IMLS
DECEMBER 15, 2016
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PROSPECTIVE APPLICANT WEBINAR-NLG AND LB21 FY17

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        >> ALY DESROCHERS: Hi, everybody this is Aly at IMLS, thank
you for joining us today. I just wanted to test the audio and find
out if everyone can hear me. If you can, please give us a yes, in
the chat box. Thanks.
    (conversations in the background).
    (silence).
    >> Hi, children -- what's going on?
    >> I have no homework -- you have spelling.
    (silence).
    December 15, 2016.
    >> Hi, everybody, we were having some background audio, just
a reminder to mute your phones and we'll get started here if a few
minutes.
        >> EMILY REYNOLDS: Hi, everyone. My name is Emily
Reynolds. I'm joined by my colleagues, Ashley Sands and Aly
DesRochers. We're going to do one more audio check, before we get
started. If you have any issues hearing me, please type it in the
chat box, otherwise, maybe just let us know that it sounds okay.
        The phone should be muted, but if you have any questions during
the presentation, please type it into the chat and we will try to
answer all of them, probably, in Q&A at the end of the presentation.
        >> Recording started.
        >> EMILY REYNOLDS: So welcome to the Institute of Museum
and Library Services Prospective Applicant Webinar for the National
Leadership Grants for Libraries Program and the Laura Bush 21st
Century Librarian Program. Today, we will briefly go over what IMLS

is and what its strategic priorities are, as well as, give an
overview of the NLG and LB21 Grant Program, which will include some
changes that we've made to both programs this year, as well as, over
the past couple of years.

        We're also going to go over the eligibility criteria for the
program, the project and funding categories that can you apply under
for these programs. We'll walk you through the application
process, and give you some tips about, sort of, putting your best
foot forward in your grant application.

        So first of all, what is IMLS? IMLS is the primary source
of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000
museums.

        And, we support those organizations by making grants,
convening group, conducting research, and publishing in order to
build the capacity of museums and libraries to serve the American
public.

        IMLS's vision and mission statements are for the agencies
strategic plan for fiscal years 2012 to 2016, and the emphasis, of
course, is 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 lifelong 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.

        So, there are three strategic priorities that drive
agency-wide grant-making. And those are, learning community, and
content. These will go with our grant programs, but they've been
the themes of our funding for the past few years. So, they'll
probably be familiar to you if you've applied for grants from us
in the past.

        Today, we'll be talking about two of our grant programs, both
of which have a deadline of February 1, 2017. The first is our
National Leadership Grant for Libraries Program, which we'll be
referring to as NLG throughout this presentation. The grant
program supports projects that address significant challenges and
opportunities facing the library in archive fields and have the
potential to advance theory and practice.

        Successful proposals demonstrate national impact,
demonstrate relevance to current practice and challenges, show
relevant expertise about the topic at hand, and incorporate
collaboration with other institutions and partner organizations.

        The Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, we will be
calling LB21 is more focused on learning and other professional
development, graduate education, and continuing education to
develop a diverse workforce of librarians to better meet the

changing and learning information needs of the American public. Similar with NLG, successful proposals will include broad impact, collaborative elements, and will work to advance library practice nationally.

We have information pages on our website for both programs. If you've made it through this webinar, it's likely that you've visited one or both of these link, but they provide an overview of the program, they link to the full notices of funding opportunities, and they also include relevant webinar recordings. So, if you want to refer back to this webinar at a later date, that's where you'll find it.

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

You're eligible to apply for NLG and LB21 if you are any of the things listed on this slide. So, that's a unit of state or local government, or a 501c3 nonprofit organization. You have to be located in one of the 50 states or territories, and you have to be one of to be one of the six types of organizations listed here, which includes a library or a parent organization of a library, an academic or administrative unit, a digital library, or a library agency, consortium, or association. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please reach out to someone on our program staff.

One thing that I'll note is that the Laura Bush Grant Program has additional eligibility restrictions for some of the categories, so please pay particular attention to that in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

You're not eligible to apply for NLG or LB21 if you are a federally funded institution, a for-profit organization, an individual, or a foreign country or organization. A federally funded institution doesn't mean that you just receive other federal grants, you are still eligible for our funding if that's the case, but it means that if you're a federal agency, we can't fund you.

If you're an ineligible institution, we encourage you to partner with an institution on a project. While you can't be the lead applicant yourself, you may apply through a partnership with an eligible institution with them as the lead applicant and then support your needs for funding in that manner. There is more information about this in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and on our website. The point here is to figure out early on if you're eligible to apply to the program that's of interest to you.

So, these are the things that are new in the grant program for fiscal year '17. If you'd had a chance to look at the Notices of Funding Opportunity, you may have noticed new categories, Community Anchor, National Digital Platform, and Curating Collections. National Digital Platform, you'll probably recognize from last year, but the other two categories are new.

We've also folded the Sparks Grant Program into NLG. It used to be run as a separate grant program once a year, but we'll now have two annual application opportunities and a category within the National Leadership Grant Program.

Finally, in LB21, we've reintroduced the pre-professional category, which is that we're recruiting librarians and archivists before they get to grad school, it's something we had a few years ago, that we are excited to be bringing back.

So, if you're wondering about which of these programs might be the best fit for your project idea, we've provided some guidance on this slide. If your research or project is primarily about education and training, or information professionals, either through formal or informal education, you should be applying to LB21.

If you are applying as a tenure-track faculty member to do research, you'll want to look at the early career research category in LB21. Otherwise, any other work of national significance, the libraries, archives, and information science will fall into the NLG Program.

This chart features some projects and activities that would fall within each program, but please make sure to read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity or NOFO to make sure it's applied with the right program and you meet eligibility criteria. If you're unsure, please feel free to contact one of the program staff for guidance.

With that I'm going to hand it over to my colleague, Ashley, who is going to talk about some of the particulars of these two programs.

 >> ASHLEY SANDS: Hi, everyone. With each application, you'll be asked to pull up one project category, either Community Anchors, National Digital Platform, or Curating Collection. We're going to go ahead now and talk a little bit about each of those.

The Community Anchor Project advances the role of libraries as community anchors but provides specific and cultural engagement, civic and cultural engagement, facilitating lifelong learning, promoting digital inclusion, and support economic vitality through programming and services. The caveat is these projects programs and must advance national practice and not impact on local communities only.

In this category, we expect research and projects with community partnerships outside of the library field on projects that elevate the role of libraries as community acres and catalysts and create tools or training for the library professionals that facilitate that work.

The National Digital Platform category has been around for a number of years now. In this category, we are interested in projects that create, develop, and expand the Open Source software

applications used by libraries and archives to provide the digital content and services to all users in the United States.

These are projects that will be developing software or creating infrastructure to support the digital work being done in libraries. You can see examples of these types of projects that we had previously funded on that area of our website.

Curating Collections is a new category for projects that can have a significant national impact on shared services for the preservation and management of digital libraries and content across the country. Again, projects focused on a single collection or doing local work will not be supported. We also cannot support digitization or pre-digitization projects for this program.

So again, looking at collaboration and the communication necessary to move projects beyond local, to national importance, is what would be important.

We've written a number of blog posts that go into more detail about each of the project categories. Here, on the slide, you can see that the first link provides an overview of the NLG and LB21 project categories, funding categories, and project types. While the subsequent three then go into detail about one of the project categories.

I highly encourage you to read the first blog post and the relevant project category blog post, along with reading the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Along with the project category, the Laura Bush program also requires you to select a project type. Research projects can focus on any of these types. The pre-professional category is applicable to any programs that are focused on any part of the pre-library school trajectory. This could be training programs for college students or even students in K-12 education. These projects could also be focused on recruitment efforts, particularly keeping diversity in the profession in mind.

Master's level and Doctoral level programs are a project that has to do with the innovation and development of the curricula and formal education in the library and information science fields.

Early career development is specifically for tenure-track library and information science faculty who are doing research.

The last category is continuing education. This program is for workshops, cohort models, and other informal learning and training for professionals who are already in the field.

Early career development research projects do not have to be tied to one of the project categories, Community Anchor, Curating Collections or the National Digital Platform. However, all other projects, other than the early career development projects, must be tied to one of those program areas.

All applicants are allowed to select funding category, as I mentioned earlier, spark Sparks Grants were folded into NLG, and

will be offered once a year. They're small rapid prototyping projects. Planning Grants are for preliminary project activity. Many people think about the grants as doing planning for a larger grant. This may be conducting preliminary research, conducting an environmental scan, or working on creating partnerships to support larger, future activities.

The National Forum Grant, convening experts and stakeholders around an issue of national significance. This could be to support one large meeting or several meetings around an area to establish a shared agenda or understanding in an issue area.

Project Grants and Research Grants are the larger grants we make in NLG and LB21, and they support larger activities and implementations of project, and investigating key research questions in library and archive practices. These are limited to one to three years. However, doctoral projects can be up to four years.

To give you a better sense of the scale in each of these funding categories, here are the funding limits for each. You should know that the funding levels may be different within each funding category for NLG and LB21. There is flexibility within the funding levels, but you should keep in mind that we have limited funding and both programs are highly competitive. We fund very few million or 2 million-dollar projects. There is a value proposition that comes into play. The higher the amount you're 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 is along with cost-sharing requirements. Cost-sharing is not considered in the reviewing of applications, but it is an eligibility criterion for certain NLG and LB21 projects. Again, this is spelled out in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for each type of funding. Please remember that if a cost is unallowable for IMLS funds, it is also unallowable for cost share.

Applications in both NLG and LB21 are due February 1, 2017. These applications -- each application must include an SF-424, which is generated in grants.gov, an IMLS Program Information Sheet, and most importantly, the two-page preliminary proposal. Applications must be submitted through grants.gov and then undergo peer review.

All applicants will receive comments and feedback, and a small percentage will then be invited to submit a full proposal for further consideration.

Those that are invited to submit full proposals will need to submit those by June 19 -- I'm sorry. June 9, 2017. Again, that is invitational only. The required components for the full proposals are much more extensive, and are listed in the NOFO, the Notice of Funding Opportunity also. These applications are also

submitted by grants.gov and will similarly undergo a peer review.

Also, applicants will be providing comments and feedback regardless of whether the projects are select the for funding. The IMLS director makes final funding decisions, and these will be announced in August 2017.

Here are some important dates that you need to be aware of during the cycle. Please, read through the Notice of Funding Opportunities, the NOFO, carefully to make sure you're meeting eligibility criteria and have fulfilled all of the application requirements.

Registering early is one of those things that we recommend on the basis of hearing devastating stories from people who forgot this part. There are three places where you must register your organization in order to be able to submit a proposal.

D-U-N-S, SAM, and grants.gov. It's important to keep in mind your SAM registration is good for one year and then must be renewed. That is something that you do not want to be doing right before the deadline. We recommend checking your status early on. If it is not your job to track SAM registration, become best friends with the person's whose job it is so you can make sure that's in place.

Grants.gov, of course, is the portal which you will file 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 then make sure that they know their password. Staff often change and people retire and passwords gets misplaced. And in fact, if you don't know for sure that all of that is in place right now, I recommend checking in on it as soon as we're done today. Again, it's not something you want to have to accomplish when we're close to the deadline.

Now, to get into some tips for successful applications. We have examples on our website of some of the successful projects in recent years, both the full and preliminary proposals.

You should think about the preliminary proposal as the trailer, giving the highlights of what the more detailed project would look like. We recognize that it's quite a challenge fitting all the information about your project into two page, so you will want to be as succinct and specific as possible.

Some elements you will want to address in your preliminary proposal will include clearly identifying the project director and any project partner. This could easily and quickly done in the first sentence. 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 what your project is about, and explain it. You also want to ground your project in current and relevant research and practice. You want to give an outline of your proposed work plan, what it will look like, and how will it be accomplished.

And as a research project, you'll want to give information on the research design. You should make clear the relevance in your project, the selecting 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 that paragraph on the budget is required, and that is spelled out in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

If you're turning in a research project proposal, it's important to think through and information about each NOFO and guidance for each research application. So, make sure you're able to articulate what is your theoretical or conceptual framework, what are your research questions, how will you collect and analyze data, and how will you interpret and share the findings with the rest of the field?

So here are some things you can do to ensure you are submitted and you are submitting the post competitive proposal you can. The first you've already accomplished by attending this webinar. As we mentioned earlier, you should also take a very intensive look at the Notice of Funding Opportunity and read through the blog posts on the project categories.

You also choose a grant program and categories that best align with your project. Some other tips. Read through the preliminary proposals from last year and get some 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 of the completed and required documents.

I highly recommend having your colleagues, unfamiliar with your project, read through your proposal prior to submission. We all get too close to our work, and you want to ensure the proposal you're submitting clearly communicates your 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 application we can. We are here to help all aspects, so please be in touch.

>> Recording stopped.

>> So at this point, we can open it up for any questions, and if you have question, please type them into the chat box, and maybe we can advance one more slide to the contact information screen, so if you have additional questions about either of these programs, the staff that work on them are listed here. We're listed by category rather than program, so if you're applying for an LB21 Community Anchors Grant, you'll want to talk to Tim or Sarah, and so on. So, we can take questions in the box or over email.

>> We have one question asking about the difference between the previous Sparks program and the current Sparks Grant that is folded into NLG.

>> Yeah. So, the main difference that you'll find is the process, that it used to be that Sparks would just submit a full proposal and then go through peer review. Now, it starts out with a two-page preliminary proposal. Otherwise, I think we've changed around some of the language around Sparks over the years to focus less on innovation specifically because that's a word that can sometimes throw people off, but I think we're still looking for the risky-type avenue of a project.

The other difference, sort of logistically, is that Sparks used to only have a six-page narrative, and now you'll be able to write a ten-page, if you're invited for a full proposal, so it will be like the rest of the NLG program in that way.

Part of the other difference is that it will now also, every Sparks proposal will have to align with one of the categories, which wasn't the case previously.

And so that -- the answer to the next question, which is, who to contact about Sparks proposals, and that will depend on which of these categories you're applying under. If you're applying for a Community Anchors Sparks Grant, you contact who is listed for that category, and same with National Digital Platform or Curating Collection.

Let's see. Can an organization apply for a Planning Grant and National Forum Grant? We don't limit the number of applications a single organization can submit. You are not allowed to submit the same project under two categories, but if you have one planning project that you want to submit and another National Forum Project, you are welcome to do that.

The caveat is that the projects are particularly similar. If they're similar or in the same kind of subject area, they may be in direct competition with each other, so you may want to focus in on one or the other in the first cycle and then revisit the other one later on, but you are allowed to do that.

>> There is another question about attachments to the preliminary proposal. Does that mean you can't have letters of support for the preliminary proposal? And, that is the case. We do not allow any attachments for the preliminary proposal, so there are no letters of support required or accepted, at this point. You do want to indicate if you have, sort of, confirmed partners or anything on the application, but you can't attach those letters at this date.

We have a couple people typing, so let's give it another couple minutes for questions.

If I have a Research Grant that is an extension of my Sparks, or includes Sparks, can I submit two applications? So, I'm not total totally clear. You need to clarify if you're submitting a Research Grant, that's a category that is different from Sparks, so you would be submitting a research proposal even if it's building

on a previous Sparks Grant. Two applications. If you could verify, I'm happy to answer.

There is a question, what is the format for the two-page preliminary proposal? We leave that largely up to you. The one requirement that we have is that you include a project paragraph at the end of the proposal, stating how much money you're requesting, what the cost share will be, and breaking it down, roughly, into the budget categories that we have on our full proposal budget form. So, that's the one, kind of, required piece of this.

We do recommend following a similar structure that you would in a full proposal, of, sort of, a statement of need, the project design, that kind of information. Then, I'd recommend looking at the successful two-pagers that we have on our website to get a sense of how folks have successfully structured those.

Let's see. Oh, okay. So, the applications as a component of my research. So, you are welcome to submit applications that are pieces of, you know, bigger projects or on-going work. So, if it concerns the goal of the Sparks category, or if they're testing something new, and potentially risky, then you are certainly welcome to submit a Sparks application, but you would not be allowed to, sort of, also submit that proposal as a Research Grant. You would have to pick one or the other.

There is a question about the webinar. We will not be sending to the attendees, but it will be posted at the website tomorrow, so check back on the same page where you found the link to join this webinar, you will find a link to watch the recording tomorrow.

And another person asked about the budget paragraph. Yes, the budget paragraph is part of the two-page narrative, and it will be included in that two-page total.

So, there is a question about human research subjects. I would say specifically refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity, which includes what federally funded grants are required to follow, which is primarily QCFR200, but also additional about different requirements for federally funded research.

Let's see. Are the successful preliminary proposals in the awarded grant section on your website? Yeah, so if you go to the awarded grants search, which is on our website, our funded projects, if you search for Laura Bush or National Leadership Grant for Libraries Projects that were funded in FY16 and some in FY13, if you push through on the search to the individual grant awards, there will be a PhD uploaded in the spaces and a full proposal, and then at the end is two-page preliminary proposal. If you have trouble finding examples relevant to you, again, contact one of the staff listed on this slide, and they'll be able to direct you to one that might be relevant for you.

There is a question. Could you explain a bit more about the shared services idea for the curative collection category? The

proposal should have an outcome, establishes a service provided by multiple organization, referred to share practices. I think the answer to that is, yes, we're intentionally leaving things somewhat open-ended in categories to allow for a range of activities. So, if you could imagine that that could be shared purposes for collections or shared best practices, shared understanding in the communities, that it's not just, sort of, formal service establishments, but also broader, working together around collections.

 I don't see any more questions coming in, so I think we'll stop it here. Again, this recording will be available online. And if you have any other questions that come up later, you have all of our contacts on the screen right here and also on our website page, so please get in touch if we can be of help. Thanks for joining us.

 (webinar completed at 2:34 p.m. CST)

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