



## **IMLS Open Government Plan January 7, 2019 Version 4.0**

This IMLS Open Government Plan is drafted in accordance with the [Open Government Directive](#) issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in December 2009. The Open Government Directive instructs executive agencies to take specific actions to implement three principles of open government: transparency, participation, and collaboration. These three principles form the cornerstone of an open government, by providing the public with information about the Federal government’s activities, allowing the public to contribute ideas and expertise, and encouraging partnership and cooperation within the Federal government, across levels of government, and between government and private institutions.

The Open Government Directive requires that agencies publish government information online, to the extent permitted by law and applicable privacy, confidentiality, and security restrictions. IMLS also maintains an Open Government webpage located at <http://www.imls.gov/open>, where members of the public can review IMLS’s Open Government Plan, access IMLS data, and learn about IMLS’s Freedom of Information Act program, Records Management program, and other agency programs and policies. The Open Government webpage also allows members of the public to provide feedback on the nature and quality of IMLS’s shared information, input about which information IMLS should prioritize for publication, and comments on this Open Government Plan.

This Plan is the fourth update to IMLS’s Open Government Plan, first released in April 2010.

### **1. OPEN DATA**

Data plays a crucial role in achieving better outcomes for the American public through the services provided by museums and libraries. IMLS’s data collection is essential to helping museums and libraries build capacity and navigate change. IMLS’s [2018-2022 Strategic Plan](#) recognizes that museums and libraries can improve their services to communities through increased access to IMLS knowledge: “IMLS builds capacity within the museum and library fields to enable better service to communities and to enhance community decision-making by sharing trends and data.”

IMLS is committed to providing public access to government data. In 2018, IMLS updated its agency-wide policies and procedures for data dissemination, reflecting the agency’s application of principles of transparency, collaboration, and participation. IMLS also redesigned its website in 2018, and continues to refine the site design, layout, and organization in order to enhance the user experience.

IMLS data is available online in open and machine-readable formats. In addition, the agency regularly publishes new reports, tools, and visualizations to its website, to facilitate the use of IMLS data. Specifically:

- **Research and Evaluation:** IMLS shares information about how it uses its research to identify national needs for and trends in museum and library services, measure and report on the services' impact and effectiveness, and identify best practices and develop plans to improve them. For more information about IMLS research and evaluations, visit <https://www.imls.gov/research-evaluation>.
- **Surveys and Data:** IMLS makes available agency data files and reports from annual surveys, administrative grant data, and funding reports by state. For more information about IMLS surveys and data, visit <https://www.imls.gov/research-tools/data-collection>.
- **Data Catalog:** The IMLS Data Catalog furnishes IMLS data—comprising agency data such as grants administration and data about libraries, museums, and related organizations— for users to probe. To explore the IMLS Data Catalog, visit <https://data.imls.gov>.

This year, IMLS launched an online portal, IMLS Labs, to explore new ways of sharing information with the public (see Section 10 below). In the coming years, IMLS plans to enhance IMLS Labs, and identify and develop new tools so that researchers and members of the public can dig deeper into IMLS data.

## 2. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

IMLS seeks to expand the amount of publicly available information about the agency's programs through the management of its Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) program and Electronic Reading Room. On December 26, 2018, IMLS published a notice in the *Federal Register* of a Proposed Rule: Freedom of Information Act Regulations and Additional Incidental Technical Amendments to Other IMLS Regulations. The Amended FOIA regulations emphasize proactive disclosure of information.

Information about IMLS's FOIA Program, including types of information that can be requested, instructions on how to make FOIA requests and appeals, quarterly and annual FOIA reports, is available on the agency's FOIA website. For more information, visit <https://www.imls.gov/about/policy/agency-reports/freedom-information-act-foia>.

IMLS expanded the amount of content made available in its FOIA Electronic Reading Room this year, providing links to the agency's most frequently requested documents. The IMLS FOIA Reading Room can be accessed at <https://www.imls.gov/foia-electronic-reading-room>.

## 3. PRIVACY

IMLS complies with applicable privacy reporting requirements, including the preparation of annual Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) reports. In 2018, IMLS revised its Privacy Program Plan and updated key policies and directives on information collection, personally identifiable information, breach response, continuous monitoring, and social media. Information about the IMLS Privacy Program is posted at <https://www.imls.gov/privacy>.

#### **4. WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

The Director of IMLS is required by 5 U.S.C. § 2302(c) to ensure, in consultation with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC), that employees are informed of their rights and remedies under the prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower retaliation protection provisions of Title V. IMLS currently participates in OSC's Whistleblower Protection Act certification program, and has been certified through 2019.

#### **5. OPEN SOURCE**

IMLS is committed to developing and implementing appropriate open source software policies. IMLS ensures that code created by IMLS or its contractors is generally made available without copyright restrictions for royalty-free worldwide use. IMLS has expanded its presence on Github, and will continue to share more script, code, and metadata for IMLS data assets at <https://github.com/imls>.

IMLS also prioritizes open access to data in its grant making. IMLS recognizes that Federally-funded digital products (content, resources, assets, software, and data sets) should be freely and readily available for use and re-use by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. IMLS requires grantees to make IMLS-funded software available under open source licenses, and requires applicants to describe how they will make digital content, resources, or assets available to the public (delivery strategies, platforms and infrastructure, accessibility via web browsers or special software tools) on a Digital Product Form. The agency's Digital Product Form can be reviewed at <https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/digitalproduct.pdf>.

#### **6. TRANSPARENCY**

**Grants.gov:** IMLS participates in Grants.gov through an interagency agreement with the Department of Health & Human Services. All applicants to IMLS's discretionary grant programs are required to submit applications through Grants.gov.

**CFDA.gov:** IMLS maintains an accurate list of grant programs on CFDA.gov.

**SAM.gov:** IMLS requires all potential and current grantees and contractors to maintain an accurate and updated SAM.gov registration through the lifecycle of their award.

**FSRS.gov:** Where applicable, IMLS requires prime contract and grant awardees to report against sub-contracts and sub-grants. IMLS only monitors FSRS to ensure timely and accurate reporting.

**USAspending.gov:** IMLS reports Federal assistance 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 and 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).

#### **7. RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

Proper records management is essential to providing accurate documentation of the agency's functions, decisions, policies, procedures, and transactions. IMLS has identified and trained a cohort of records liaison officers to provide program office support of the IMLS Records Management Program, and to ensure that staff are cognizant of IMLS records and the policies and schedules that govern them.

IMLS has also transitioned to cloud-based services for email, calendar, and collaboration tools. IMLS is completing a revision of its offices' file plans and electronic folder directories to streamline records scheduling, disposition, and transfer to the National Archives and Records Administration.

## 8. CONGRESSIONAL REQUESTS

The IMLS General Counsel and Congressional Affairs Officer are responsible for coordinating with IMLS offices and submitting responses to congressional inquiries that accurately represent the agency views. The General Counsel, Chief Operating Officer, and Congressional Affairs Officer coordinate on legislative matters, and consult with the Office of Management and Budget during the development of the agency's proposed budget and legislative program. Information about IMLS legislation and budget are available at <https://www.ims.gov/about-us/legislation-budget>.

## 9. COLLABORATION

IMLS values collaboration and helps build the capacity of institutions to engage in it.

**Community Catalyst Initiative:** Through this initiative, IMLS helps libraries and museums gain a deeper understanding of their role as enablers of positive community change. Having funded two cohorts of Community Catalyst grantees, IMLS now seeks to share with the field and the general public the lessons learned and field-level outcomes associated with the Community Catalyst Initiative, and aspects thereof that mostly likely contributed to and inhibited success. IMLS has engaged a third party evaluator to conduct this assessment and prepare a public report, with the long term goal of enabling museums and libraries to serve as more effective community partners as a benefit to the public. More information about the Community Catalyst Initiative is available at <https://www.ims.gov/issues/national-initiatives/community-catalyst-initiative>.

**Social Wellbeing Study:** IMLS has also engaged a third party evaluator to conduct a study of the contributions that museums and libraries make to different dimensions of social wellbeing in their communities. This national study will look beyond economic impact to articulate how library and museum activities contribute to the quality of life in their communities, with a long term goal of developing approaches, tools, and training for museums and libraries in their efforts to become sustained and adaptive community partners.

**Museums for All:** IMLS has expanded its Museums for All program, reaching over 1.5 million visitors at over 300 museums nationwide. Through Museums for All, those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) can gain free or reduced admission to participating museums throughout the United States by presenting their SNAP EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Electronic Benefit Transfer) card. IMLS and its cooperative partner, the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), launched a new website at <https://museums4all.org> to spread information about the program to eligible visitors and improve outreach to potential museum participants. In the coming year, IMLS has engaged ACM to conduct a field assessment and research evaluation to identify best practices and avenues to success, continue outreach efforts to expand the program, and disseminate takeaways, tips and tools from evaluations and assessments aimed a greater outreach and communication.

## 10. FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

IMLS is exploring new ways of sharing information with the public through the flagship initiative IMLS Labs. IMLS Labs hosts new data exploration tools, and seeks feedback from the public about these resources. IMLS Labs currently features a Library Search and Compare tool, an easy way to query and view data from the Public Libraries Survey. Users can try out new data exploration tools at <https://www.imls.gov/labs>.

The Library Search and Compare tool was developed through iterative agile development and continuous user feedback practices using principles from OMB's Digital Services Playbook. As a part of the agency's commitment to developing in the open, IMLS has posted the software code for this tool to the IMLS code-sharing page at <https://github.com/IMLS/library-search-compare>.

IMLS has identified a short term goal of establishing an IMLS Open Government Summit, a collaborative project involving the agency's programmatic, communications, legal, privacy, digital and information strategy, information policy, and records management functions. Participants will explore ways to promote proactive disclosure and facilitate information sharing that is convenient and easily accessible for interested members of the public. The Summit will enable IMLS to reexamine iterative open government related commitments and plans, including future updates to the IMLS Open Government Plan.