

Justification for Change

3137-0029 General Clearance Grant Application and Post-Award Processes

IMLS is requesting a change to a previously approved clearance in order to add a new grant program, Sparks! Ignition. This new grant is requesting the same expiration date of 8/31/2013.

Previous request abstract:

IMLS requests delegation of authority to review and approve all agency information collection requests (excluding surveys, evaluations, and data calls used for policy-making purposes, under the Paperwork Reduction Act. The information collections in this package include all of the guidelines and instructions to (1) apply for IMLS support, (2) identify grant reviewers, and (3) complete post-award reports for the agency's grant programs. In a separate clearance submission (3137-0071) and justification, IMLS is requesting a three-year generic clearance for all forms used in its grant programs, including application materials and post-award reports.

Justification for the Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries and Museums

The Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries and Museums initiative is a new funding opportunity developed by IMLS to expand and test the boundaries of library, archives and museum services and practices. It provides small, targeted investments in high-risk, innovative responses to the challenges and opportunities facing cultural heritage institutions in a rapidly changing information environment. Innovation is the key to using time, money and staff more productively and helping cultural heritage institutions improve their services, processes, programs and products. These grants will support the testing of specific innovations and foster broad sharing of information about what works, and what does not. Because innovations can emerge in a variety of settings, the Sparks! Ignition Grants initiative is structured to encourage participation by organizations of all types and sizes.

The Sparks Grants guidelines were developed in response to needs expressed repeatedly to IMLS both by practitioners in the library, archive, and museum fields, and by the peer review panels used by IMLS to review proposals received under the National Leadership Grants (NLG) program. The small awards (\$10,000-\$25,000), shorter time periods to get results (grants are for one year), and no cost-sharing requirements of the Sparks Grants are all characteristics suggested by practitioners and peer reviewers as key ways to encourage innovation and a greater degree of risk-taking, and potentially to develop proofs-of-concept that may later fuel larger grant project proposals under the NLG program.