



FIELD REVIEWER HANDBOOK

IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum and Library Service

OFFICES OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES
FISCAL YEAR 2020

For additional information, contact:

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WELCOME!

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a peer reviewer for the IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum and Library Service Program. We hope you will find this a rewarding experience and will draw satisfaction identifying projects that will to support the role of museums and libraries in responding to the coronavirus pandemic. We assure you that your contribution of time and expertise will be invaluable to IMLS and to the applicants who will receive your comments.

In this handbook, you will find the information you need to carry out field review, including information about the program, step-by-step instructions for using eGMS Reach, and *four appendices with important reference material*.

If you have any questions about this material or the processes described, please do not hesitate to contact your panel chair at any time.

Once again, thank you for the service you are about to render to museums, libraries, and communities throughout the nation.

IMLS Offices of Museum and Libraries Services Staff

FIELD REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum and Library Service Program

Overview

The goal of the IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum and Library Service (CAG-NANH) program is to assist Indian Tribes and organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians in responding to the coronavirus pandemic in ways that meet the immediate and future COVID-19 needs of the Native American and Native Hawaiian communities they serve.

Distinguishing features of successful CAG-NANH projects are:

- Impact: The project addresses an identified need or challenge facing the community.
- Design: The work plan consists of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge identified in the application.
- Demonstrable Results: The project generates measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

Project Categories

There are no defined project categories within the CAG-NANH grant program. Applicants were encouraged to apply for support of projects including, but not limited to, the following to address problems created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency:

- Providing technical support services and staff salaries related to enhancing staff skills and digital literacy, or retraining staff to improve access to and use of digital learning resources
- Creating guidelines, procedures, and/or innovative adaptations relating to reopening closed facilities
- Building on the role of museums, cultural centers, and libraries as trusted spaces to strengthen community connections and healing through exhibitions, programs, and events
- Implementing digital services that feature activities dedicated to the establishment or improvement of an infrastructure, platform, or technology that will serve a user community
- Designing and delivering formal and informal digital learning resources to support individual and community response and recovery efforts
- Creating, preserving, or delivering digital content such as oral histories and language preservation that improves or expands access to materials and collections during and after the pandemic
- Providing tools and technologies that provide for the protection of community assets and enable people of all backgrounds and abilities to discover and use museum, library, and tribal collections and resources
- Providing tools and technologies such as hotspots in museums, cultural centers, and libraries that can help tribal communities have greater access to information
- Advancing efforts to create shared services that enhance access, optimize adoption and use, and sustain the management of digital assets

- Leveraging new digital learning resources and new media communications tools to foster audience engagement, learning, and conversation within broader social networks
- Leading multi-stakeholder collaborations and partnerships that leverage assets to support response and recovery efforts

Funding Amounts

IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museums and Libraries requests for IMLS funds may range from \$10,000 to \$150,000, including both direct and indirect costs. Cost sharing is not required for the CAG-NANH grant program and will **not** be considered in the evaluation.

Confidentiality

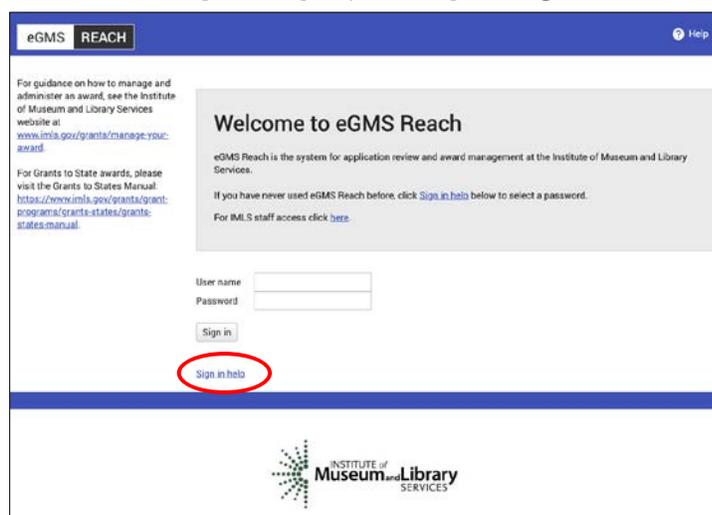
The information contained in grant applications is strictly confidential. Do not discuss or reveal names, institutions' project activities, or any other information contained in the applications.

Using eGMS Reach: Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sign in to eGMS Reach and create a password.

An account has been established for you in eGMS Reach. In a separate email with the subject line "eGMS Reach Account Information," you will receive your access credentials, including a username. If you do not receive such an email, please check your junk folder. If you still do not see the email, contact imls-librarygrants@imls.gov

Once you have the email, please visit <https://grants.imls.gov/Reach/> and follow the instructions to create a password. If you are entering the system for the first time, click the **Sign in help** button to create a password. If you are a previous IMLS grantee or reviewer, you may already have an eGMS Reach account and username. If you need to reset your password, you will have the option to do so on the sign in page by clicking the **Sign in help** button.



eGMS REACH Help

For guidance on how to manage and administer an award, see the Institute of Museum and Library Services website at www.imls.gov/grants/manage-your-award.

For Grants to State awards, please visit the Grants to States Manual <https://www.imls.gov/grants/grant-programs/grants-states/grants-states-manual>.

Welcome to eGMS Reach

eGMS Reach is the system for application review and award management at the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

If you have never used eGMS Reach before click [Sign in help](#) below to select a password.

For IMLS staff access click [here](#).

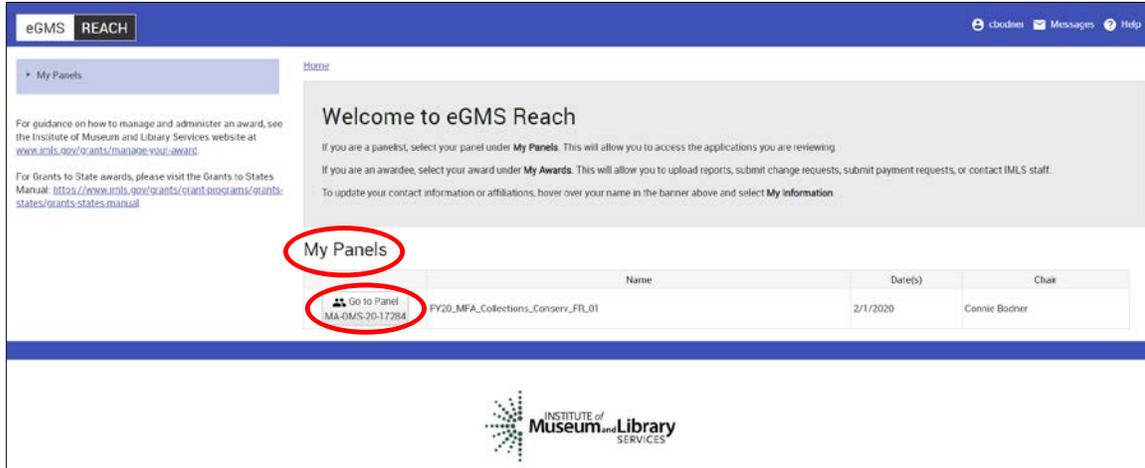
User name

Password

INSTITUTE of
Museum and Library
SERVICES

2. *Verify access and confirm you have no conflicts of interest.*

Once you have signed in successfully, go to **My Panels** and click on the **Go to Panel** button to see Panel Files and Applications assigned to you and to confirm you have no conflicts of interest.



Panel Files include:

- Field Reviewer Instructions: IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museums and Libraries (this document)
- FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity (guidelines for applicants)

IMPORTANT: Before proceeding to the Applications Tab, you must affirm that you have reviewed and approved the conflict of interest statement located under your Personal Files and as Appendix C in this document. Click on the paper icon to review Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest. Then click on the pen icon to affirm that you have reviewed this file and approved its contents.



To electronically sign the file, check the box and click **Save Changes**.



You may wish to prepare your comments in a separate document for later copying and pasting into the eGMS Reach evaluation form to ensure that none of your work can be lost due to a technical problem.

When writing your grades and comments ...

- Use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- Judge the application on its own merits, and do not base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- Make sure your comments justify the scores you provide. A highly complementary comment does not remove the sting of a low score, and a negative comment does not even out a high one. Comments and scores must complement each other and make sense as a whole.

Effective comments...	Poor comments...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are presented in a constructive manner. ▪ are both substantive and easy to read and understand. ▪ reflect the resources of the institution. ▪ are specific to the individual application. ▪ reflect the numeric score assigned. ▪ highlight the application’s strengths and identify areas for improvement. ▪ are directed to applicants—not IMLS or panel reviewers—for their use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ simply summarize or paraphrase the applicant’s own words. ▪ make derogatory remarks. ▪ penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money. ▪ offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information. ▪ make vague or overly general statements. ▪ question an applicant’s honesty or integrity.

Below are some examples of **effective** field reviewer comments:

Project Justification	
<p>“You clearly identify the COVID-19 needs of your community that this project addresses. The project partners add needed expertise and have been involved in the development of the project. Your intended results are well reasoned, well formulated, achievable, and will go a long way toward addressing the identified need.”</p>	<p><i>Comment is substantive, addresses the review criteria, and employs a positive tone.</i></p>
<p>“You make a strong case for adapting your programs and services due to the challenges resulting from the closing of your facility. However, I believe that the problem you identify is one based more on the needs of the library itself and does not fully address a response to the problems of your community or target audience created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 health emergency.”</p>	<p><i>Comment is thoughtful yet points out the lack of a clear connection to the overall goals of the program.</i></p>

Project Work Plan	
<p>“Your work plan is clear and outlines specific activities necessary for achieving your goals. Your consultants are well qualified to assist the project team with the implementation of project activities. I like the clearly described points at which you track the progress of your project and allow for course corrections, especially given the challenges of an ongoing pandemic.</p> <p>“You might explore more concrete ways to ensure that the digital resources you create are discoverable and fully accessible for the audiences you wish to reach.”</p>	<p><i>Comment provides a constructive assessment of the application and suggestions likely to benefit the applicant.</i></p>
Project Results	
<p>“Your evaluation plan is very thorough and well thought out. The resources resulting from this project could be invaluable to library field and, as you note, could be easily adapted for use by other kinds of organizations. I would have liked to see more robust plans for sharing your work.”</p>	<p><i>Comment addresses questions from the review criteria.</i></p>

In contrast, below are some examples of **poor** field reviewer comments:

Project Justification	
<p>“The cultural center plans to organize an exhibition on the impact of the pandemic on the community. They will partner with the local hospital, school district, and other nonprofit organizations.”</p>	<p><i>Comment paraphrases the applicant’s own words.</i></p>
Project Work Plan	
<p>“The work plan would be improved by adding to the list of key project personnel.”</p>	<p><i>Comment is very brief and has little value or direction for the applicant.</i></p>
Project Results	
<p>“The design of this project is laughable and will not benefit the community in any way. The staff is woefully unprepared and will fail in the execution of this project. Targeting federal funds to this organization is a mistake.”</p>	<p><i>Comment is derogatory and does not provide useful feedback.</i></p>
<p>“Strong results with very sustainable benefits.”</p>	<p><i>Comment is very brief and has little worth or value to the applicant.</i></p>

The chart below summarizes some of the anticipated questions that may arise from CAG-NANH field reviewers:

Should I consider ...?	Yes	No
Whether a project meets COVID-19 related needs of the community/target audience	X	
Whether the project is well planned, and the organization has the appropriate resources to complete the project	X	
Whether the applicant has included the information necessary for an adequate evaluation of its merits	X	
The project timeline will allow for measurable results	X	
The size or age of the organization		X
An institution's indirect cost rate		X
Whether cost share is included in the budget		X

5. *Assign your scores.*

Assign a grade to each of the three sections of the application Narrative: **Project Justification**, **Project Work Plan**, and **Project Results**. Use a scale of 1 to 7, as described below. Use only whole numbers; do not use fractions, ranges, decimals, or zeroes.

SCORE DEFINITIONS	
7 – Exceptional	The applicant's response is exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.
6 – Excellent	The applicant's response is very strong with no more than one minor weakness in its support of the proposed project
5 – Very Good	The applicant's response is strong with only a few minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.
4 – Good	The applicant's response is adequate but with numerous minor weaknesses in its support for the proposed project.
3 – Some Merit	The applicant's response may have some strengths but has at least one moderate weakness in its support for the proposed project.
2 – Poor	The applicant's response is deficient and has at least one major weakness in its support of the proposed project.
1 – Inadequate/Insufficient	The applicant's response is either inadequate or insufficient to evaluate fully and/or has numerous major weaknesses in its support of the proposed project.
<i>Minor</i>	<i>An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project</i>
<i>Moderate</i>	<i>A weakness that lessens the impact of the project</i>
<i>Major</i>	<i>A weakness that severely limits the impact of the project</i>

6. Review your work.

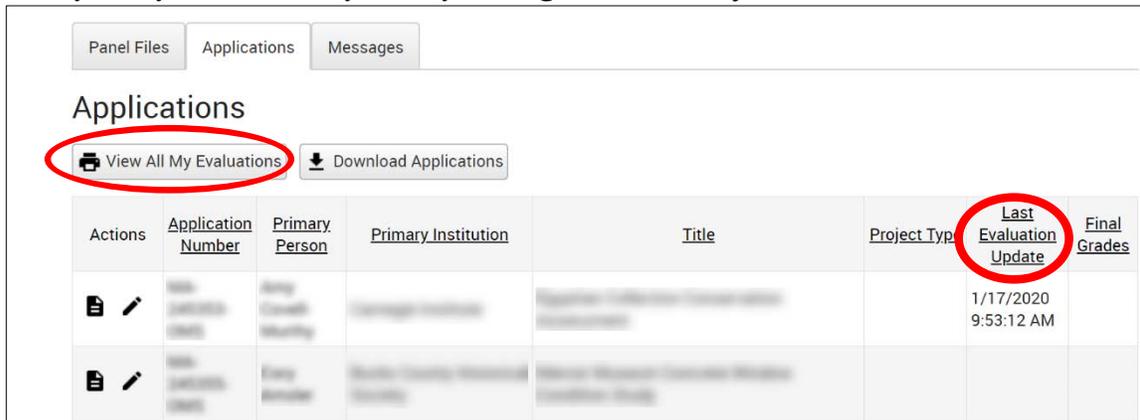
Review your draft comments and preliminary scores. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to reflect your written evaluation more accurately. Scores should support comments, and comments should justify scores.

You may enter your comments directly into the form or copy and paste them from a document you may have created. If you copy and paste your comments from another document, make sure to use plain text to avoid including any imbedded code. Click on the **Paste Plain Text icon** to create a Paste Plain Text box. Enter your comments, and then click **Paste**.

Choose a score for the section and move to the next one until you have completed all three sections and entered your overall comments. The evaluation form is built to autosave every five minutes. However, it is wise to click the **SAVE** button at the bottom of the form frequently.

You may return to the evaluation form as frequently as you wish until the review deadline. You can keep track of your progress by checking the “Last Evaluation Update” column on the Applications Tab.

You may view your work at any time by clicking the **View All My Evaluations** button.



Applications							
Panel Files		Applications		Messages			
View All My Evaluations Download Applications							
Actions	Application Number	Primary Person	Primary Institution	Title	Project Type	Last Evaluation Update	Final Grades
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REMINDER: Your reviews must be completed and entered into eGMS Reach by Monday, **July 27, 2020, Noon Eastern Time.**

7. Manage your copies.

Keep your applications and copies of your review sheets until **August 31, 2020**, in case there are questions from IMLS staff. Continue to maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review by keeping electronic and paper copies in a secure place. After August 31, 2020, destroy the applications and all review sheets, notes, and note templates.

APPENDIX A: APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The mission of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. The success of IMLS grant programs depends upon the quality of its peer review process, through which hundreds of reviewers consider thousands of eligible applications fairly, candidly, and impartially in order to make recommendations for funding each year. Below is a summary of the process from application submission through award announcements.

1. Organizations submit their applications electronically using [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), the central portal of the United States government for receipt of electronic applications.
2. IMLS receives the applications, and staff members check them for organizational eligibility and application completeness.
3. IMLS staff members identify a pool of available peer reviewers with appropriate expertise. Peer review takes place in one or two tiers, depending on the grant program: field review, panel review, or both. Every complete application submitted by an eligible organization is reviewed.
4. For the applications ranked most highly by peer reviewers, IMLS staff members carefully assess the budgets and past organizational performance.
5. IMLS staff members provide a list of applications recommended for funding to the IMLS Director.
6. The IMLS Director makes all final funding decisions.
7. IMLS notifies all applicants whether or not they have received an award. With their notifications, all applicants receive anonymous copies of the field and/or panel reviews. IMLS also sends notification of the awards to each participating reviewer.

APPENDIX B: PROTECTING SENSITIVE DATA AT IMLS

IMLS is committed to protecting your private, sensitive information and employs the following physical and technical safeguards when collecting museum program reviewer and panelist information:

1. **Email Security.** IMLS email is hosted on a cloud computing infrastructure which has been reviewed and approved as meeting the security requirements of the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP). FedRAMP is a government-wide standardized program for security assessment, authorization, and monitoring of cloud products and services. FedRAMP requirements are based on (and surpass) the Security and Privacy Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. FedRAMP's additional security controls address the unique elements of cloud computing to ensure all federal data is secure in cloud environments.
2. **Secure File Transmission.** IMLS Secure File Upload uses Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS), a transmission protocol that verifies the identity of a website or web service for a connecting client, and encrypts nearly all information sent between the website or service and the user. HTTPS is designed to prevent this information from being read or changed while in transit. HTTPS is a combination of HTTP and Transport Layer Security (TLS). TLS is a network protocol that establishes an encrypted connection to an authenticated peer over an untrusted network.
3. **Secure File Storage.** IMLS will only store secure files and any related passwords as long as necessary to complete the relevant transaction or process. A physical copy of personally identifiable information (PII) may be printed at IMLS for business use, after which the copy is secured in a locked location and destroyed after the business use ceases.
4. **Access Controls.** IMLS employs access controls to restrict access to sensitive information that is stored electronically. Access to IMLS files is restricted to authorized IMLS staff, and sensitive data is stored in folders that can only be accessed by a restricted set of authorized users. Files containing sensitive information are password-protected, providing an additional layer of security.
5. **Records Policies.** IMLS financial transaction records are subject to the agency's record retention policy and disposed of in accordance with the General Services Administration's General Records Schedule.

APPENDIX C: COMPLYING WITH ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS AND AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As a reviewer for IMLS, you perform a vital role in ensuring the integrity of the IMLS's peer review process and must carry out your duties in accordance with government ethics rules. Before you evaluate applications, we ask that you review the following *General Principles of Ethical Conduct* and *Summary of the Conflict of Interest Laws*. You will be asked to certify compliance with the IMLS Reviewer Conflict of Interest Statement and Certification. IMLS allocates up to one hour of your reviewer time for you to consider these materials.

If, at any time in the course of performing your duties at IMLS, you believe you may have a conflict of interest, please contact the IMLS program officer coordinating your review process. Other questions about the ethics rules and responsibilities may be directed to IMLS's Designated Agency Ethics Official at ethics@imls.gov; (202) 653-4787; 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20024-2135.

General Principles of Ethical Conduct

1. Public service is a public trust, requiring you to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.
2. You shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
3. You shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
4. You shall not, except pursuant to such reasonable exceptions as are provided by regulation, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by IMLS, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the your duties.
5. You shall put forth honest effort in the performance of your duties.
6. You shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
7. You shall not use public office for private gain.
8. You shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
9. You shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
10. You shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
11. You shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
12. You shall satisfy in good faith your obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those – such as Federal, State, or local taxes – that are imposed by law.
13. You shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.
14. You shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that you are violating the law or the ethical standards.

Summary of Conflict of Interest Laws

18 U.S.C. § 201 – Prohibits you from acceptance of bribes or gratuities to influence Government actions.

18 U.S.C. § 203 – Prohibits you from accepting compensation for representational activities involving certain matters in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest.

18 U.S.C. § 205 – Prohibits you from certain involvement in claims against the United States or representing another before the Government in matters in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest.

18 U.S.C. § 207 – Imposes certain restrictions on you related to your activities after Government service.

18 U.S.C. § 208 – Prohibits you from participating in certain Government matters affecting your own financial interests or the interests of your spouse, minor child, general partner, or organization in which you are serving as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee.

18 U.S.C. § 209 – Prohibits you from being paid by someone other than the United States for doing their official Government duties.

Reviewer Conflict of Interest Statement

As a reviewer or panelist for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), you may receive a grant application for review that could present a conflict of interest. Such a conflict could arise if you are involved with the applicant institution, or in the project described in the application, as a paid consultant or through other financial involvement. The same restrictions apply if your spouse or minor child is involved with the applicant institution or if the application is presented on behalf of an institution with which you, your spouse or minor child is negotiating for future employment.

A present financial interest is not the only basis for conflict of interest. Through prior association as an employee or officer, you may have gained knowledge of the applicant that would preclude objective review of its application. Past employment (generally more than five years) does not by itself disqualify a reviewer so long as the circumstances of your association permit you to perform an objective review of the application. If you believe you may have a conflict of interest with any application assigned to you for review, please notify us immediately.

You may still serve as a reviewer even if your institution is an applicant in this grant cycle or you were involved in an application submitted in this grant cycle, as long as you do not review any application submitted by your own institution or any application in which you were involved.

However, if you believe that these or any other existing circumstances may compromise your objectivity as a reviewer, please notify us immediately.

If an application presents no conflict of interest at the time you review it, a conflict of interest may still develop later on. Once you have reviewed an application, you should never represent the applicant in dealings with IMLS or another Federal agency concerning the application, or any grant that may result from it.

It is not appropriate, for your purposes or for the purposes of the institutions or organizations you represent, for you to make specific use of confidential information derived from individual



applications that you read while you were serving as an IMLS reviewer. In addition, pending applications are confidential. Accordingly, you must obtain approval from IMLS before sharing any proposal information with anyone, whether for the purpose of obtaining expert advice on technical aspects of an application or for any reason.

If you have any questions regarding conflict of interest, either in relation to a specific application or in general, please contact the IMLS program officer who is coordinating the review process.

Certification

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the ethics training materials and the Conflict of Interest Statement above. To the best of my knowledge, I have no conflict of interest that would preclude my service to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Name (Printed)

Signature

Date

Note: Once you have reviewed this document, return to eGMS Reach to affirm that you have approved its contents.

APPENDIX D: FIELD REVIEW CRITERIA FOR IMLS CARES ACT GRANTS FOR Native American/Native Hawaiian MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICE

Project Justification

- Is the COVID-19-related need, problem, or challenge to be addressed clearly identified and supported by relevant evidence?
- Are the stakeholders and/or people who will benefit from the project clearly identified?

Project Work Plan

- Are the proposed activities clearly explained?
- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?
- Is the schedule of work realistic and achievable?
- Is a clear methodology described for tracking the project's progress and adjusting course when necessary?

Project Results

- Are the project's intended results clearly articulated and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project?
- Are the anticipated benefits to the target audience clearly explained and linked to the impact of the COVID-19 health emergency?
- Is the plan for collecting and reporting data well designed and feasible?
- Will the tangible products be useful?
- Is there a reasonable and practical plan for sustaining the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of this award?