IMLS Office of Museum Services National Leadership Grants for Museums Program

FY 2023 Applicant Information Session

Pre recorded Webinar   **August 2022**

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "National Leadership Grants for Museums - Fiscal Year 2023 Information Session."

My name is Helen Wechsler, and I'll be hosting this webinar. We are delighted that you are interested in learning more about the NLG for Museums program.

Our goal in this presentation is to provide specific information about the National Leadership Grants for Museums program and make some recommendations that you may wish to consider when preparing your application. Since this is a pre-recorded webinar and you won't have the opportunity to ask questions, feel free to contact me or other staff in the Office of Museum Services to seek answers to your questions or to discuss a project idea. The staff contact slide is shown later in this webinar.

Companion Webinars

Pre-recorded Webinar

- IMLS OMS: Choosing a Funding opportunity for FY 2023
  - *Basic Information about all museum funding opportunities*
- Visit: https://www.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 recording, and as a PDFs of the slides (along with their transcripts) on our website at the link on this slide.

The webinar covers the IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan; with an emphasis on how they influence our grant making. We also address institutional eligibility; provide a quick overview of all our funding opportunities; discuss how to find information on our website; provide tips to help you complete an application; and we cover the places with which you must be registered in order to apply for an IMLS grant. There are also individual webinars for each of the museum grant programs.

Overview

- Where to find information
- NLG for Museums Program Overview
- Eligibility
- Characteristics of Successful NLG Projects
- Important Dates
- How Much and How Many?

- NLG for Museums Program Goals
- Application Components
- Review Criteria
- Application Tips
- Timeline
- Contacts

In this presentation, we'll be addressing the following topics:

Where to find information
NLG for Museums Program Overview
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# NLG Museums Statistics

Application and Award Numbers

	Number of Applications	Number of Awards	Funds Requested	Funds Awarded
FY 2021	74	15	$35,064,616	$6,387,709
FY 2022	46	16	$21,623,966	$6,324,656

Before we jump into details about the NLG for Museums program, I want to provide some numbers from the last two cycles. As you can see this is a fairly competitive grant program. We were able to fund about 20% of applications received in FY21 and 35% in FY22. FY22 is a bit of an anomaly because of the low application numbers. My guess is that the pandemic created challenges to applying for grants and the numbers may bounce back. With this in mind, this webinar will help you determine if your project is right for the NLG program, which is essential before putting in the effort to prepare an application, and it will give you tips for creating a competitive proposal.

NLG-M Notice of Funding Opportunity

Visit:
https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/national-leadership-grants-museums
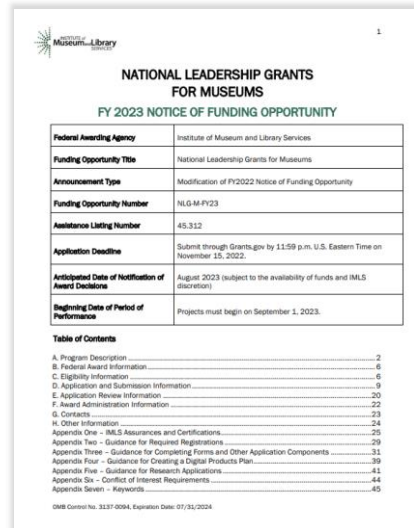
I also want to make sure to point out where the application process begins, which is on our website. Use the Grants drop-down menu and choose Apply for a Grant. Clicking that will take you to a list of grant programs from which you will choose National Leadership Grants for Museums.

These guidelines – or Notice of Funding Opportunity – which you can see on the right are downloadable as a PDF. These NOFOs, as we call them, will walk you through the application process and contain most of the information I will provide today.

Eligibility

A museum

- use a professional staff;
- be organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes;
- own or use tangible objects;
- 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.

An organization or association that engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of museums and the museum profession

An institution of higher education

You can be one of three types of organizations to be eligible to apply to NLG-M.

If you are applying as a museum, you will need to certify that:
    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; AND
    exhibit these objects to the general public on a regular basis, at least 120 days a year, and
    Conducts these activities in facilities that it owns or operates.

Regarding the 120 day rule during our current COVID-19 reality – you can count these 120 day in either the year preceding the application due date, the year preceding your first shut down due to COVID-19 (this might be helpful if your local has had on and off closures throughout the pandemic), or you can use the calendar year preceding this current one (so, 2021).

You can also be eligible for NLG-M if you are an organization or association that engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of museums and the museum profession or if you are a college or university.

NLG for Museums Program Purpose

Photo courtesy of the National Aquarium. Photo credit: Theresa Keil

Support projects that address critical needs of the museum field and that have the potential to advance practice in the profession so that museums can improve services for the American public.

Let's now discuss the purpose of this grant program. NLG supports projects that address critical needs of the museum field and that have the potential to advance practice in the profession so that museums can improve services for the American public.

NLG is all about meeting the needs of the museum field, our institutions, and our professionals. We invest in institutions and partnerships that understand the challenges and opportunities facing the field and devise plans to move the field forward through the development of resources and tools for use by multiple institutions and/or groups of museum professionals.

Characteristics of Successful NLG-Museums Projects

- Shared results and tools for the museum field
- Thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge of the project topic
- Collaborative process
- Broad impact for the museum field
- Novel approaches as appropriate

Making sure your project shares the characteristics of successful NLG projects is an important first step to preparing an application. We are looking for projects that are designed intentionally to produce results that can be used by the field to advance and improve practice to better serve the American public. We're looking for tangible results such as models, tools, curriculum resources, research findings, or new services that can be useful to a segment of the museum field.

We seek proposals for projects with the potential to influence practice across one or more disciplines within the museum field—not just benefiting a single museum but multiple museums and museum professionals. Projects should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice, knowledge about the subject matter, deep familiarity with previous work on the project topic, and an awareness of and support for current strategic priorities in the field. We encourage new perspectives and approaches and expect collaboration that demonstrates broad need, field-wide buy-in and input, and access to appropriate expertise. Finally, we seek to fund projects that generate results that can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend the benefits of federal investment.

Funding Options

How Much?
Option 1: $50,000-$750,000 projects with 1:1 cost share required

Option 2: $50,000-$750,000 research projects with no cost share required.

Option 3: $5,000-$50,000 for one-year rapid prototyping projects with no cost share required

How Many?
There is no limit on the number of applications your museum may submit to NLG for Museums.

There are three funding options for your project.

Option 1 is for full projects that result in robust results for the field. These can request anywhere from $50,000 to $750,000. There is a 1:1 cost share requirement. **Cost share** may be in the form of cash, staff or volunteer time, other grantee-contributed costs, or third-party contributions. It may not be funds from another federal source.

Option 2 is for research projects from $50,000 to $750,000, which do not require a cost share. We'll talk more about research projects a little later.

Option 3 supports one-year, rapid prototyping projects budgeted between $5,000 and $50,000, with no cost share required.
If you have an idea for an innovative solution to a field-wide challenge that requires some funding to rapidly develop, test, iterate, and retest, this funding level is for you. Remember, whether you succeed, fail, or come out somewhere in between, we want you to report your results to the field; tell others what worked, what is promising, what needs more tweaking, and what they should not try at home.

The second question is how many applications you may submit? There is no limit on the number of applications your museum may submit to NLG-museums. However, as you consider the option to submit more than one application, we urge you to think about the capacity of your organization to prepare multiple applications and to manage multiple federal awards at once.

Program Goals

Goal 1: Advance the museum field's ability to empower people of all ages and backgrounds through experiential and cross-disciplinary learning and discovery.

- Objective 1.1: Support the development, implementation, and dissemination of model programs that facilitate adoption by museums across the field.
- Objective 1.2: Support training and professional development programs, tools, or resources that build the knowledge, skills and abilities of museum staff and/or volunteers in multiple institutions
- Objective 1.3: Support research focusing on the role of museums in engaging learners of all types.

Now I want to talk about the three program Goals for NLG for Museums. Your project must align with one of the three program goals and a set of corresponding objectives. Goal and objective choices should be identified clearly in the Narrative (see Section D2c).

Goal 1 is the Lifelong Learning goal. Its objectives correspond to the types of project NLG supports. For example, a project that takes a successful STEM education program with Head Start centers and adapts, tests, and scales it for use by museums across the country and their local Head Starts fits within Objective 1.1. A statewide series of evaluation workshops for museum educators would meet Objective 1.2. And, research on the impact of single visit field trips to art museums would fit within Objective 1.3.

Program Goals

Goal 2: Advance the museum field's ability to maximize the use of museum resources to address community needs through partnerships and collaborations.

- Objective 2.1: Support the development of new and innovative methods for addressing community challenges through partnerships, services, processes, or practices for use across the museum field.
- Objective 2.2: Support the development and implementation of training and professional development programs, tools, or resources that build the knowledge, skills and abilities of museum staff and/or volunteers to meet the needs of their communities.
- Objective 2.3: Support research focusing on museums' roles in engaging diverse audiences and fostering civic discourse.

Goal 2 is about museums' work to collaborate with and meet the needs of their communities. The three objectives are parallel to those we saw in Goal 1. They support the adapting and scaling up of models of community engagement so that others in the field do not need to reinvent the wheel (objective 2.1). Professional development for museum professionals on topics that increase their ability to work within their communities is Objective 2.2. And, objective 2.3 is what you would use to answer a research question about the important work museums do in their communities.

Program Goals

Goal 3: Advance the museums field's ability to identify new solutions that address high priority and widespread collections care or conservation issues.

- Objective 3.1: Support the development, implementation, and dissemination of new tools or services that facilitate access, management, preservation, sharing, and use of museum collections.
- Objective 3.2: Support the development and implementation of training and professional development programs, tools, or resources that impact the ability of museum staff and/or volunteers in multiple institutions to improve the stewardship of collections
- Objective 3.3: Support research focusing on any broadly relevant aspect of the management, conservation, and preservation of collections.

Goal 3 offers the opportunity to be ever-better stewards of the nation's collections. The objectives, again, are parallel to the other goals, offering opportunities to scale up models for care, access, and management of collections, say a new database project (Objective 3.1), training and PD on stewardship issues like training staff at small historical societies on how to make their own hat mounts (Objective 3.2), and research on management and care of collections, like testing methods to mitigate the degradation of plastics (Objective 3.3)

Past Successful Applications

Search Awarded Grants

OMS Sample Applications

IMLS offers a few ways to find examples of funded projects. On the left are results using the Search Awarded Grants feature of our website. You can see the filters I selected on the left - the last three years at the top, and National Leadership Grants for Museums at the bottom. We have also posted the abstract, narrative, and schedule of completion for a cross-section of successful NLG for Museums applications. The proposals posted present a variety of project types, meet the overarching goal of the NLG for museums program, and were considered to be clear and well-written by reviewers. Looking at these exemplary proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own application. The image on the right shows the Sample Application page; you will scroll down to find National Leadership Program for Museums examples.

Application Components

Required Documents

- <u>All</u> applications must include these

Conditionally Required Documents

- <u>Some</u> applications must include these

Supporting Documents

- <u>Optional</u>. Only include what supplements the narrative and supports the project description provided in the application.

Next up are the documents that make up your application and that you will upload into Grants.gov.

These application components fall into three categories. The first is Required Documents. All applications must include these.

The second group is Conditionally Required Documents. Some applications must include these. It might depend on the nature of your institution or some aspect of your project. For example, if you are a non-profit organization, you must include your proof of nonprofit letter from the IRS. If you are proposing a project that will produce a digital product, you must include a Digital Product Plan. If you meet the condition, omission of any one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The third group of application components are Supporting Documents. These are completely optional. You may submit some or none. Think about including only those that supplement or back-up your narrative. You may refer to these materials in your narrative so your reviewers know where to look. For example, if you are basing your project on successful work you have done in your museum, you may want to indicate that an evaluation report is included as supporting material. This is not the place to introduce new information. Be respectful of your reviewers' time.

Table of Application Components

Use the table to keep organized.

- Serves as a checklist of application components

- Identifies document formats and naming conventions

- Provides links to instructions and forms

- Identifies categories of documents (Required, Conditionally Required, Supporting)

Component	Format	File name to use
Required Documents Please see the guidance in Section D2c for more information.		
The Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)	Grants.gov form	n/a
IMLS Supplementary Information Form (including Abstract)	Grants.gov form	n/a
IMLS Museum Program Information Form	Grants.gov form	n/a
Organizational Profile (one page max.)	PDF document	Organizationalprofile.pdf
Narrative (ten pages max.)	PDF document	Narrative.pdf
Schedule of Completion (one page per year max.)	PDF document	Scheduleofcompletion.pdf
Performance Measurement Plan (two pages max.)	PDF document	Perfmeasurement.pdf
IMLS Budget Form	IMLS PDF form	Budget.pdf
Budget Justification	PDF document	Budgetjustification.pdf
List of Key Project Staff and Consultants (one page max.)	PDF document	Projectstaff.pdf
Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants (two pages each max.)	PDF document	Resumes.pdf
Conditionally Required Documents Please see the guidance in Section D2d for more information.		
Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status	PDF document	Proofnonprofit.pdf
Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement	PDF document	Indirectcostrate.pdf
Digital Products Plan (two pages max.)	PDF document	Digitalproduct.pdf
Data Management Plan (two pages max.)	PDF document	Datamanagement.pdf
Supporting Documents Please see the guidance in Section D2e for more information.		
Information that supplements the Narrative and supports the project description provided in the application	PDF document	Supportingdoc1.pdf Supportingdoc2.pdf Supportingdoc3.pdf

In the NLG for Museums Notice of Funding Opportunity you will find a Table of Application Components. We recommend that you use this as a checklist to keep yourself organized. It is divided into Required, Conditionally Required, and Supporting documents. The middle column tells you about document formats and the third tells you how to name each document. Note that deviating from the naming convention or upload a document that is not a pdf (such as Word or Excel) will result in an error and/or the system thinking the document is not present.

The table also provides links to instructions and forms.

Narrative: Project Justification

- Which program goal and associated objective(s) of National Leadership Grants for Museums will your project address?
- What field-wide need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified? Describe how you have used relevant data from reliable sources to define the need, problem, or challenge and develop the scope for the project.
- Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning? "Target group" refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project. Identify the number of individuals in the target group or in each target group, if you identify more than one.
- Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this 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."
- How will the museum field benefit from your project?
- How does this proposed project differ from, complement, or build upon existing theory, scholarship, and practice?

Now let's talk about the narrative of your proposal. You have ten pages to cover three sections.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION
In this section of the narrative, you should lay out the reasoning for your project. Tell us in the clearest terms what need, problem, or challenge you expect to address; how you identified it; who or what will benefit from your work (which should be some segment of the museum field); and how your project will address the goals of NLG for Museums.

Remember that core to NLG for Museums is the desire to support projects that strengthen the museum field. Show the reviewers how this all fits together.

Note that reviewers have prompts that correspond to these questions. You will find this information is section E1 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

For this section of the narrative, reviewers will consider how well you've defended the need, problem, or challenge you will address; how well you've identified who or what will benefit from the project, and how good of a job you've done in involving them in the planning. Reviewers also value external needs assessment or research that can support and validate your need. They'll look at who particularly will benefit and how the museum field will benefit. And they will weigh in on your demonstrated understanding of current research and practice in the area.

Narrative: Project Work Plan

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

PROJECT WORK PLAN

The Project Work Plan is the part of the narrative in which you explain what you will do, how you plan to address risks that may be present, who will do the project, when, and using what resources.

The reviewers will be looking for evidence that you know what you are doing, have the right people at the table, that the project is realistic, that there is room to change course if needed, and, for research projects, they'll look for appropriate research design and answers to the questions outlined in the guidance on effective research proposals.

Research Projects

- What are your specific research questions, methods, and theoretical framing?
- What is the relevance of the proposed research for current practice?
- What type of data will you gather?
- How will you analyze the data?
- Does your study require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval?
- How will you report and disseminate your findings?

Speaking of research…here are the questions outlined and explained in the Guidance for Research Applications, within the NLG for Museums Notice of Funding Opportunity. To submit a competitive research proposal, your narrative should answer these. We sometimes see projects submitted as research in order to avoid the cost share requirement. This is not a winning strategy. Think carefully about these questions and if they do not make sense for your project, you likely do not have a research project.

If you do submit a research project, note that a data management plan becomes a required document.

Narrative: Project Results

- 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?

- What models, tools, research findings, and/or services will result from your project? How will you ensure that they are broadly adaptable and usable by other institutions and are widely disseminated to the field?

- 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 your project's intended results.

What specific results do you intend to achieve in your project and what will change as a result.

Tell us about the tangible products that will result from your project, if you have any, and last but not least, tell us how you will sustain the benefits of your project beyond the lifespan of this particular project? In other words, when the federal funding goes away, how will the benefit to the field be sustained?

Reviewers will register their thoughts about how likely it is you will deliver on the results that you've proposed; how useful the tangible products you plan to create will be; and whether your plan for sustaining the benefits of the project are reasonable and practical.

Allowable and Unallowable costs

- IMLS NOFO
- 2 CFR 200

  Visit: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E?toc=1

When preparing your proposal, be careful to include only allowable costs in both your IMLS request and your cost share. To do otherwise can hurt your chances of getting positive reviews and being recommended for funding.

We'll go through some common expenses that are allowable and unallowable, but for details, please see 2 CFR part 200, this is the part of the Code of Federal Regulations covering Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Fortunately, the regulations are available online in a searchable format on the U.S. Government Publishing Office website and a link is listed on this slide.

Of particular interest is Subpart E—Cost Principles.

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 (e.g., program evaluation, software development)
- publication design and printing
- training for staff and volunteers that impacts multiple museums
- Paid internships
- indirect or overhead costs

In the NLG for Museums Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a partial list of the most common examples of allowable costs for this grant program. These include:

- 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 (e.g., program evaluation, software development) You can also include honoraria, stipends, or other compensation from project participants (for example, community members, advisors)
- training for staff and volunteers that impacts multiple museums
- paid internships
- indirect or overhead costs

So, 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.

Unallowable Costs

- general fundraising costs, such as development office staff or other staff time devoted to general fundraising
- contributions to endowments
- general operating support
- acquisition of collections
- general advertising or public relations costs designed solely for promotional activities other than those related to the specific project
- construction or renovation of facilities
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment

Unallowable costs include:

- general fundraising costs, such as development office staff or other staff time devoted to general fundraising;
- contributions to endowments;
- general operating support; (these costs are part of what we support through your Indirect Costs)
- acquisition of collections;
- general advertising or public relations costs designed solely for promotional activities other than those related to the specific project;
- construction or renovation of facilities; and – fabrication and other types of work can be allowable, check with us if you have questions
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment. Note that sometimes food can be allowable – for example when you need to feed kids or teens or during a working lunch at a training workshop.
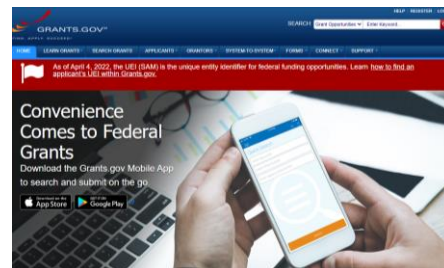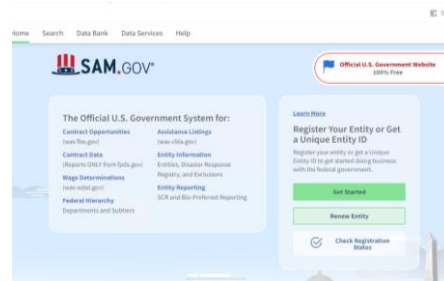
So, these costs may NOT be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, NOR can they be part of what you will pay for as part of your cost share. In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal.

Application Tips

Register Early

1. SAM Registration:
   www.sam.gov

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

Now for some tips.

First on the list is "Register early!" You must have an active SAM.gov registration and know your Unique Entity Identifier, which is generated through your SAM account. You must also have a current and functional Grants.gov registration. You must have an active SAM.gov registration and know your Unique Entity Identifier number to register with Grants.gov. And you must have a functional Grants.gov registration in order to submit an application to IMLS. Check to see whether your Grants.gov registration is associated with a former staff member whose password is a mystery to you. Leave time to deal with these eventualities!

It's also crucial to remember that 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.

Application Tips

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: We can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline**. So...

- Start early.

- Do your background research.

- Revisit the grant Notice of Funding Opportunity frequently and follow the narrative outline it provides. Use headings, subheadings, or numbered sections to make it easy for reviewers to read.

- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.

- Check your spelling, grammar, and math.

- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit.

- Be sure your application is complete. **Pay close attention to required documents, formats, and naming**.

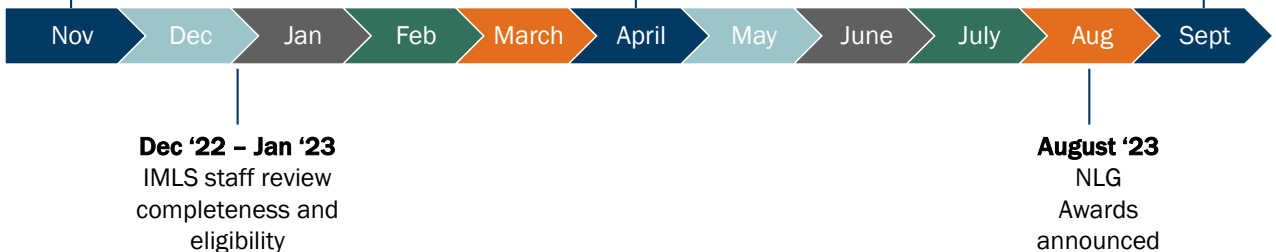- Submit to Grants.gov **early** so you can correct any errors.

Important things to know...

NLG-M Timeline

Nov 15, 2022
Applications due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time

Feb – June '23
Review period

Sept 1, 2023
NLG Projects start

| Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept |

Dec '22 – Jan '23
IMLS staff review completeness and eligibility

August '23
NLG Awards announced

We want to remind you of important dates for NLG applications. They are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 15, 2022 and Grants.gov system generates that time stamp. Staff reviews applications for completeness and institutional eligibility before they are sent for review, which will happen from February through June. There will be two tiers of review during that time.

This year, NLG for Museums awards will be announced in August of 2023.

And all NLG projects must be scheduled to start on September 1, 2023.

OMS Staff Contacts

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Thank you very much for your interest in IMLS and in the National Leadership for Museums program. We hope you have found the information in this webinar helpful. Here is a listing of the names, email addresses, and direct phone numbers for program staff in the Office of Museum Services. There is also a list of staff on the NLG for Museums page of our website with contact information. We encourage you to contact us with any questions you might have. We'll be very happy to help.

To learn more, visit www.imls.gov

And remember that our website is the central place for information about applying for IMLS grants.