



# Museums Empowered:

## FY 2020 Information Session

September 20, 2019

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "IMLS Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff Fiscal Year 2020 Information Session."

My name is Mark Isaksen – I'm a Senior Program Officer in the Office of Museum Services -- and speaking on behalf of rest of the staff in the Office of Museum Services, we are delighted that you are interested in preparing an application for the IMLS Museums Empowered grant program.



# Agenda

- Where to Find Information
- Program Goals, History & Statistics
- IMLS Funding Eligibility Criteria
- Choosing a Project Category
- Project Activities
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- Application Components
- Narrative Review Criteria
- Where to Learn More
- Application Tips & Next Steps

Here are the topics we will cover in today's webinar:

- Where to Find Information
- Museums Empowered Program Goals, History & Statistics
- IMLS Funding Eligibility Criteria
- Choosing a Project Category
- Project Activities
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- Application Components
- Narrative Review Criteria
- Where to Learn More
- Application Tips & Next Steps



## Companion Webinar

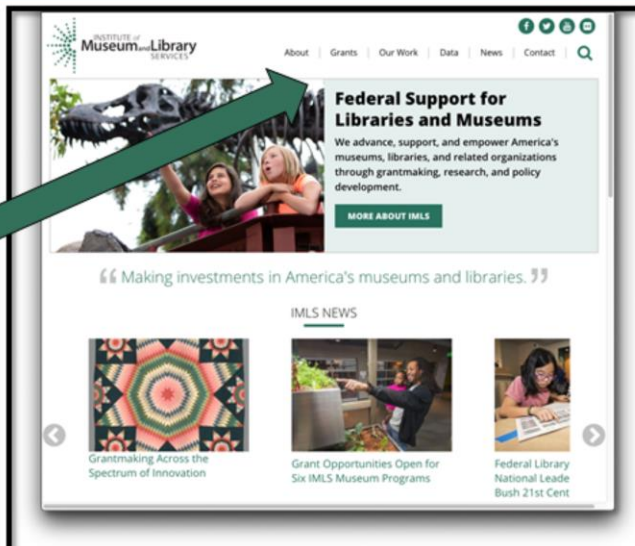
- PRE-RECORDED WEBINAR
- IMLS OMS: Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2020
- *Basic information for all applicants*
- <https://www.ims.gov/webinars/ims-oms-choosing-funding-opportunity-fy2020>

This is one of a series of webinars designed to help you find the information you need to create a competitive application for IMLS museum funding.

“Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2020” was pre-recorded and is available as a video and as a PDF of the slides plus a transcript on our website at the link identified here. In that webinar, we cover the IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan with an emphasis on how they influence our grant making. We also address institutional eligibility, provide a quick overview of all our funding opportunities, how to find information online with a focus on our website, and we cover the three places you must be registered in order to apply for an IMLS grant.

In addition to this webinar about Museums Empowered we are hosting, recording, and making available on-demand webinars for all our museum grant programs. A complete calendar for the live presentations is provided in “Choosing a Funding Opportunity for FY2020,” and you may access the record versions by visiting [www.ims.gov/webinars-archive](http://www.ims.gov/webinars-archive).

# Where to Find Information: [www.ims.gov](http://www.ims.gov)



The IMLS website is an important place to find information

When you go to the website you will see a drop down menu for GRANTS on our home page. Click on the section titled "Apply for a Grant." This section of our website is for you.

# Notice of Funding Opportunity

## Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff



Each grant program has a landing page on the IMLS website. Here you will find a brief overview of the grant program, contact information for the IMLS staff assigned to this grant program – and your primary point of contact if you have questions – and link to the PDF of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (sometimes referred to as the NOFO) is the official instructions and guidance for how to prepare, complete, and submit an application for funding. The text and information I am using in this webinar derive from the instructions and guidance found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. A NOFO is available for each of the grant funding opportunities.

Now let's discuss the Museums Empowered grant program in more detail.



## Program Goals

Museums Empowered is a special MFA initiative with the goal of :



strengthening the ability of an individual museum to serve its public

using **professional development** activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within the museum

Museums Empowered is a special MFA initiative with the goal of strengthening the ability of an individual museum to serve its public through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within the museum.

With this special MFA initiative, IMLS encourages applicants to invest in the professional development of museum staff, volunteers, and interns to enhance their skills and ensure the highest standards in all aspects of museum operations. We expect Museums Empowered projects will utilize comprehensive strategies and frameworks to support professional development. Projects should cross-cut various departments and result in systemic change within the museum.

IMLS encourages applicants to invest in the professional development of museum staff, leadership, and volunteers to enhance their skills and ensure the highest standards in all aspects of museum operations.

## Application and Award History

### Summary of 2019 Grant Statistics

Number of applications: 62

Number of grants awarded: 18

Total dollar amount requested: \$9,367,363

Total dollar amount awarded: \$2,635,212

Total dollar of matching: \$4,182,051

Museums Empowered	2019 #	2019 %
Digital Technology	7	11%
Diversity & Inclusion	29	47%
Evaluation	10	16%
Organizational Management	16	26%
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>62</b>	
<b>Total Awards</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29%</b>

We are often asked about numbers of applications and funding success rates, and so here are the figures for the just completed Museums Empowered grant cycle. In FY 2019 we made 18 awards up to \$250,000 each for a total of \$2,635,212

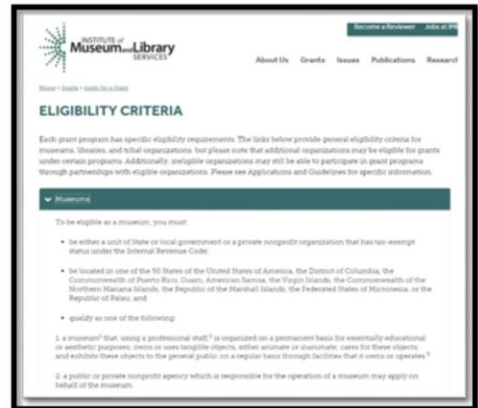
### ● Summary of 2019 Grant Statistics

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- Total dollar of matching: \$4,182,051

# Museum Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization:

- A museum?
  - A non-profit organization?
  - A Unit of State or local government?
- ✓ If yes, then you may be eligible to receive funds.
- ✓ If no, then partner with someone who is eligible.



General funding eligibility criteria for museums can be found on the IMLS website as shown in the screen shot image on the right side of this screen. This general eligibility criteria applies to most of the IMLS grant museum programs, including Museums Empowered.

To summarize: you are likely to be eligible to receive funding if you meet the IMLS definition of a museum (as described on our website) and are a non-profit organization, or part of a state or local government.



# Project Categories

## There are four project categories in Museums Empowered.



**Digital Technology:** for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.



**Diversity and Inclusion:** for museum staff to develop cultural competency and support museum relevancy in their communities.



**Evaluation:** to expand museum staff's capacity in conducting formative and summative evaluation of programs, practices, and products that can help the museum yield indicators and measurable outcomes.



**Organizational Management:** for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, innovation and managing change.

The Museums Empowered grant program provides support for professional development in four project categories:

**Digital Technology:** for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** for museum staff to develop cultural competency and support museum relevancy in their communities.

**Evaluation:** to expand museum staff's capacity in conducting formative and summative evaluation of programs, practices, and products that can help the museum yield indicators and measurable outcomes

**Organizational Management:** for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, embracing innovation and managing change

Why is your decision about which category to choose so important? For one thing, your application will be reviewed by museum professionals who have experience and expertise in these general categories. And for another, your application will be competing against others who have chosen the same category. In short, the entire review process incorporates an assumption that your project aligns with the category you've identified.

# Digital Technology

## Museums Empowered Digital Technology projects might include:



- Training programs for museum staff to become more effective and efficient users of digital technology
- Developing fellowships, internships, and mentoring programs to attract and retain a tech savvy workforce and cross-train museum staff
- Developing strategies and enhancing staff capacity to use digital technology for audience engagement and community outreach
- Hosting workshops with experts, thought-leaders and practitioners in the digital technology field to help museum staff address a specific issue facing the museum
- Developing institutional digital strategies to leverage big data and provide the training and support for staff to sustain and maintain open data resources

So let's take a look at what kinds of activities a project in each of these categories might include.

IMLS supports the work of museums in adopting and adapting the use of existing and emerging digital technology to transform audience engagement, collections care and management, communication and general operations. Recognizing the transformative and pervasive nature of digital technology, IMLS welcomes applications to develop training and professional development learning opportunities for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.

Some examples of the types of projects that might be included in the Digital Technology category are listed on this slide, and more examples may be found in the NOFO.

## Diversity & Inclusion

### Museums Empowered Diversity & Inclusion projects might include:



- Development and implementation of recruitment and retention programs designed to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Building the capacity of museum staff to develop, support, and sustain inclusive fellowship, internship and mentoring programs to attract diverse emerging professionals
- Enhancing the skills and ability of museum staff to develop and deliver inclusive programs to engage with diverse audiences
- Training in proactive and sustained community outreach and engagement strategies
- Building competencies among staff to incorporate diversity and inclusion objectives when revising or implementing institutional plans such as a strategic plan, interpretive plan, and/or collections plan

IMLS supports the work of museums in engaging with communities and providing inclusive services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.

Recognizing the changing demographics across the nation, IMLS welcomes applications for staff professional development and museum capacity building projects that increase cultural competency within a museum and support relevancy through projects that connect, engage, and strengthen the museum's ties with diverse communities.

Some examples of the types of projects that might be included in Diversity and Inclusion category are listed on this slide, and more examples may be found in the NOFO

# Evaluation

## Museums Empowered Evaluation projects might include:



- Implementing training programs for museum staff on evaluation tools, strategies and techniques customized to address a specific institutional or audience need
- Developing and strengthening competencies among staff to use evaluation to help shape and/or measure the impact of museum programs and exhibits
- Building staff capacity to create a robust museum evaluation program by developing logic models and frameworks to differentiate between output-focused and outcomes-based data
- Building staff capacity to develop an institution-wide evaluation framework that integrates impact, assessment and learning strategies

IMLS supports the use of robust formative and summative evaluation of museum programs, practices and products to help museums best serve their intended audiences and demonstrate their impact to stakeholders.

Recognizing the many challenges and resources needed to develop and sustain an evaluation program, IMLS welcomes applications that use training and professional development to improve and enhance the ability of museum staff to augment their knowledge of the broad spectrum of evaluation methods and techniques as well as better use evaluation reports, data, and metrics in order to make improvements in their program or product design and delivery.

Some examples of the types of projects that might be included in the Evaluation category are listed on this slide, and more examples may found in the NOFO

# Organizational Management

## Museums Empowered Organizational Management projects might include:



- Creating a more resilient workforce through training programs for museum staff on topics such as project management, strategic thinking, and managing change
- Creating a more innovative workforce through training programs for museum staff on topics such as design-thinking, human-centered design and rapid prototyping
- Building staff capacity to develop a succession plan for key staff positions
- Fostering a business mindset among museum staff to assess, evaluate, and adopt current business practices in order to identify areas for improvement or to respond to new opportunities
- Supporting the growth and development of museum staff in the process of revising a strategic plan supported with measurable outcomes and a continuous improvement plan

IMLS supports museums' efforts to develop resilient organizations with the goal of long-term sustainability and relevancy. IMLS welcomes applications to develop training and professional development opportunities for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, embracing innovation and managing change in order to foster continued growth, relevancy and vitality.

Projects may use replicable models within the museum field as well as look beyond the museum field for transferrable techniques and strategies to build the capacity of the museum and support its long term sustainability.

Across all four categories, we expect your project will reference current research, incorporate best practices, and use models with proven outcomes.

## Choosing a Project Category



Digital Technology



Diversity & Inclusion



Evaluation



Organizational Management

1. Think carefully about what is “in the center” of your project. Who or what will benefit from your work? What will be improved once you’ve finished your project?
2. Decide who you want to review your application. What kind of skill set and experience do you want them to have?
3. List all the activities you plan to carry out, and assign each to a category. Which category gets the most? Where will most of the resources be spent?

Before we close our discussion of project categories, we want to mention our guidance for projects that could belong logically in more than one. Sometimes it’s tough to choose, and you might be tempted to think that the best strategy would be to align with more than one. Here are three strategies to help you choose the best category for your project:

1. Think carefully about what is “in the center” of your project. Who or what will benefit from your work? What will be improved once you’ve finished your project?
2. Decide who you want to review your application. What kind of skill set and experience do you want them to have?
3. List all the activities you plan to carry out, and assign each to a category. Which category gets the most? Where will most of the resources be spent?

Our advice is to choose one project category, study the instructions for preparing an application as well as the review criteria, and write your proposal accordingly. As always, if you have questions, call the IMLS staff to discuss them.

# Allowable Costs



## 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

<https://www.ecfr.gov>

Subpart E—COST PRINCIPLES	
<b>GENERAL PROVISIONS</b>	
\$200.400	Policy guide.
\$200.401	Application.
<b>BASIC CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
\$200.402	Composition of costs.
\$200.403	Factors affecting allowability of costs.
\$200.404	Reasonable costs.
\$200.405	Allowable costs.
\$200.406	Applicable credits.
\$200.407	Prior written approval (prior approval).
\$200.408	Limitation on allowance of costs.
\$200.409	Special considerations.
\$200.410	Collection of unallowable costs.
\$200.411	Adjustment of previously negotiated indirect (F&A) cost rates containing unallowable costs.
<b>DIRECT AND INDIRECT (F&amp;A) COSTS</b>	
\$200.412	Classification of costs.
\$200.413	Direct costs.
\$200.414	Indirect (F&A) costs.
\$200.415	Required certifications.
<b>SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND INDIAN TRIBES</b>	
\$200.416	Cost allocation plans and indirect cost proposals.
\$200.417	Interagency service.
<b>SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION</b>	
\$200.418	Costs incurred by states and local governments.
\$200.419	Cost accounting standards and disclosure statement.
<b>GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SELECTED ITEMS OF COST</b>	
\$200.420	Considerations for selected items of cost.
\$200.421	Advertising and public relations.
\$200.422	Advisory councils.
\$200.423	Alcoholic beverages.
\$200.424	Alumni activities.
\$200.425	Audit services.
\$200.426	Bad debts.
\$200.427	Banking costs.
\$200.428	Collection of interagency payments.
\$200.429	Commemoration and dedication costs.
\$200.430	Compensation—personal services.
\$200.431	Compensation—fringe benefits.
\$200.432	Conferences.

We'll turn now to allowable and unallowable costs for your project. Be very careful in preparing your proposal and include only allowable costs in both your IMLS ask and your cost share. To do otherwise can hurt your chances of getting positive reviews and being recommended for funding.

We'll go through some common expenses that are allowable and unallowable, but for details, please see Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations covering Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, or "2 CFR 200" for short.

The regulations are available online in a searchable format on the U.S. Government Publishing Office website listed on the screen.



## Allowable Costs

### Examples of allowable costs

- personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- travel expenses for key project staff and consultants
- materials, supplies, software, and equipment related directly to project activities
- third-party costs
- publication design and printing
- staff and volunteer training
- internships/fellowships
- indirect or overhead costs

In the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity, we provide a partial list of the most common examples of allowable costs as pictured here.

These costs may be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for and/or what you will pay for as part of your cost share. The rules about allowability apply to both sides.





# Unallowable Costs

## Examples of unallowable costs

- fundraising costs, such as development office staff devoted to general fundraising
- contributions to endowments
- general operating support
- acquisition of collections
- general advertising or public relations costs
- construction or renovation of facilities
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment
- research projects
- pre-award costs

We also provide a list of generally unallowable costs, again both for IMLS funds and for cost share. These costs may NOT be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, NOR can they be part of what you will pay for as part of your cost share. In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal.

As you prepare your application, it's a good idea to compare your list of proposed expenses against these lists of allowable and unallowable costs and against the appropriate set of cost principles. If after that you have specific questions, please contact us and we'll be happy to help.



# Application Components

## Required Documents

All applications must include these. Omission of one results in exclusion from further consideration.

## Conditionally Required Documents

Some applications must include these. Omission of one results in exclusion from further consideration.

## Supporting Documents

These are optional. Make good decisions, and include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description provided in the application.

Now that you have some basic framework on the amount of funding and the allowable costs for your project, let's review the multiple parts of the grant application that you will need to prepare. The application components are a series of documents you will upload in Grants.gov that together make up your application.

These application components fall into three categories. The first is that of **Required Documents**. **All applications must include these**. Omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The second group is that of **Conditionally Required Documents**. **Some** applications must include these. It might depend on the nature of your institution or some aspect of your project. In either case, omission of even just one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.

The third group of application components are **Supporting Documents**. These are completely optional. You may submit some or none. Think about including only those that supplement your narrative and support the project description you provide in your application. This is not the place to introduce new information. Be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include extraneous material that is not directly relevant to your project.

# Application Components

**Required Documents :** All applications must include these.

- Organizational Profile
- Strategic Plan Summary
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- List of Key Project Staff
- Resumes of Key Project Staff
- Budget Justification
- Application for Federal Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)
- IMLS Supplementary Information Form (includes abstract)
- IMLS Museum Program Information Form
- IMLS Budget Form

Your application will consist of a series of individual documents, and it's very important to make sure you prepare and submit everything necessary to complete your application.

**All applications must include the 11 required documents listed on this slide.**

The 7 documents listed on left side of this slide are created by you, using a word document, and then saving this as a PDF. Instructions for all of these required documents are found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Many of these have page limits, and if you exceed the page limit specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we must remove the extras before your application goes out for review. Make sure your content fits into the page limits specified and make sure the number of pages holds when you convert your document to a PDF.

The Application for Federal Assistance, the IMLS Supplementary Information Form, and the IMLS Program Information Form are online forms you complete in the grants.gov environment. The IMLS Budget Form is a fillable PDF.



## Application Components

These components are required of some applications.

- Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status
- Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Digital Product Form

The second category of application components is that of **conditionally required documents**. **Some** applications must include one or both of these, and it's your job to figure out which are required for yours.

- If you are applying as a nonprofit, then you must include your proof of nonprofit status issued by the IRS.
- If you are using a federally negotiated indirect cost in your budget, then you must include a copy of your final rate agreement.
- If you will create digital products during the course of your project, then you must complete and submit a Digital Product Form.

Please note that the term “digital product” includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data. Please see the form itself for more specific examples. If you are creating any of these types of materials, you must include the form with your application.

Just like the required documents, omission of even one can result in the exclusion of your application from further consideration.



## Application Components

### Supporting Documents

- These are optional. Make good decisions, and include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description provided in the application.

The third group of application components is **supporting documents**. Supporting documents are completely optional. You may submit some or none. We urge you to make good decisions here and include only those that supplement the narrative and support the project description you provide in your application. This is not the place to introduce new information. We also recommend that you be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include hundreds of pages of extraneous material that is not directly relevant to your project. Being judicious really does work to your benefit. **Include what is important and helpful ... and stop there.**



## Narrative

In the Museums Empowered grant program the narrative is limited to 7 pages and is divided into three sections:

- **Project Justification**
- **Project Work Plan**
- **Project Results**

The questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are posted in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on the IMLS website.

Among the required components of your application, the Narrative is the section that reviewers are likely to spend the most time reading. So let's examine the narrative section of the application. In the Museums Empowered grant program the narrative is limited to 7 pages and is divided into three sections:

Project Justification  
Project Work Plan  
Project Results

The questions we ask you to answer and the review criteria by which your application will be judged are posted in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on the IMLS website.

## Narrative: Project Justification

### Tell us:

- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?
- Are others addressing this need? What other studies or best practices have you used in developing your project?
- Who or what will benefit from your project?
- How will your project advance your institution's strategic plan?
- How will your project address the goals of goals of the Museums Empowered special initiative?

### Reviewers will look for:

- *A clearly identified need, problem, or challenge supported by relevant evidence*
- *Consideration of best practices or relevant studies in shaping the project design*
- *Clear identification of the beneficiaries and their involvement in planning where possible*
- *Specific, actionable, and measurable ways in which the project advances institution's strategic plan*
- *Project activities use professional development to generate systemic change within the museum*
- *Alignment of activities with one of the four project categories*

### Project Justification

In this first section of the narrative, you should lay out the reasoning for your project. Tell us in the clearest terms possible what you propose to do; what need, problem, or challenge you expect to address; who or what will benefit; how your project will enhance the capacity of your institution; and how your project will address the goals of the Museums Empowered program – using professional development to generate systemic change within the museum.

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well you explain your project; how well you've identified the need, problem, or challenge you will address and how well you've supported that with relevant evidence; whether you've clearly identified who or what will benefit from the project, and if this involves an audience of some kind, whether they've been appropriately involved in the planning; whether your project enhances the capacity of your institution in ways that are specific, actionable, and measurable.

## Defining a need, problem, or challenge



- Remember that the federal government wants its investment to result in something getting better.
- Articulate what will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible.
- Identify why it is important that this change happens.
- Hone your problem definition carefully.
- Present data that support your problem definition.

Because the need, problem, or challenge is foundational in your application, keep these points in mind.

- The federal government wants its investment to result in SOMETHING getting better.
- As you define your need, problem, or challenge, articulate WHAT will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible. Will someone learn something, develop a skill, change an attitude or behavior? Will members of your community be better able to work together to solve problems? Identify why it is important that this particular change happens.
- Hone your problem definition carefully in clear, succinct terms.
- Gather and present data that support your problem definition.





## Narrative: Project Work Plan

### **Tell us:**

- What specific activities will you carry out?
- What is your project's maturity level?
- What are the risks to the project and are they accounted for in the work plan?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- In what sequence will your activities occur?
- What are the risks to the project?
- What resources will you need?
- How will you track your progress?
- How will you share your project's results?

### **Reviewers will look for:**

- *Activities informed by appropriate theory and practice with relevant evaluation and performance measurements*
- *Activities that reflect the project's maturity level (exploratory, piloting, scaling, or mainstreaming)*
- *Team with sufficient experience and skills*
- *Realistic and achievable schedule*
- *Goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated*
- *Appropriate personnel and financial resources*
- *Clear methodology for tracking progress and adjusting course when necessary*
- *Effective plan for communicating results*

The Project Work Plan is the part of the narrative in which you relay who will do what when and using what resources?

We ask you to tell us what specific activities you will undertake; who will plan, implement, and manage your project; when and in what sequence your activities will occur; what financial, personnel, and other resources you will need to carry out the activities; how you will track progress toward achieving your intended results; and how and with whom you will share your project's results.

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well your activities are informed by appropriate theory and practice; whether the team you've put together has the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully; and whether your schedule is realistic and achievable. They'll also be looking at whether the time, personnel, and financial resources identified are appropriate for the scope and scale of the project. They will look at your proposed evaluation and will weigh in on whether you've described a clear methodology for tracking your progress and adjusting course when necessary. And last but not least, is your plan for communicating results and/or sharing discoveries appropriate and likely to be effective

## Defining an activity



- An activity is something that someone does.
- It has a beginning and an end.
- You know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more (or it is no longer on your To Do List).
- It is not a "goal," "result," or "outcome." It is a thing you do as part of striving to achieve those.
- Aim for a reasonable level of granularity in identifying your activities—not too much, not too little, just right.

[Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/stick-figure-road-sign-traffic-sign-1097163/>]

Your work plan will be built on activities, so it's important to be clear about just what an activity is.

An activity is something that someone does. It has a beginning and an end (just like projects), and you know when you've finished it because it doesn't need to be done any more. It is no longer on your To Do List.

An activity is NOT a goal, a result, or an outcome. Rather it is something you do as part of striving to achieve those.

Aim for a reasonable level of granularity in identifying your activities. That might be hard, but strive for not too much, not too little, but rather just right.



## Narrative: Project Results

### **Tell us:**

- What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
- How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the audience change?
- How will the institution's internal capacity be strengthened as a result of your project?
- What data will you collect and report to measure your project's success?
- What tangible products will result?
- How will you sustain the benefit(s)?

### **Reviewers will look for:**

- *Results that are realistic, meaningful, actionable, and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project*
- *A well-grounded plan to effect change in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes*
- *Measurable improvements to the internal capacity of your museum*
- *A feasible plan to collect and report data*
- *Useful tangible products*
- *A practical plan for sustaining the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of this award*

**Project Results:** The final section of your narrative should be devoted to articulating the impact of your project.

What specific results do you intend to achieve in order to address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified? Something will get better. Tell us what that is. Tell us about the tangible products that will result from your project, and last but not least, how will you sustain the benefits of your project beyond the lifespan of this particular project?

Reviewers will give us their opinions on how well you've designed a feasible plan for collecting and reporting data; how likely the improvements that you've proposed will be realized; how useful the tangible products you plan to create will be; and whether your plan for sustaining the benefits of the project are reasonable and practical.

## Defining Intended Results



- Answer the question, “What will be better as the result of this work?”
- Think through how you’ll recognize success and how you’ll measure it for each of your high-level activities.
- Tie everything back to your need, problem, or challenge.
- Include tangential benefits or positive outcomes, but make sure they are in addition to, not instead of, your original intended results.
- Consider constructing a logic model to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

We often hear that defining intended results and success measures is challenging for applicants, so it’s worth spending a bit of time on this here.

Let’s think back to the questions we referenced a couple of slides ago when we talked about defining the need, problem, or challenge that your project is addressing. If you said someone will learn something, how will you know? If you expected a change in attitudes or behaviors, how will you know? If your problem related to segments of your community being better able to work together, how will you know when that has been achieved?

All of your results should tie back to your need, problem, or challenge. You may well experience tangential benefits and/or positive outcomes, but make sure you identify them as “in addition to” and not “instead of” your original intended results. Reviewers are likely to see that as a disconnect.

There has been a tremendous amount of work done on ways to measure success, and we encourage you to consider using well-established tools, such as a logic model, to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.



## Characteristics of Successful Applications

- ***Institutional Impact:*** The project strengthens the ability of an individual museum to serve its public through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within the museum.
- ***In depth Knowledge:*** Applications reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- ***Project-based Design:*** Work plans consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge identified in your application.
- ***Demonstrable Results:*** Projects generate measureable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

In summary, considering all the components of your application, there are four general characteristics of successful Museums Empowered applications that reviewers will look for. As you prepare your application, keep these characteristics in mind.

- ***FIRST, Institutional Impact:*** Your project should strengthen the ability of your museum to serve its public through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments to generate systemic change within your museum.
- ***SECOND, In-depth knowledge:*** Your proposal should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- ***THIRD, Project-based design:*** Your work plan should consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge.
- ***AND FOURTH, Demonstrable results:*** Your project should generate measureable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

An application that has all of these four characteristics, will stand out in the review process, and will have the best chance of success for funding.

# Awarded Grants Search

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants.

The screenshot shows the 'Awarded Grants Search' page on the IMLS website. The page features a search form with the following fields:

- Grant Program:
- Program Categories:
- Institution Name:
- City:
- State:
- Recipient Type:
- State Areas:
- Keywords:
- Log Number:
- Fiscal Year:
- Sort Options:

Below the search form, there are two download buttons: 'Download CSV' and 'Download PDF'. The search results are displayed in a list format, with the first result being 'Adirondack Experience'.

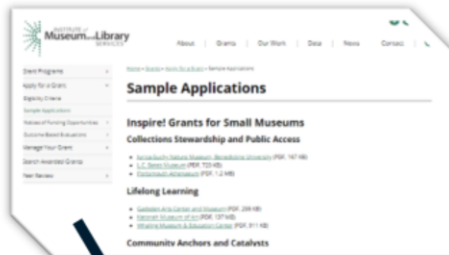
**Adirondack Experience**  
Log Number: [101\\_0513\\_0225\\_02](#)  
Fiscal Year: 2018  
Award#: \$211,874.00  
Recipient Type: Museum  
Program: Museums Empowered  
Program Categories: IMLS/Museums Empowered  
City: Blue Mountain Lake  
State: NY

**Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum**  
Log Number: [101\\_0513\\_0225\\_02](#)  
Fiscal Year: 2018

We want to share with you, the places to look for more information, such as the IMLS website, where you can find the awarded grants search to learn more about the projects we have funded through the Museums Empowered program.

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of grants that we have awarded in past years using a variety of criteria such as grant program name, institution name, location, and keyword. Your search will basic information about the award and a brief description of the project. This can be extremely helpful as you put ideas together for your own project.

# Sample Applications



Sample applications of recently funded grants are available on the IMLS website

## Museums Empowered

- [Museum of Science, Boston](#) (PDF, 261 KB)
- [McWane Science Center](#) (PDF, 1.1 MB)
- [National Museum of Women in the Arts](#) (PDF, 785 KB)
- [Oregon Museum of Science and Industry](#) (PDF, 625 KB)

We have also posted the abstract, narrative, and schedule of completion from four successful applications from 2019, one from each of the Museums Empowered categories: Digital Technology, Diversity & Inclusion, Evaluation, and Organizational Management.

To find these examples, go to the Sample Applications on the IMLS website and scroll down the page to find the Museums Empowered examples. Looking at these proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own.

## Important Dates

November 15, 2019	➔	Applications due: 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 15, 2019
December 2019	➔	
January 2020	➔	IMLS staff review for completeness and eligibility
February 2020	➔	
March - May 2020	➔	External peer review of applications
June 2020	➔	
July 2020	➔	
August 2020	➔	Awards announced: August 2020
September 2020	➔	All projects start: September 1, 2020

So, what happens after the application deadline? First, IMLS program staff review all applications for completeness and eligibility. The applications are then sent out for external peer review – to museum professionals around the country. Reviewers then meet at the IMLS office as a group to discuss each application. Reviewer scores and written comments are provided directly back to all applicants – to help you be more competitive in future application cycle – or for those application that were funded we know that the reviewer comments will often help the grantees be more successful with implementation of their projects.

Museums Empowered awards will be announced in early August 2020.

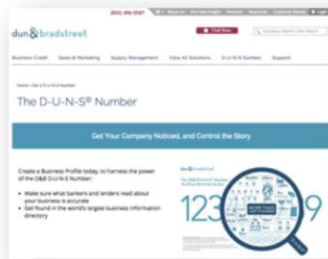
And all Museums Empowered projects must be scheduled to start September 1, 2020.



# Application Tips

## Register early!

1. D-U-N-S® Number: [www.dnb.com/us](http://www.dnb.com/us)
2. SAM Registration: [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)
3. Grants.gov Registration: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)



At this point, we'd like to share a few tips collected from our experience in working with applications submitted to the Museums Empowered program each year.

First on the list, is "Register early!" You must have a DUNS number, an active SAM.gov registration, and a current and functional Grants.gov registration. You must have a DUNS number to register with SAM.gov. You must have an active SAM.gov registration to register with Grants.gov. And you must have a functional Grants.gov registration to submit an application to IMLS.

It's also crucial to remember that your SAM.gov registration expires each year and you must renew it. You can log into SAM.gov at any time and find out your status. I would recommend doing that today.



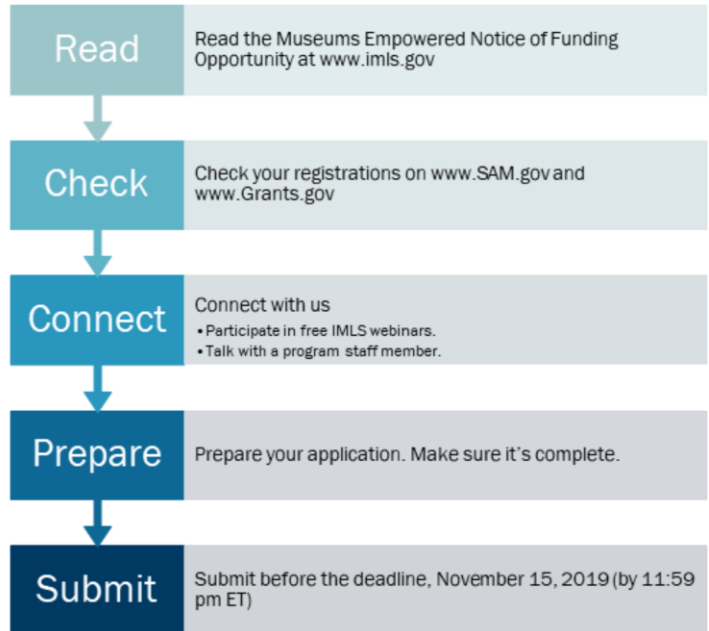
## Application Tips

- Do your background research.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, using the same headings, subheadings, or numbered sections to make it easy for reviewers to read.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.
- Check your spelling, grammar, and math.
- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit it.
- Be sure your application is complete.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.

Our legislation states that we can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline**. So here are some application tips to make sure you meet the deadline...

- Do your background research. Make it easy for the reviewers to see that you are up to date and know what you're talking about.
- Follow the narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and use headings or numbered sections to make it easy for reviewers to read.
- Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon. The people who will review your application are experts, but they may not be totally familiar with your particular field's shorthand. Make it easy for them to understand what you mean.
- Check your spelling, grammar, and math. It counts!
- Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit. Ask them to act like a reviewer who's seeing this for the first time.
- Be sure your application is complete. Check it against the Table of Application Components and then check it again.
- Submit to Grants.gov early so you can correct any errors.

## Recommended Next Steps



So to recap your next steps:

1. Visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) and read the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully.
2. Check your organization's registrations with both [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov) and [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov).
3. Connect with us: Participate in free IMLS webinars. Talk with a program staff member.
4. Prepare your application. Make sure it's complete.
5. Submit before the deadline, November 15, 2019 (by 11:59 pm ET)



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In closing our presentation today, I want to make sure you have our e-mail addresses and direct phone numbers. Don't hesitate to call or email either of us with questions or concerns.