

STEM Expert Facilitation of Family Learning in Libraries and Museums (STEMeX) – FY16 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Federal Awarding Agency:	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Funding Opportunity Title:	STEM Expert Facilitation of Family Learning in Libraries and Museums (STEMeX)
Announcement Type:	Notice of Funding Opportunity
Funding Opportunity Number:	NLG Special Initiative-STEMeX-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 May 1, 2016
Anticipated Date of Notification of Award Decisions:	September 2016 (subject to the availability of funds and IMLS discretion)
Beginning Date of Period of Performance:	Not earlier than October 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. Special Initiative Description

What is this special initiative?

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.

This joint NLG-Libraries and NLG-Museums special 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, geographic, social, and cultural backgrounds, with different levels of knowledge about STEM.

We are interested in proposals for design-based research projects that develop and explore models for inquiry-based STEM programs delivered by scientists, engineers, and related technical practitioners (STEM experts) to children ages 6-10 and their families. In particular, proposals should address the role of expert oral narratives (e.g., storytelling, personal histories, and analogies) as part of object-based

science inquiry (Dahlstrom, 2014). Proposals should include information about how findings from this research will be applicable in both museum and library settings.

STEM experts are invaluable community resources for conveying the processes of scientific inquiry as well as the practices of STEM (Flick, 1990; France & Bay, 2010; Hobbs & Davis, 2013; Montano, 2012; Morrison & Estes, 2007; Tala & Vesterinen, 2015) which provide an essential foundation for science literacy (AAAS, 1993; Bybee, 1997; DeBoer, 2000). Many communities have a wealth of STEM experts including academic researchers, hydrologists, dental hygienists, road engineers, art conservators, and many others. At the same time, libraries and museums are eager to feature "faces of science" in their programs. In both school programming and informal learning contexts, important progress has been made to instill STEM inquiry skills and practices through role-based programs and by connecting learners to experts (Chen, 2014; Eberbach & Crowley, 2009; Farland-Smith, 2009; Howitt, Rennie, Heard, & Yuncken, 2009; Navid & Einsiedel, 2012; Rennie, 2012; Zhai & Dillon, 2014). Demand has increased for diverse informal learning mechanisms that connect STEM experts with the public, such as citizen science programs, science cafes, maker events, site visits to research and development facilities, onsite museum research labs, and online hangouts. However, the library and museum fields have not fully engaged in research to understand the roles of community STEM experts within family learning experiences.

This special initiative seeks projects that will build upon models and frameworks such as but not limited to those exploring connected learning (Ito et. al, 2013); object-based learning (Paris, 2002); problem-based learning (Hmelo-Silver, 2004); making and tinkering (Vossoughi & Bevan, 2014); and sociocultural learning among children and families (Bamberger, 2014; Cox-Peterson et., al, 2003; Haden, 2010; Kisiel, Rowe, Vartabedian, & Kopczak, 2012; Zimmerman, Perin & Bell, 2010). Any products should be adoptable and adaptable by museums and libraries of various sizes, disciplines, and resources. The desired outcome for young children and their families will be engagement with STEM professionals that enhances skills in scientific inquiry and interest and affinity with STEM within a range of real life contexts.

Because we are calling for members of different communities to work with and learn from one another, we encourage collaboration and outreach (e.g. de Lacalle, & Petruso, 2012). It is essential that researchers define and operationalize constructs that are key for their projects, such as learning, engagement, inquiry, and argumentation. In addition, project proposals should use pedagogical approaches and techniques that enhance children's identification with experts and interest in STEM careers and build STEM knowledge that becomes part of decision-making in everyday life. Successful proposals may suggest pathways to explore how to engage parents in activities involving experts in their children's learning activities. Project results will support family learning in a variety of library and museum contexts.

Proposals should describe how STEM experts can use objects--broadly defined and including specimens collected by researchers, collection materials and their representations, experts' equipment, electronics, books, photographs, models and journals--to scaffold the development of STEM knowledge and skills and promote interest in, and affinity, with STEM among family members. We anticipate the results of funded projects will explore how the processes of inquiry and related practices in STEM are embedded within the life stories and related problem-solving activities of experts. In addition, we seek results that will provide connections to the enriching environments offered by museums and libraries and will thus support and contextualize such STEM explorations.

An important consideration in funding proposals is the potential of projects to generate research findings that will serve as the basis for tools and resources that will support ongoing application across both museums and libraries. Successful projects will be intentionally designed to articulate and refine models, techniques, and approaches that can help museum and library professionals from institutions of varying sizes and disciplines facilitate family learning of STEM content and increasing awareness of scientific processes.

Awards will support two-year research projects. Proposals should describe how research teams will use an iterative, design-based research approach (Barab & Squire, 2004) to develop practices and models for various library and museum contexts. IMLS expects project staff funded through this special initiative to share their research findings with IMLS, the staff of other projects funded under the same initiative, and with a third-party evaluator through periodic teleconferences, email, and in-person convenings.

Potential supplemental funding may be provided (subject to the availability of funding, IMLS discretion, and written notice) for up to three additional years to implement curricula and programs after the research results are reviewed. Supplemental funding may support testing frameworks or models at increased scale, an evaluation of scaling, the creation and refinement of a toolkit, additional testing of frameworks or models in diverse cultural contexts, and identification of approaches to enhance adoption within libraries and museums. The goal of supplemental funding is to move the body of knowledge and related products towards applicability in a broad range of institutional and community contexts.

What are the characteristics of successful projects?

Successful projects will develop and explore models for inquiry-based programs delivered by STEM experts to children and their families. These projects will build on prior theoretical and empirical work about how children learn (e.g. Benjamin, Haden, & Wilkerson, 2010; Fender & Crowley, 2007; Herrenkohl & Guerra, 1998; Jant, Haden, Uttal, & Babcock, 2014; Kim & Crowley, 2010; Scherz & Oren, 2006; Weisberg, Sobel, Goodstein, & Bloom, 2013; Wilson, Krakowsky & Herget, 2010) and address learning during a key period of children's social, cognitive, and identity development (ages 6-10). In addition, such projects will produce research results that are inclusive of children and families from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds. The research should explore the role of expert oral narratives (e.g., storytelling, personal histories, and analogies) and problem-solving as part of object-based inquiry within real world STEM contexts. Successful projects will study and formalize a learning model for science-based family learning experiences. Competitive research projects will simultaneously address learning in both libraries and museums, incorporating existing learning sciences theory (Sawyer, 2014) and appropriate modes of inquiry (Penuel & Frank, 2015) that can translate across institution types.

Research should be designed so as to explore some of the following questions and areas of opportunity:

- how the processes of inquiry and problem solving are embedded within the life stories and personal experiences of STEM experts
- methods for understanding the nature of inquiry and how to apply it within both library and museum settings
- how STEM expert narratives can shape parent-child conversations during hands-on activities that will impact children's interest and understanding of STEM

- potential effects of STEM expert narratives on children's and families' engagement in areas such as language skills, real world problem solving abilities, or parental comfort with supporting their child's learning
- potential effects of objects combined with STEM expert narratives in guiding families towards gaining new STEM knowledge and skills
- how potential impacts of STEM expert narratives are connected to a family's knowledge of and/or comfort with STEM topics

We are interested in the development and refinement of frameworks and guidance on approaches to working with STEM experts in order to enhance family STEM learning. Such products could include:

- identifying the impacts that STEM expert narratives may have in enabling children to use general cognitive mechanisms and artifacts in developing knowledge to make predictions, generate explanations or inferences, and other practices in science and engineering
- a working framework about where to best place STEM experts' narratives within the family's inquiry process
- recommendations about where and how objects are best used within the inquiry process in combination with STEM experts' narratives
- determining how certain types of STEM experts' narratives and their placement within the inquiry process can engage parents in their child's learning
- identifying ways parents can support children's memory and cognitive development within inquiry-based activities
- identification of how the effectiveness of narratives may be dependent on the family's pre-existing knowledge of/comfort with STEM processes
- an understanding of how the effectiveness of narratives may be dependent on differing cultural contexts around STEM processes
- recommendations about STEM experts' delivery modes and content that will support parents in actively learning science with their children

We also seek to bridge gaps between how museums and libraries currently approach using experts in their programs.

Given the specificity and range of elements involved in developing a successful proposal for this initiative, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact IMLS program staff before submitting a proposal.

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 special initiative 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 and project categories for this special initiative?

There are no funding or project categories in this special initiative for FY16.

How much money can my institution apply for?

Awards in this special initiative may be made up to up to \$1,000,000.

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 §9171 et 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	\$2,500,000
Anticipated number of awards	3
Range of awards	Up to \$1,000,000
Average amount of funding per award	\$700,000
Type of assistance instrument	Grant
Anticipated start date	Not earlier than October 1, 2016. Projects must

	begin on October 1, November 1, or December 1, 2016.
Anticipated period of performance	October 2016-November 2018. Project activities may be carried out for up to two years.

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 special initiative?

The information below outlines eligibility requirements for a museum entity or library entity, and some institutions may be eligible as both. An institution will not be asked to identify as a museum or library, but will be asked to identify the organization type on the SF424S and the organization unit type on the Program Information Sheet (Section f).

To be eligible as library entity, 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;
- 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
- qualify as one of the following:
 - a library or a parent organization, such as a school district, a municipality, a State agency, or an academic institution, that is responsible for the administration of a library. Eligible libraries include public libraries, public elementary and secondary school libraries, college and university libraries, research libraries and archives that are not an integral part of an institution of higher education and that make publicly available library services and materials that are suitable for scholarly research and not otherwise available. Research libraries must be under the supervision of at least one permanent professional staff librarian and be either generally recognized as possessing unique, scholarly research materials and services that are made available to the public, or able to demonstrate that such is the case when submitting an application to IMLS
 - a private library or other special library, but only if the State in which it is located determines that the library should be considered a library for purposes of Library Services and Technology (see 20 U.S.C. 9121-9165)
 - an academic or administrative unit, such as a graduate school of library and information science that is part of an institution of higher education through which it would make application

- a digital library, if it makes library materials publicly available and provides library services, including selection, organization, description, reference, and preservation, under the supervision of at least one permanent professional staff librarian
- a library agency that is an official agency of a State or other unit of government and is charged by the law governing it with the extension and development of public library services within its jurisdiction
- a library consortium that is a local, statewide, regional, interstate, or international cooperative association of library entities that provides for the systematic and effective coordination of the resources of eligible libraries, as defined above, and information centers that work to improve the services delivered to the clientele of these libraries or
- a library association that exists on a permanent basis; serves libraries or library professionals on a national, regional, State, or local level; and engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of libraries and the library profession

To be eligible as a museum entity, you must meet 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 2 CFR §3187.3

(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 3(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?

Cost sharing is not required for research grants. [Click here for further information on cost sharing.](#) [internal link]

How many applications can we submit to this special initiative?

An institution may only submit one application to this special initiative.

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.

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

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

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

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

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 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 STEMx package in Grants.gov:

- CFDA No: 45.312, or

- Funding Opportunity Number: NLG Special Initiative-STEMeX-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.](#) [internal link]

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 **STEM Expert Facilitation of Family Learning in Libraries and Museums** [internal link] webpage 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](#) [internal link]

When and where must I submit my application?

For the STEMeX Special Initiative, Grants.gov will accept applications through 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on May 1, 2016.

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 (link is external) (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, when 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 SF424S 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 Application Components

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

	document	pdf
Narrative (ten pages, max.) [internal link]	PDF document	Narrative.pdf
Schedule of Completion (one page per year, max.) [internal link]	PDF document	Scheduleofcompletion.pdf
IMLS Budget Form [internal link]	IMLS PDF form	Budget.pdf
Budget Justification [internal link]	PDF document	Budgetjustification.pdf
List of Key Project Staff and Consultants (one page, max.) [internal link]	PDF document	Projectstaff.pdf
Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants that appear on the list above (two pages each, max.) [internal link]	PDF document	Resumes.pdf
Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form [internal link]	IMLS PDF form	Digitalstewardship.pdf
<u>Conditionally Required Documents</u>		
Proof of Nonprofit Status [internal link]	PDF document	Proofnonprofit.pdf
Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement [internal link]	PDF document	Indirectcostrate.pdf
<u>Supporting Documents</u>		
Information that supplements the narrative and supports the project description provided in the application [internal link]	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 \[internal link\]](#)

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?
- Explain how your project will address the challenge identified in this funding initiative.

- How does your project benefit the museum and library fields?
- What activities will you carry out and in what time frame?
- What are your project's intended outcomes?
- What are your performance goals, and 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: Skip this section.

4. Performance Goals: Select "Learning" and click the box next to the goal that states, "Develop and provide inclusive and accessible learning opportunities." If your project is funded, a third-party evaluator provided by IMLS will help your project team measure progress toward achieving this goal.

5. Funding Request Information:

- IMLS Funds Requested: Enter the amount in dollars sought from IMLS.
- Cost Share Amount: Cost sharing is not required for research grants and will not be considered in the evaluation of applications. If you wish to provide cost share, enter the amount of non-federal funding you are providing. Click here for further information on cost sharing [\[internal link\]](#).

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. Skip this section.

Narrative

Write a narrative that addresses the components listed and explained below. Limit the narrative to ten single-spaced, numbered pages. We will remove any pages above the ten-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 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, and be certain to address the bullet points 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?
- Explain how your project will address the challenge identified in this funding initiative (as described above in Section A Special initiative Description - What is this Special initiative?)-
- How does this project differ from, complement, or build upon previous work in this area?

Review Criteria:

- Is the project clearly explained?
- How well does the project address the challenge identified in this funding initiative?
- Is the research well-grounded in current literature and practice?

2. Impact

- Describe your performance goals and how the project will generate research findings that will serve as the basis for tools and resources that will support ongoing application across both museums and libraries.

- Describe how your project's results may be used, adapted, scaled, and/or replicated in museums and libraries upon the conclusion of your research.

Review Criteria:

- Are the project's performance goals and intended results clearly articulated, appropriate, and realistic?
- Does the project demonstrate the potential for significant benefit to and applicability across the museum and library fields?

3. Project Design

- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- Articulate your specific research questions, methods, and design. Describe your theoretical or conceptual framework, what type of data you will gather, and how it will be analyzed, interpreted, reported, and managed. *Note: Regarding data management issues, be sure to fill out the Digital Stewardship Supplementary Information Form.*
- When and in what sequence will your activities occur? *Note: Include in your plan time to engage with a third-party evaluator who will collectively evaluate the work of all projects funded through this opportunity. This evaluator will work with you on measuring progress toward achieving the IMLS goal of developing and providing inclusive and accessible learning opportunities.*
- What financial, personnel, partnering, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities? *Note: You must include \$2000 per year in award funds for travel to attend IMLS-designated meetings.*
- How will you track your progress toward achieving intended results?
- How and with whom will you share your project's work?

Review Criteria:

- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the expertise and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?
- Are the theoretical approach, research questions, methods, and design likely to be efficient, and effective in and appropriate to accomplishing the goals of this initiative?
- Is the schedule of work realistic and achievable?
- Are the financial, personnel, partnering, and other resources identified appropriate for the scope and scale of the project?
- Is a clear methodology described for tracking the project's progress and adjusting course when necessary?
- Is there an effective plan for communicating the work and/or sharing discoveries?

Schedule of Completion

Click here for instructions on:

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

Budget Form and Budget Justification

Click here for instructions on:

How to complete the [Budget Documents](#). [\[Internal link\]](#) Only fill out Years 1 and 2 of the budget form. The research proposal may not extend beyond two years.

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 generally allowable costs, both for IMLS funds and for cost share (if applicable), in this special initiative.

- personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- travel expenses for key project staff and consultants
- materials, supplies, software, and equipment related directly to project activities
- consultant fees
- publication design and printing
- design, technical support, printing, non-construction labor
- training for staff and volunteers that impacts multiple museums
- internships/fellowships
- indirect or overhead costs

You must explain all proposed expenses in your Budget Justification.

The following list includes some examples of generally unallowable costs, both for IMLS funds and for cost share (if applicable), in this special initiative.

- general fundraising costs, such as development office staff or other staff time devoted to general fundraising
- contributions to endowments
- general 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 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

Please note that the above are examples; consult 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 3187 for additional guidance on allowable and unallowable 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.](#) [Internal link]

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 §§3187.14 (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.](#) [Internal link]

List and Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants

Click here for instructions on:

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

Conditionally Required Documents

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

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 ...	Then you must include ...
your organization has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate	a current copy of your Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
your organization is a nonprofit	a Proof of Nonprofit Status [Internal link]

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. \[Internal link\]](#)

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
- Position descriptions for project staff (if not included with resumes for key personnel) to be supported by grant funds
- 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 influencing practice across one or more disciplines or specific fields within the museum and/or library profession.
- *In -depth Knowledge:* Your application 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 application should employ novel approaches or techniques new to your project area to strengthen and improve museum services to benefit the audiences and communities being served.
- *Collaborative Process:* Your project should incorporate audience, stakeholders and/or other partners to demonstrate broad need, field-wide buy-in and input, access to appropriate expertise, and sharing of resources.
- *Shared Results:* Your project should generate results such as models, new tools, research findings, services, practices, and/or alliances that can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend and leverage the benefits of federal investment.

Is cost sharing considered in the review process?

Cost sharing is not required for research grants and will not be considered in the review of applications to this special initiative.

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.

What are the requirements regarding the designated integrity and performance system?

i. IMLS, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold [currently \$150,000], is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

ii. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

iii. IMLS will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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 September 2016. Funded projects may not begin earlier than October 1, 2016 and not later than December 1, 2016. Project must begin on the first day of the first month and end on the last day of the last month.

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 \[internal link\]](#) and the [IMLS Assurances and Certifications \[internal link\]](#). 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 \[internal link\]](#). 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: <https://www.imls.gov/grants/grant-recipients/administration-info>

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

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

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. \[internal link\]](#)

G. Contacts

How can I contact program staff?

See the [STEMeX web page](#) for IMLS contact information. We are available by phone and through email to discuss general issues relating to this special initiative.

How can I participate in a webinar?

See the [STEMeX web page](#) for information on webinars for this special initiative. [Click here for instructions](#) on accessing IMLS webinars from your computer.

H. Other Information

What are the requirements regarding conflict of interest?

You must comply with IMLS' [conflict of interest requirements \[internal link\]](#). 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 on the [IMLS website](#). 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.

IMLS Clearance Number

IMLS-CLR-F-0018, Expiration date: 09/30/2017

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