



IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding

Request

- We urge Congress to provide \$42.7 million in Fiscal Year 2021 funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services, the amount approved by the U.S. House of Representatives last year.

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 and technology centers, zoos, and more—by awarding grants that help them educate students, preserve and digitize collections, and connect with their communities. The 2018-2022 IMLS strategic plan focuses on promoting lifelong learning, strengthening the capacity of museums and libraries to serve their communities, increasing access to information and ideas, and strategically aligning resources to maximize public value.

Reauthorization

Congress overwhelmingly reauthorized IMLS and its Office of Museum Services (OMS) in late 2018 by enacting the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (S. 3530 now Public Law No: 115-410). The legislation was passed with widespread bipartisan support by unanimous consent in the Senate and by a vote of 331 to 28 in the House, showing Congress’ renewed bipartisan support for the agency’s programs and a renewed commitment to its funding.

Status

- The Office of Museum Services within IMLS is funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. It is currently funded at \$38.5 million for FY 2020.
- As in FY 2018, FY 2019 and FY 2020, the president’s FY 2021 budget proposal is expected to eliminate IMLS entirely, allocating no funding to OMS.

IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding History

	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13 CR*	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21 President’s Request
Appropriation <i>(in millions)</i>	\$35.2	\$31.6	\$30.9	\$30.9	\$30.1	\$30.1	\$31.3	\$31.7	\$34.7	\$34.7	\$38.5	TBD

*In FY 2013, across-the-board sequestration cuts reduced OMS’ effective funding to \$29.2 million.

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.
- OMS has set a strong record of congressional support during the appropriations submission process in each of the last seven years, with 178 Representatives and 41 Senators signing FY 2020 appropriations letters on its behalf.



- In FY 2019, Congress provided \$242 million to IMLS, of which \$34.7 million was directed to the Office of Museum Services. With this funding, OMS provided 219 grants totaling \$34,714,990 to museums and related organizations in 48 states and the District of Columbia.
- By leveraging significant private, state, and local funding, OMS grants amplify a small federal investment for maximum impact in the community.
- In 2018, legislation reauthorizing IMLS passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support.
- There is high demand for funding from the IMLS Office of Museum Services. In FY 2019 OMS received 938 applications requesting nearly \$134 million, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly rated grant applications it receives.
- The Inspire! Grants for Small Museums program, designed to encourage small institutions to apply for OMS funding, generated 202 applications in its first year. OMS awarded 30 grants totaling \$1.1 million, representing 15 percent of the applicants and demonstrating a need for continued support for the nation's small museums.
- Despite this funding shortfall, museum attendance has increased, collections are subject to increasing risk, and museum staff members need professional development in conservation, education, and technology.
- In 2014, IMLS launched Museums for All, a national access initiative. Today, more than 500 participating museums offer deeply discounted admission to visitors who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. More than 1 million people visited a Museums for All museum in 2019 and more than 2.5 million visits have occurred since 2014.
- To learn more about grants awarded to museums in your state or district, visit: [imls.gov/grants/awarded-grants](https://www.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 have strong public support: [Museums and Public Opinion](#), a 2017 national public opinion poll, showed that 95% of voters would approve of lawmakers who acted to support museums and 96% want federal funding for museums to be maintained or increased.
- Museums are an essential part of the nation's educational infrastructure, spending more than \$2 billion a year on education and promoting lifelong learning.
- Museums receive more than 55 million visits each year from student groups.
- Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics, and science in third grade than children who did not.
- 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, some museums 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.