Open Government Plan

April 2010

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Open Government Directive: Overview

In January 2009, as one of his first actions after taking office, President Obama issued a memorandum stating the Administration's commitment to "creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government." The key principles of open government are transparency, public participation, and collaboration:

- **Transparency** promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing.
- **Participation** allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that their government can make policies with the benefit of information that is widely dispersed in society.
- **Collaboration** improves the effectiveness of Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions.

On December 8, 2009, Peter R. Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), issued a memorandum to the heads of executive departments and agencies directing them to take the following steps toward the goal of creating a more open government:

1. Publish Government information online;

2. Improve the quality of Government information;

3. Create and Institutionalize a culture of open government; and

4. Create an enabling policy framework for open government.

To create and institutionalize a culture of open government (item 3 above), the memorandum states that "within 120 days [April 7, 2010] each agency shall develop an Open Government Plan that describes how the agency will improve transparency and integrate public participation and collaboration into its activities."

IMLS embraced this new directive as an opportunity to build upon its solid record of openness and consultation. Through its grantmaking, convenings, data collection, research and policy work, IMLS has provided resources and inspiration to support the development and use of new technologies to expand access to and use of education and information services in communities across the country and around the globe.

IMLS has continually sought to be a leader in developing participatory processes to engage the public in the development of core agency functions. IMLS was the first federal cultural agency to provide a publically accessible searchable grants database (2002).

Shortly after release of the President's January 2009 memorandum, IMLS established a cross-agency working group, open to all staff to participate. The working group identified opportunities for increased agency transparency and public participation, particularly in introducing use of Web 2.0 to achieve the agency's mission.

The working group made recommendations for a social media policy and the recommendations were reviewed by agency managers. The President's memo and agency response were topics of discussion at the October 2009 public meeting of the agency's Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed policy advisory body, the National Museum and Library Services Board. The policy was adopted and signed by the Institute's director on December 2, 2009.

Following release of the December 8, 2009 Open Government Directive, all agency managers and the executive team met to discuss and plan for the agency response to the directive. The agency promotes a culture of openness through encouraging participation in open government workshops, listservs and through discussions and action plans in every agency department.

IMLS published its entire public library data and state library survey data on data.gov well in advance of the January 22, 2010 deadline and met the February 6, 2010 deadline for launching an Open Government Web page (www.imls.gov/open).

The agency is reviewing its strategic plan to assure continued emphasis on transparency, participation and collaboration and using Web 2.0 technologies to encourage broad participation in development of the plan.

Agency Overview

Mission: Connecting People to Information and Ideas

In the global knowledge economy, lifelong learning is fundamental to our nation's success. For Americans to remain competitive we must recognize that formal schooling is only one part of the learning continuum. Thanks to a combination of public and private investment, libraries and museums in the United States constitute an expansive network of public and nonprofit institutions dedicated to fulfilling the democratic promise of a free flow of information and ideas for the public good. The extraordinary variety of libraries and museums is one of the hallmarks of American education and workforce development. These institutions support learning in school, out of school, and from infancy to old age.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, an independent federal agency, helps create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to pursue four performance goals:

- To sustain heritage, culture and knowledge;
- To enhance learning and innovation;
- To build professional capacity of the library and museum workforce; and
- To attain excellence in federal management, operations and service.

The Institute supports the full range of museums, including zoos, art, history, science and technology, children's, and natural history museums; historic houses, nature centers, and botanical gardens; and all types of libraries, including public, school, academic, research, and archival. Its programs of research, evaluation, policy analysis, grant making, and partnerships help make it possible for libraries and museums to be leaders in their communities.

Museums and libraries make knowledge available to millions at little or no cost. To do this, they must be supported by a strong and resilient network of public, private, and earned-revenue sources. As public and nonprofit institutions, libraries and museums must meet a very high threshold of mission accountability and must demonstrate that they use resources wisely for the public good.

As stewards of cultural heritage, museums and libraries have traditionally helped us to experience, explore, discover, and make sense of the world. Today, these institutions use the tools of the 21st century—web technologies, broadband, digitization, and social networking—to connect people to information and ideas like never before. IMLS helps libraries and museum innovate with new technology; create strong partnerships with community organizations, business, and educators; and use the latest research about learning. With strong leadership libraries and museums can offer unprecedented value to the public, fueling knowledge sharing and energizing our economy, creativity, and competitiveness.

Respected in their communities, libraries and museums hold the public trust and play an important role in our democracy by helping to create an informed citizenry. Our role at the Institute is to provide libraries, museums, and policymakers with the resources they need—leadership, data, policy analysis, and funding—to ensure that the American ideal of open access to information and ideas flourishes.

In FY 2009, IMLS made 707 grants totaling over $86,000,000 to eligible institutions through its' discretionary programs and congressionally directed grants. An additional 63 grants, totaling $171,500,000 were awarded through the Agency's formula-based Grants to States program. Through grants and information resources, IMLS reaches thousands of communities each year. IMLS encourages accountability, planning and evaluation and reaches institutions, small and large, with a range of opportunities for support. The scope of funding ranges from providing opportunities for technical assistance for small institutions to establishing national models and strengthening state networks. Funding from IMLS helps museums and libraries operate effectively and give value to their communities. It also helps spur innovative approaches through supporting creative community partnerships, high tech demonstration projects, and research that addresses education, environmental, information and economic challenges.

Organizational Structure

IMLS, was established in 1996, bringing together federal library programs that were first established in 1956 and federal museum programs that were initiated in 1976. The agency supports library and museum service in the United States through a combination of a state formula grants for libraries and peer-reviewed competitive discretionary grants, cooperative agreements, and partnerships that support both libraries and museums. The agency also provides research, analysis, and the collection of reliable, current data to inform professional practice and public policy. IMLS engages in a wide range of policy areas ranging from infrastructure issues such as technology use and adoption to education, workforce, early learning, STEM, health information and civic engagement. The agency has a particular interest in the development of sound information policy particularly in the areas of intellectual property, copyright, and privacy as they relate to scholarship, artistic expression, and the free flow of information and ideas for the public good.

The Institute is led by a director who alternates between an individual with expertise with libraries and an individual with expertise in museums. The director is a presidential appointee confirmed by the Senate and advised by the National Museum and Library Services Board (NMLSB). The organization of the Institute consists of offices for Museum Services, Library Services, Administration, Budget and Finance, Information Resource and Technology Management, Policy, Planning, Research, and Communications, General Counsel, and Strategic Partnerships. See Staff Directory and Organizational Chart.

The NMLSB is a twenty-three-member advisory body that includes the Director of the Institute, the Deputy Director for Libraries, the Deputy Director for Museums, and twenty presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed individuals who have demonstrated expertise in, or commitment to, library or museum services. Informed by its broad collective knowledge and experience, the NMLSB advises the IMLS Director on general policy and practices. The Board also provides critical input on selections for the National Medals for Museum and Library Service. See National Museum and Library Services Board.

Strengthening Open Government at IMLS

Strategic Plan and Statutory Framework

In order to fully achieve performance improvements from open government efforts and maintain sustained commitment to increasing transparency, participation and collaboration, open government objectives IMLS is integrating these concepts into its strategic plan and aligning with performance goals.

The Museum and Library Services Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 9101 *et seq.*, sets a strong foundation for open government work. It requires the Institute to work in collaboration with stakeholder organizations, in particular, state library administrative agencies, state, regional and national library and museum organizations and other relevant agencies and organizations. 20 U.S.C. Section 9108.

It also calls on the IMLS director to ensure coordination of the policies and activities of the Institute with the policies and activities of other agencies and offices of the Federal Government having interest in and responsibilities for the improvement of museums and libraries and information services. 20 U.S.C. Section 9103.

And further the agency is authorized to seek public/private partnerships to further its mission, 20 U.S.C. Section 9106.

The statute also provides that the Institute encourage collaborations at the community level particularly among libraries and museums. 20 U.S.C. Section 9162.

The agency has developed many standard practices that facilitate public participation in grant program, data collection and research activities through the use of peer review, public participation in working groups such as the Library Statistics Working group, and regular convenings with grantees and other library and museum practitioners.

IMLS Open Government Working Group

As described below, this plan provides an opportunity to review current practice and focus on using new technology and new administrative policies to expand opportunities for greater transparency, participation and collaboration.

The IMLS has created an IMLS Open Government Directive Working Group charged with implementing the various activities in the directive. The group consists of:

- The Deputy Director for Policy, Planning, Research and Communications
- The Chief Information Officer
- The Associate Deputy for Research and Statistics
- The Deputy Director for Museums
- The Deputy Director for Libraries
- The Chief Financial Officer
- The General Counsel

- Records Management Officer
- The Director of Strategic Partnerships
- The Grants Administration Officer

Key Stakeholders

IMLS has identified key stakeholders and implemented a communications plan to keep them informed about funding opportunities available through IMLS, awards and grants, results of studies, data collection activities, reports and workshops supported by IMLS, results of meetings and evaluation reports, and outcomes of IMLS-supported activities that can build the capacity of libraries and museums to advance education, workforce development, health and full participation in American society.

The IMLS stakeholders consist of:

- The American public;
- Museum and library workforce (includes all types of museums, art to zoo, and all types of libraries, public, school, research and archives);
- Community based organization partners (includes schools, faith-based organizations, other cultural institutions, etc.);
- Colleges and universities;
- Researchers;
- Elected officials and public employees at the national, state and local level;
- Policymakers and thought leaders in education, workforce development, environment, health and government services;
- Other federal agencies;
- Corporate and non-profit foundations;
- The news media as conduits to the public.

Within these groups, IMLS seeks to maintain especially strong relationships with:

- Grant applicants and grantees
- Peer reviewers
- Chief Officers of State Library Agencies
- Federal and private partners
- Non-governmental organization partners
- National Museum and Library Services Board
- Congressional committees with responsibility for IMLS budget and authorization
- Museum and library service organizations
- Members of research and special initiative task forces
- Library Statistics Working Group and State Library data coordinators
- IMLS Staff

Transparency

> "*Government should be transparent*. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing. Information maintained by the Federal Government is a national asset. My Administration will take appropriate action, consistent with law and policy, to disclose information rapidly in forms that the public can readily find and use. Executive departments and agencies should harness new technologies to put information about their operations and decisions online and readily available to the public. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public feedback to identify information of greatest use to the public."
>
> —President Barrack Obama, Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, January 2009

Complying with Existing Transparency Initiatives

USASpending.gov
The Institute reports Federal Assistance (Grants) and Contractual data on a monthly basis, via the Data Submission and Validation Tool (DSVT), to USAspending.gov. The Federal Assistance data consists of all mandatory and discretionary grants, as well as cooperative agreements. The Contractual data consists of all federally awarded contracts greater than $3,000 and is retrieved from the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS).

The grant data is extracted from the Agency's grant reporting system and validated using the current OMB FFATA validation edit checks, issued under M-09-19, Guidance on Data Submission under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA). This data is reviewed internally for accuracy and completeness prior to uploading in the DSVT. The DSVT ensures all edit checks have passed before uploading the Agency's data to Usaspending.gov. The Agency reviews the accuracy of the data after it has been uploaded to Usaspending.gov and provides feedback to the Usaspending.gov support group if incorrect information is identified. This process is repeated on a monthly basis.

ITDashboard.gov
IMLS follows the law in the Federal Records Act, Title 44, Chapter 31, Records Management by Federal Agencies, to systematically and strategically manage its documentation to ensure that its institutional records are timely, accurate, complete, cost-effective, accessible and useable.

Records Management
IMLS' agency head and senior staff understand its records and information are valuable and are accountable for effective management of these assets through established Records Management Program (RMP) goals (FY 2010 – 2012) modeled after NARA's three high level goals for Federal agencies. IMLS' Records Management Program

includes a Records Officer, Records Management Liaison, and a Task Force of 22 staff assigned as Records Custodians to their office units.

IMLS works closely with the Appraisal Archivist for guidance in development of records schedules and appraisals, to provide records management training and workshops, and program evaluation. In June of 2009 an agency-wide survey and inventory were completed. In January 2010, IMLS held a NARA Appraisal Meeting to review schedules created for agency-wide Electronic Information Systems (EIS). The Agency's primary systems of records are identified at [link to FOIAPage/Systems of Records Notice.]

IMLS follows NARA guidance for electronic records including databases, Web 2.0 technology including cloud computing, e-mail and document development, webpage content. The Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Office of Policy, Planning Research and Communication responsible to develop and use the new technology effectively and efficiently.

FOIA

The IMLS is committed to providing prompt responses to FOIA requests in accordance with the Open Government Directive. A description of the FOIA process at IMLS can be found at www.imls.gov/about/foia.shtm. The agency has no backlog nor any pending administrative appeals.

IMLS continually seeks to strengthen its FOIA process, and in 2009 assessed its capacity to analyze, coordinate, and respond to FOIA requests in a timely manner. .

In addition to this assessment,, the Institute's Chief FOIA Officer evaluated the use of the Institute's IT resources to maximize the efficiency of the agency's FOIA program. The professional working relationship between the agency's IT support staff and Key FOIA principals add to the effectiveness of the agency's electronic FOIA processes.

Consistent with Department of Justice requirements, the Institute's FOIA Reading Room was updated in Fiscal Year 2009. IMLS posts on its website all releasable agency information that is identified to have wide-public applicability. Recently, as a result of the President's FOIA Memorandum, the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines, and the Open Government Directive, the agency's Chief FOIA Officer, key FOIA principals and Senior Agency Management Officials met to discuss the proactive release of various other designated agency documents. Some specific examples of items already released by the agency pursuant to the Open Government Act can be found on the agency website at www.imls.gov/open. In addition, in accordance with the FOIA, Privacy Act, and the Institute's current regulations, the agency's FOIA Officers are continuing to review other records, submitted by agency program managers and staff, to determine the appropriateness of proactive release.

Congressional Inquiries

The Office of Policy, Planning, Research and Communications (OPPRC) is responsible for coordinating with program areas to ensure responses to congressional inquiries that accurately represent the agency views. The Office also coordinates with the Office of General Counsel on relevant legislative matters.

The OPPRC is responsible for consultation with the Office of Management and Budget during the development of the agency's proposed budget and legislative program. More information can be found at www.imls.gov/about/legislation.shtm.

Providing Online Resources to Enhance Transparency of Programs and Processes

The Institute's website, www.imls.gov, is a one-stop hub for all who are interested in IMLS.

- Database of Grant Funding Since 2002, IMLS has provided a searchable database of all IMLS grants. Records include description of funded projects, institution name and location, grant amount and grant program information.

- Staff Directory The staff directory includes biographies of agency leadership and board, as well as e-mail addresses for all employees.

- Information for Grant Applicants Applicants can find a wide range of resources including links to grant guidelines and forms, samples of successful applications, grant decision making processes, evaluation training tutorial, and links to funded projects.

- Information for Grant Reviewers Nearly 600 public and private citizens are engaged each year in the review of grant proposals. Web resources help to recruit and support peer reviewers who are selected to provide broad geographic diversity as well as a diverse range of expertise in library and museum management, education, technology, community service and research.

- Information for Grant Recipients The website is a source of information about grant regulations, assurances, and reporting and dissemination requirements. The web site provides 24/7 support to grantees and helps monitor all post award activities.

- Webcasts and Podcasts The multimedia center on IMLS website provide links to video of agency conferences and briefings. Podcasts featuring innovative ideas and people are also featured.

- Monthly e-newsletter Primary Source, the agency's monthly newsletter, has been published continuously since 2004. It provides feature stories, a message from the agency director, and information about agency activities and grant opportunities. The newsletter has 10,000 subscribers.

- Sharing Best Practices Each month IMLS features a profile of a funded project that is a model of innovation and effectiveness.

Adding Value and Make Data More Accessible

In FY 2009, disparate library-related data collection and policy analysis functions from the Department of Education and the National Commission on Library and Information Sciences IMLS were consolidated into IMLS. IMLS is making important contributions to the collection of sound and current data for policy analysis and is engaged in several high-profile research projects to analyze trends and share best practices. The integration of these activities into IMLS has allowed the agency to expand its work in the areas of research, statistics and policy analysis and has enabled us to take concrete action to make library data more useful. This year the public library and state library data was released more quickly than ever before. In addition, staff geocoded each library in the country and adding other geo-referenced data at the post-collection processing stage, such as: Census tract identifiers, county population, urban-rural locale codes, which make the national survey a more valuable resource for researchers and program planners. . Further, rather than releasing a series of charts with no comparisons year to year, staff reviewed data and provided insights into trends over time. One result of this work is a data note on Broadband and Public Libraries, which analyzed library computer connection speeds in rural, non-metro and metro areas.

IMLS has made the following datasets available on Data.gov:

Public Libraries Surveys (16 data files)
Fiscal Years 1992 - 2007
This dataset is a national census of public library systems. Its data elements cover library service measures such as the number of uses of electronic resources, the number of Internet terminals available to the general public, reference transactions, interlibrary loans, circulation, library visits, children's program attendance, and circulation of children's materials. It also includes information on collection sizes, staffing, operating revenue and expenditures. Selected data elements are aggregated and summarized at the state level.

State Library Agency Surveys (2 data files)
Fiscal Years 2006 - 2007
This dataset is a national census of state library agencies. A state library agency is the official agency of a state that is charged by state law with the extension and development of public library services throughout the state and that has adequate authority under state law to administer state plans in accordance with the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). Beyond these two roles, state library agencies vary greatly. This dataset provides information on the range of roles played by state library agencies and the various combinations of fiscal, human, and informational resources invested in such work.

Briefs and Reports

IMLS publishes policy reports and research briefs that add value and make data and best practice examples more useful to practitioners and policy making stakeholders. The following are some examples of recent reports:

Research

[Research Brief No. 1: Service Trends in U.S. Public Libraries, 1997-2007](#)
The first Research Brief identifies important changes public libraries have made to address patron needs in an increasingly Internet-centric environment and explores service differences in urban and rural communities.

[Research Brief No. 2: State Library Agency Service Trends: 1999–2008](#)
The second Research Brief gives an overview of the revenues, expenditures, and services provided by state library agencies (StLAs) during fiscal year (FY) 2008.

[Data Note No. 1: Libraries Use Broadband Internet Service to Serve High Need Communities](#)
The first Data Note to be released by IMLS presents recent statistics on broadband Internet access in U.S. public libraries. It discusses how libraries use technology and provide content to meet the needs of patrons in the digital age.

[A Catalyst for Change: LSTA Grants to States Program Activities and the Transformation of Library Services to the Public](#)
This report underscores the value of the LSTA Grants to States program in helping libraries embrace technology, establish new service models, and engage the public. It provides a snapshot of the program, for the period from 2003 through 2006.

[Exhibiting Public Value](#)
This study provides the first major review of museum public finance in the United States. It explores public support from federal, state, and local government sources, focusing particular attention on levels of financial support and types of delivery mechanisms for public funding.

[Heritage Health Index - Full Report](#)
Full Report of the Heritage Health Index (HHI), the first comprehensive survey ever conducted of the conditions and preservation needs of our nation's collections. Conducted by Heritage Preservation in partnership with IMLS, HHI found that immediate action is needed to prevent the loss of millions of irreplaceable artifacts.

[Museum Data Collection Report and Analysis](#)
Commissioned by IMLS to assess the status of data collection activities in the museum community, the Museum Data Collection Report reinforces recommendations made by a similar 1998 study, addressing the need for systematic data collection to inform public policy and museum management decision-making.

Initiatives: Connecting to Collections

Capitalize on Collections Care
A publication of Heritage Preservation in partnership with IMLS that outlines fund-raising fundamentals, strategies, and case studies to generate new contributions, increase support, and foster new audiences for collections care activities.

Connecting to Collections Overview Brochure
Provides an overview of *Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action,* a national initiative to raise public awareness of the importance of caring for our treasures, and to underscore the fact that these collections are essential to the American story.

Connecting to Collections Bookshelf User's Guide
This 44-page booklet is a guide to the IMLS Connecting to Collections Bookshelf, a core set of texts that are essential for the care of collections. Developed by Heritage Preservation, in consultation with the Getty Foundation, the guide contains an individual sheet on each text (containing bibliographical and other information), and FAQ's.

Connecting to the World's Collections: Making the Case for the Conservation and Preservation of our Cultural Heritage
Sixty cultural heritage leaders from thirty-two countries, including representatives from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, South America, Australia, Europe, and North America gathered in October 2009 in Salzburg, Austria, to develop a series of practical recommendations to ensure optimal collections conservation worldwide.

Initiatives: The Future of Museums and Libraries

The Future of Museums and Libraries: A Discussion Guide
The result of a two-day meeting at the National Academies of Science in which a diverse group of colleagues came together to share and debate, this guide is designed to provide a structure for future discussion among museum and library professionals, policy makers, funders, users, researchers, and partners.

Initiatives: Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills

Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills
This report outlines a vision for the role of libraries and museums in the national dialogue around learning and 21st century skills and includes case studies of innovative audience engagement and 21st century skills practices from across the country. See also the Self-Assessment Tools, available Online and in PDF format (363KB)

Initiatives: Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth

[Final Report of a Study of IMLS Youth Programs, 1998-2003](#)
This report shares the results of a year-long study of the impact of IMLS grants (1998-2003) though programs that served youth aged 9-19. Nearly 400 museum and library programs were surveyed about their goals, strategies, content, audience, and structure, as well as about their impact, effectiveness, and outcomes.

[Youth Practitioner's Guide](#)
Created for museum and library practitioners who are building, or wish to build, strong programs to reach and engage youth, this guide contains a variety of resources and references to critical works that have been gathered from the fields of youth and community development, education, and informal learning.

Programs

[Partnership for a Nation of Learners: Joining Forces, Creating Value](#)
This publication provides profiles and case studies funded by the Partnership for a Nation of Learners, a collaboration between IMLS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting that supported partnerships among museums, libraries, and public broadcasters, addressing critical community needs.

[Native American & Native Hawaiian Program Update](#)
This brief on IMLS's Native American and Native Hawaiian grant programs (published October 2009) provides an overview of program activities, application processes, examples of recently-funded projects, and tips on writing a successful proposal.

[Museum Grants for African American History and Culture Program Update](#)
This brief on the Museum Grant for African American History and Culture program (published July 2009) provides an overview of program activities, application processes, examples of recently-funded projects, and tips on writing a successful proposal.

Convenings

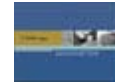[African American History & Culture in Museums: Strategic Crossroads and New Opportunities](#)
On July 16, 2004, IMLS convened a day-long forum of leaders in the African American museum community, as well as leaders in the museum community at large, to explore the evolving role of African American museums, their contributions, and their challenges. The report provides a synthesis of the July meeting.

[Charting the Landscape, Mapping New Paths: Museums, Libraries, and K-12 Learning](#)
On August 30-31, 2004 the Institute convened a conference and workshop examining the intersections of museums, libraries, and K-12 education. The resulting report captures the key issues that emerged at the workshop, highlights seminal project and partnership examples, and provides some common language around a vision for how museum/school/library collaborations can contribute to a learning society.

Guidance

[Designs for Change: Libraries and Productive Aging](#)
As the first of the baby boomers turn 60, public libraries are preparing to offer creative alternatives to retirement to a generation notorious for their idealism and activism. This report from the Americans for Libraries Council (ALC) and IMLS offers guidelines, demographics, and examples of model programs to public libraries interested in connecting these active older adults to new opportunities for learning, work, and community service.

[Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections](#)
Identifies principles of good practice and current standards in four areas: collections, digital objects, metadata, and digital projects. The Framework was developed with IMLS support and is maintained by the National Information Standards Organization.

[Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums](#)
Planning for results and measuring impact are key to public accountability. Two visionary leaders, Peggy Rudd, the State Librarian of Texas, and the late Steven Weil, noted museum legal scholar discuss what it means to make a difference.

Transparency and Agency Events

An important part of fulfilling the IMLS mission is to provide a national platform to share innovative thinking as well as practical advice. Through IMLS-sponsored forums and workshops, stakeholder communities meet to share lessons learned and plan for the future. IMLS has produced a series of webcasts and podcasts that make the content of these meetings accessible to a broad audience. The following are some examples:

Connecting to Collections

[Connecting to Collections: National Tour: Buffalo--Web cast](#)
The fourth stop on the *Connecting to Collections National Tour* was in Buffalo, NY for the "Stewardship of America's Legacy: Answering the Call to Action" forum. The full conference is available for online viewing.

[Connecting to Collections: National Tour: San Diego--Web cast](#)
The third stop on the *Connecting to Collections National Tour* was in San Diego for the "It's Alive! Petals to Primates: Preservation Challenges of Living Collections" forum. The full conference is available for online viewing.

[Connecting to Collections:National Tour: Denver--Web cast](#)
The second stop on the *Connecting to Collections National Tour* was in Denver for the "Collaboration in the Digital Age" forum. The full conference is available for online viewing.

[Connecting to Collections: National Tour: Atlanta--Web cast](#)
The first stop on the *Connecting to Collections National Tour* was in Atlanta for the "Preserving America's Diverse Heritage" forum. The full conference is available for online viewing.

WebWise

[WebWise 2010--Web cast](#)
The 2010 WebWise Conference on Libraries and Museums in the Digital World was held March 3-5 at the Hyatt Regency at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado. This year's conference was co-hosted by the University of Denver and the Denver Art Museum, and the theme was "Imagining the Digital Future."

[WebWise 2009--Web cast](#)
The 2009 WebWise Conference was held February 27-27, 2009, in Washington, D.C. The theme was "Digital Debates." Panelists and attendees discussed the complicated and sometimes problematic "Big Issues" faced by museums, libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions in terms of emerging technologies.

[WebWise 2008--Web cast](#)
The 2008 WebWise conference was co-hosted by the Wolfsonian-- Florida International University, and took place March 5-7, 2008, in Miami Beach, Florida. The theme for this year's conference was "WebWise 2.0: The Power of Community." The full conference is available for online viewing.

IMLS Future Actions

Identifying High Priority Datasets
In the coming months IMLS will inventory all its data sets, and establish protocols to engage the public in identifying high priority data sets and goals for publishing them. In addition IMLS is engaged in government wide discussions about establishing requirements for dissemination protocols for government funded research and will be acting accordingly to encourage grantees to make data appropriately accessible.

Launching New Content Management System for imls.gov
The IMLS is also planning to re-launch its website with a content management system that will make it possible for stakeholders to find and use web resources more effectively. With the content management system IMLS has developed "tagging protocols" so that it will be possible to use common keywords to search across IMLS grants, publications, data, tools and other resources. This will make it possible for the user to more easily aggregate and customize disparate information and ultimately provide greater value.

Museum Data Collection
While the government has collected data about libraries (public, state, academic and school) for decades, there is no systematic national data collection activity for museums. The IMLS is launching a museum data project so that practitioners and policy makers will gain a better understanding of the characteristics of US museums, their locations and capacity, to make it possible to better assess the impact of funding and research on practice. The *Museums Landscape Study* will collect existing administrative and commercial data resources to build a comprehensive list of museums in the United States. IMLS will then work with a contractor to consolidate museum data holdings, update missing fields, verify mailing and site address information for active institutions and identify active museum institutions that are not accounted for in the consolidated lists. The study will provide a universe of institutions, a basic building block for probability sampling and analysis in the field. IMLS is also exploring options for providing geo-referenced data in web readable format and will explore the feasibility of Web 2.0 and "crowd sourcing" tools for enumerating museums of various types across the country.

Interagency Working Group
IMLS, together with the National Endowment for the Arts, has established an informal interagency working group on cultural data. Many federal agencies offer grants to cultural agencies. These grants serve a wide range of federal purposes including strengthening communities by building the capacity of cultural organizations, advancing understandings in science, art and technology, American history, strengthening community technology networks, and supporting training museum and library workers and for K-12 teachers. Working together this group will help identify data that is being collected and consider how best to mine and add value to these data sets.

Participation

> "*Government should be participatory*. Public engagement enhances the Government's effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions. Knowledge is widely dispersed in society, and public officials benefit from having access to that dispersed knowledge. Executive departments and agencies should offer Americans increased opportunities to participate in policymaking and to provide their Government with the benefits of their collective expertise and information. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public input on how we can increase and improve opportunities for public participation in Government."
>
> —President Barrack Obama, Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, January 2009

IMLS has a long history of engaging public participation in grant making, research activities and policy making. With a small administrative staff, IMLS has developed significant skills in establishing multiple pathways to participation so that IMLS practice is constantly informed by and responsive to stakeholder needs.

Peer review

Participation and citizen engagement are at the core of IMLS operations. IMLS award decisions are informed by the merit-based reviews of over 600 (this is the number used earlier) subject matter experts each year. The IMLS staff recruits for reviewers through active participation in industry meetings and close monitoring of publications, journal articles, and increasingly blogs and other social media. IMLS provides a reviewer recruitment page on its website so that any individual can submit credentials for staff consideration. The page is also a source for resources and tools for reviewers with guidelines and tips to increase the consistency and quality of the process. In addition IMLS Program Officers hold webinars to provide additional support for grant reviewers. IMLS is committed to creating a reviewer pool that is diverse (gender, disabilities, ethnic, geographic, race, institution size, discipline, etc) so that a broad range of perspectives are considered in the grant review process.

Participation Opportunities for Eligible Applicants

IMLS also seeks to engage the broadest possible range of eligible applicants. In addition to the web resources listed in the transparency section, IMLS engages participation of potential grantees through moderated conference calls and webinars. Last year, IMLS hosted 31 calls and/or webinars that served more than 1,100 potential grantees and grant reviewers, encouraging dialogue to discuss application processes and identify and reduce barriers to applying for grants. IMLS also encourages participation through open town hall meetings and exhibit booths at a wide range of industry meetings, as well as a robust communications strategy including regular announcements in industry newsletters and publications, and outreach to Congress.

Public Participation in IMLS Research and Data Collection Activities

In accordance with the Museum and Library Services Act's emphasis on collaboration, IMLS has a standard practice of establishing systems to engage public participation in the administration of its data collection and research activities. For example, IMLS established the Library Statistics Working Group to review new data elements, identify methods for improving the usefulness of data, and contribute to the development of new library statistics products. Representatives on the working group include state librarians, state data coordinators, and representatives of the library and community development research community.

In addition, IMLS hosts an annual conference for state library data coordinators (SDC). The SDCs are responsible for coordinating statewide library data collection efforts, striving for 100 percent participation among libraries in the state and assuring accuracy of data submitted. The conference offers an opportunity for information sharing and a platform for development and review of data elements. IMLS also monitors an SDC listserv throughout the year to provide additional technical assistance.

Participation Opportunities for Grantees

IMLS engages its state-based formula grant partners in multiples ways. IMLS staff actively participate in quarterly meetings of the Chief State Library Officers (COSLA). IMLS engages COSLA members in the development of protocols for statewide planning, annual reporting and five-year evaluations. In addition IMLS engages COSLA in the development of agency-wide leadership initiatives and provide regular ongoing two-way communication.

In addition to participating in COSLA meetings, IMLS hosts an annual meeting for state employees who are responsible for federal grant administration. The purpose of the meeting is to share best practices and to provide training and resources to assist the states in the good stewardship of federal funds

For IMLS discretionary program grantees, IMLS hosts meetings and workshops so that grantees can share knowledge gained through their IMLS supported projects and to identify issues that can be addressed in future grant cycles. IMLS has regularly convened grantees in its African American History and Culture and 21st Century Museum Professionals and the Native American/Native Hawaiian grant programs. A fall meeting is planned for recipients of National Leadership Grant research principal investigators.

IMLS also engages grantees in future program development through a regular cycle of program evaluation. The agency recently completed an examination of its largest program, Library Grants to States, and is currently evaluating its largest museum program, Museums for America. A request for proposals to evaluate the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program is currently in development.

Using New Media to Engage Broader Participation

In December 2009, IMLS adopted its Social Media Policy. The policy was the result of broad engagement of agency staff and board and establishes guidelines for use and adoption as well as procedures to assess, launch, sustain and evaluate social media projects to advance the IMLS mission.

In March 2010, IMLS launched the "UpNext" wiki. The purpose of the wiki is to encourage cross disciplinary conversation and engage experts as well as emerging professionals in discussion about the future of libraries and museums. It follows the format of an IMLS publication *The Future of Libraries and Museums: A Discussion Guide*, which synthesized, into nine broad themes, discussions from a two-day meeting of twenty leading experts in libraries, museums, university research and technology convened by the National Academies of Science. Wiki participants have shared ideas, resources and projects that help libraries and museums plan for the future and take action. To date , the wiki has 660 members and has received over 250 comments. IMLS plans to consider these comments in the development of its strategic plan and they will inform future IMLS research, publications, convening and grantmaking.

In April 2010, IMLS launched a Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/US_IMLS. The cross-agency working group is also developing a plans for a Facebook presence and exploring further opportunities such as blogging and a YouTube video channel.

Collaboration

> "*Government should be collaborative*. Collaboration actively engages Americans in the work of their Government. Executive departments and agencies should use innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate among themselves, across all levels of Government, and with nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector. Executive departments and agencies should solicit public feedback to assess and improve their level of collaboration and to identify new opportunities for cooperation."
>
> —President Barrack Obama, Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, January 2009

Collaboration is a central concept of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The agency's establishment in 1996 was the result of congressional action to combine federal administration of existing programs for library services and museum services. The Museum and Library Services Act encourages IMLS to act in consultation with the constituencies it serves, to collaborate at the federal level to improve library and museum services, to encourage public-private partnerships, and to support collaboration at the local level among libraries, museums and other community organizations.

As a particular example, since the beginning of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) IMLS has cultivated a close partnership with the state library agencies individually and as a group to ensure clear communication about program accountability while also ensuring that the states can individually identify and develop strategies that address their specific library needs. Together, IMLS and COSLA work to promote improvements in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States; facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry; and encourage resource sharing among all types of libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public.

Encouraging Community Level Partnerships

Since 1998, IMLS has made 112 awards totaling over 30 million dollars for projects that support library and museum partnerships. As significant as this investment is, it under-reports the IMLS's efforts in this area. IMLS encourages partners in all its grant categories, and multiple partners are frequently part of funded projects. These partners are not limited to libraries and museums; they include schools, universities, faith-based organizations and other cultural organizations and social service organizations Partnership projects have impact on every aspect of library and museum service, including public programming, using new technologies, strategic planning, preparing the library and museum workforce, digitizing collections and collections stewardship, and developing new understandings about learning.

While we believe that collaboration is a critical 21st century strategy we also have come to understand that partnership can be challenging. In 2005 and 2006, IMLS partnered

with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to provide grants, webinars and resources to help libraries, museums and public broadcasters develop the art of partnership, address critical community needs, and share lessons learned. This work resulted in a publication, Partnership for a Nation of Learners: Joining Forces, Creating Value, which summarizes project evaluations and provide tips for successful partnerships.

Public Private Collaboration

IMLS also has a long history of collaborating with corporate, foundation and non-profit partners to advance the agency's mission. A few recent examples include:

Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action

Connecting to Collections is an IMLS initiative that seeks to inspire action to care for endangered library, museum and archive collections. Grounded in the findings and recommendations of a nation-wide study documenting dire conditions, IMLS worked with non-profit organizations (the American Association of State and Local History, AIC, and Heritage Preservation, Inc.) other federal agencies (the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the Library of Congress and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities,) and foundations, including The Getty Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, Kress, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provide online resources, forums in four cities, a national summit, and over 3,000 conservation bookshelves and grants. Connecting to Collections was also the impetus for a new funding opportunity called American Heritage Preservation grants, which is supported jointly by the Bank of America Foundation and IMLS.

Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries

In March, together with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, IMLS released findings from the first, large-scale study of who uses computers and Internet access in public libraries. This jointly funded research carried out by the University of Washington School of Information provides a look at the demographics of library computer users, the ways library patrons use this free technology service, why they use it, and how it affects their lives.

International Collaboration

For IMLS, collaboration does not stop at the border. IMLS encourages dialogue that is critical in our increasingly globalized world through partnerships with overseas cultural ministries, initiating programs with international components, participating in international policy meetings, hosting foreign museum and library professionals, and convening U.S. professionals to explore ways to connect with their global counterparts,

Salzburg Global Seminar

Connecting to the World's Collections: Making the Case for the Conservation and Preservation of Our Cultural Heritage occurred October 28–November 1, 2009, in Salzburg, Austria, and built on the themes and lessons learned from IMLS's major initiative on conservation, *Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action*, extending to an international audience. Attended by 60 cultural leaders, policymakers, and conservation

professionals from 32 countries, the seminar—a partnership between IMLS and the Salzburg Global Seminar—addressed central issues in the care and preservation of the world's cultural heritage.

At the conclusion of the seminar, the Fellows unanimously endorsed a [Salzburg Declaration on the Conservation and Preservation of Cultural Heritage](#) that affirmed the importance and value of cultural heritage to cultures and societies globally. They also made individual commitments for future action in their own countries and organizations.

IMLS and China: A Partnership for Cultural Exchange

Building on a June 2007 cultural accord, in November 2008 IMLS entered into a Partnership for Cultural Exchange with the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China to strengthen cultural cooperation between the two countries. The agreement calls for sharing best practices in library and museum services, including enhancement of public service and access to information in libraries, promotion of youth engagement, education in museums, and applications of new technologies in libraries and museums to engage audiences and increase the availability of information online. Two major components of this partnership are an American/Chinese librarian exchange program and a professional development exchange opportunity for Chinese museum professionals.

AFI Project: 20/20

Since 2006, under the leadership of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, IMLS has joined with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Film Institute (AFI) to support the *AFI Project: 20/20*. The project is part of the U.S. Government's Global Cultural Initiative, a public-private cultural diplomacy effort designed to coordinate, enhance, and expand America's cultural diplomacy efforts worldwide. It is intended to foster international cultural exchange, understanding, and collaboration through filmmakers and their films from the United States and abroad. Throughout this partnership, museums have functioned as critical film festival partners.

Closing the Digital Curation Gap: An International Collaboration to Integrate Best Practice, Research & Education

Scientists, researchers, and scholars across the world generate vast amounts of digital data, but the scientific record and the documentary heritage created in digital form are at risk – from technology obsolescence, the fragility of digital media, and the lack of baseline practices for managing and preserving digital data. The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science, is collaborating with IMLS and Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), which supports innovation in digital technologies in U.K. colleges and universities, and its funded entities, the Strategic Content Alliance and the Digital Curation Centre on the Closing the Digital Curation Gap project. The goal of the project is to establish baseline practices for the storage, maintenance, and preservation of digital data to help ensure their enhancement and continuing long-term use.

Valued Resources: Roles and Responsibilities of Digital Curators and Publishers

IMLS is collaborating with the University College London's Centre for Publishing and Department of Information Studies for the next two years to co-sponsor the Bloomsbury Conference on E-Publishing and E-Publications. The aim of the conference is to promote productive relationships among librarians and publishers in the increasingly digital environment of scholarly communications. The 2010 and 2011 conferences will also be designed to encourage collaboration among US and UK library and information science researchers, practitioners and publishers. The theme of the 2010 conference, to be held in London, is "Valued Resources: Roles and Responsibilities of Digital Curators and Publishers." For more information see www.ucl.ac.uk/infostudies/e-publishing.

International Meetings

IMLS staff members participate in international meetings on policy issues relating to cultural stewardship, education, the knowledge society, cultural diversity, and promotion of the role of museums and libraries in the global society. Hosts of these international meetings include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), and the Organization of American States (OAS). IMLS participated in drafting the Digital Content and Public Sector Information Policy Principles, which were adopted in June 2008 by the Member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. IMLS's efforts in this area help develop partners throughout the government who can recognize and leverage the important role of museum, library, and information services in achieving national and international priorities.

Collaborations with other Federal Agencies

The National Book Festival

Since 2001, the Institute has sponsored The Pavilion of the States at the National Book Festival. The Pavilion promotes reading and literacy projects as well as the literary traditions of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. Representatives from state libraries and Centers for the Book provide information and answer questions about their state's authors, libraries, book festivals, book awards, and reading-promotion activities. IMLS hosts at table at the Pavilion as well, sharing information on upcoming grant opportunities and encouraging children and their families to visit their local libraries and museums.

Institute of Museum and Library Services partnership with the Employee Training Administration of the US Department of Labor

In order to better meet the workforce information needs of the American public IMLS and DOL-ETA are working together to support collaboration among libraries and the workforce system at the state and local levels. This partnership builds upon an IMLS-supported project to provide training for librarians nation-wide to help them meet the needs of the nation's job seekers. The collaboration between IMLS and DOL-ETA includes sharing data and information enhancing electronic resources, presenting at workforce industry and library industry conferences and through webinars and identifying and sharing best practices.

Afterschool.gov
Afterschool.gov is a one-stop website connecting the public, and particularly afterschool providers, to federal resources that support children and youth during out-of-school time.

The Big Read
The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The NEA presents The Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest

Coming Up Taller
Coming Up Taller Awards recognize outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people by providing them with learning opportunities and chances to contribute to their communities.

Historic Preservation Learning Portal
IMLS is a partner along with 20 federal agencies in the development by the Federal Preservation Institute, National Park Service, of an Internet portal that provides access to more than 1,500 U.S. and foreign historic preservation and cultural resources web sites. The Portal is a tool for researching diverse issues.

Picturing America
This NEH initiative brings masterpieces of American art into libraries and classrooms nationwide to help teach American history, social studies, history, writing, literature, geography, civics, and other subjects.

Preserve America
Preserve America is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage.

Save America's Treasures
Save America's Treasures makes critical investments in the preservation of our nation's most significant and endangered cultural treasures, which illustrate, interpret, and embody the great events, ideas, and individuals that contribute to America's history and culture.

Flagship Initiative

IMLS selected a focus on *Museums, Libraries and 21st Century Skills* as its flagship initiative because 1) it was developed in a transparent participatory way 2) it encourages community institutions to engage public participation in all facets of programming and operations 3) it enlists libraries and museum in supporting the skill development needed for a 21st century workforce and 4) plans to enhance public engagement in this initiative are underway, including a contest challenge.

In the 21st century, workers and students need more diverse skills to compete in a global knowledge economy. The Obama Administration has called for the development of 21st century skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, entrepreneurship and creativity. At the same time the capacity of cultural institutions to engage the public in innovative learning experiences has created a new dynamic for delivering library and museum service. Libraries and museums that adapt to these changes are playing a significant role in delivering 21st century skills to learners of all ages.

As part of its mission to engage libraries and museums, community stakeholders and policy makers at the national, state and local level in a concerted effort to meet the educational, economic, civic, and cultural needs of communities, IMLS launched *Museums, Libraries and 21st Century Skills*. Initial resources included a website that provides a quick online assessment for libraries and museums to evaluate their readiness to engage the public and to deliver 21st century skills, a downloadable pdf of a report and in-depth assessment matrix for library and museum practitioners and policy makers, and a published report.

The project was developed in collaboration with a national task force of library and museum leaders, an internal IMLS team, and the e-Luminate group (a consulting firm specializing in 21st century skills), to provide a framework for libraries and museums to assess the 21st century skills needed by their communities and align their institutions assets including collections, facilities, technology and staff to meet those needs. During the development process the framework was vetted by more than 120 museum and library professionals.

In the coming year, IMLS will build upon this work with a series of workshops held in six U.S. cities, the development of a robust, interactive website, and launch a contest to engage wide participation and identify the best innovative practice in this area.