional grants dot gov registration to submit an application to IMLS.

37:23

Now, remember, there's no cost to register on these sites, but it can take several days to several weeks to get your registration established and validate.

37:32

So, pay attention to this requirement, particularly if this is your first time applying for a federal grant or if your SAM registration has expired, or if you've had a change in your point of contact for SAM.

37:45

Start that registration process as early as possible.

37:49

Your SAM dot gov registration expires each year, and you must renew it.

37:53

You can log into SAM dot gov at anytime and find out your status. I recommend doing that today.

38:01

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

38:12

Now, on our next to last slide, I wanted to show just a few tips from some of our accumulated knowledge over the years.

38:21

First, read the application guidelines, the NOFOs. It's a long document, but it contains essential information on how to prepare your application.

38:30

Schedule a counseling call one of our staff.

38:33

We are available to answer your questions, and these often come at the start of the process with some general questions, but you might also have questions later.

38:42

A very specific or detailed question about a particular component, and you can e-mail or call us with those questions, too.

38:49

Describe your museum well and vividly, use recent and relevant data to make your points. Reviewers are looking at the application to try to understand your museum.

38:59

Be sure to give them a good description.

39:02

Follow the narrative outline in the NOFO.

39:05

And just, you know, even use the same headings to make it easy for reviewers to read and find the information.

39:12

Avoid any acronyms or jargon. The people who will review your application are experts, but they might not be totally familiar with your shorthand, so make it easier for them to understand what me.

39:27

Ask a colleague to read the seven page Narrative with fresh eyes.

39:31

So once you've drafted it, make sure someone else reads it, ask them to act like a reviewer, who's seeing it for the first time.

39:39

Do this well in advance of the submission deadline, so you have adequate time to edit the Narrative if necessary, or maybe add more information if you need to do that.

39:51

Be sure your application is complete.

39:53

Check it against the table of application components and check it again to be sure you're not missing any required documents.

40:03

Then submit to grants dot gov early so you have time to deal with any glitches or last-minute issues that might come up.

40:16

So, let's recap.

40:23

Make sure you go to IMLS dot gov and read the NOFO.

40:28

Check your organization's registration for both SAM dot gov and grants dot gov.

40:34

Connect with us, talk with a program staff person.

40:39

Prepare your application, make sure it's complete, and finally, submit before the deadline, November 15, 2022, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time.

40:53

That's Eastern Time.

40:58

Now, in closing, I just want to make sure that you have our e-mail address and direct phone number.

41:04

Don't hesitate to call or e-mail either of us with questions or concerns.

41:09

Thank you, and have a great day.