



October 13, 2015

IMLS Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums FY2016 Information Session



RECORDING BEGINS

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services' webinar, "Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums Fiscal Year 2016 Information Session."

My name is Helen Wechsler, and speaking on behalf of the rest of the staff in the Office of Museum Services, we are delighted that you could join us today and that you are interested in learning more about the Sparks grant program.

Pre-recorded Webinar

IMLS FY2016 Museum Funding Opportunities

- <https://www.imls.gov/news-events/events/imls-fy2016-museum-funding-opportunities>
 - Blackboard Recording Link
 - PDF with transcript
- Topics Covered:
 - IMLS vision, mission, and strategic plan
 - IMLS funding programs and opportunities
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Registration requirements
 - Learning more

If you have not viewed our pre-recorded introductory webinar about IMLS's funding opportunities, we strongly recommend that you do so. You can access it at any time by going to our website's News & Events page, choosing Events and Webinars, and then clicking on IMLS FY2016 Museum Funding Opportunities, which is the link shown here.

In that webinar, we discuss IMLS's vision, mission, and strategic plan which are at the core of our grant-making.

We also introduced IMLS's funding programs and opportunities for museums, which include a technical assistance program (MAP) and five grant programs, and can help you decide which is best for your project.

We reviewed the eligibility requirements for each grant program.

We covered registration requirements—getting a DUNS number, and registering early with SAM.gov and Grants.gov.

And lastly, we encouraged potential applicants to view the webinar for each program to which they might want to apply. That brings us to today and the Sparks webinar.

FY2015 Sparks for Museums

Number of Applications	Number of Awards	Funds Requested	Funds Awarded
40	6	\$921,019	\$64,730

Before we jump into the details, we are often asked about numbers of applications and funding success rates, and so here are the figures for the just completed FY2015 grant cycle. As you can see, we funded 15% of the applications we received. That varies from year to year, but this is within the typical range.

Overview

1. Sparks Program Goals
2. Characteristics of Successful Sparks Projects
3. Important Dates
4. How Much and How Many?
5. Allowable/Unallowable Costs
6. Application Components
7. Application Tips
8. Review Process
9. Contacts

In this presentation, we'll be addressing the following topics:

1. Sparks Program Goals
2. Characteristics of Successful Sparks Projects
3. Important Dates
4. How Much and How Many?
5. Allowable/Unallowable Costs
6. Application Components
7. Application Tips
8. Review Process
9. Contacts

Sparks Program Goals

Supports projects that address problems of broad relevance to museums by prototyping and evaluating innovative approaches to operations and services that result in new tools, products, services, or organizational practices.

Let's begin with the Sparks for Museums goals. Sparks supports projects that address problems of broad relevance to museums by prototyping and evaluating innovative approaches to operations and services that result in new tools, products, services, or organizational practices.

The key concepts here that distinguish Sparks from other IMLS funding programs are that 1) the focus is on rapid prototyping of innovative solutions and 2) they address a need in the museum field (as apart from a need in an individual's museum or community which is the purpose of the Museums for America grant program).

Sparks is all about allowing you the time, creativity, and a little money to test some perhaps risky idea, see what you find out, and - success or stumble - report out to the field what you learned.

Characteristics of Successful Sparks Projects

Sparks for Museums	Museums for America: \$5,000-\$25,000 Funding Level
Broad Impact	Institutional Impact
In-depth Knowledge	In-depth knowledge
Innovative Approach	Project-based design
Shared Results	Demonstrable results

In the past, some museums have been attracted to the Sparks program because of its small grant size and lack of a cost share requirement, but have misunderstood its purpose. For this reason, I want to take a moment to talk about the characteristics of successful Sparks projects and compare them with those of successful Museums for America grant program projects. Museums for America has a funding level option of \$5,000 - \$25,000 for which cost share is not permitted, so these make a nice comparison.

SPARKS-Broad Impact: Your project should show the potential for far-reaching impact beyond your institution, and influence practice across one or more disciplines or specific fields within the museum profession.

MFA-Institutional Impact: Your project should address a key need or challenge that faces your museum and that is identified in your strategic plan.

SPARKS and MFA-both require In-depth Knowledge: Your project should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter. For **SPARKS** you should also be aware of current strategic initiatives and agendas in the field.

SPARKS-Innovative Approach: Your project should employ new approaches to strengthen and improve services to benefit the audiences and communities being served.

MFA-Project-based design: Your work plan should consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge.

SPARKS-Shared Results: Your project should generate results that can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to leverage the benefits of federal investment. Awardees are required to submit a short white paper to be publicly posted and shared with the field.

MFA-Demonstrable results: Your project should generate measureable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

Project that are not successful in getting Spark funding often fail to deliver convincingly on one or more of these characteristics, so it is wise to think hard about how to structure your application to show how your project will be strong in each. If it sounds like Museums for America might be a better fit for your project, please tune into that webinar on Thursday, October 15 at 3:30 PM Eastern.



We want to remind you of important dates for Sparks applications. They are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on December 1, 2015. That is non-negotiable and the time stamp is auto-generated by the Grants.gov system. We will say this over and over again, but **start early** and **submit early**. That way, if you encounter a difficulty of any kind when submitting your proposal, you'll have some time to resolve the problem.

Sparks for Museums awards will be announced in July, 2016.

And all Sparks projects must be scheduled to start August 1, September 1, or October 1, 2016. The choice is yours.

How much and how many?

HOW MUCH?

\$10,000-\$25,000 with no cost share required

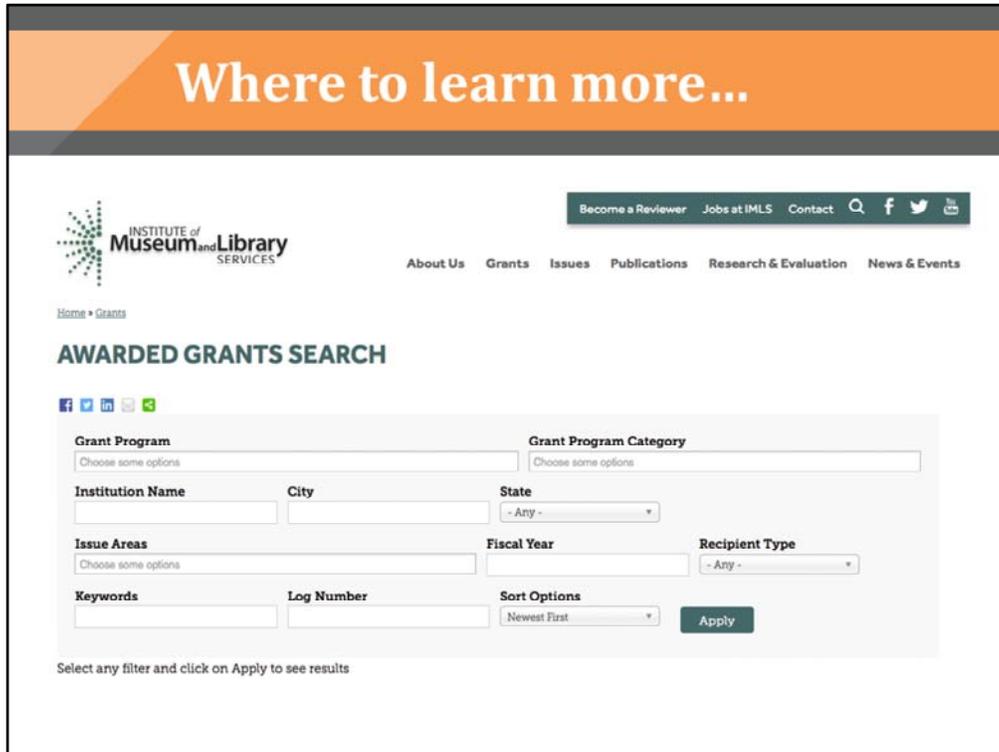
HOW MANY?

There is no limit on the number of applications your museum may submit to Sparks for Museums.

Next we'll address how much funding may you request and how many applications are you allowed to submit.

You may request anywhere from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and you are not required to provide cost share.

You may submit as many application as you wish.



We want to point out two places on the IMLS website to learn more about the projects we have funded in Sparks for Museums.

The Awarded Grants Search gives you an opportunity to explore an 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 return 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 or decide if Sparks or MFA is the right program for you.

The screenshot shows the American Museum of Natural History website. At the top left, there is a large orange banner with the text "Where to learn more...". The main navigation bar includes "Search & Review", "Jobs at PLS", "Contact", and social media icons. The page is titled "SAMPLE APPLICATIONS" and lists several grant categories:

- Museum Grants for African American History and Culture**
 - Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
 - Museum of the African Diaspora
 - National Center for the Study of Civil Rights and African American Culture, Atlanta State University
- Museums for America**
 - Learning Experiences**
 - Harvard Museums of Science and Culture
 - Montpelier Institute of Arts
 - Chinese Science Center
 - New Francisco Museum of Modern Art
 - Quincy Museum of Art
 - \$5,000 - \$25,000 Funding Level**
 - Discovery Center at North Haven
 - Community Anchors**
 - Los Angeles County Museum of Art
 - Minnesota Historical Society
 - Collections Stewardship**
 - The Henry Ford
 - Mural Museum
 - Portland Art Museum
 - National Marine Museum, University of South Dakota
 - American Museum of Natural History
 - \$5,000 - \$25,000 or Less Funding Level**
 - Princeton University of Fine Arts
 - John Thayer Museum in Youth Center
- National Leadership Grants for Museums**
 - National Art Education Association
 - Pacific Science Center
 - Museum of Science, Boston
 - Smithsonian Zoo
 - University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program**
 - Maui Preservation Society
 - Keating Inc.
- Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums**
 - Carson Museum of Natural History
 - Indiana Museum of Art

An orange arrow points to the "Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums" section.

We have also posted the abstract, narrative, and schedule of completion for some successful Sparks applications. Looking at these exemplary proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own.

Allowable Costs

Examples of allowable costs

- personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- travel expenses
- materials, supplies, software, and equipment
- consultant fees
- publication design and printing
- design, technical support, non-construction labor
- internships/fellowships



There are certain things that IMLS can fund and certain things that we can't. Here are some 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
- publication design and printing
- consultant fees
- design, technical support, printing, non-construction labor
- internships/fellowships

Unallowable Costs

Examples of unallowable costs

- general museum fundraising costs
- contributions to endowments
- general museum operating support
- acquisition of collections
- general advertising or public relations costs
- construction and renovation of museum facilities
- exhibit fabrication that involves contract labor of the construction trades
- reconstruction or renovation of historic sites
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment
- pre-award costs



<http://tinyurl.com/nxawgds>

Unallowable costs include:

- general museum fundraising costs, such as development office staff or other staff time devoted to general fundraising
- contributions to endowments
- general museum operating support
- acquisition of collections
- general advertising or public relations costs designed solely to promote activities other than those related to the specific project
- construction and renovation of museum facilities (generally, any activity involving contract labor of the construction trades is not an allowable cost)
- exhibit fabrication that involves contract labor of the construction trades
- reconstruction or renovation of historic sites
- social activities, ceremonies, receptions, or entertainment
- pre-award costs

Note that rules about allowability or unallowability relate to both costs that you are asking IMLS to pay for and costs covered by cost share.

To see the full set of rules, 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. You can access this at the site shown on the right side of the slide. Of particular interest may be Subpart E—Cost

Principles.

If you have questions about the allowability of specific activities, call IMLS staff for guidance.

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.

Next up are application components. As you will see in Grants.gov, if you haven't already, you will upload a series of documents 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 hundreds of pages of extraneous material that is not directly relevant to your project.

Table of Application Components

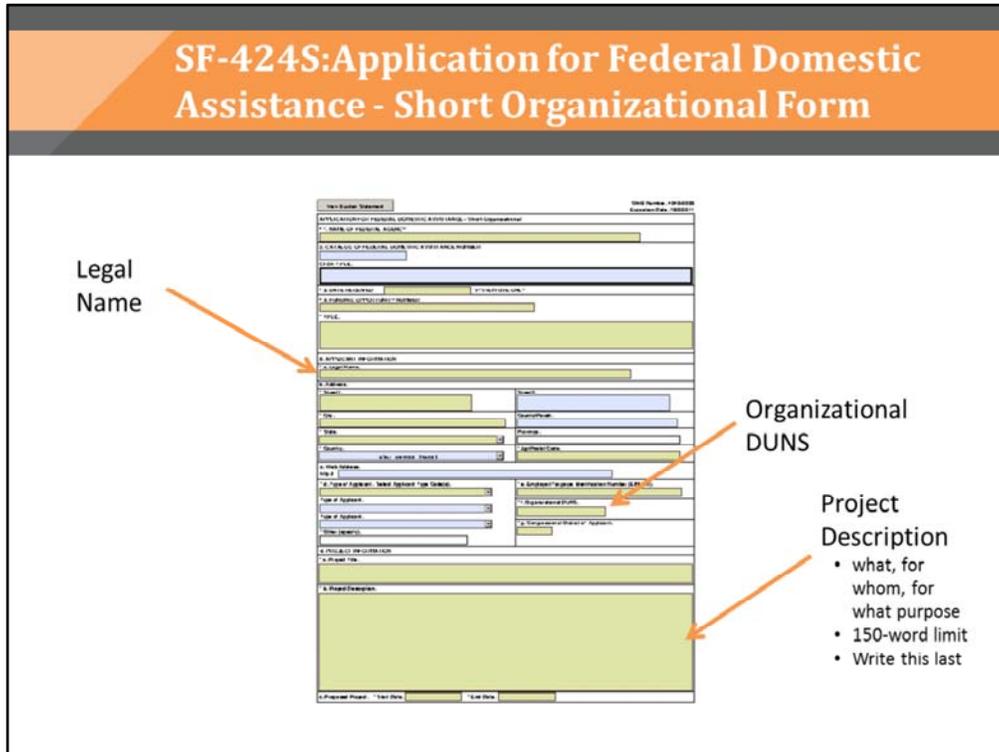
- Serves as a checklist of application components
- Identifies document formats and naming conventions
- Provides links to instructions and forms
- Identifies categories of documents (Required, Conditionally Required, Supporting)

Table of Application Components

Component	Format	File name to use
Required Documents		
The Application for Federal Assistance/Team Organizational Form (AF-450)	Others gov form	n/a
Abstract (one page max.)	PDF document	Abstract.pdf
DMLL Program Information Sheet	DMLL PDF form	Programinfo.pdf
Organizational Profile (one page max.)	PDF document	Organizationprofile.pdf
Narrative (one page max.)	PDF document	Narrative.pdf
Schedule of Completion (one page per year max.)	PDF document	Schedulecompletion.pdf
DMLL Budget Form	DMLL PDF form	Budget.pdf
Budget Justification	PDF document	Budgetjustification.pdf
List of Key Project Staff and Consultants (one page max.)	PDF document	Projectstaff.pdf
Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants that appear on the list above (one page each max.)	PDF document	Resumes.pdf
Conditionally Required Documents		
Proof of Nonprofit Status	PDF document	Proofnonprofit.pdf
Federally Required Indirect Cost Rate Agreement	PDF document	Indirectcostrate.pdf
Digital Inevitable Supplementary Information Form	DMLL PDF form	Digitalinevitable.pdf
Supporting Documents		
Information that supplements the narrative and answers the account description described in the application	PDF document	Supportingdoc1.pdf Supportingdoc2.pdf Supportingdoc3.pdf etc.

In the Sparks Notice of Funding Opportunity is a Table of Application Components. You can use this to keep yourself organized. It serves as a checklist of application components. The middle column tells you what formats and the third tells you how to name each document so that you may upload your application to Grants.gov successfully.

It also provides links to instructions and forms, and it tells you which documents are required, conditionally required, and supporting.



Now we're going to look at some of the forms that are required for your application. The first form is the SF 424S, or the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance, Short Organizational Form. This is a Required Document, and the form is downloaded as part of the Grants.gov package. It is not available from the IMLS website.

There are three important things to watch for on this page:

The **Legal Name** ties to Program Information Sheet, which we'll get to in a few minutes, and these entries should match. It is the name to which your DUNS number is officially tied.

The **Organizational DUNS number** is important in confirming your eligibility, identity, and tax-exempt status. It must link to the Legal Name.

And at the bottom of the page is space for a **Project Description**. This is important for at least two reasons:

1. We use this during the review process, and if you're funded, it can be the basis for the representation of your project that goes on our website and to the media. Write your project description to address **what you plan to do, for whom, and for what purpose**. Be sure to list your major activities and your intended results. Don't waste characters on telling us what grant program you are applying for, how much you're asking for, or the history of your organization. **Consider making this the last piece you write so that it is as concise and accurate as possible.**

2. There is a character limit of about 150 words that you won't encounter until the moment you press the **SUBMIT** button. Your entire application might be rejected by Grants.gov if you exceed the limit.

SF-424S: Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational Form

The image shows a screenshot of the SF-424S Short Organizational Form. The form is divided into two main sections: '1. PROJECT DIRECTOR' and '2. PRIMARY CONTACT/GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR'. Each section contains a series of fields for personal and contact information, including Name, Title, Address, Phone, and Email. An orange arrow points from the text 'Project Director' to the first section, and another orange arrow points from the text 'Primary Contact/Grants Administrator' to the second section.

Page 2 of the SF-424S is about the Project Director and the Primary Contact/Grants Administrator. The Project Director should be the person who is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the project. The Primary Contact might be someone in the grants office or someone whose role is more purely administrative. These two positions may be the same person.

HOWEVER...

Let’s turn now to the Program Information Sheet, which is an IMLS form downloadable from our website. This is a five-page document that is VERY important to your application. The Notice of Funding Opportunity provides complete instructions for how to fill out this form, but we want to highlight a couple of especially important things for you here. Make sure the Program Information Sheet you download looks like this one and has a 2018 expiration date. We made very important changes this year, and you want to be sure you aren’t using an old version that is cached on your machine or left over from a previous application.

In #1a on page 1, you’ll see “Legal Name.” This must be the same as the “Legal Name” you provided on the SF-424S.

Below that in #1c, we ask about your SAM.gov registration. You MUST have a SAM.gov registration, and it MUST be active. We recommend that you check this immediately. If you haven’t registered yet, start the process now because it can take several weeks. If you need to renew, start that process now too because it also can take several weeks. Please remember: Your SAM.gov registration must be active throughout the grant review period, at the time awards are made, and throughout the lifespan of your grant. Without it, we cannot accept your application, review it, make an award, or provide you money.

In #1d and e, we ask you to record your organizational unit if that is different from the Legal Name of the applicant and its address. In some cases, the Legal Name entity might be something other than a museum, usually its parent organization—such as a university. In

that case, you would enter the university's name as the Legal Applicant and the museum name as the Organizational Unit.

If you have questions about your own situation, spend some time with the eligibility requirements for Sparks, and then call us if you need help in interpreting them.

Program Information Sheet

IMLS PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

2. Organizational Financial Information

3. Please complete the following table for **Organizational Unit(s)** for the three most recently completed fiscal years.

Fiscal Year	Total Revenue**	Total Expenses**	Surplus or Deficit
			\$0

** For nonprofit tax filers, Total Revenue can be found on Line 12 of the 990 Form 990.

** For nonprofit tax filers, Total Expenses can be found on Line 16 of the 990 Form 990.

3. If you had a budget surplus or deficit greater than 10% of your annual operating budget for two or more of the three fiscal years listed above, please explain the circumstances of this surplus or deficit in the box below.

c. Were there any material weaknesses identified in your prior year's audit report?

Yes No Not applicable

A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

If yes, please explain:

d. Has your organization had an A-133 audit in the past three years?

Yes No

OMB Number: 3157-0071, Expiration date: 07/31/2014

IMLS-PLA-F-2013

Financial
Information

On page 2, we ask questions about your organization's finances—total revenue and expenses for three fiscal years; budget surplus or deficit greater than 10% of your annual operating budget; and any material weakness identified in your prior year's audit report. If you are applying using an **organizational unit** designation, then these questions apply to the organizational unit, rather than to the Legal Name entity. If you're the museum that's run by a university, we want to know about the museum budget, not that of the entire university.

Program Information Sheet

IMLS PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

3. Grant Program Information

3a. Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program
 Select one funding category:
 Phased Grant
 Planning Grant
 National Forum Grant
 Research Grant

Select one project category:
 Obtain need and doctoral-level programs
 Research and Early Career Development
 Continued Education and Programs to Build Institutional Capacity

3b. National Leadership Grants for Librarians
 Select one funding category:
 Phased Grant
 Planning Grant
 National Forum Grant
 Research Grant

3c. Native American/Native Hawaiian Library Services
 Select one funding category:
 Classic Grant Only
 Classic Grant with Education/Assessment Option
 Enhancement Grant
 Native American Library Services

4. Sparks! Ignition Grants

4a. Sparks! Ignition Grants
 Museum Library

4b. Museum for America
 Select one project category:
 Learning Experiences
 Community Anchors
 Collections Stewardship

Select one funding level:
 IMLS funds requested total \$25,000 or less with no applicant cost share permitted.
 IMLS funds requested total more than \$25,000 with applicant cost share required.

4c. National Leadership Grants for Museums
 Select one project category:
 Learning Experiences
 Community Anchors
 Collections Stewardship

4d. Museum Grants for African American History and Culture
 Select one funding level:
 IMLS funds requested total \$25,000 or less with no applicant cost share permitted.
 IMLS funds requested total more than \$25,000 with applicant cost share required.

4e. Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services

4. Performance Goals
 Select one of the following three IMLS agency-level goals: (a) Learning, (b) Community, or (c) Content and Collections. Then select at least one of the performance goals listed beneath it.

4a. Learning
 Train and develop museum and library professionals
 Support communities of practice
 Develop and provide inclusive and accessible learning opportunities

4b. Community
 Strengthen museums and libraries as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities

4c. Content and Collections
 Broaden access and expand use of the Nation's content and collections
 Improve management of the Nation's content and collections
 Improve preservation, conservation, and care of the Nation's content and collections

If you select a performance goal listed beneath Learning or Community for your project, [click here](#) to view the specific performance measure statement choices and the information you will be required to collect for each.

5. Funding Request Information

a. IMLS funds requested: b. Cost share amount:

OMB Number 3137-0171, Expiration date 07/31/2018 IMLS-OLRF-003

On page 3, we ask what grant program you are applying under. You will check the Museum box under Sparks! Ignition Grants, circled on the slide.

#4 will be new to returning applicants. As part of new government-wide regulations regarding federal grants, we are asking you to select one or more performance goals that align with our agency-level goals. You'll begin by making a choice—Learning, Community, or Collections. Next, choose one or more of the pre-determined performance goals beneath it.

Once you have done this, you will need to choose a performance measure statements. If you are proposing a Learning or a Community project, then click on the link circled in orange here to view a list of pre-determined performance measure statements that will help IMLS document the collective achievements of the Learning and Community projects we fund.

Performance Measure Statements

PERFORMANCE MEASURE STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION FOR LEARNING AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Performance Measure Statements and Information to be Collected and Reported for Learning and Community Projects

On the Program Information Sheet, you selected an IMLS Agency-Level Goal of Learning or Community with which your project best aligns, and you selected at least one performance goal that reflects a measurable change or outcome that you intend for your project to achieve.

Below is a list of pre-determined performance measure statements that will help IMLS document the collective achievements of the Learning and Community projects we fund.

IMPORTANT: You will be required to provide specific information directly relating to these performance measure statement(s) in your Final Performance Report. You may design and administer a more elaborate survey than what will be required to gather this specific information. These information-gathering activities must be incorporated into your application narrative, your work plan, your schedule of completion, and your budget, as necessary.

IMLS Agency-Level Goal 1: Learning

Performance Goal	Performance Measure Statement	Information You Will Be Expected to Report
	Survey Respondent: Program/Project Participants	Date to be Collected
Train and develop museum and library professionals.	My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training. Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree, nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants • Number of total responses • Number of responses per answer option • Number of non-responses
	My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training. Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree, nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants • Number of total responses • Number of responses per answer option • Number of non-responses

The link will take you to this page of our website. You'll see here that you will be required to provide specific data directly relating to these performance measure statement(s) in your Final Performance Report. Now, while you won't be writing that Final Performance Report until at least 15 months from the time you get your award, you **will** need to administer surveys to get responses from your program or project participants, your staff, or your community partners, depending on the nature of your project.

It stands to reason then that you will need to set aside time and resources in your project to collect and analyze this information, so we expect you to incorporate it into your application narrative, your work plan, your schedule of completion, and your budget.

If you have questions about this new requirement, please don't hesitate to contact an IMLS staff member. We'll be happy to discuss it with you and how it will impact your particular project.

Program Information Sheet

IMLS PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

3. Grant Program Information
 A. Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program
Select one funding category:
 Phased Grant
 Planning Grant
 National Forum Grant
 Research Grant
Select one project category:
 Master's and Doctoral-level Programs
 Research and Early Career Development
 Continuing Education and Programs to Build Institutional Capacity

B. National Leadership Grants for Libraries
Select one funding category:
 Phased Grant
 Planning Grant
 National Forum Grant
 Research Grant

C. Native American/Native Hawaiian Library Services
Select one funding category:
 Basic Grant Only
 Basic Grant with Education/Assessment Option
 Enhancement Grant
 Native American Library Services

4. Performance Goals
Select one of the following three IMLS agency-level goals: (a) Learning, (b) Community, or (c) Content and Collections. Then select at least one of the performance goals listed beneath it.

a. Learning
 Train and develop museum and library professionals
 Support communities of practice
 Develop and provide inclusive and accessible learning opportunities

b. Community
 Strengthen museums and libraries as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities

c. Content and Collections
 Increase access and equid use of the Nation's content and collections
 Improve management of the Nation's content and collections
 Improve preservation, conservation, and care of the Nation's content and collections

If you select a performance goal listed beneath Learning or Community for your project, [click here](#) to review the specific performance measure statement choices and the information you will be required to collect for each.

5. Funding Request Information
a. IMLS funds requested: b. Cost share amount:

OMB Number 3347-0171, Expiration date 07/31/2018 IMLS-OLRF-2023

IMLS Funds Requested and Cost Share

Also on page 3 of the Program Information Sheet, we ask you to tell us how much money you are requesting from IMLS, and to record any cost share. **Make sure these amounts reflect what's in your budget.**

Program Information Sheet

OMB Number 3137-0071, Expiration date: 07/31/2016

IMLS PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

6. Population Served
Please select the target population(s) served by the proposed project:

<input type="checkbox"/> General Population	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum and/or Library Professionals
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood/Preschool (0-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Americans/Native Hawaiians/Native Hawaiians
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Childhood/Primary School (6-12 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> People with Mental or Physical Challenges/Disabilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Adolescence/High School (13-19 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> People Who Are Low Income/Economically Disadvantaged
<input type="checkbox"/> Adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Populations
<input type="checkbox"/> Aging, Elderly, Senior Citizens (50+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Scholars/Researchers
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic or Racial Minority Populations other than Native Americans/Native Hawaiians	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed
<input type="checkbox"/> Families/Intergenerational	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Populations
<input type="checkbox"/> Immigrants/Refugees	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Military Families	

7. Museum Profile (Museum Applicants Only)

a. Is your institution either a private not-for-profit organization that has tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code or a unit of state or local government that is organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes? Yes No

b. Is your institution open and exhibiting tangible objects to the general public at least 120 days a year through facilities your institution owns or operates? Yes No

c. Does your institution own or use these objects, whether animate or inanimate? Yes No

d. Does your institution care for these objects? Yes No

e. Does your institution exhibit these objects to the general public on a regular basis through facilities your institution owns or operates? Yes No

f. Institution's attendance for the 12-month period prior to the application

On-site: Off-site:

g. Year the institution was first open and exhibiting to the public:

h. Total number of days the institution was open to the public for the 12-month period prior to application:

i. Does the institution employ at least one professional staff member, or the full-time equivalent, whether paid or unpaid, who is primarily engaged in the acquisition, care, or exhibition to the public of tangible objects owned or used by the institution? Yes No

j. Number of full-time paid institution staff:

k. Number of full-time unpaid institution staff:

l. Number of part-time paid institution staff:

m. Number of part-time unpaid institution staff:

OMB Number 3137-0071, Expiration date: 07/31/2016

M.I.S. O.A.F. 8023

Museum Profile →

On page 4, we draw your attention to #7, Museum Profile. This is for museum applicants only. This is where you provide the information we need to verify your **eligibility** as a museum for Sparks funding. We need answers for each question, **a** through **m**, so don't skip any. If you are a university or professional association, also eligible for Sparks, you do not need to complete this section, unless you are a university museum.

Narrative: Statement of Need

Tell us:

- What do you propose to do?
- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified?
- Who or what will benefit from your project?
- How will your project address the goals of this program

Reviewers will look for:

- *Clearly explained project*
- *Clearly identified and supported need, problem, or challenge*
- *Clearly identified beneficiaries of the project who have they been involved in planning the project*
- *Address current needs of the museum field and/or have the potential to advance practice in the museum profession*
- *Meet the Sparks Grants requirement of demonstrating broad impact, in-depth knowledge, and an innovative approach*

Now let's talk about the narrative of your proposal. You have six pages to cover three very important issues.

STATEMENT OF NEED

In this 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; how you identified it; who or what will benefit from your work; how your project will address the goals of Sparks to prototype innovative solutions to field wide challenges.

Reviewers will evaluate your proposal on how well you explain your project; how well you've defended the need, problem, or challenge you will address; how well you've identified who or what will benefit from the project, and if this involves an audience of some kind, how good of a job you've done in involving them in the planning; and how well your project aligns with the goals of the Sparks for Museums program.

Narrative: Impact

Tell us:

- How will you collect and report the data required for the performance measure statement(s) you have chosen?
- What are your intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
- How will you determine whether this innovation can be adapted by others in the field?

Reviewers will look for:

- *Well designed and feasible plan for collecting and reporting data*
- *Clearly articulated, appropriate, and realistic results linked to need, problem, or challenge*
- *Value of the results to the museum field*

IMPACT

The second section of your narrative should be devoted to articulating the impact of your project.

For Learning Experiences and Community Anchors projects, tell us how you will collect and report the data required for the performance measure statements you have chosen.

What specific results do you intend to achieve in your project?

How will you determine that your innovative solution can be used by others in the field?

Reviewers will give us their opinions on your plan for collecting and reporting data; how likely it is you will deliver on the improvements that you've proposed; and the value of your results to the museum field.

Narrative: Project Design

Tell us:

- What specific activities, including evaluation and performance measurements, will you carry out?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- When and in what sequence will your activities occur?
- What financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?
- How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?
- In addition to the white paper, how and with whom will you share your project's results?

Reviewers will look for:

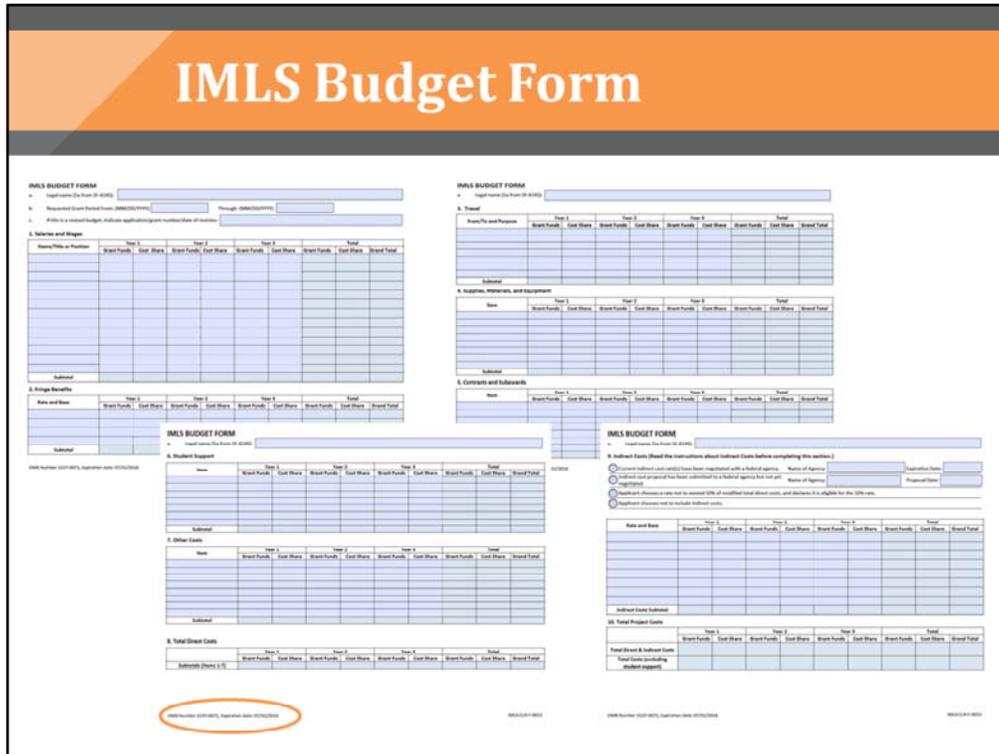
- *Activities informed by appropriate theory and practice*
- *Appropriate evaluation activities and performance measurements*
- *Staff, partners, consultants, and service providers with necessary experience and skills*
- *Realistic and achievable schedule of work*
- *Time, personnel, and financial resources appropriate for the scope and scale of the project*
- *Evidence of capacity to carry out the project activities*
- *Clear methodology for tracking the project's progress*
- *Effective plan for communicating results and sharing discoveries?*

PROJECT DESIGN

Lastly, the Project Design 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 performance goals and intended results; and how and with whom you will share your project's results.

Reviewers will weigh in on how well they think you've taken into account 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 of work 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 performance measurements and will weigh in on whether it will result in valid and reliable findings; whether your methodology for tracking progress will give you what you need to adjust course when necessary. And last but not least, they'll register how effective they think your plan for communicating results and/or sharing discoveries will be.



The IMLS Budget Form is next. This is a single fillable PDF document that is four pages long and that you download from our website. Since Sparks project are a year in duration, you will only use the first set of columns on the form. The Notice of Funding Opportunity contains detailed instructions for what to include where. Make sure that expenses that will be paid from IMLS funds as well as those that you will cover as part of your cost share are in the right categories, are justifiable in the context of your project, and, of course, represent allowable costs.

Make sure you have **this** version of the form, and not a cached one, as there are some important changes over previous years. Check the expiration date and make sure it says 7/31/2018.

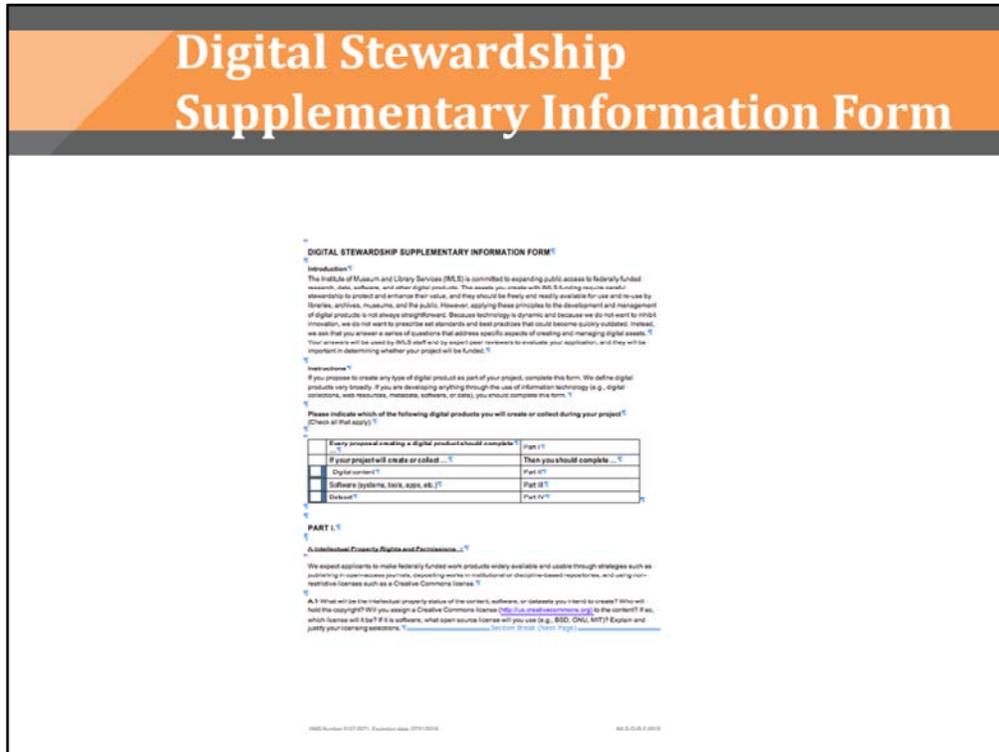
Budget Justification

- Address the purpose for each expense in the budget
- Explain the basis or method of cost computation used to determine each dollar amount.
- Itemize and explain any costs that you consolidated and summarized on the IMLS Budget Form.
- Explain all costs – IMLS and Cost Share
- Follow the format of the IMLS Budget form section headings.
- DO NOT use the Budget Justification to detail staff qualifications or to justify your project.

You will also need to write a Budget Justification. This is a separate document, and an important part of your application. Peer reviewers will use it to evaluate the appropriateness of the financial resources you have identified as necessary for your project, and IMLS staff will use it to check your calculations and make determinations regarding the allowability of specific expenses. The Notice of Funding Opportunity includes very useful Guidance for Writing a Budget Justification. You may use as many pages as necessary to fully justify your budget.

Your Budget Justification should:

- Address the purpose for each expense in the budget—both the IMLS ask and the cost share, if required.
- Explain the basis or method of cost computation used to determine each dollar amount, for example.
 - Travel for Advisory Meeting: \$4,400
 - 4 advisors, 2 days each
 - Estimated Airfare $\$500 \times 4 = \$2,000$
 - Lodging $\$200 \times 2 \times 4 = \$1,600$
 - Meals $\$100 \times 2 \times 4 = \800
- Follow the format of the IMLS Budget form section headings.
- DO NOT use the Budget Justification to detail staff qualifications or to justify your project. There are other places for that!



The last form we'll talk about today is the Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form. If your project includes creating a digital product of any kind—digital collections, web resources, metadata, software, or a digital dataset—you should complete and submit the Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form as a Supporting Document. This five-part form makes it easy for reviewers and for IMLS to understand how you will create your digital products and how you will make them available for use and re-use by others.

Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not prescribe standards and best practices. Instead, we ask a series of questions about your digital stewardship project, and your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by peer reviewers to evaluate your proposal. You need to complete the sections that align best with your project.

Application Tips

Register early!

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



At this point, we'd like to share a few tips gleaned from our experience in working with applications submitted 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.

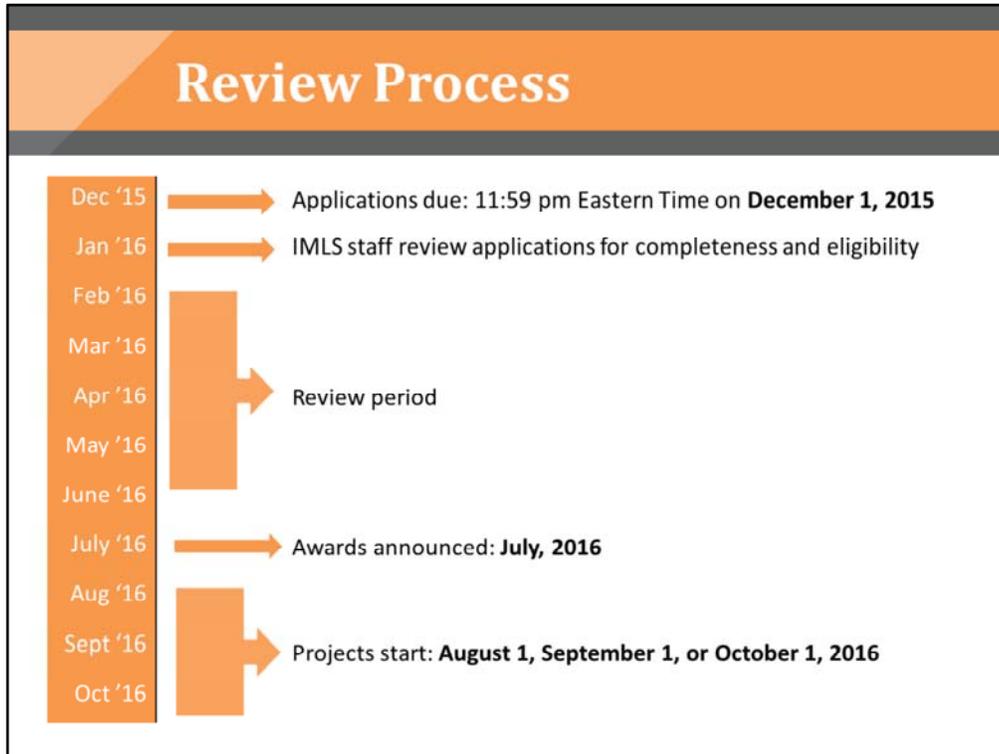
Application Tips

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: We can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline**. So...

- Start early.
- Do your background research.
- Revisit the grant Notice of Funding Opportunity frequently, and follow the narrative outline it provides. Use 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.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW: Our legislation states that we can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline**. So...

- Start early.
- 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.
- Revisit the grant Notice of Funding Opportunity frequently, and follow the narrative outline it provides. Use headings, subheadings, 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.
- 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.



We want to remind you of important dates for Sparks applications. They are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on December 1, 2015. That is non-negotiable and the time stamp is auto-generated by the Grants.gov system. Again, start early so that if you encounter a difficulty of any kind when submitting your proposal, you'll have some time to resolve the problem.

After the grants are submitted and our agency downloads them from Grants.gov, we check for completeness and eligibility before they go out for review. The review period includes identifying appropriate reviewers, getting systems set up for online review, the reviewers work, staff analysis of the reviewers work, recommendations to the director, and the director's decision. She has the sole responsibility of making IMLS funding decisions.

Sparks awards will be announced in July, 2016.

And all Sparks projects must be scheduled to start August 1, September 1, or October 1, 2016.

Contacts

IMLS Office of Museum Services Staff Contacts

Connie Bodner
cbodner@imls.gov
202.653.4636

Reagan Moore
rmoore@imls.gov
202.653.4637

 **Jill Connors-Joyner**
jconnors-joyner@imls.gov
202.653.4791

Sandra Narva
snarva@imls.gov
202.653.4634

Mark Feitl
mfeitl@imls.gov
202.653.4635

Mary Sellers
msellers@imls.gov
202.653.4689

Sarah Glass
sglass@imls.gov
202.653.4652

Steve Shwartzman
sshwartzman@imls.gov
202.653.4641

Mark Isaksen
misaksen@imls.gov
202.653.4667

Helen Wechsler
hwechsler@imls.gov 
202.653.4779

Thank you very much for your interest in IMLS and in Sparks, and we hope you have found the information in this webinar helpful. Here is a listing of the names, email addresses, and direct phones for program staff in the Office of Museum Services. Jill and I are can to answer Sparks questions but if you can't reach us, any staff member will be happy to help you.



To learn more, visit www.imls.gov



STOP RECORDING

Now we'd like to open the phone lines so we can answer any questions you might have and respond to some of the more complicated ones that might have come up via the chat.