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IMLS
FY18 NLG LB21 APPLICANT WEBINAR
JULY 20, 2017
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     >> Hello, my name is Sandy and I'm a program officer in the
office of library services. Today I'm joined by Sandra and
Steven. Please let me know if you can hear me okay by typing in
the chat box. If you have technical problems, type it in the
chat box and we'll help you as soon as we can. The phones are
muted, but if you have questions, type them into the chat box
and I'll try to answer all of them. We'll have a Q&A portion at
the end of the presentation.

     Welcome to the institution webinar. Today we'll briefly go
over IMLS and provide an overview of the NLG and LB21 grant
programs, including changes we've made to both programs this
year. We'll also review eligibility criteria, product and
funding categories and take you through the application process,
as well as give you some tips.

     IMLS is a primary source of federal support for the
nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. We make grants,

convene groups, conduct research, and publish in order to build the capacity of museums and libraries to serve the public.

IMLS's vision and mission statements emphasize that IMLS is here to support libraries and museums in serving their communities. The IMLS vision is a democratic society where communities and individuals thrive with broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage and life-long learning. The mission of IMLS is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, learning and cultural and civic engagement.

We provide leadership through research, policy development and grant-making. The IMLS mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, learning and cultural and civic engagement. We provide leadership through research, policy development and grant-making.

There are three strategic priorities that drive agency-wide grant-making. Learning, community, and content. These will tie in quite closely with our grant programs. But have been the themes of our funding for the last few years and they may be familiar to you if you apply for grants in the past.

Today, we'll be talking about two of our grant programs. Both of which have a deadline of September 1st. The first is our national leadership grants for libraries program, otherwise known as NLG. This grant program supports projects that address significant challenges and opportunities facing the library and archive fields and have the potential to advance theory and practice. Successful proposals may include national impact, incorporate collaborations, show relevant and expertise about the topic at hand.

The other program we'll be discussing today is the Laura Bush 21st century librarian grant program. This program supports developing a diverse workforce of librarians to better meet the changing learning and information needs of the American public. By enhancing the training and professional development of librarians, developing faculty and library leaders and recruiting and educating the next generation of librarians. Similar to NLG, successful proposals include broad impact, collaborative developments and advance library practice.

We have information pages on our website for both programs. If you're on this webinar, it's likely you've already visited one or both of them. These pages provide an overview of the

program, links to the full notice of the funding opportunities or NOFOs and also relevant webinar recordings. If you want to refer back to this applicant webinar at a later date, that's where you'll find it.

In addition, on each page, you can find a list of the relevant program staff that you should contact with questions about the grant programs and the application process.

You're eligible to apply if you're a unit of state or local government or a 501C3 non-profit organization, located in one of the 50 states and territories. One of six types of organizations, including a library or parent organization, an academic or administrative unit, a digital library or library agency, consortium or association. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please reach out to someone on our program staff. One note: The Laura Bush grant program has additional eligibility restrictions for some of the categories, so please pay attention to that in the notice of funding opportunity.

You're not eligible to apply if you're a federally-funded institution, a for-profit, an individual, or a foreign country or organization. A federally-funded institution doesn't mean you receive other federal grants, it means you're a federal agency, like the Smithsonian, for example. We cannot fund you.

If you're an eligible institution, we encourage you to partner with an eligible institution on a project. While you cannot be the lead applicant, you may apply through a partnership with an eligible institution and receive funding to support activities in that manner.

There's more information about this in the guidelines on our website. But the point here is to figure out, early on, if you're eligible to apply for the program that is of interest to you.

In fiscal year 17, we made several changes to both LB21 and NLG. If you had a chance to look at the notices of funding opportunity, you may have noticed new project categories. The community anchored and curating collections categories were introduced in FY17 while the national digital platform category was introduced in FY16. While we haven't made any changes to the names of these project categories since last year, we have continued to refine how we define each of these categories. So,

even if you read last year's notice of funding opportunity, or applied to one of these categories, you want to take a careful look at how they're defined in our new notices of funding opportunity.

Also, just as a reminder, in FY17, we also folded the Sparks Grants into NLG. Sparks used to be run as a separate grant program once a year. Now, has an application opportunity under the National Leadership Grants Program. The Sparks Grants are still available, they're just now included under NLG, this means they're now offered twice a year and follow the same application process.

For FY17, we also reintroduced the preprofessional category into the LB21 program and will continue to offer that option in FY18.

We provided some guidance for those of you who are unsure whether your project idea fits into NLG or LB21. If your project or research is primarily about education and training for information professionals, either formal or informal education, you should be applying to LB21. If you're applying as a ten-year track faculty member to do research, you'll want to look at the early research category in LB21. Otherwise, other information will fall under the NLG program.

This chart features some examples of projects and activities that would fall within each program. Please make sure to read through the notice of funding opportunity carefully to ensure your project is aligned with the correct grant program and that you meet eligibility criteria. If you're still unsure, feel free to contact one of our program staff for guidance.

>> Hi, everybody, this is Sarah. I'll be taking over from Sandy for the remainder of our webinar presentation. Thanks again for joining us.

On each application, you'll be asked to select one project category. Either community anchors, National Digital Platform or Curating Collections. We're going to talk about each of those.

Note that each category is defined slightly differently for LB21 as opposed to NLG. We'll be speaking generally as we discuss the categories. You should make sure to review the NOFO for specific language about how each category applies to each program.

First up is the Community Anchors category. Proposals should encourage civic and cultural engagement, foster community dialogue, facilitate life long learning, promote digital inclusion, enhance equity and access and support economic vitality. The benefits of projects must not be limited to the local community, but also advance national practice. In Laura Bush 21st century grant program, community anchors projects will increase the capacity of library and archives professionals to support communities through training, educational opportunities and research.

Projects should improve the ability of library professionals to create meaningful community partnerships and provide programs and services and encourage civic and cultural engagement, foster community dialogue, facilitate life long learning, promote digital inclusion and support economic vitality.

The national digital platform category focuses on the creation and use of open source software for library centers and archives. In NLG, we're looking for proposals that will expand the capacity of libraries and archives to provide digital content and services to users.

For LB21, we're looking for a proposal that will increase library and archive professionals ability to create, enhance and deploy that software.

The curating collections category is closely related to the national digital platform category. In NLG, we are interested in proposals that can have a signal impact on shared services for the access, preservation, and/or stewardship of digital library collections and content across the country. It's important to note that projects focused on preserving or providing access to a particular collection or set of collections cannot be supported.

Similarly, the program cannot support the digitization of content or predigitization activities, such as inventory and collections.

In LB21, we are interested in a proposal that will increase library and archive's professional's capacity to create, manage, preserve and provide access to digital library collections across the country.

Along with the project category, the Laura Bush program also requires all applicants to select a project type. Research grant applicants need to select one of these types and also demonstrate how the project advanced theory and/or empirical understanding.

The preprofessional category is applicable to any program, focused on any part of the prelibrary school trajectory. This can be training programs for college students or even created opportunities for students in middle school or high school to explore careers in Library and Information Science.

Recruitment, mentorship and service learning may all be key components of these types of projects, but the caveat that any grant activities should keep the goal of developing a diverse workforce in mind.

Masters programs educate the next generation of librarians and archivists in nationally accredited graduate library programs to meet the evolving needs of the profession and society. Doctoral programs develop faculty to educate the next generation of library and archive professionals. These programs should develop library and archive leaders to assume positions as managers, administrators, researchers and faculty.

Early career development proposals support untenured, tenured track Library and Information Science faculty. The last project type is continuing education. These projects improve the knowledge, skill, and abilities of library and archive professionals in the field through formal and informal education opportunities. This could include postmasters programs, residencies, internships, enhanced work experiences, blended learning opportunities, including mentorships, online learning modules and other training programs for professional staff.

All applicants will also have to select a funding category. As we mentioned earlier, Sparks Grants were folded into NLG. Sparks Grants are for small rapid prototyping products. Planning grants are for preliminary project activities. Many people think about this as planning for a larger grant, but that's not a requirement. This may be conducting preliminary research, conducting an environmental scan or working on creating partnerships to support larger future activities.

National forum grants are for convening experts and stakeholders around an issue of national significance. This

could be to support one large meeting or several meetings, focused on a particular area to establish a shared agenda or understanding.

Project grants and research grants support implementation or development activities. As well as investigating key research questions and library archive practice. These are limited to one to three years.

However, doctoral projects can be up to four years long. To give you a better sense of the scale in each of these funding categories, here's are the funding limits for each. The funding levels may be different within each funding category for national leadership grants and for Laura Bush 21st century librarian grants.

There's flexibility within the funding levels, but you should keep in mind, we've limited funding and both programs are highly competitive. We fund very few million or $2 million projects. There's a value proposition that comes into play. The higher the amount you are asking for, the more compelling your case must be for how your work will impact the entire field and represent a significant return on investment.

The notices of funding opportunities also spell out these funding caps along with the corresponding cost share requirements. Cost sharing isn't considered in the review of applications, but it is an eligibility criteria for certain NLG and LB21 projects. Again, this is filled out in the notices of funding opportunity for each funding type.

Please remember if a cost is unallowable for analyst funds, it is unallowable for cost share as well.

Applications in both NLG and LB21 are due September 1st 2017. Each application must include an SF424 generated grants.gov, an IMLS program information sheet and most importantly, a two-page preliminary proposal. No other documents will be accepted.

Applications must be submitted through grants.gov and then undergo peer review. Grants.gov will soon require all applicants to submit their applications through the work space feature on their website. So, we recommend all applicants opt to do so this application round.

After peer-review, all applicants will receive reviewer comments and feedback and a small percentage will be invited to submit a full proposal for further consideration.

Those that are invited to submit full proposals will need to submit those by January 16 of 2018. The required components for the full proposals are much more extensive and also listed in the notice of funding opportunity. These applications are also submitted through grants.gov and will similarly undergo a peer review process. All full proposal applicants will be provided reviewer comments and feedback regardless of whether the projects are selected for funding or not.

The IMLS director makes final funding decisions which will be announced in April of 2018. To give you an idea how competitive the grant programs are, here's a number from cycle one of last year.

As you can see, 43% of the applicants for NLG and 46% of applicants were LB21 were invited to submit full proposals following review of the two-page proposals. Of the applicants invited to submit full proposals, 64% of NLG applicants and 52% of LB21 applicants were awarded grants.

Overall, roughly a quarter of the original applicants from NLG and LB21 received grants during cycle one of FY17. Obviously these numbers vary each year and are based on the availability of funding, but it does demonstrate that the process can be quite competitive and that you should plan to invest in substantial time in writing your two-page proposal to ensure it's competitive within the guidelines of the program you select.

These are important dates you need to be aware of during this application cycle. Please read through the notes of funding opportunities carefully to ensure you're meeting eligibility criteria and have fulfilled all the application requirements.

There are three places where you must register your organization in order to be able to submit a proposal. DUNS, SAM and grants.gov. We strongly recommend you check all the administrations are active. It can take time to update and renew them.

Your organization will need a DUNS number. The URL for acquiring a DUNS number is on the slide.

Next, your institution must be registered with the system of award management or SAM. It's important to keep in mind your SAM registration is good for one year and must be renewed. That's something you don't want to do right before the deadline. Check your status early on. If it's not your job to check your SAM registration, become best friends with the person at the organization whose job it is so you can make sure this is in place.

Finally, you need an account at grants.gov, the portal where you will submit your application. Allow at least two weeks for the registration process here and even if you know you're registered, make sure you know who is authorized for your institution and make sure they know their login information.

In fact, if you don't know for absolutely sure, that this is all in place, right now, I'd recommend checking, checking on it as soon as we get done today. Again, it's not something you want to be trying to accomplish anywhere close to the deadline.

Now to give some recommendations for successful applications. You should think about the preliminary proposal or the movie trailer, giving the highlights of what the more detailed project would look like. We recognize it's quite a challenge getting all the information about your project into two pages. You'll want to be as succinct and specific as possible. The preliminary proposal should follow the general sections of the proposal narrative.

For LB21, it should address diversity. Some elements you will want to address in your preliminary proposal include clearly identifying the project director and any project partners. This can easily and quickly be done in the first sentence.

For example, institution X and institution Y will partner together to make A or accomplish B. I recommend foregoing lengthy introductions and getting directly into the meat of the project in your first sentence. You'll want to ground your project in current and relevant research and practice. You will want to give an outline of your proposed work plan. What will it look like and how will it be accomplished?

If it's a research project, you'll want to give information on the research design. You should make clear the relevance of your project and selected project category and also demonstrate

the potential national impact and projected outcomes of your work. And lastly, you will need to provide an estimated budget. Please note, a budget summary is required and must include the total anticipated costs of the project, including cost share, if required, and a break down of how funds would be allocated into different cost categories. Proposals that do not include this information will be rejected without review.

We have examples on our website of most of the LB21 and NLG projects that have been funded in recent years, including both the full and preliminary proposal.

For research projects, for research projects, specifically, you want to make sure you're answering the question, what is your theoretical or conceptual framework? And you should also talk about other work that has been done in your area of interest.

You'll want to make sure you clearly state your research question and describe how you will collect and analyze your data. In addition, you want to give some information about who your research study participants will be and who your subjects are.

Finally, you should talk a little bit about how you will interpret and share your findings with the field. For more information, please see the Guidance for Research Applications in each notice of funding opportunity.

So, here's some things that you can do to ensure you're submitting the most-competitive proposal. The first you've already accomplished by attending this webinar. Next you want to choose the grant programs and categories that best-align with your project.

Other tips: Read through proposals from last year to get ideas of what was successful, articulate your project goals as quickly as possible in the preliminary proposal, include a budget paragraph, and be sure you're submitting all the completed and required documents.

I'd highly recommend having a colleague unfamiliar with your project read through your proposal prior to submission. We all get too close to our work and this will ensure the proposal you're submitting clearly communicates your project idea. Most importantly, get in touch with us. Our program staff are more than happy to chat with you about your project ideas prior to

the deadline. Our job is to help people put together the most competitive applications we can. We are to help all applicants, so please be in touch.

So, thank you for joining us today. Here is a chart with all of our contact information. Each of us works on specific content areas, so it is broken up that way. If you're not sure who to contact, contact any one of us and we'll steer you to the right person.

Now we're going to open up for questions. If you do have any questions, please type them into the chat box and then we'll respond out loud on the phone. So...again, please type them into the chat box if you have any questions. We'll ask that you keep it to general questions about the application process or notices of funding opportunity and again, if you have any specific questions about a particular idea or project, you can feel free to reach out to any one of us program officers. And I'll make sure to put up the contact information slide again. But...please do type questions into the chat box, we'll stay on the line for a few minutes and if we're not getting anything, then we'll say good-bye, but...please type in any questions you have.

Okay, so I think the first question is, will the recording for this webinar be available for later viewing? And yes, it will be. If you go to the program application pages, we do, we do post the recording there. It's also going to be on the same exact place that you got the link for the webinar right now. For the live webinar, so, there'll be another posting there that says recording or something like that. Typically it takes about 24 hours. If you can't find it, then feel free to contact us and we'll direct you there.

Are supporting letters of collaboration required? So...for the preliminary proposal phase, you are not required to submit letters of collaboration. In fact, we actually won't accept them.

The only document that we will accept from you are the SS424, the program information sheet, and a two-page preliminary proposal. So anything above that two pages will not go on for review.

And the full proposal round, if you're invited, there are letters of support and partnership letters that are required, but you don't need to worry about that now.

Is continuing education only for postmasters or can this be for anyone working in a library? For example, para professionals? Yes continuing education development can be for anyone in the library setting. You don't have to have a Master's Degree or be an actual librarian to receive that type of training through our grant program.

So, we're going to hang on here for another couple minutes in case you have any questions...I'm not exactly sure by what's meant by required or encouraged. If you could be more specific about what you mean. Oh...is that -- I think that's referring to the supporting letters of collaboration? Again, those are neither required or encouraged for this current phase. For the full proposal round, you'll read, if you want, in the notice of funding opportunities, it has very specific information about the required documents and letters of support and partnership letters, are certainly included.

>> And there's a question about what is meant by diversity for the LB21 grants? We are not prescriptive. It's up to the applicant to define diversity and we, if you look at our awarded, grants, database, you can see examples of previously-funded projects and how they have defined diversity and referenced literature and other projects to kind of back up their definition and their approach and also, look at the notice of funding opportunity for more information.

And the next question is, a single organization can submit applications for both categories, correct? Two different projects, one in each category.

So, I'm going to rephrase your question so that it makes sense from the IMLS kind of perspective. One organization, say a university, can apply for both programs, NLG and LB21. The review process is distinct for each program, so...reviewers won't look at both projects in the same panel. However, it is, I'll mention, very rare for one organization to get multiple awards in any given cycle. And there's another question, if we hire a graduate assistant to work on a grant, does that require

matching or is that considered students support that doesn't
require a match?

So...we have a very um...thorough description of what we
mean by student support in the notice of funding opportunity
that you can look at. If you have any questions about that, you
can get in touch with us.

>> I'll just add a point to that in general, when it comes
to what is defined as student support, it needs to be an
educational opportunity for that student, so, if you're having a
grad assistant do clerical work, for example, that typically
wouldn't be considered student support. And in fact, many
times, if you have an indirect cost agreement, it also defines
what's meant by student support for your institution, but...as
Sandy said, definitely look in our guidelines. That should
provide you with some clarity. If you're not sure, especially
when it comes to these cost share questions, please do reach out
to us and we're more than happy to discuss it with you. It's
definitely better to ask before you submit than for you to
realize after the fact that there is an issue or that you
misinterpreted how something was defined. We're definitely more
than happy to talk those things through with you.

So...I'm not seeing anymore questions right now...we're
just checking, I would definitely encourage you to reach out to
one of our program staff to talk about any ideas you have.
We're certainly here to help you. Again, you can revisit this
webinar by going to the same exact page through which you logged
onto it in the first place. It should be up in about 24 hours.
And here are all of our content areas and our contact
information.

Again, thank you for joining us today and...please do reach
out to us and let us know if you have anymore questions. And
we'll stay on the line for a few more minutes, but...otherwise,
have a great rest of your day.

[Call concluded at 2:36 p.m. CT].

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