

LB21 NLG Applicant Webinar Recording Transcript

0:01

My name is James Neal, and I'm a senior program officer in the Office of Library Services at the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

0:12

This webinar will cover the National Leadership Grants for Libraries and the Laura Bush 21st Century Library and Grant programs.

0:24

Today, we'll briefly go over IMLS and its strategic priorities and provide an overview of the NLG and LB21 grant programs.

0:36

We will also review eligibility criteria, the project types, take you through the application process, and provide you with some tips to help make your application complete and competitive.

0:58

If you have applied to IMLS in the past, you may note that the current notices of funding opportunities are slightly different than in the past.

1:09

This year there will be a one phase application process.

1:14

In the past, there was a two phase application process where applicants would submit a short preliminary proposal and then only a subset were invited to submit a full proposal.

1:27

This year, all NLG and LB21 applicants will be expected to submit a full proposal.

1:36

Additionally, before applying, you should read the NOFO cover letter very closely to see if your ideas are aligned with current IMLS priorities.

1:49

This information can help you decide whether or not to apply before investing significant time putting together a full proposal.

2:02

IMLS is an independent grant making agency and the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums.

2:12

IMLS helps ensure that all Americans have access to museum, library and Information Services.

2:22

You can read our mission and vision on this slide and on the IMLS website, www.imls.gov.

2:33

That's www.imls.gov.

2:42

Today, we'll be talking about two of our grant programs.

2:45

The first is our National Leadership Grant for Libraries program, otherwise known as NLG. NLG projects enhance the quality of library services nationwide.

2:58

The models, tools, research, finding, services, and partnerships resulting from these awards can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend and maximize the benefit of federal investment to libraries and archives of all sizes.

3:17

It is particularly important to note that the importance of far reaching impact in a national leadership grant application.

3:28

The benefits of your work should extend well beyond one institution or geographic region.

3:35

Collaborating across institutions, considering institutional diversity in terms of geography, size and type of institutions, and thinking through dissemination and replicability are essential for success.

3:52

The Community Centered Implementation project type is an exception.

3:56

We will talk more about that soon.

4:00

Note that we are not accepting applications that are strictly for digitization, and we cannot accept applications for construction.

4:13

The goal for this program is to generate projects that develop, enhance, or disseminate replicable practices, programs, models, or tools to strengthen the quality of library services nationwide.

4:31

Each applicant should align their proposal and their proposed project with the NLG goal and one of the associated objectives.

4:42

An applicant should clearly identify their selected objective in the narrative and on the Library Program Information form.

4:55

The other program that we're discussing today is the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, or LB21 for short.

5:06

This program is designed to build a library and archival workforce that can meet the information needs of communities and increase the institutional capacity of libraries, archives, and library and information science graduate programs across the country.

5:25

The program supports projects that provide training and professional development to library and archives professionals, develop faculty and information leaders, and recruit, educate, and retain the next generation of library and archives professionals.

5:44

Like the NLG, projects in LB21 are expected to influence practice, reflect the current understanding of current practices and priorities, use strategic collaborations, disseminate activities, results and findings, and generate measurable results.

6:06

And just like NLG, LB21 features far reaching impact as an expectation for all project categories except for the Community Centered Implementation category.

6:23

The goals for the LB21 program are recruit and educate future library and archives professionals, faculty and staff; Train and retain current library and archives professionals, faculty and staff.

6:41

Each applicant should align their proposed project with one of these two program goals and one of the associated objectives.

6:51

Goal and objective choices should be identified clearly on the in the Narrative and on the Library Program Information form.

7:04

Here we have provided some guidance for those of you who are unsure whether your project idea fits into NLG or LB21.

7:17

Note that NLG is focused on external services and direct work with the American public, where LB21 is focused on building and training the current and future library and archival workforce.

7:32

If your project is primarily about education and training for information professionals, either formal or informal education, you should probably apply to LB21.

7:46

If you are a non-tenured tenure track faculty member who is interested in research funding, you will want to look at the Early Career Research Development category in LB21.

8:02

If your project is focused on direct services for the American public, whether through practice or research, you should apply to NLG.

8:12

Please be sure to read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity or what we call the NOFO, very carefully to ensure your project is aligned with the correct grant program and that you meet eligibility criteria.

8:30

On the IMLS website, we have landing pages for each of the two programs.

8:36

If you're on this webinar, it's likely you have already visited one or both.

8:41

These pages provide an overview of the programs.

8:45

Links to the full Notices of Funding Opportunity are Nofos and also this webinar.

8:52

So if you want to refer to this applicant webinar later, that's where you will find it.

8:58

In addition, on each page you can find a list of the relevant program staff you should contact with any questions about the programs and the grant application process.

9:17

Your organization is eligible to apply to IMLS if it is a unit of state or local government or a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in one of the 50 states or territories and one of seven types of organizations, which we will list on the next slide.

9:41

Please also note that the Laura Bush 21st Century Library Program has additional eligibility requirements for early career research proposals, so you should pay attention to that in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

10:02

In addition to the criteria on the previous slide, your organization is eligible to apply if you are one of the seven types of organizations, including a library, archives, or parent organization, an academic or administrative unit, a digital library or archives, a library or archival agency, consortium, association, or organization, or a nonprofit organization affiliated with a library or archives whose sole mission is supporting the specified library or archives.

10:43

If you have any questions about your eligibility, please reach out to someone on the IMLS program staff.

10:54

You are not eligible to apply to these programs if you are a federally operated institution, a for profit institution, an individual, or a foreign country or organization.

11:10

A federally operated institution does not mean an institution that receives other federal grants.

11:15

It means that if you are a federal agency, for example, the Library of Congress or Smithsonian, IMLS cannot fund you.

11:25

If you are an ineligible institution, we encourage you to partner with an eligible institution.

11:32

While you cannot be the lead applicant, you can apply through a partnership with an eligible institution and be able to receive funding in that manner.

11:43

More important, more information about this is provided in the guidelines on the IMLS website, but the point here is that it's important to figure out early if you are eligible to apply for the program that is of interest to you.

12:03

To ensure that you will be able to submit your application, Please ensure the following registrations are in place at your institution.

12:13

An applicant organization must have a unique entity identifier that's a UEI number, a current and active system for award management, that's SAM registration, and an active grants.gov registration with an approved authorized organization representative.

12:36

We strongly recommend you check these registrations immediately to ensure that they are accurate, current, and active, as it can take a long time to update or renew them.

12:49

Your institution must be registered with SAM.

12:56

It's important to keep in mind that your SAM registration is good for only one year at a time and must be renewed annually.

13:04

That's something you don't want to be doing right before the deadline, so we recommend checking your status early on.

13:12

If it is not your job to track your SAM registration, we recommend you contact the person at your organization whose job it is so you can make sure that this is in place.

13:25

You will also need to establish an account at grants.gov, which is the portal through which you will submit your application.

13:35

Please allow at least two weeks for the registration process here, and even if you know you're registered, make sure you know who is the authorized representative for your institution, and make sure that they know their login information.

13:52

In fact, if you don't absolutely know for sure that all these registrations are in place now, I'd recommend checking on it as soon as we get done today.

14:03

It's not something you want to be trying to accomplish anywhere close to the deadline.

14:12

All applicants will have to select a project type.

14:16

These categories each have different limits regarding the period of performance of the grant, which you can see in this table.

14:26

Planning grants are for preliminary project activities.

14:30

It should be clear how your activities might lead to future implementation or research activities.

14:38

Planning grants may include conducting preliminary research, conducting an environmental scan,

rapidly prototyping a new program or service, or working on creating partnerships to support larger future activities.

14:52

Forum grants are for convening experts and stakeholders around an issue of national significance.

15:00

This could support one large meeting or several meetings focused on a particular area to establish a shared agenda or understanding.

15:11

Planning and Forum grants must be one to two years and should demonstrate how you will measure and achieve far reaching impact.

15:23

National Implementation grants support full scale development, execution, and evaluation activities that will achieve far reaching impact.

15:34

These are limited to one to three years.

15:38

Community-centered implementation projects adapt existing models, practices, findings, tools and or partnerships to a specific organizational context.

15:51

You must identify and align your proposed work with an established model, standard practice, toolkit, open-source software, or research.

16:04

Finally, your project should demonstrate how it is going to use or adapt what you have identified.

16:11

Your project should share resources and lessons learned that can be used by libraries and archives and other communities throughout the nation.

16:21

Please note your institution may only submit one application under the Community-Centered Implementation Project type.

16:32

Community-Centered Implementation projects are limited from one to two years.

16:38

Applied research grants support the investigation of key questions relevant to libraries or archives, building on prior empirical, theoretical, or exploratory work in libraries and archives or other relevant disciplines.

16:54

Your project should share resources and lessons learned that can be used by library and archival professionals in other communities throughout the nation.

17:03

The LB21 program also offers the Early Career Research category, which supports the research of an untenured tenure-track library and information science faculty member.

17:21

To give you a better sense of the scale, here are the maximum dollar amounts that you may request which are based on the project type that you do select.

17:32

There is flexibility within the funding levels, but you should keep in mind that we have limited funding and both programs are extremely competitive.

17:42

We fund very few \$1,000,000 projects.

17:46

There is a value proposition that comes into play.

17:50

The higher the amount that you're asking for, the more compelling your case must be for how your work will impact the entire field and reflect and represent a significant return on investment.

18:07

The Notices of Funding Opportunity, the NOFOs, also spell out these funding caps along with the corresponding cost share requirements.

18:21

Cost sharing is not considered in the review process of the applications, but it is an eligibility criterion.

18:31

Again, this is spelled out in the Notice of Funding Opportunities.

18:35

The NOFO's generally a one-to-one cost share is required for both programs.

18:44

If you select the National Implementation Project type and you are requesting \$300,000 or more in IMLS funds, Laura Bush 21st Century applicants requesting a National Implementation Grant of 300,000 or more are required to 1:1 cost share minus student support costs.

19:12

Please remember that if a cost is unallowable for IMLS funds, it is also unallowable for cost share.

19:20

Cost share is not required for planning forum, community centered implementation, applied research or early research grants.

19:34

The required components for applications are listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs).

19:41

These applications are submitted through Grants.gov and will undergo a peer review process.

19:49

The IMLS Director makes the final funding decision.

20:07

For the final part of this webinar, we'll go over some tips for preparing a competitive application.

20:15

At this first phase of the proposal process, you should think about the narrative introduction as a movie trailer.

20:24

Are the coming attractions providing the highlights of what the proposal will include.

20:31

The Search Awarded Grant section of the IMS website has descriptions of LB21 and NLG projects that have been funded over the past few years, which can be helpful for you as you review your work to start on your proposal.

20:50

The narrative should include an introduction, project justification, project work plan, and project results section.

21:00

Some elements you will want to address in your introduction include clearly identifying any project partners and the purpose of the project.

21:11

This can be easily done and quickly done in the first sentences of the introduction.

21:16

Institution X, for example, and Institution Y will partner together to take and make or accomplish A&B.

21:27

They request the dollar amount Z from IMLS.

21:32

We recommend foregoing lengthy introductions and get directly into the substance of what your project is all about in the first sentence or two of the narrative.

21:43

In your project justification, you will want to ground your project in current and relevant research and practice.

21:51

Please be succinct and provide data that supports your statements.

21:57

You will want to give an outline of your proposed work plan, what it will look like, and how it will be accomplished.

22:04

If it's a research proposal, please articulate specific research questions and describe your data collection and analysis methods.

22:15

You should articulate the potential impact of your work, your projected outcome, and how you will disseminate results.

22:26

The Notice of Funding Opportunity,

22:28

The NOFO has specific guidance for application in the Applied Research and Early Career Research Development categories.

22:38

This slide lists the questions we ask you to consider, including thinking about the research questions, theoretical framing, research methods, and other aspects of your proposed project.

22:54

As a summary, here are some things that you can do to ensure you are submitting your most competitive proposal.

23:04

The first you've already done and accomplished by viewing and listening to this webinar.

23:10

Next, you want to choose the grant program goal and objective that best aligns with your proposed idea.

23:20

I highly recommend that you have a colleague who is unfamiliar with your project to do some reading through your proposal prior to submission.

23:30

We all get too close to our work and this will ensure that the proposal you're submitting clearly communicates your project idea.

23:38

Please be sure to submit all required and conditionally required documents and that all use and naming conventions indicated in the table of application components.

23:52

Submit all the committed, completed, and required documents in PDF format.

24:00

Submit on or before the application deadline. IMLS will not consider late applications.

24:09

Thank you for your interest in and support of IMLS.

24:13

Please do not hesitate to contact a program Officer should you have any questions about the application process.

24:21

Good day.