

A. Justification: Notice of Funding Opportunity: STEM Expert Facilitation of Family Learning in Libraries and Museums (STEMeX) – A National Leadership Grants Special Initiative, OMB Control Number 3137-XXXX

1. Necessity of the Information Collection

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. IMLS' mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. IMLS works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is requesting a one-time clearance in an existing collection in use without an OMB Control Number for the STEM Expert Facilitation of Family Learning in Libraries and Museums (STEMeX) – A National Leadership Grants Special Initiative under the Paperwork Reduction Act. The information collection in this package includes STEMeX Notices of Funding Opportunities and instructions necessary to apply for IMLS support as part of the agency's grant programs.

National Leadership Grants for Libraries (NLG-Libraries) and National Leadership Grants for Museums (NLG-Museums), under which this special initiative falls, support projects that address challenges faced by the library and museum fields and that have the potential to advance practice in those fields. Successful projects will generate results such as new tools, research findings, models, services, practices, or alliances that can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend the benefits of federal investment.

This special joint NLG-Libraries and NLG-Museums initiative invites proposals for research on informal educational approaches that leverage community Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) professionals in the broadest sense. Funded research projects will create a foundation for reaching children and families from diverse economic, social, and cultural backgrounds, with different levels of knowledge about STEM.

Application Notices of Funding Opportunities: IMLS uses an iterative review process for each set of Notices of Funding Opportunities in every fiscal year. The process is defined in IMLS's *Grants Administration Manual* and it is designed to ensure that key stakeholders and agency officials review and authorize proposed Notices of Funding Opportunities. In FY 2007, text common to all of IMLS grant program applications was rewritten to provide consistent information and language across all these program documents. Beginning in FY2013, IMLS complied with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 to provide "clear government communication that the public can understand and use." We at the Institute of Museum and Library Services are committed to writing new documents in plain language, using the [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#).

2. Purposes and Uses of the Data

The information collected by IMLS is used by the agency to carry out its grant programs. The information is used by IMLS staff to validate applicant eligibility, identify and assign peer reviewers, manage grant competitions, award discretionary and formula-based grants, and administer and monitor its grants. It is also used by the agency for strategic planning, performance analysis, and to provide information to the Administration and to Congress. Data elements subject to FOIA also provide information about IMLS's grant applications and programs to individuals outside the agency, and may be used by applicants to validate their project ideas or application strategies, to follow trends in their fields, and to identify effective practice that can be widely adapted to improve the quality of

museum and library services in the United States. IMLS intends to make final grant reports available via its website and so informs grantees.

3. Use of Information Technology

IMLS is committed to the use of improved information technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs, while reducing burden on potential applicants. Applicants can download the STEMEx Notice of Funding Opportunity, and application instructions online. IMLS requires all applicants to apply for IMLS awards online through Grants.gov.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

All IMLS grant application Notices of Funding Opportunities and publications are annually reviewed through an internal clearance process, which requires review by several different offices within the agency, including the program offices, the Office of General Counsel, and the Grants Administration Office. This annual review process protects against duplication.

5. Method Used to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses

Participation is entirely voluntary. No small businesses are impacted, but some applicants for IMLS funding are small non-profit organizations. Every effort has been made to streamline processes and instructions and to simplify the application and reporting processes. The agency's internal clearance process ensures that no undue burden is placed on any applicant for IMLS funding.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

These collections of information are essential to IMLS in meeting its statutory mission to award Federal financial assistance under the Museum and Library Act (20 U.S.C. Section 9101 *et seq.*), and its obligation to identify needs and trends in museum, library and information services. The information collections included in this package vary in frequency. Many are one time per application, others are annual, and one is every five years.

7. Special Circumstances

None of the listed conditions applies.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

The 60-day notice for this collection was published in the Federal Register Vol. 81, no. 101 (May 25, 2016), pages 33273-33274. One public comment was received. A 30-day notice requesting comment for this generic clearance was published in the Federal Register: Vol. 81, No. 158 (August 16, 2016), pages 54609-54610.

IMLS uses several different mechanisms to consult with persons outside the agency. Contact information for program officers is widely distributed and easily accessible from the IMLS website, and grantees and potential applicants are encouraged to communicate frequently with these experts. In addition, program officers convene nationwide conference calls to answer questions and take input. IMLS program staff also travel to national, regional, and local meetings of potential applicants to discuss program requirements. Finally, agency staff consults informally with its communities throughout the year, including regular meetings with the Chiefs of State Library Administrative Agencies, semiannual information meetings hosted for representatives of key professional associations, and IMLS convenings for other purposes.

During the grant application review process, outside experts are asked to review applications and discuss the agency's forms, instructions, and process. These experts are consulted by IMLS staff regarding the clarity and value of the Notices of Funding Opportunities and informally comment on the burden of response required by applicants.

IMLS notes and evaluates suggestions for revising Notices of Funding Opportunities and reporting forms received from applicants responding to the invitation for comments found in the burden statement contained in each information collection. Efforts are continually made to shorten and simplify application instructions and forms in response to suggestions made by respondents.

9. Payments or Gifts to Respondents

No payments or gifts are provided to any of the respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

No assurance of confidentiality is provided. Grant files are subject to FOIA request and are handled on a case-by-case basis. IMLS intends to make final grant reports available via its website and so informs grantees.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden to Respondents

The estimated number of respondents is 37. This number was estimated based on an assessment of the number of applicants for IMLS grants in FY 2016, the most recent year for which data is available. The number of annual burden hours is estimated to be 1,480, based on estimates of the average number of hours an applicant will need to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the narrative components of the application.

13. Estimate of Cost Burden to Respondents

The estimated cost to applicants is \$43,805. The average cost per hour is based on \$29.60, the Bureau of Labor Statistics average mean hourly wage of a museum, library professional, university, and non-profit employee. The estimated burden hour cost per application is 40 hours (40 hours x \$29.60).

Note: the cost for completion of forms associated with applications is accounted for in the ICR for generic clearance for applications and reporting forms.

The two cost components for total capital/start-up and operation/maintenance/purchase of services are not applicable.

14. Estimate of Costs to Federal Government

The annualized cost to IMLS is estimated at \$9,890. The agency has received 37 total applications (37 respondents x 5 forms, includes discretionary applications including SF-424S, Discretionary interim performance report, Discretionary final performance report SF-425 and SF-270) for a total of 185 responses this year. Approximately 285 hours (varies from 1.16 to 2.5/hour average time to process one application) are spent by IMLS staff reviewing and processing each response at an average wage of \$41.12.

15. Explanation of Change in Burden

There is no change in burden.

16. Statistical Usage

Not applicable.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

Not applicable. The expiration date will be displayed.

18. Exception to Certification Statement

Not applicable.