

Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums – FY16 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Federal Awarding Agency:	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Funding Opportunity Title:	Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums
Announcement Type:	Notice of Funding Opportunity
Funding Opportunity Number:	Sparks-Museum-FY16
Catalog of Federal Financial Assistance (CFDA) Number:	45.312
Due Date:	Submit through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on December 1, 2015
Anticipated Date of Notification of Award Decisions:	July 2016 (subject to the availability of funds and IMLS discretion)
Beginning Date of Period of Performance:	Not earlier than August 1, 2016

Equal Opportunity

IMLS-funded programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For further information, email the Civil Rights Officer at CivilRights@imls.gov or write to the Civil Rights Officer, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 1800 M Street, NW, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20036-5802.

A. Program Description

What is this grant program?

The Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums program is a special funding opportunity within the IMLS National Leadership Grants for Museums program. These small grants encourage museums to prototype and evaluate specific innovations in the ways they operate and the services they provide. Project results – be they success, failure, or a combination thereof – should offer valuable information to the museum field and the potential for improvement in the ways museums serve their communities.

What are the characteristics of successful projects?

- *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.

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- *In-depth Knowledge:* Your project should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter and an awareness and support of current strategic initiatives and agendas in the field.
- *Innovative Approach:* Your project should employ new approaches to strengthen and improve services to benefit the audiences and communities being served.
- *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.

What are the IMLS Agency-level goals?

The mission of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. We provide leadership through research, policy development, and grant making.

U.S. museums and libraries are at the forefront in the movement to create a nation of learners. As stewards of cultural and natural heritage with rich, authentic content, libraries and museums provide learning experiences for everyone. In FY2016, each award under this program will support one of the following three goals of the [IMLS strategic plan](#) for 2012-2016, *Creating a Nation of Learners*:

1. IMLS places the learner at the center and supports engaging experiences in libraries and museums that prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society.
2. IMLS promotes museums and libraries as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality.
3. IMLS supports exemplary stewardship of museum and library collections and promotes the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage.

The goals focus on achieving positive public outcomes for communities and individuals; supporting the unique role of museums and libraries in preserving and providing access to collections and content; and promoting library, museum, and information service policies that ensure access to information for all Americans.

What are the funding categories and project categories for this program?

There are no funding categories in the Sparks Grants program.

There are no specific project categories within the Sparks Grants program, though applicants should align their applications with one of the three IMLS strategic goals cited above. Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Rapid prototyping and testing of new ways to engage learners
- Offering innovative new types of services or new service options
- Exploring the potential of highly original, experimental collaborations
- Implementing new workflows or processes with potential for substantial cost savings
- Addressing community challenges through new types of partnerships, services, processes, or practices
- Developing and testing new tools or services that facilitate access, presentation, management, preservation, sharing, or use of museum collections

[Click here for samples of recently funded Sparks Grants.](#)

How much money can my institution apply for?

Sparks Grants range from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Where can I find additional examples of projects funded by this program?

[Click here to search awarded grants by program, category, and/or key word.](#)

Where can I find the Authorizing Statute and Regulations for this Funding Opportunity?

Statute: 20 U.S.C. §9101 et seq., in particular, §9162, and §9171et seq. (Museum Services)

Regulations: 45 CFR Chapter XI and 2 CFR Chapter XXXI

You are required to follow the IMLS regulations that are in effect at the time of the award.

PLEASE NOTE: The recent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) final guidance on Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Grant Reform) has streamlined and consolidated grant requirements. The Grant Reform can be found at 2 CFR Part 200. With certain IMLS-specific additions, IMLS regulations at 2 CFR Part 3187 formally adopt the 2 CFR Part 200 Grant Reform. The Grant Reform as adopted by IMLS at 2 CFR Part 3187 will be effective for all awards made after December 26, 2014.

B. Federal Award Information

Total amount of funding expected to be awarded	\$120,000
Anticipated number of awards	6
Range of awards	\$10,000-\$25,000
Average amount of funding per award	\$20,000
Type of assistance instrument	Grant
Anticipated start date	Not earlier than August 1, 2016. Projects must begin on August 1, September 1, or October 1, 2016.
Anticipated period of performance	August 2016-September 2017. Project activities may generally be carried out for up to one year.

The funding in the above Federal Award Information is subject to the availability of funds and IMLS discretion.

C. Eligibility Information

What are the eligibility requirements for this program?

To be eligible for an award under the Sparks Grants program, you must be an organization that meets all three of the following criteria:

1. You must be either a unit of State or local government or be a private nonprofit organization that has tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code;
2. You must be located in one of the 50 States of the United States of America, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau; and
3. You must qualify as one of the following:

- a. A museum that, using a professional staff, is organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes; owns or uses tangible objects, either animate or inanimate; cares for these objects; and exhibits these objects to the general public on a regular basis through facilities that it owns or operates.
 - **What types of institutions are included in the term “museum”?**
If they otherwise meet these requirements, including the criteria in (3)(a) above, museums include, but are not limited to, aquariums, arboretums, art museums, botanical gardens, children’s/youth museums, general museums (those having two or more significant disciplines), historic houses/sites, history museums, natural history/anthropology museums, nature centers, planetariums, science/technology centers, specialized museums (limited to a single distinct subject), and zoological parks.
 - **What does it mean to be using a professional staff?**
An institution uses a professional staff if it employs at least one staff member, or the full-time equivalent, whether paid or unpaid, primarily engaged in the acquisition, care, or exhibition to the public of objects owned or used by the institution.
 - **What does it mean to exhibit the objects to the general public?**
An institution exhibits objects to the general public if such exhibition is a primary purpose of the institution. An institution that exhibits objects to the general public for at least 120 days a year is deemed to exhibit objects to the general public on a regular basis.

An institution which does not have the exhibition of objects as a primary purpose and/or does not exhibit objects to the public for at least 120 days a year may be determined to be eligible as a museum under certain circumstances. For more information, please see 45 CFR §1180.2(d).
- b. An organization or association that engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of museums and the museum profession;
- c. An institution of higher education, including public and nonprofit universities; or
- d. A public or private nonprofit agency which is responsible for the operation of a museum that meets the eligibility criteria in (a) above may apply on behalf of the museum.

Note to applicants: In order to receive an IMLS award, you must be in compliance with applicable requirements and be in good standing on all active IMLS awards.

If my museum is located within a parent organization, can my museum apply on its own?

A museum located within a parent organization that is a State or local government or multipurpose nonprofit entity, such as a municipality, university, historical society, foundation, or cultural center, may apply on its own behalf if the museum:

- is able to independently fulfill all the eligibility requirements listed in the above three criteria;
- functions as a discrete unit within the parent organization;
- has its own fully segregated and itemized operating budget; and
- has the authority to make the application on its own.

When any of the last three conditions cannot be met, a museum may only apply through its parent organization.

Is a nonprofit organization eligible if it is affiliated with a museum?

IMLS may determine that a nonprofit organization that is affiliated with a museum is eligible for this program where the organization can demonstrate that it has the ability to administer the project and can ensure compliance with the terms of this Notice of Funding Opportunity and the applicable law, including the [Assurances and Certifications](#). The applicant organization must submit an agreement from the museum that details the activities that the applicant and museum will perform and binds the museum to the statements and assurances made in the grant application.

What are the requirements for cost sharing?

There are no matching or cost share requirements for Sparks Grants.

How many applications can we submit to this program?

There is no limit on the number of applications your organization may submit to this program for FY2016.

What if I fail to meet the eligibility requirements?

We will not review or make awards to ineligible applicants. In order to receive an IMLS award, you must be eligible and in compliance with applicable requirements and be in good standing on all active IMLS awards.

D. Application and Submission Information

Are there registration requirements in order to submit an application?

Before submitting an application, your organization must have a current and active D-U-N-S® Number, SAM.gov registration, and Grants.gov registration. Check your materials and registrations well in advance of the application deadline to ensure that they are accurate, current, and active.

If your D-U-N-S® and SAM.gov registrations are not active and current at the time of submission, your application will be rejected; if they are not active and current at the time of an award, your application cannot be funded.

What is a D-U-N-S® Number and how do I get one?

Before submitting an application, your organization must have a current and active D-U-N-S® Number, SAM.gov registration, and Grants.gov registration. Check your materials and registrations well in advance of the application deadline to ensure that they are accurate, current, and active.

[Click here to learn more about getting a D-U-N-S® Number.](#)

What is the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and how do I register?

[Click here to learn more about SAM.gov Registration.](#)

If your DUNS and SAM.gov registrations are not active and current at the time of submission, your application will be rejected; if they are not active and current at the time of an award, your application cannot be funded.

What is Grants.gov?

Grants.gov is your place to FIND and APPLY for federal grants.

The Grants.gov program management office was established, in 2002, as a part of the President's Management Agenda. Managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Grants.gov is an E-Government initiative operating under the governance of the Office of Management and Budget.

Under the President's Management Agenda, the office was chartered to deliver a system that provides a centralized location for grant seekers to find and apply for federal funding opportunities. Today, the Grants.gov system houses information on over 1,000 grant programs and vets grant applications for [26 federal grant-making agencies](#).

How can I find the application package on Grants.gov?

Use one of the following identifiers to locate the Sparks Grants package in Grants.gov:

- CFDA No: 45.312, or
- Funding Opportunity Number: Sparks-Museums-FY16

You must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting your application package. The multi-step registration process generally cannot be completed in a single day. If you are not already registered, you should allow at least two weeks for completing this one-time process. **Do not wait until the day of the application deadline to register.**

You do not need to complete the registration process to download the application package and begin to prepare your material. However, you will need your Grants.gov User ID and password that you obtain during the registration process to submit your application when it is complete.

We require all applicants to apply through Grants.gov. Please note that the entire completed application must be submitted online through Grants.gov.

[Click here to learn more about Grants.gov registration and Tips for Using Grants.gov.](#)

Can I request an audio recording of this publication?

Upon request, we will provide an audio recording of this publication. Use **Teletype (TTY/TDD) (for persons with hearing difficulty):** 202-653-4614

Can I request a paper copy of this publication?

If needed because of difficulty using Internet or for other accessibility reasons, you may also request paper copies of the materials. Use the [Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums program web page](#) for IMLS contact information. We are available by phone at 202-653-4789.

What federal laws do I agree to comply with when I submit my application?

[Click here to read the IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#)

When and where must I submit my application?

For the Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums program, Grants.gov will accept applications through 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on December 1, 2015.

We strongly recommend that you REGISTER EARLY for DUNS and SAM.gov and COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THE APPLICATION EARLY. We make grants only to eligible applicants that submit complete applications, including attachments, through Grants.gov, on or before the deadline.

[Contact the Grants.gov help line](#) (1-800-518-4726) for assistance with hardware and software issues, registration issues, and technical problems. The help line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except for federal holidays, on which it is closed.

What happens after I submit my application to Grants.gov?

Once Grants.gov has received your submission, Grants.gov will send email messages regarding the progress of your application through the system. Over the next two business days, you should receive two emails. The first will confirm receipt of your application by the Grants.gov system and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency (IMLS) or has been rejected due to errors. Once your submission is retrieved by the grantor agency, you will receive a third email. You can check the status of your application(s) after submission in Grants.gov, by using the "Track My Application" feature. You may also check the status of a submission by logging into your Grants.gov account using the Applicant Login and clicking on the "Check Application Status" link.

What documents are required to make a complete application?

The Table of Application Components below will help you prepare a complete and eligible application. You will find links to more information and instructions for completing each application component in the table. Applications missing any Required Documents or Conditionally Required Documents from this list will be considered incomplete and will be rejected from further consideration.

How should the application components be formatted, named, and sequenced?

- **Document format:** Aside from the SF424 listed below which is created in Grants.gov, all application components must be submitted as PDF documents.
- **Page limits:** Note page limits listed below. We will remove any pages above the limit, and we will not send them to reviewers as part of your application.
- **Naming convention:** Use the naming conventions indicated in the table. **IMPORTANT:** You are limited to using the following characters in all attachment file names: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space, period. If you use any other characters when naming your attachment files, your application will be rejected.
- **Document order:** In Grants.gov, attach all application components in the sequence listed below. Use all available spaces in the "Attachments Form" first. Attach any additional application components using the "Other Attachment File(s)" box.
- **Complete applications:** Use the table below as a checklist to ensure that you have created and attached all necessary application components.

Any document you create must be converted to PDF format before submitting it. [Click here for assistance in converting documents to PDF.](#) Do not send secured or password-protected PDFs; we cannot process these files.

Note that IMLS does not permit the authorized representative to be the same person as the project director on the SF-424-S.

Table of Complete Application Components

Component	Format	File name to use
<u>Required Documents</u>		
<u>The Application for Federal Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)</u>	Grants.gov form	n/a
<u>Abstract (one page, max.)</u>	PDF document	Abstract.pdf
<u>IMLS Program Information Sheet</u>	IMLS PDF form	Programinfo.pdf
<u>Organizational Profile (one page, max.)</u>	PDF document	Organizationalprofile.pdf
<u>Narrative (six pages, max.)</u>	PDF document	Narrative.pdf

Schedule of Completion (one page per year, max.)	PDF document	Scheduleofcompletion.pdf
IMLS Budget Form	IMLS 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 (two pages each, max.)	PDF document	Resumes.pdf
<u>Conditionally Required Documents</u>		
Proof of Nonprofit Status	PDF document	Proofnonprofit.pdf
Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement	PDF document	Indirectcostrate.pdf
Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form	IMLS PDF form	Digitalstewardship.pdf
<u>Supporting Documents</u>		
Information that supplements the narrative and supports the project description provided in the application	PDF document	Supportingdoc1.pdf Supportingdoc2.pdf Supportingdoc3.pdf etc.

Required Documents

The Application for Federal Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)

Click here for instructions on:
[How to Fill Out the SF-424S](#)

Abstract

A project abstract must be no more than one page and address the following:

- Who is the lead applicant and, if applicable, who are the partners?
- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified?
- What activities will you carry out and in what time frame?
- How does your project benefit the museum field?

- What are your project's intended outcomes?
- How will you [measure your success](#) in achieving your intended outcomes?

This abstract may be used for public information purposes, so it should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, as well as to the lay reader. The abstract must not include any proprietary or confidential information.

IMLS Program Information Sheet

Download IMLS Program Information Sheet:
[Adobe® PDF](#) (318 KB)

1. Applicant Information:

- Legal Name: From 5a on the SF424S.
- Organizational D-U-N-S® Number: From 5f on the SF424S.
- Expiration date of your SAM.gov registration: Enter the expiration date of your SAM.gov registration in the fill-in field. Please note that before submitting an application, your organization must have a current SAM.gov registration.
- Organizational Unit Name: If you cannot apply for grants on your own behalf, then enter your organizational unit's name and address in these spaces. For example, if your museum or library is part of a parent organization, such as a university, then enter the name of the university under **Legal Name**, and the museum or library as the **Organizational Unit**.
- Organizational Unit Address: Be sure to include the four-digit extension on the ZIP code.
- Organizational Unit Type: Select the one that most accurately describes your organization.

2. Organizational Financial Information: a-d. All applicants must provide the information requested.

3. Grant Program Information: Check the Museum box under **d. Sparks! Ignition Grants**

4. Performance Goals: Select one of the three IMLS agency-level goals (a – c). Check at least one of the performance goals listed beneath it. **Note:** If you select a performance goal(s) under agency-level goals a) Learning or b) Community, click on the link below it to review the specific performance measure statement choices and the information you will be required to collect and report on throughout the award period of performance.

5. Funding Request Information:

- IMLS Funds Requested: Enter the amount in dollars sought from IMLS.
- Cost Share Amount: Enter the amount of non-federal funding you are providing, if any. [Click here for further information on cost sharing](#). Note: Cost sharing is not required for Sparks Grants.

6. Population Served: Check the boxes that reflect the population(s) to be served by your project.

7. Museum Profile: Museum applicants must answer all questions (a – m) in this section. If you named an organizational unit under 1d, this information must pertain to that unit.

8. Project Elements: Sparks Grants applicants skip this section.

Narrative

Write a narrative that addresses the components listed and explained below. Limit the narrative to six single-spaced, numbered pages. We will remove any pages above the six-page limit and we will not send them to reviewers as part of your application.

- Use Supporting Documents to provide supplementary material.

- Make sure your organization's name appears at the top of each page. Use at least 0.5-inch margins on all sides and a font size of at least twelve points.

How will my narrative be reviewed?

Reviewers with a variety of professional backgrounds read Sparks Grants applications and advise us on their merits. They base their evaluations on the information presented in the applications. Your project narrative should therefore be clear, concise, and well organized, with a minimum of technical jargon.

Review criteria are listed below for each section of the narrative. These criteria describe what the reviewers are instructed to consider as they evaluate applications. Keep these review criteria in mind when writing your narrative.

How should my narrative be structured?

Structure your narrative according to the following outline, using the three section titles and addressing the bullet points beneath them. In each section of your narrative be mindful of the characteristics of a successful Sparks Grants project: they address a key need or challenge of the museum field, they reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge; they employ novel approaches or techniques; and they generate results that are valuable to the museum field.

Be certain to address the bullet points under each of the narrative sections as you write. Address the sections of the narrative separately and in the same order in which they are listed below.

Please be advised that reviewers may also choose to visit your organization's website, as listed on the SF-424S form provided with this application.

1. Statement of Need

- 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 (as described above in section A. Program Description – What is this grant program?)

Review Criteria:

- Is the project clearly explained?
- Is the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed clearly identified and supported by relevant evidence?
- Are the people who will benefit from the project clearly identified, and have they been involved in planning the project?
- Does the project address current needs of the museum field and/or have the potential to advance practice in the museum profession?
- Does the project meet the Sparks Grants requirement of demonstrating broad impact, in-depth knowledge, and an innovative approach?

2. Impact

Describe the intended performance goals and benefits of this project, as follows:

- Referring to the Performance Goal(s) selected on the Program Information Sheet prepared for your application, choose one or more Performance Measure Statement(s) appropriate for your project and describe how you will collect and report the corresponding data.
- Referring to your Statement of Need, describe your project's intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified. These may be in addition to, but not instead of, the Performance Goal(s) and Performance Measure Statement(s) referenced above.
- How will you determine whether this innovation can be adapted by others in the field?

Review Criteria:

- Is the plan for collecting and reporting data corresponding to the Performance Goal(s) and Performance Measure Statement(s) selected for the project well designed and feasible?
- Are the project's intended results clearly articulated, appropriate, realistic, and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project?
- If successful, what value will the results from the proposed project provide to the museum field?

Incorporating Evaluation into Your Project
[Click here for helpful information about evaluation.](#)

3. Project Design

- 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?

Review Criteria:

- Are the proposed activities informed by appropriate theory and practice?
- Are the proposed evaluation activities and performance measurements appropriate for the project? Will they result in valid, reliable, and generalizable findings?
- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?
- Is the schedule of work realistic and achievable?
- Are the time, personnel, and financial resources identified appropriate for the scope and scale of the project?
- Does the institution provide evidence of its capacity to carry out the project activities?
- Is a clear methodology described for tracking the project's progress and adjusting course when necessary?
- Is there an effective plan for communicating results and/or sharing discoveries?

For this section of the application, reviewers will consider information provided in the Narrative, Budget Forms, Budget Justification, and Resumes.

Projects that primarily consist of research are not supported in this grant program.

In addition to following the instructions above, research project applications should also address each of the following questions within the three sections of the Narrative portion.

- What are the specific research questions this investigation will attempt to answer?
- What is the relevance of the proposed research for current practice?
- What research method(s) will be used to conduct the research?
- What type of data will be gathered?
- How will the data be analyzed?
- How will the information be reported?
- How will the research data be managed and made available for future use (as applicable)?

If an electronic dataset will be created as a result of the proposed research, you should complete the [Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form](#) and include this form as part of your application. This form asks you to summarize the dataset's original purpose and scope; provide technical information about the dataset's format, structure, and content; explain what metadata will be created about the dataset and what standards and formats will be used for the metadata; list any relevant hardware, software, or other dependencies for using the data; identify a repository where the data and metadata will be archived, managed, and made accessible (if applicable); and describe the long-term preservation plan for the dataset. If you do not expect your project to generate data, please state this clearly in your narrative. [Click here to learn more about the elements of an effective research application.](#)

Schedule of Completion

[Click here for instructions on:](#)

How to create the [Schedule of Completion](#)

Budget Form and Budget Justification

[Click here for instructions on:](#)

How to complete the [Budget Documents](#)

How do I construct my application budget?

Are there funding restrictions?

You may only use IMLS funds, and your cost sharing, for allowable costs as found in IMLS and OMB government-wide cost-principle rules.

PLEASE NOTE: The recent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) final guidance on Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Grant Reform) has streamlined and consolidated grant requirements. The Grant Reform can be found at 2 CFR Part 200. With certain IMLS-specific additions, IMLS regulations at 2 CFR Part 3187 formally adopt the 2 CFR Part 200 Grant Reform. The Grant Reform as adopted by IMLS at 2 CFR Part 3187 will be effective for all awards made after December 26, 2014.

What are some examples of allowable and unallowable costs?

The following list includes some examples of allowable costs, both for IMLS funds and for cost share (if applicable), in this grant program. Please consult 2 CFR Part 200 for additional guidance on 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

You must explain all proposed expenses in your Budget Justification.

The following list includes some examples of unallowable costs, both for IMLS funds and for cost share (if applicable), in this grant program. Please consult the appropriate cost principles for additional guidance on unallowable costs.

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

Are partner-related costs allowable?

Yes. [Click here to learn more information about incorporating partners into your project.](#)

Subawards and Contracts

In addition to the activities that you carry out directly, some project activities may be carried out by utilizing IMLS funds for either subawards or contracts. It is your responsibility to make a case-by-case determination as to whether each agreement you make for the disbursement of federal program funds casts the party receiving the funds in the role of a subrecipient or a contractor. (See 2 CFR 200.330 (Subrecipient and contractor determinations)).

There are particular requirements for subawards that you must follow as a pass-through entity (a non-federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program). (See 2 CFR 200.74 (Pass-through entity) and 2 CFR 200.331 (Requirements for pass-through entities)). There are other requirements that you must follow if you contract for activities. (See sections 200.317 through 326 (Procurement Standards))

Please Note: You may not make a subaward unless expressly authorized by IMLS. (See 2 CFR 200.3187 (Subawards)).

See 2 CFR Part 200 (in particular, sections 200.330 through 332 (Subrecipient Monitoring and Management) and sections 200.317 through 326 (Procurement Standards) and 2 CFR Part 3187 for further information.

What are the requirements regarding costs for foreign travel?

All air transportation of persons or property that is paid in whole or in part with IMLS funds must be performed in accordance with applicable law, including but not limited to the Fly America Act (49 U.S.C. §40118) (see also 41 CFR 301-10.131 through 10.143). Each separate foreign trip must be itemized in the budget approved by IMLS. Foreign travel that is not included in the approved project budget must be specifically approved in writing by the appropriate IMLS program officer.

What are my choices regarding indirect costs?

You can choose to:

- use a current indirect cost rate already negotiated with a federal agency
- use an indirect cost rate proposed to a federal agency for negotiation, but not yet approved, as long as it is approved by the time of award
- if you have never had a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and you are otherwise eligible, use a rate not to exceed 10% of total modified direct costs or
- not include any indirect costs

[Click here for further information on indirect costs.](#)

List and Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants

Click here for instructions on:

How to create the [Project Staff and Consultant Documents](#)

Conditionally Required Documents

Failure to provide a conditionally required document will result in your application being considered incomplete and rejected from further consideration.

Link to information on providing:

[Proof of Nonprofit Status](#)

Please consult the table below to determine if any additional documents are required. If any of the conditions in the left column apply to your project, then the documents described in the right column are required. If you do not provide them, your application will be considered incomplete and will be rejected from further consideration.

If your project involves ...	Then you must include ...
A federally negotiated indirect cost rate	A current copy of your Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
A digital product (IMLS defines digital products very broadly. If you are developing anything through the use of information technology, you should assume that you need to complete this form.)	A Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form; click here for Requirements for Projects that Develop Digital Content

Please note that if you are eligible for and are choosing the option of claiming an indirect cost rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs, you do not need to provide any documentation. [Click here for further information on indirect costs.](#)

Supporting Documents

You may submit other attachments of your choosing as part of your application package but these attachments should include only information that will supplement the Narrative and support the project description provided in the application. They should help IMLS staff and reviewers envision your project, but they should not be used to answer narrative questions. You may wish to consider the following:

- Letters of commitment from subrecipients who will receive grant funds or from entities that will contribute substantive funds to the completion of project activities
- Letters of commitment from consultants or other groups who will work closely with you on your project
- Bibliography of references relevant to your proposed project design or evaluation strategy
- Letters of support from experts and/or stakeholders
- Reports from planning activities
- Vendor quotes
- Equipment specifications

- Products or evaluations from previously completed or ongoing projects of a similar nature
- Collections, technology, or other departmental plans for the institution as applicable to the proposed project
- Web links to relevant online materials
- Needs assessments

Note: When attaching these documents, give each one a specific title for clear identification. All Supporting Documents should include dates of creation and authorship.

E. Application Review Process

What are the characteristics of successful applications?

- *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.
- *In-depth Knowledge:* Your project should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter and an awareness and support of current strategic initiatives and agendas in the field.
- *Innovative Approach:* Your project should employ new approaches to strengthen and improve services to benefit the audiences and communities being served.
- *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.

Is cost sharing considered in the review process?

Cost sharing is not required for FY16 Sparks Grants. However, any cost share that you include in your project budget is a consideration in the review of your application and should be carefully calculated.

What is the review and selection process?

We use a peer review process to evaluate all eligible and complete applications. Reviewers are professionals in the field with relevant knowledge and expertise in the types of project activities identified in the applications. They are instructed to evaluate applications according to the Review Criteria above. Reviewer conflicts of interest are identified prior to review, and reviewers who may have conflicts with particular applications are reassigned to review other projects.

The Director takes into account the advice provided by the review process and makes final funding decisions consistent with the purposes of the agency's programs.

Reviewers are directed to follow the review criteria described in Section D above.

When will awards be announced?

We will not release information about the status of an application until the applications have been reviewed and all deliberations are concluded. We expect to notify both funded and unfunded applicants of the final decisions by July 2016. Funded projects may not begin earlier than August 2016.

F. Award Administration Information

How will we be notified about the results of the grant process?

Official Award Notifications for Grants and Cooperative Agreements will be sent electronically. The award packet sent to the Authorized Representative/Authorizing Official will contain the following:

- cover letter(s)
- the Official Award Notifications for Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- links to the applicable documents, including general terms and conditions, reporting forms, etc.

The Project Director will receive the following:

- copies of the cover letter(s)
- a copy of the Official Award Notifications for Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- links to the applicable documents, including general terms and conditions, reporting forms, etc.
- when appropriate for a particular funding category, reviewer comments

Applicants who do not receive awards will be notified at the same time.

What is the award period of performance?

The award period of performance will run from the first day of the month in which project activities are undertaken and will end on the last day of the month in which these activities are completed.

What are the administrative and national policy requirements?

Organizations that receive IMLS grants or cooperative agreements are subject to the [IMLS General Terms and Conditions for IMLS Discretionary Awards](#) and the [IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#). Organizations that receive IMLS funding must be familiar with these requirements and comply with applicable law.

As an applicant for federal funds, you must certify that you are responsible for complying with certain nondiscrimination, debarment and suspension, drug-free workplace, and lobbying laws. These are set out in more detail, along with other requirements, in the [Assurances and Certifications](#). By signing the application form, which includes the Assurances and Certifications, you certify that you are in compliance with these requirements and that you will maintain records and submit any reports that are necessary to ensure compliance. Your failure to comply with these statutory and regulatory requirements may result in the suspension or termination of your grant and require you to return funds to the government.

What are the reporting requirements?

Reports are due according to the reporting schedule that accompanies your Official Award Notification for Grants and Cooperative Agreements. Please note that recipients must submit performance reports in the format defined by the IMLS; both interim and final performance reports may be accessible on the IMLS website to support the agency's commitment to open government, to engage the public in communities of practice and to inform application development and grant making strategies.

For details and forms, please see: www.imls.gov/recipients/administration.aspx

What do I need to know about acknowledgement of IMLS support?

[Read more about acknowledgement of IMLS support.](#)

What do I need to know about sharing IMLS-supported work products and copyright, and management of digital assets produced with IMLS support?

[Read more about sharing IMLS-supported work products and copyright, and management of digital assets produced with IMLS support.](#)

G. Contacts

How can I contact program staff?

See the [Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums program web page](#) for IMLS contact information. We are available by phone and through e-mail to discuss general issues relating to the Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums grants program.

How can I participate in a webinar?

Learn more about museum grant programs by participating in IMLS webinars. [Click here for instructions.](#)

1. [A general presentation on IMLS museum grants](#). *We recommend that you view this presentation before participating in a program-specific webinar.*
2. [FY16 Sparks! Ignition Grants for Museums program webinar](#)

H. Other Information

What are the requirements regarding conflict of interest?

You must comply with IMLS' [conflict of interest requirements](#). These requirements include disclosing in writing to IMLS or pass-through entity any potential conflict of interest.

How long should it take to complete this application?

We estimate the average amount of time needed for one applicant to complete the narrative portion of this application to be 40 hours. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and writing and reviewing the answers.

We estimate that, in addition to the time needed for you to answer the narrative questions, it will take you an average of 15 minutes per response for the IMLS Program Information Sheet and three hours per response for the IMLS Budget Form.

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Institute of Museum and Library Services at 1800 M Street, NW, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20036-5802, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3137-0029), Washington, DC 20503.

How can I become a reviewer?

If you are interested in serving as a reviewer, you may submit your information through our online reviewer application at www.ims.gov/reviewers/become.aspx. Please remember to attach your resume. Your information will be considered and, if accepted, your name will be entered into our reviewer database. You will be contacted prior to the next deadline regarding your availability to serve as a reviewer.

There are many benefits to reviewing applications, including enhancing your professional knowledge and serving the museum and library communities. If you are selected to serve, you will be helping IMLS and strengthening our grant review process.

Office of Management and Budget Clearance Numbers

Notices of Funding Opportunity: OMB No. XXXXX; Expiration Date: XXXXX.

Forms: OMB No. XXXXX; Expiration Date: XXXXX.