

IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding

Request

We urge Congress to:

- provide \$80 million in fiscal year (FY) 2022 for the IMLS Office of Museum Services, an increase of nearly \$40 million.
- include in this increase \$2.5 million to fund projects and to explore establishing a roadmap to strengthen the structural support for a museum Grants to States program administered by OMS, as authorized by the Museum and Library Services Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 9173(a)(4), in addition to the agency's current direct grants to museums.
- include legislative report language acknowledging the authority of OMS to allow grants to be used for general operating support and provide the Director of IMLS with the statutory authority to waive OMS matching requirements for FY 2022.

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, culturally-specific museums, historic sites, history museums, military museums, natural history museums, nature centers, planetariums, railway museums, science and technology centers, zoos, and more—by awarding grants that help them educate students, preserve and digitize collections, and connect with their communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through its CARES Act grants. For example, the agency has been providing science-based information and recommended practices to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to staff and visitors engaging in the delivery of museum services. The 2018-2022 IMLS strategic plan focuses on promoting lifelong learning, strengthening the capacity of museums to serve their communities, increasing access to information and ideas, and strategically aligning resources to maximize public value.

IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding History

	Appropriation (in millions)
FY 11	\$31.6
FY 12	\$30.9
FY 13 CR*	\$30.9
FY 14	\$30.1
FY 15	\$31.1
FY 16	\$31.3
FY 17	\$31.7
FY 18	\$34.7
FY 19	\$34.7
FY 20	\$38.5
FY 21	\$40.5
FY 22 President's Request	TBD

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 \$40.5 million for FY 2021.
- IMLS awarded \$13.8 million through the IMLS CARES Act Grants to Museums and Libraries to 68 museums and libraries to support their response to the coronavirus pandemic. IMLS received 1088 applications from museums but was only able to fund 39 awards or 4 percent for a total of \$8.28 million.
- IMLS also awarded \$1.2 million in IMLS CARES Act Grants to 15 organizations to fund projects assisting Native American tribes and Native Hawaiian serving organizations through their cultural centers and tribal libraries to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

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 198 Representatives and 41 Senators signing FY 2021 appropriations letters on its behalf.
- In FY 2020, Congress provided \$252 million to IMLS, of which \$38.5 million was directed to the Office of Museum Services. With this funding, OMS provided 252 grants totaling \$38,514,040 to museums and related organizations in 46 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.
- There is high demand for funding from the IMLS Office of Museum Services. In FY 2020 OMS received 784 applications requesting nearly \$146 million, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly rated grant applications it receives.
- \$80 million would allow OMS to double its grant capacity for museums, funds which museums will need to help recover from the pandemic and continue to serve their communities. This substantial funding increase would still be greatly shy of the high demand of \$146 million in FY 2020 in highly rated grant applications the agency received.
- A Grants to States program administered by OMS, in addition to the agency's current direct grants to museums, would merge federal priorities with state-defined needs and expand the reach of museums and increase their ability to serve their communities, address underserved populations and meet the needs of the current and future museum workforce.

- The Inspire! Grants for Small Museums program, designed to encourage small institutions to apply for IMLS funding, generated 230 applications in FY 2020 (an increase of 14% from FY19). IMLS was able to double the number of awards to 60 through this program, demonstrating a continuing need for support for the nation's small museums.
- Prior to the pandemic, museum attendance was increasing, subjecting collections to additional risk and thereby increasing the demand for professional development in conservation, education, and technology.
- In 2014, IMLS launched Museums for All, a national access initiative. Today, 622 participating museums in 50 states, DC, and the U.S. Virgin Islands offer deeply discounted admission to visitors who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The program has reached over 2.9 million visitors.
- In 2018, legislation reauthorizing IMLS passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support by unanimous consent in the Senate and by a vote of 331 to 28 in the House, showing Congress' renewed support for the agency's programs and a renewed commitment to its funding.
- 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 across the country are struggling with the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Survey data](#) shows that one out of every three museums may shutter permanently without immediate support—the loss of 12,000 museums and 124,000 jobs—and confirms the financial state of U.S. museums is moving from bad to worse.
- 30 percent of museums remain closed since the March 2020 lockdown and those that have reopened are operating on an average of 35 percent of their regular attendance—a reduction that is unsustainable long-term even with recent federal relief support.
- Like other nonprofits, museums are continuing to meet the needs of their communities despite the financial stress caused by the pandemic—from providing spaces for remote and virtual classrooms to providing lesson plans, online learning opportunities, and drop-off learning kits to teachers and families. Museums will be vital to the nation's recovery and the recovery of communities, big and small, urban and rural, all across the country.
- [Museums are economic engines](#), prior to the pandemic, 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, prior to the pandemic.
- 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.