# Part A. Justification

A.1. Necessity of the Information Collection

The proposed study will empirically measure social wellbeing in American communities (counties), and for the first time, examine how social wellbeing is related to the presence and utilization of museums and public libraries. These results will contribute to creating a framework for understanding the positions museums and libraries occupy in their communities and beginning to identify approaches to measuring the contributions their activities make in their communities.

This research is intended to further the national dialogue between IMLS and community leaders and is also consistent with IMLS's previous and current work in the area of community engagement, and will further that work by: 1) providing a more nuanced understanding of economic and social wellbeing that can inform both IMLS decision-making and that of library and museum directors; 2) building on the concept of "community catalysts" by focusing library and museum directors on the specific features of their social and economic context and how those should inform their practice; 3) providing benchmarks and a refined theory of change regarding community wellbeing and guidance that will be refined through further research and professional practice in IMLS; and 4) empowering localized action by museums and libraries as well as their partners to build upon the study's finding further within their unique community contexts.

Figure 1 presents a graphic depiction of where this Social Wellbeing Exploratory Study fits within the Agency's overall Community Catalyst Initiative and its relationship to other components.
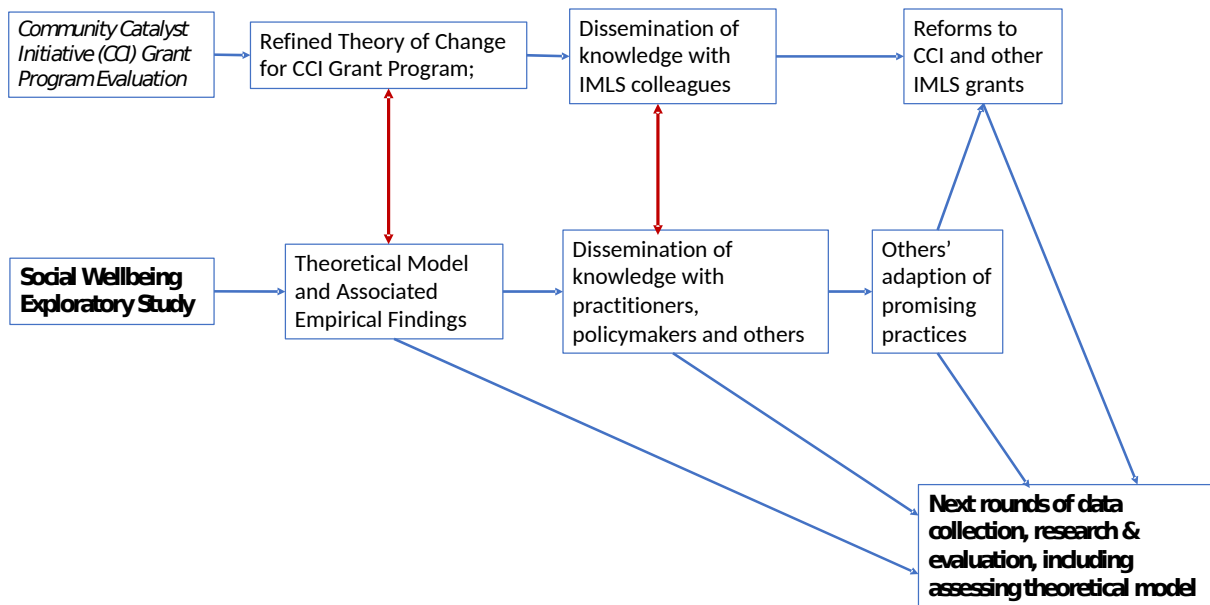
Objectives for the Exploratory Study

A primary motive for the proposed study is to better understand the role that museums and libraries play in their communities. In *Strengthening Networks, Sparking Change: Museums and Libraries as Community Catalysts (2017),* The Reinvestment Fund conducted a preliminary scan of the literature and innovative practices which documented a range of existing ways that museums and libraries (M/L) across the country engage with community concerns and visions through their programmatic activities and strategic partnerships. However, no study has yet adequately measured the contributions these institutions make to different dimensions of wellbeing in their communities. Previous studies have focused either on sub-sector economic impacts or evaluated individual programs run by individual museums or libraries, and in some cases, holistic studies of a single library or library system.[1] Despite their strengths, none of these studies produced results that could be reliably extended to the entire country. Without a national study that looks beyond economic relationships, the Museum and Library (M/L) sector will not have a clear and consistent way to articulate how their activities might contribute to the quality of life in their communities.

As documented in the initial 2017 Community Catalyst report, museums and libraries have expanded their service offerings beyond traditional curation of their collections in being more engaged members of their communities. Understanding better what this means for the field and providing guidance for how to observe and measure these activities is a central motivation for the proposed study.

A primary outcome for this proposed study is to posit a more clearly defined theory of change, in articulating the different ways that museum and library seem to engage in their local communities. These results consequently can help guide future research designed to more precisely assess the influences that museum and libraries activities have in their communities. That is, the study's results should point future researchers in the right direction for developing more refined and targeted studies.

Proposed Social Wellbeing Index Study (SWI) and IMLS's Related Efforts

This proposed Social Wellbeing Index study (SWI) is a new data collection request, and the data to be collected are not available elsewhere with the required national scale and granularity unless collected through this proposed study. The multi-method exploratory research will provide

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[1] https://www.aam-us.org/2018/01/19/museums-as-economic-engines/;
https://associationofchildrensmuse.app.box.com/s/ddaoce8ygq4qumaaioe2tma3ziooje91;
https://associationofchildrensmuse.app.box.com/s/xl9weptorxwfxuip7bjkezbn787swzn6;
https://associationofchildrensmuse.app.box.com/s/17eldy0y2et3zw6rdjxz9hkb17iofh74
https://mfas3.s3.amazonaws.com/MFA_EconomicImpactReport2015.pdf;
http://artsboston.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/TheArtsFactorReport2014.pdf;
https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/ARTS_AEPsummary_loRes.pdf;
https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/wilibraryimpact.pdf;
http://www.ibrc.indiana.edu/studies/economicimpactoflibraries_2007.pdf; http://www.libsci.sc.edu/sceis/final%20report%2026%20january.pdf;

IMLS with a more structured understanding of how museum and library activities can be further supported through its multi-year grant-making effort, the *Community Catalyst Initiative* (CCI).

CCI was initiated in 2016 through an environmental scan and a town hall-style convening with representatives from museums, libraries, philanthropy, and community development practitioners; a final report in 2017 chronicled these learnings (*Strengthening Networks, Sparking Change: Museums and Libraries as Community Catalysts).* [2] CCI uses a multifaceted approach for museums, libraries, and community partners interested in enhancing the benefits of collaborative, community-based programmatic efforts. Since its introduction in 2017, IMLS has worked to encourage more museums and libraries to consider and employ the emerging approaches and methods.

Building on the CCI vision, this SWI study relates to these MLS efforts:

1) The *Community Salute* project[3] that seeks to understand opportunities for museums and libraries to better serve veterans and military families and provide tools to do so.

2) The *Measures That Matter* project,[4] funded through the Library Services and Technology Act for state library administrative agencies, is a first step aimed at building bridges between data collection activities of various library organizations. It is engaging broadly with the library field in promoting a greater understanding of the common issues related to library data. It works to increase the chances that survey and administrative data collections reflect the circumstances of 21st century libraries, as well as reduces respondent burden for local libraries, duplication of efforts, and uncertainty about the sustainability and long-term access to data.

3) The Community Catalyst funding opportunity (*Activating Community Opportunities Using Museums/Libraries as Assets*) in 2017 and 2018[5]: these competitive awards provide (1) intensive and targeted training in asset-based community development (ABCD), (2) technical assistance to support local engagement in ABCD, and (3) a grantee Community of Practice (COP) to support peer learning and practice improvement. This initiative includes an independent evaluation with OMB approval of its PRA submission.

Taken together, CCI, including this proposed SWI study, supports the Agency's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, *Transforming Communities*, which seeks in part to "adapt to the changing needs of the museum and library fields by incorporating proven approaches as well as new ideas into IMLS programs and services" (4.2), "encourage library and museum professionals and institutions to share and adopt best practices and innovations" (2.2), and "identify trends in the museum and library fields to help organizations make informed decisions" (2.3). [6]

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[2] https://www.imls.gov/publications/strengthening-networks-sparking-change-museums-and-libraries-community-catalysts

[3] https://www.imls.gov/issues/national-issues/veterans

[4] https://www.imls.gov/news-events/news-releases/imls-and-cosla-announce-project-develop-public-library-data-and-outcomes

[5] https://www.imls.gov/blog/2018/03/2018-community-catalysts-funding-opportunity-chance-innovate

[6] https://www.imls.gov/news-events/news-releases/imls-presents-new-strategic-plan-2018-2022

A.2. Purposes and Uses of the Data

This exploratory study will use primary and secondary data to document the different activities that museums and libraries can potentially pursue to promote the quality of life in their communities. Secondary data will be used for the following analyses: 1) estimates of the presence, utilization and programming of M/Ls; 2) estimates of levels of social and economic wellbeing in every county in the United States across 10 distinct dimensions of wellbeing; and 3) explorations on potential associations between the presence, utilization, and economic contributions of M/Ls and select dimensions of social wellbeing (see Section B.1 for more detail).

Primary data will be collected through county-level case studies in up to 24 counties that will be selected based on a critical presence of museums and libraries in the county, and elevated levels of one or more dimension of social wellbeing (see Section B.2 for more detail). These data will provide 'first of its kind' insights into different activities that museums and libraries pursue that may be associated with some dimension of social wellbeing in the selected county.

The study is intended to help IMLS pursue these following priorities, consistent with its agency strategic plan:

1. Engage a broad range of stakeholders to support investments in and collaboration with the country's museums and public libraries in ways that further a community's social and economic wellbeing. Key stakeholders include: museum and library practitioners, governmental leaders, foundation heads, researchers and others working to sustain and advance the wellbeing of the nation's diverse communities. These conversations also will inform the ongoing refinement of our theory of change.

2. Inform more state and local innovations and accompanying studies. We hope that this study's approach and findings will motivate local museums and libraries, within their own boundaries, to engage with partners to deepen this investigation's initial findings. In addition, certain state library systems may adopt proposed approaches to bolster their own work, such as improving the development and utilization of public library indicators. In many ways the proposed study compliments ongoing national efforts, such as *Measures That Matter*, which is IMLS funded, and administered by the Chief Offices of State and Library Agencies, COSLA. The study's learnings also will inform the ongoing refinement of our theory of change.

3. Inform IMLS's own grant-making. Findings from the proposed study will build upon findings from the evaluation of IMLS's Community Catalyst Initiative, a grant program now in its second pilot year. The learnings from the first two cohorts[7] of the *Community Catalyst* competitive open grant awards in FY 2017 and 2018 have helped the agency to identify which gaps in practice and knowledge need to be filled and what areas of social wellbeing museums and libraries are likely to address. The agency currently has a commissioned third-party evaluation (separate OMB-approved PRA submission) that is systematically assessing the efficacy of technical assistance and peer learning opportunities provided to these first two cohorts of grantees. The combined findings from this proposed SWI study and the grant program evaluation will provide guidance on

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[7] https://www.imls.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-grants-libraries-museums-and-partners-fund-sustainable-community

ways to potentially scale up this initiative. Study results will also inform IMLS capacity building practices adopted through the Agency's other grant programs.

4. Guide future national-level research for verifying and expanding the theoretical propositions. Including the theory of change, this study's findings will provide a foundation for a long-term national research agenda to better understand the conditions under which museum and library programs and services contribute to enhanced social wellbeing in the communities they serve. This agenda will include both new approaches to data collection as well as support for innovative research designs. This work may be carried out by IMLS or others.

A.3. Use of Information Technology

All secondary data will be accessed using publicly accessible datasets from IMLS and other federal sources (e.g., Census Bureau). For primary data collected via case study, the study team will conduct a front-end internet search for information relevant to the ways M/Ls influence certain dimensions of social wellbeing in that county. This review will be conducted to identify existing studies or programming documentation that can inform the identification of the institutions and organizations that will need to participate in the case study, including developing a list of key informants for interviews. Findings from this initial online review will also be used to tailor interview protocols for individual counties to be sure the study team asks questions that are relevant for each participant in each local context. The result of this exploratory work will also streamline data collection with individual respondents during site visits to case study sites.

This review will be followed by initial informational interviews with local M/L points of contact to finalize a county's inclusion for a case study by: 1) confirming those activities associated with a particular dimension of social wellbeing; 2) confirming the community partners they work with; 3) developing a list of potential interview participants during the site visit; and 4) identifying potential site visit dates (See Protocol A).

If it is not possible to discern whether local M/L activities have a connection to a particular dimension of social wellbeing through an online search, the informational interview referenced in the previous paragraph will be administered to a M/L point of contact to determine whether the county is an appropriate candidate for a case study (see Protocol A).

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The key elements of proposed study have never been conducted before at a national scale. The study team will rely on publicly available, secondary data sources to conduct all quantitative analyses, and use the results of these analyses to guide the case study selection and its primary data collection activities. Prior to conducting the case studies, the study team will conduct thorough background research from publicly-accessed secondary sources on case study counties to ensure primary data collection efforts are not expended on data collection that is readily available. The study team will also consult with the subject matter experts guiding the study to identify additional data sources that can minimize the primary data collection required in each case study county. Primary data collected through the case studies will be combined with the quantitative analyses using secondary data to provide first of its kind insights into the different ways that the M/L field contributes to the overall health and vitality of local communities.

A.5. Methods Used to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses
Prior to soliciting the participation of any small business for any of the case studies, the study team will consult with local M/L contacts about the appropriateness of their participation. If it is determined a small business is a critical stakeholder for an individual county, every effort will be made to accommodate their availability to participate in the study – which may include a phone call, a visit directly to their place of business, or whatever communication method will be best for them.

A.6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection
Case study data collection is planned to take place over a roughly six to nine month period from summer 2019 through winter/spring 2020. Case study participants will not be asked to participate in structured follow up data collection activities but may be asked to clarify any ambiguity in field notes from interviews. Reducing the number of case sites conducted could reduce the generalizability of the study findings.

A.7. Special Circumstances
We do not anticipate any special circumstance that will require substantial adjustments to data collection at any individual site.

A.8. Consultations Outside the Agency
We are planning on consulting with two sets of groups outside of IMLS: a Project Steering Committee composed of experts in the M/L field, and a team of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from outside the M/L field with methodological and content expertise related to measuring different dimensions of social wellbeing. Both groups will be consulted to inform the study implementation and provide input on data analysis, case study selection and related data collection protocols, interpretation of results, and feedback on all project deliverables. The Project Steering Committee is composed of a mix of M/L association leaders, researchers and funders who will provide high-level feedback and guidance on the interpretation of results and product development throughout the study. The content expertise represented among the SME group includes public health, economics, institutional community engagement processes, education, arts and culture. These experts have been consulted in the design of the study and will continue to be consulted for any modifications in its application.

A.9. Payments or Gifts to Respondents.
There will be no incentives, gifts, or payments to participants in the study.

A.10. Assurance of Confidentiality.
All case study participants will receive the written assurance language below. Individual quotes will only be attributed to identifiable individuals with the express consent of study participants.

> "Reinvestment Fund has undertaken a study of the impact museums and libraries have on their local communities. The study is funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services and seeks to understand how the activities of museums and libraries sustain and enhance the quality of life in the communities they serve.
>
> **Participation in this study is voluntary.**

If you agree to participate in this study, Reinvestment Fund will interview you at a location of your choice. Those who agree to participate in the study will be interviewed by Reinvestment Fund staff or consultants. The interview will ask about your work in the local community and how collaboration with a local museum or library is making a positive impact on your neighborhood. All personally identifiable information you provide will be securely stored, and only study team staff will see your interview responses. Without your express permission, you will never be named in the study, nor will Reinvestment Fund disclose any information that could be used to identify you.

CONSENT STATEMENT: By signing below, I am indicating that I have read and understand this form, and that I agree to participate in Reinvestment Funds' study of museums and libraries. I also understand that the information from the interview will be kept private and that my name will not be used in the study without my consent."

A.11. Justification for Sensitive Questions
No sensitive questions will be asked of study participants. All questions will be related to the way programming at an individual library or museum is designed to, and actually does, contribute to positive outcomes for the local community. (See Attachment A for interview instruments.)

A.12. Estimates of Hour Burden to Respondents/Table
The burden estimates presented represent an upper-limit estimate of the number of people that will be engaged through the study. For instance, if the case study selection process ends up with more micropolitan counties, then these estimates will be lower. We will not conduct more than twelve case studies in urban counties, 32 counties in total.

On average, we anticipate 3 M/L points of contact per county for initial phone interviews – 72 interviews. Up to 30 min per call, 10 min of scheduling set up, and 10 min to confirm that data collection was complete = 60 hours to conduct initial interviews and follow up with M/L points of contact.

The study team will also pre-test interview protocols with up to 6 people in Philadelphia in hour long conversations.

Pre-testing interview protocols = 6 maximum respondents
Up to 24 people per urban county * 12 urban case study counties = 288 maximum respondents
Up to 20 people per suburban county * 10 suburban case study counties = 200 maximum respondents
Up to 12 people per micropolitan county * 10 rural case study counties = 120 maximum respondents
Up to 60 min interviews, 10 min. of scheduling set up for 680 respondents = 709 hours of effort for respondents to set up engagements and participate

PRA Burden Table calculation is attached. The total number of estimate respondents is 680. The total burden hours are 709 hours, and the burden cost is $17,858.12.

A.13. Estimates of Cost Burden to Respondents
None

A.14. Estimates of Cost to Federal Government
None, because activities are part of regular duties of IMLS staff.

A.15. Reason for Program Changes or Cost Adjustments
This request is for new information collection. No changes have yet been needed.

A.16. Project Schedule
This work will take place over the course of 22 months (commencing September, 2018 and completed by June, 2020). See Table 1 below.

Table 1. Key Task Timeline

Key Task	Q1 Sep '18	Q2 Oct – Dec '18	Q3 Jan – Mar '19	Q4 Apr – Jun '19	Q5 Jul – Sep '19	Q6 Oct – Dec '19	Q7 Jan – Mar '20	Q8 Apr – June '20	Q9 Jul – Sep '20
PRA/OMB clearance	X	X	X	X					
Literature Review	X	X	X						
Identify Experts for Consultation	X	X							
Public Data Collection, Cleaning, Processing;	X	X							
Index Creation and Correlational Analyses		X	X	X					
Case Studies: Select Locations and Conduct					X	X	X		
Compile Results & Product Development						X	X	X	X

This project will yield two research briefs and a final synthesis report:
1. A brief detailing the methodology and results of the social wellbeing analyses, delivered no later than October 31, 2019;
2. A brief detailing the methodology and results of the 32 case studies, delivered no later than June 30, 2020 with an updated info-graphic;
3. A final synthesis report (including finalized info-graphic), presented in draft form to subject matter experts and the steering committee and will be revised based on their feedback by July 31, 2019;
4. Final content for the synthesis report will be provided to IMLS no later than September 1, 2020 for final lay-out and design;
5. Final publications for public dissemination of the synthesis report, no later than September, 30 2020.

A.17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date
Not applicable. Participants will not be filling out a standardized data collection tool. However, any correspondence to participants will include the statement of OMB approval, the number and the expiration date.

A.18. Exceptions to the Certification
Not applicable. No exceptions are requested.