



IMLS Reauthorization

Request

- Thank your [Senators](#) and [Representative](#) for passing **S. 3530**, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018. The bill reauthorizes the Institute of Museum and Library Services and was signed into law by the president on Dec. 31.

Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary federal agency responsible for helping museums connect people to information and ideas. Its Office of Museum Services (OMS) supports all types of museums—including aquariums, arboretums, art museums, botanical gardens, children’s museums, historic sites, history museums, military museums, natural history museums, nature centers, planetariums, science & technology centers, zoos, and more—in their work to educate students, preserve and digitize collections, and connect with their communities. Reauthorization is critical to the future federal support of the museum community as it shows renewed bipartisan support for the agency’s programs and a renewed commitment to its funding.

Reauthorization

IMLS has been regularly reauthorized by Congress with broad support, most recently in 2018 with a funding authorization of \$38.6 million for the Office of Museum Services. In September 2018, Senators Jack Reed (D-RI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Angus King (I-ME), Doug Jones (D-AL), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Robert Casey (D-PA) introduced [S. 3530](#), The Museum and Library Services Act of 2018. Representatives Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Hurd (R-TX), McKinley (R-WV) and Lance (R-NJ) introduced an identical companion bill, [H.R. 6988](#). Both bills were introduced with the support of the national museum community.

The Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 contains a number of provisions specifically supported by the museum field. It:

- Formally authorizes a 21st Century Museum Professional Program, to improve the recruitment, preparation, and professional development of museum professionals, especially those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
- Maintains the agency’s existing authority to support museum activities at both the state and regional level, while adding regional museum collaboration to its “Purpose” section, akin to how state museum collaboration is currently referenced.
- Adds a new emphasis on ensuring that every American has access to high-quality museum experiences.
- Maintains and augments the agency’s research, data collection, and analysis about museums and libraries.
- Establishes new reporting to ensure that the agency sufficiently collaborates with museum and library organizations at the national, regional, and state level on its research and data collection activities.
- Includes additional federal entities on the list of potential interagency partnerships, allowing IMLS to expand its collaborative efforts with other agencies and magnify support for museums and libraries.
- Updates the agency’s governance, so that it operates more closely in alignment with other federal cultural agencies and reauthorize the agency for six years.

Talking Points

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services has strong bipartisan support, and has been lauded for its peer-reviewed, highly competitive grant programs.
- By leveraging significant private, state, and local funding, OMS grants amplify a small federal investment in museums for maximum impact in the community.
- In addition to awarding grants that benefit individual museums and communities, IMLS also awards National Leadership Grants for Museums, which support projects with the potential to advance the profession so that museums can improve services for the American public.
- 37 percent of museums are free at all times. Through IMLS' Museums for All initiative, many museums also offer free or greatly reduced admission to anyone with an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.
- The current authorization level of \$38.6 million, first enacted in 2004, would be over \$50 million if adjusted just for inflation. This does not even consider increases in museum attendance.
- There is high demand for funding from the IMLS Office of Museum Services. In 2017 it received 962 applications requesting nearly \$165 million, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly rated grant applications it receives. To learn more about grants awarded to museums **in your state or district**, visit: imls.gov/grants/awarded-grants.

Additional Information About Museums

- Museums are economic engines, supporting more than 726,000 jobs and contributing \$50 billion to the U.S. economy per year. They attract tourists, promote economic development, and make communities more desirable for employers.
- Museums' economic impact generates \$12 billion in tax revenue at all levels of government.
- Museums are an essential part of the nation's educational infrastructure, tailoring educational programs and materials to state and local curricula, spending more than \$2 billion a year on education, and promoting lifelong learning.
- Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics and science in third grade than children who did not. This benefit is also seen in the subgroup of children who are most at risk for deficits and delays in achievement.
- Museums are beloved community anchors, attracting over a million volunteer hours every week.
- Many museums have developed innovative programs to meet the growing needs of their individual communities. For example, many have programs designed specifically for children with special needs and their families, some work with medical schools to teach observation and description skills, and some are helping veterans heal from their wounds—both physical and psychological.

Status

- S. 3530 was introduced on Sept. 28, 2018 and unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on Nov. 29 and the full Senate on Dec. 4. On Dec. 19, the House passed S. 3530 by a vote of [331 to 28](#), and it was signed into law by the president on Dec. 31.