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>> ALY DESROCHERS: Hi. This is Aly at IMLS. We will get started in a few minutes. It sounds like we are having some audio coming through on the other end. If everyone could please mute your phones if you have dialed in, that way you will be able to hear our presenter. Thanks.

>> SANDRA TORO: Good afternoon. This is Sandra Toro in the Office of Library Services discretionary programs. And I'm joined today by Aly who has already introduced herself. And we both work with the Native American and Native Hawaiian resource programs. And I work in the National Leadership grants and the Laura Bush 21st Century grant. Thank you for joining us today. And we will have time for questions at the end if you have any. But if you have anything to ask at all, please feel free to type your questions in to the chat box. And we'll do our best to answer them as we go along.

First of all, I'll say that you may be aware that the fiscal 2018 budget blueprint proposes the defunding and elimination of IMLS. With that said our fiscal 2017 operations remain unchanged. Under the current continuing resolution budget and the President's budget request it is a first step in a very long budget process. The agency continues to operate as usual and we

will do so until a new budget is enacted by Congress.

So today we are going to focus on the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant program and some of the types of projects that have been funded as well as the components of good proposals and what the logistics of applying are. So you must read the Notice of Funding Opportunity or NOFO very carefully so you are aware of the required components and submit your application. Something especially important that you need to be aware of we will try to bring that to your attention. For example, we are now required to only accept PDFs. So you can't submit anything like a Word document or an Excel spreadsheet. And I see a comment that the sound keeps cutting out and it sounds like I am talking through a tunnel. And Aly is going to answer that right now. But hopefully everyone else can hear me.

Okay. So I'm going to move on -- okay. So the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants are competitive grants that can be up to two years and up to \$150,000. You do need to have basic grant in order to get an enhancement grant. And if you are not aware we did extend the deadline for the basic grants until April 17th. So if you have any questions at all about applying for a basic grant please feel free to give me a call or send me an e-mail and I'll explain what you need to do to get a basic grant.

For these grants you don't have to contribute any cost share. And Indian tribes are eligible to apply for funding while entities like libraries, schools, tribal colleges for Departments of Education are not eligible applicants. They can be involved in the administration of the program and their staff may serve as project directors in partnership with the tribes but the tribe itself must be the applicant, the lead applicant.

And by Indian tribe we mean any tribe, land, nation or other organized group or community including any Alaskan native corporation or village corporation which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided to the United States to Indians.

So to be eligible for this particular program you must have an existing library with regularly scheduled hours, staff and materials that are available for library users. We don't tell you how many staff or how many hours or what kinds of materials. You can have volunteer staff that work part time but you must meet those three criteria. And again remember the applying institution must be the tribe, not the library.

So you can find the NOFO or Notice of Funding Opportunity on our website and make sure to read it carefully and follow all the links. The links will take you to our strategic plan to awarded grant search so you can see what we funded in the past. And you will find information on cost sharing if you do want to

include that as well as all the forms you need to complete the application. The application is going to be due by 11:59 p.m. on May 17th. And you must submit it through grants.gov. You can't e-mail it to us or fax it or put it in the mail. It has to be grants.gov.

Okay. So as with the basic grant if you have already applied for that, the NOFO for the enhancement grants include the table that has all the application components, the format they need to be submitted as and which file name to use when you are submitting your application package. So use this list as a checklist of all the documents that you need to submit on May 17th. You want to make sure that your application is complete so it is not rejected simply because you missed or forgot one document. IMLS is more strict to make sure that each application includes all the necessary documentation and we won't be able to make exceptions. So if you forget, for example, the resume of a key personnel member, we'll have to reject you and then will you have to appeal and submit the resume. We won't be able to just call you and say hey, we think you forgot a resume. They have really become more strict.

So the application components are the SF424, which is the cover sheet, abstract, IMLS program information sheet which you can get from our website, the organizational profile, a narrative of up to eight pages, a schedule of completion, the IMLS budget form, and make sure to use the most current budget form. Don't -- if you submitted in the past don't use the same form and update it. There is a more recent version that's on our website. Budget justification, again that has to be a PDF, not a Word document or Excel spreadsheet. List of project staff and consultants and resumes for all those people. Don't list anyone whose resume you can't get because then you will have an incomplete application. And don't list every possible person you think might be important. Only list the most important people. All of the documents have to be saved and submitted in PDF format. In addition to these required documents you can submit proof of non-profit status if that's applicable as well as your federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement if you plan to use one. Those are conditionally required.

The other form is the digital product form which used to have a different name. But that's a necessary document if you are using funds from IMLS to build any kind of digital product like a website or digital histories or even put pictures online. And -- okay. So keep putting your questions in and we will definitely get to those.

So unlike the basic grants which again the deadline has been extended to April 17th, these enhancement grants are competitive. So with basics as long as you apply you get the

funding but with enhancements you get the peer review process and reviewers will read through and evaluate and make sure you have responded to the criteria and Notice of Funding Opportunity and also going to be looking to make sure that your project has the potential for success. So we will take their comments and present their comments and their matching scores to our director. And she will make the final decision based on what the reviewers have said, based on the overall goals of the program and the agency as well. Right now we expect to make 10 to 12 enhancement awards for a total of about 1 million 800 dollars and that amount depends on how many basic grants we make as well. So that could change. We might make more awards or fewer.

So what types of projects are funded? These are some of the project areas of focus from years past and you can see they range from focus on early reading or to GD programs to activities focused on health issues to e-books. So we are not looking for anything in particular. We just want to know that you have developed a strong proposal idea and we are going to talk about the -- how you can demonstrate to us that your project has potential for success.

So before we get to those specific pieces just remember to read the NOFO carefully. It has step by step instructions on what you need to do to apply. It clarifies the policies and regulations that govern our grant making. And it describes the criteria the reviewers will use to evaluate your proposal. If you have any questions at all, please e-mail us or call us. Sometimes it is easier to get through by e-mail. But we will definitely get back to you as soon as we can. And we can also look at drafts. So if you send me a draft of your proposal idea, I can call you back and give you verbal feedback.

So in terms of the specific components, the first one is the abstract. And often people find it is easier to write this after they have written the whole narrative but this is going to be a condensed version of what the project is. You tell us who the applicant is, who your partners are and what you are planning to accomplish and why, what's the time frame, and what are the community needs that your project will address and for whom. Who is the audience. What specifically are you going to do in terms of activities. What are the goals and your outcomes that are desired. What are the products and any results that you hope to see at the end.

More and more importantly you are going to come to see that reviewers really want some information about measurable changes. And you do have to pick on your program information sheet a goal that has to do with either learning or community for most people and then document in your interim and final reports how you know

that there have been changes in participant's knowledge, attitudes or behavior. We will talk more about that in a little bit. But your abstract should summarize all these different elements. One of the most important pieces that the reviewers will focus on is a statement of need and this is where you give us a general picture about your community. Giving us, for example, demographic information, stats about who you are working with in the community, what languages are spoken, what the economic status is. And then talk about the role of the library in your community and how the library serves the community members. You want to tell us what the purpose of your proposed project is and how it might relate to an identified need. So if the need that you have identified has to do with reading or if it has to do with financial literacy, how did you come up with a plan to address that need and how did you know that that need is the most important need that you need to address through library services.

So some sample questions that we have presented in the past that can help you get at some of the needs assessment information are, you know, what services do community members use at the library. What do they feel the library does well. Why do they go to the library. What do they feel could be improved in terms of library services and what do they like to see in terms of the future. What do they feel that the library's No. 1 priority should be. And if you can find people who don't go to the library and don't use the services, what would they like you to offer that would entice them to go to the library.

When you talk about the project design, the reviewers are going to want to see a detailed work plan that ties all of the activities to the goals and objectives. So remember that the goals are usually broader and the objectives are specific things that you'll do to meet the goals. If you have questions that you are trying to answer, then include those questions as part of your project design and tell us what your conceptual framework is. And if you have any data you are trying to gather to track progress towards meeting your goals and objectives.

What are the activities? How often will they happen? Who is going to lead the activities? Who do you think will participate? Be as detailed as you can be because the reviewers again are going to be looking to see how much potential there is for you actually meeting your goals and objectives. If you are partnering with anyone, don't just tell us who you are partnering with but tell us what their roles are and if they have any milestones that are going to be met and when those milestones will be met. So everyone who is involved should have a particular role and a set of activities related to that role.

If you did any preliminary work or planning, if you have already demonstrated potential for success, include that information as well. And give us a rationale for anything that you want to do that will seem unusual to the reviewers. If you do try out a new kind of practice or you are presenting an idea that may be unfamiliar to reviewers, tell them how you are going to test for the potential applicability of those new techniques or procedures. So remember that the reviewers will be your peers and they will come from tribal communities throughout the United States. And you want to use language with which they will be comfortable and familiar. So if there is anything really kind of outside of the box that you want to do, make sure you explain it so that anyone can understand.

So overall when you think about the potential impact that your project will have go back to those goals and really explain how the goals are guiding your project design and your activities and make sure that any projected results are clearly articulated for the reviewers.

With your communications plan think about your audience. How are you going to reach them. Who are they. How will you engage with them or do any community building. How will you measure that they are actually taking something away from their participation. What are their outcomes. Again think about learning or community based outcomes as they relate to the goals that you picked on the program information sheet. You also want to think in terms of communications plan of who is responsible for different bits and pieces. So who is doing the outreach. Who is going to do the promotion and who is going to be responsible for disseminating information. Tell us your plans about who is involved, but then also tell us how you are going to document all of your communications related work.

Reviewers will also want to look at the potential for sustainability. So as per the initial investment from IMLS how will the project's benefits continue beyond the grant period and how do you know that there is that potential. How do you have buy-in or adoption from other community members or other institutions. For example, if you are developing an app do you know that other groups might be interested in trying it out. How will the project lead to systemic change if that's one of your goals. And what are your plans for preserving and sustaining anything that gets digitized, any software you develop, the documentation that you create, or any technology tools and information systems that emerge from all of the work you do for the project.

So going back to the program information sheet, before you even start your project you have to select one agency level goal and one performance goal at least on the IMLS program and

information sheet which is on the screen. And there is a link to it from the Notice of Funding Opportunity. To learn more about the performance measure statements that you have to choose and how to develop activities that align with those statements, there is a link to a page that says performance measure statements and information for learning and community projects. This is in the enhancement grant Notice of Funding Opportunity. It is not in the basic. So if you scroll down to the bottom of the NOFO you will find it there but here is the link as well. And if you have any questions about which goal or performance measure statement you should pick or how to make sure you are thinking about the right kinds of data to show that you are meeting those goals, feel free to get in touch with me and we can talk through some ideas.

There is also a session from past ATALM that we use to introduce people to the new performance measures approach that IMLS has to take and how to assess impact and outcomes of a project. It is a 44 minute video but it has a lot of information about evaluation in general, and then the specific IMLS tools that help you try to track progress towards meeting your goals.

Practically speaking how do you think about your budget. So again make sure you use the most current version of the IMLS budget form. And up on the screen is the list of different sections that you will find in the budget form which may be a little bit different from budget forms that we have used in the past. But make sure that everything you put in to the budget form is clearly defined in your budget justification. With the basic application you can be much more general but with the enhancement grant budget and budget justification the reviewers really want very detailed explanations for every line item. And again cost share is not required. I'll just add a note that over the past few years the agency has been moving away from really ambitious projections of cost share because we found when people are too ambitious and they want to show that an institution is invested they might not be able to meet the cost share by the end of the award period. And it is better to just either not include cost share or be much less ambitious in terms of what your projecting can be provided.

In addition to the required documents you might have some supporting materials. And people often ask us, you know, what should we include, what are reviewers looking for. The first thing I would say they look for are letters of commitment from everybody who might be involved with the project. Including, you know, a few -- if most of your budget is going toward a consultant who is going to help you with a project, you want a commitment letter. You want letters from any partners that are

involved, any important community members that might be included as part of the project. Anyone that you think might speak to buy-in and the potential for sustainability. Reviewers will really appreciate seeing those kinds of letters. You also want to think about if there is a long range plan that your tribe or group has been working on that really impacts how you came to develop your project. You should include the long range plan. You can also include very specific kinds of things, like vender quotes or specs for equipment. But another great document to include would be a summary of any needs assessment findings that you have already developed that can speak to why you identified a particular need and how the community understands the role and the potential benefits of your library.

So in general in terms of the entire application package, make sure that your application package is complete and has all of the required documents. Again go back to that table of application components and use it as a checklist. Don't forget all the key personnel that are listed must have resumes. This is something we see over and over where there is a long list of people on the key personnel list and there are only like two or three resumes and then we are going to have to reject your application.

So check the list of conditionally required documents and that's the old name for the form. So if you see that name on the form, that's the old version. You should use the new version which is the digital products form. Don't forget your federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement if you are going to use it. And if you are going to use it make sure that it is active, at least until September 2017 or else we won't be able to use it. No agreement required if you are just using the 10% administrative fee. Also if you reference any supporting documents in your narrative make sure they are included as part of the application package because the reviewers will look for them.

Now before you submit the application you can talk to us and get us to look at your draft and we can give you verbal feedback. We are not allowed to give written feedback but we can set up a conference call and give you some initial thoughts. You should also talk to a few different people who aren't closely involved with your grant who can read the application and check for typos, ease of readability, and then give you some feedback on the general ideas, the structure of the application, and whether or not it makes sense to them. So consider what they say and then revise accordingly. So remember that you are going to have a diverse group of reviewers looking at your proposal and your proposal should use simple, easy to understand language that pretty much anyone can understand. So proofread

it. Because reviewers definitely get annoyed when they see lots of mistakes because it seems like you didn't take good enough care putting the materials together. And you don't want them to be biased from the beginning before they really start reading through it.

Also make sure that you coordinate with tribal administration to get all of your application components through grants.gov before the deadline. We have had instances where people try to submit on the day a grant is due but they don't have the authority and can't do it. And then they are stuck because the person who is actually -- who was given the authority was on vacation or doesn't remember their password or something like that. So make sure you have all those pieces in place well before May 17th.

Now specifically about grants.gov, you have to use that to submit your application. We can only consider proposals that have gone through that site. All of your proposals have to be complete because grants.gov won't accept applications in terms of things that are missing in terms of documents. You must have a current DUNS number and your SAM.gov registration must be active. You just went through the basic application. Make sure you have all the information you need.

Yeah, and just remember that we can't waive any of the federal requirements. We have to follow what's been put in place. And again make sure that all of your documents are PDFs, not Word documents or Excel or anything else. It has to be PDF.

So these are some tips most applicable when you are doing your basic which is pretty recently. Make sure you have your DUNS number and SAM.gov registration in place and you know how or who is going to submit for you on grants.gov. In the past we have had some security issues in terms of Adobe and getting documents uploaded in to grants.gov. So this is another reason why we tell you to submit before the deadline so you don't get stuck in terms of having your documents uploaded.

Once you submit your application by or before May 17th we will check for eligibility and completeness and we are doing that right now for the basic grant proposals we've received. And then we will have the field review where the reviewers will read all of the proposals and write up their comments and define scores. We'll process those in a sense of basically compiling everything and creating master spreadsheets that show the rankings of the proposals. And meet in person with the reviewers where they will talk about all of the proposals they reviewed in person here at the IMLS offices. And then we will present the reviewers' recommendations to the IMLS director. She will make final decisions and will announce the awards in August. It could be as late as September. But we are hoping

that we'll be able to announce the awards in August. And your projects ideally will start October 1st. So just reminder again we make grants only to eligible applicants that submit complete applications on or before the deadline. And you can see some sample applications if you follow this link. If you need something more specific that you are not seeing, if you need the contact information for a project that you see on the awarded grant search or you need some ideas, please again feel free to call us or e-mail us and we'll try to get you the materials that you need or the contact information.

And now we will open it up to questions and also look at the questions that were entered in to the chat box. So let's see, when placing an organization's name at the top of the page can we use the header for this? Yes, you can do that.

Would cost share help the application? Yeah, we are -- we don't require cost share. If it comes up in discussion during the review panels we remind reviewers that it should not be considered. Sometimes there is a perception on the reviewer's part that it is beneficial, but we will reiterate during the panel that it is not something that should be considered.

Is the tribal resolution required at the time of the application submission? I think that's -- we do not require a tribal resolution be submitted to us. It is not one of our required documents. You can choose to submit it as a supporting document. What we do require is that a tribal administrator with the authority to enter in to financial agreements on behalf of the tribe sign your application forms. So if, for example, in your tribe a tribal resolution is required to get that signature, then, of course, go through that process but you don't need to submit it to us.

I will just add that we have seen situations in the past where a project idea was submitted and it didn't have the full support of the tribal elders and so progress had to be halted. So make sure that you have the approvals that you need and that you work with your tribal administration and don't submit a project idea that hasn't gone through the approval process, whatever that process might be for your tribe. And someone said what goal? If you go back to the program information sheet you will see that there is a place where you have to pick a goal and most applications pick either the learning or the community goal. If you have trouble finding that, e-mail me or give me a call and I can show you where to find the goal that you need to pick.

And the next question is are most current and direct cost rates for 2015. 2016 is in process. We should receive completed documents by June of 2017. Can we send 2015 and 2016 when finished? You can submit a budget with an in-process indirect cost rate. But when we have to make the award if it is

not approved, you have to get documentation from the agency that you are negotiating with to tell us basically it is about to get approved. And they have confidence that you can use that rate. Or you will have to remove it from your budget. If you have had a previously negotiated rate, you can't use the 10% de minimis. You either use the rate that's approved or no rate and that's something that we have seen happen in the past where a rate was a negotiation but it wasn't approved. So they have to take that off of their budget unfortunately.

Okay. The next question is the Drug Free Workplace Act was ended in 1998. Why is a drug free certificate required? That's a good question but I can find out from our general counsel. A similar issue was brought up in the past and I think -- I can't answer for right now but I know in the past whatever the tribe determined was appropriate was okay with the agency, but again I'll have to ask our legal counsel how to answer this question for right now because I don't know how to answer it. Yes, so that's a great idea. Why don't you e-mail it to me. Here is our contact information so that way I can know who to contact with the answer from our legal counsel.

If you have any other questions, please enter them in to the chat box and we'll do our best to try to answer them now. We are not seeing anyone typing. So we are going to go ahead and thank you for joining us today. We hope to see all of you submit applications. It is a competitive process but we really want to help you as much as we can to submit successful proposals. And I see one question which is this all recorded on the computer. Yes. We are recording this webinar. And you will get a link sent to you so that you can -- oh. I'm sorry. You are not going to get a link. It is going to be posted on our website. So if you can't find the link, then e-mail us and we will give you the link. So thank you very much. And good luck.

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