



IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding

Request

We urge Congress to:

- provide at least \$54.5 million in fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the IMLS Office of Museum Services (last year's House-passed and Senate draft approved level), a much needed increase of \$7 million over FY 2022.
- include funding for the agency 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.

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, American Rescue Plan grants, and 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. Its Communities for Immunity partnership is working to boost COVID-19 vaccine confidence in communities across the country. 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.

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 \$47.5 million (FY 2022). President Biden requested \$52.4 million for FY 2023.
- 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 1085 applications from museums but was only able to fund 39 awards or 4 percent for a total of \$8.28 million.

- Out of \$200 million in American Rescue Plan funds, museums received a small fraction, \$10.5 million (5.2%), to provide direct support to address community needs created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and in assisting with recovery as nearly all of the funding was directed by Congress to the states for broadband expansion.

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 several years, with 151 Representatives and 42 Senators signing FY 2022 appropriations letters on its behalf.
- In FY 2021, Congress provided \$257 million to IMLS, of which \$40.5 million was directed to the Office of Museum Services. With this funding, OMS provided 275 grants totaling \$40.5 million to museums and related organizations in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- 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 2021 OMS received 943 applications requesting more than \$154 million, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly rated grant applications it receives.
- \$54.5 million at least in FY 2023 funding would allow OMS to increase 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 \$154 million in FY 2021 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.

IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding History

	Appropriation (in millions)
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	\$47.5
FY 23 President's Request	\$52.4

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

- The Inspire! Grants for Small Museums program, designed to encourage small institutions to apply for IMLS funding, generated 301 applications in FY 2021 (an increase of 23% from FY 2020). IMLS made awards to 60 museums through this program, demonstrating a continuing need for support for the nation's small museums.
- In 2014, IMLS launched Museums for All, a national access initiative. Today, more than 800 participating museums in 50 states, DC, and the US Virgin Islands offer deeply discounted admission to visitors who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The program has reached over 3.8 million visitors.
- OMS provides critical funding for professional development to improve the recruitment, preparation, and professional development of museum professionals, especially those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
- 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 are economic engines](#), prior to the pandemic, supporting more than 726,000 jobs and contributing \$50 billion to the US 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 important part of the nation's educational system, 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 essential community infrastructure, 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.