



Getting Started with IMLS Museum Grants

Office of Museum Services



Introduction



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Using This Video

Watch

Watch this video in its entirety

Review

Review the Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) at www.imls.gov/grants

Refer

Refer to this video as needed



Chapter 1:

What is IMLS?



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



Office of Museum Services

- Awards discretionary grants to a broad range of institutions in the museum field
- Eight grant programs accepting applications





Chapter 2:

Is My Institution Eligible for an IMLS Museum Grant?

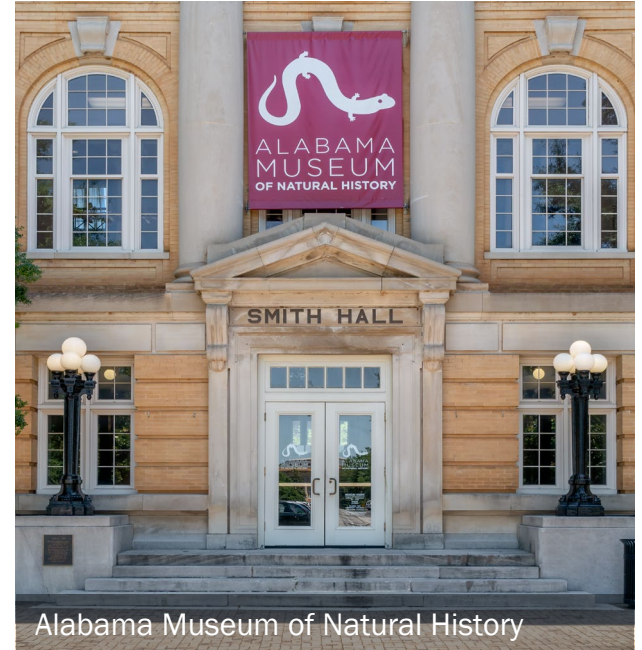


Applicant Requirements

- Requirements for all potential applicants:
 - Your organization must be located in one of the United States' 50 States, its territories, or the District of Columbia
 - Your organization must be a unit of state, local, or Tribal government, or a private nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status

Program Eligibility

- Only museums may apply to
 - Museums for America
 - Museums Empowered
 - Inspire Grants for Small Museums



Alabama Museum of Natural History



Museum Requirements

- Museums must
 - ✓ Have at least one full time or equivalent professional staff person, either paid or unpaid
 - ✓ Have a physical location that it owns or operates
 - ✓ Have been open to the public for at least 120 days in the year prior to the application deadline
 - ✓ Own or use tangible objects
- Museums may be stand-alone organizations, or they may be part of a larger institution, such as a college, university, Tribe, or a state or local government.



Examples of Museums

- Anthropology museums
- Aquariums
- Arboretums
- Art museums
- Botanical gardens
- Children's/youth museums
- General museums
- Historic houses/sites
- History museums
- Natural history museums
- Nature centers
- Planetariums
- Science/technology centers
- Specialized museums
- Zoological parks



Program Eligibility

- Programs with unique eligibility requirements
 - 21st Century Museum Professionals
 - National Leadership Grants for Museums
 - Museum Grants for African American History and Culture
 - Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture
 - Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program



Allowable Costs

- Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- Travel expenses
- Materials and supplies
- Third-party costs
- Publication design and printing
- Program evaluation
- Staff and volunteer training
- Internships and fellowships
- Equipment to improve collections storage
- Program-specific overhead costs



Unallowable Costs

- General fundraising costs
- Contributions to endowments
- General operating support
- Acquisition of collections
- Construction or renovation of facilities
- Social activities, receptions, or entertainment



Chapter 3:

Which Grant Program Should I Apply To?



Available Programs

- Museums for America
- Museums Empowered
- Inspire Grants for Small Museums
- National Leadership Grants for Museums
- 21st Century Museum Professionals
- Museum Grants for African American History and Culture
- Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture
- Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program

Museums for America



The Denver Botanic Gardens

Goal: To strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public through a project that is aligned with its current strategic plan

Objectives: Lifelong Learning, Community Engagement, and Collections Stewardship and Access

Duration: 1 – 3 years

Funding: \$5,000 - \$350,000 (1:1 Cost Share)

Museums Empowered



Goal: To support projects that use professional development and training to generate change and growth within museums of all types and sizes

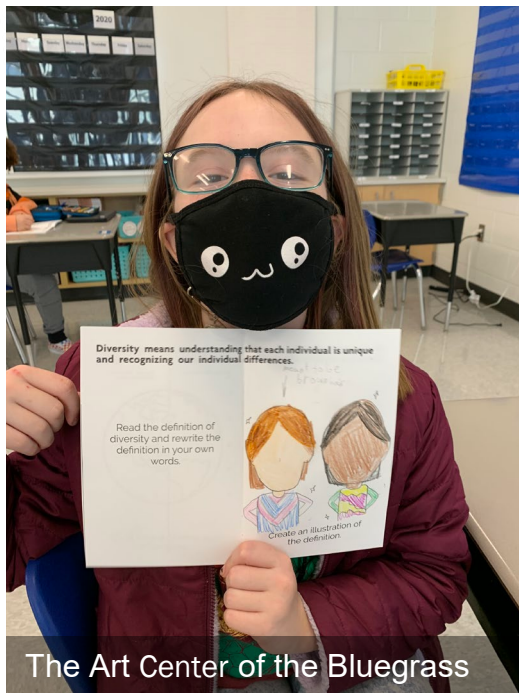
Objectives: Digital Technology; Evaluation; Organizational Management

Duration: 1 – 3 years

Funding: \$5,000 - \$350,000

Cost Share: 1:1

Inspire Grants for Small Museums



The Art Center of the Bluegrass

Goal: To support small museums in addressing priorities identified in their strategic plans

Objectives: Lifelong Learning; Collections Stewardship and Access

Duration: 1 – 3 years

	Small Projects	Large Projects
Funding	\$5,000-\$25,000	\$25,001 - \$75,000
Cost Share	None	1:1

National Leadership Grants for Museums



Goal: To address critical needs of the museum field and to advance museum practice

Project Types: Research, Non-research

Duration: 1 – 3 years

	Non-Research	Research
Funding	\$50,000 - \$750,000	\$50,000 - \$750,000
Cost Share	1:1	None

21st Century Museum Professionals (21MP)

Goal: To build career pathways, strengthen professional networks, and identify and share effective workforce education and training practices in the museum field.



Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts

Duration: 1 – 3 years

Funding: \$100,000 – \$500,000

Cost Share: 1:1

Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Goal: To build the capacity of African American museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums and HBCUs

Duration: 1 – 3 years

	Small Projects	Large Projects
Funding	\$5,000 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$500,000
Cost Share	None	1:1



Amistad Research Center

Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture



Mexic-Arte Museum

Goal: To build the capacity of American Latino history and culture museums to serve their communities and advance the growth and development of a professional workforce in American Latino cultural institutions

Duration: 1 – 3 years

Funding: \$5,000 - \$500,000

Cost Share: None

Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program

Goal: To enhance museum services that sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge among Indian Tribes and Native-Hawaiian serving organizations

Duration: 1 – 3 years

Funding: \$5,000 – \$250,000

Cost Share: None

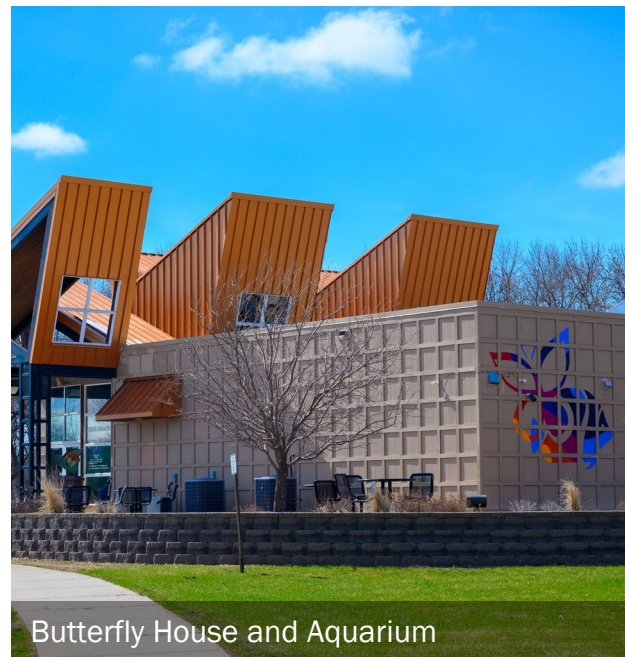
Eligibility: Federally recognized Tribes & organizations that primarily serve & represent Native Hawaiians





Additional Information

- You can apply to multiple programs, but must meet the eligibility requirements for each program
- Full details are available at www.ims.gov/grants



Butterfly House and Aquarium



Chapter 4:

How Do I Apply?



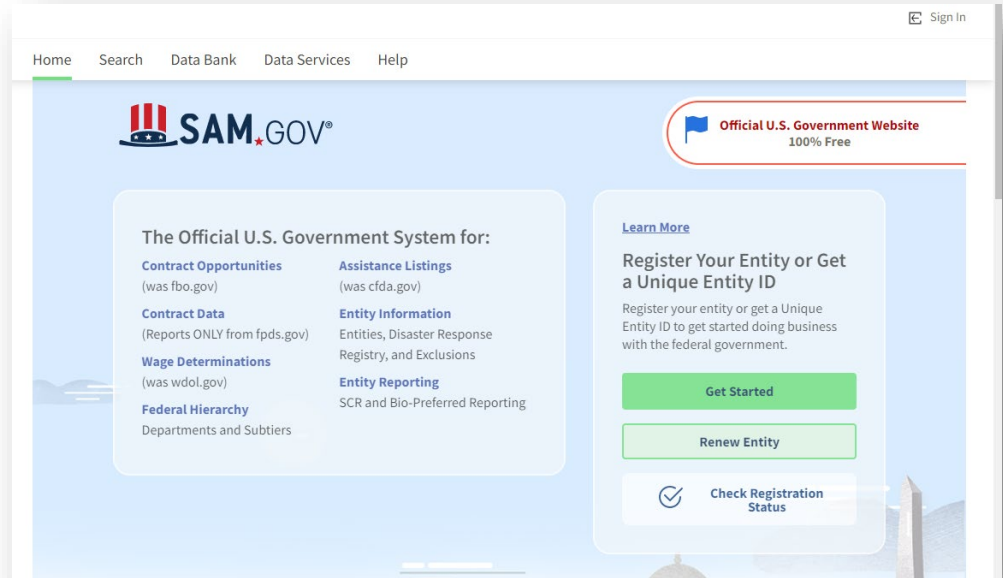
Key Dates

Nov. 13, 2026

**Application
Deadline**

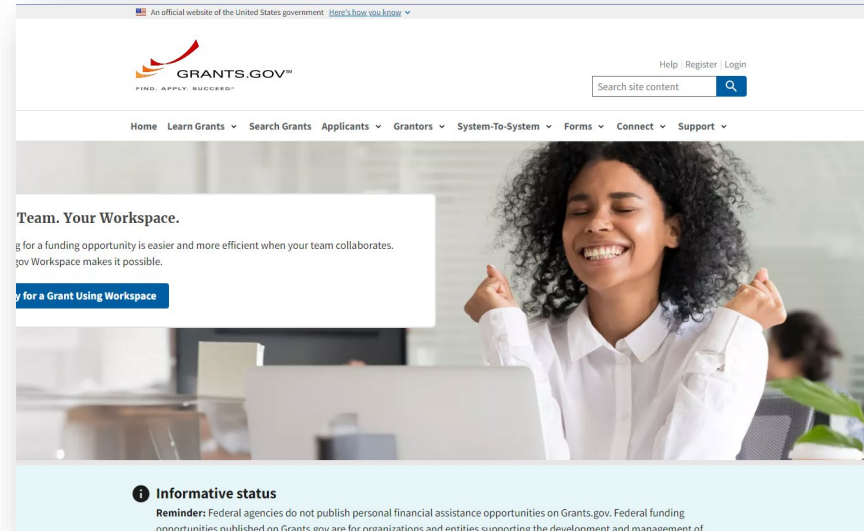
SAM.gov

- Create or update Sam.gov account immediately
- Register with the bank account that should receive grant funds



Grants.gov

- Use your Unique Entity Identifier to register with Grants.gov
- Register with the bank account that should receive grant funds.
- If you need further assistance, visit www.grants.gov/support, email support@grants.gov, or call 800-518-4726; available 24/7 except on federal holidays.





Chapter 5:

What if I Have More Questions?

- Strategic Plan
- NOFOs for all grant programs
- Contact information of IMLS staff





One-on-One Counseling

- Short sessions with our program officers
- Request a session through any of the program landing pages at www.imls.gov/grants





Conclusion



Reminders

- Review www.imls.gov/grants for details on specific grant programs
- Register with SAM.gov, then Grants.gov, as soon as possible
- All applications are due by 11:59 pm U.S. Eastern Time on November 13th, 2026

Thank you and good luck!



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