

FY 2025 SENATE appropriations letter in support of the IMLS Office of Museum Services

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

We write to thank the Subcommittee for its previous support, and to urge you to support robust funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Office of Museum Services (OMS) in the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

The pandemic inflicted considerable damage on US museums, a large majority of which are 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organizations. While the museum field is making strides in its recovery efforts, it will take years to fully rebound to pre-pandemic levels of staffing, revenue, and attendance. [Survey data](#) shows two-thirds of museums continue to experience reduced attendance, averaging 71% of their pre-pandemic attendance. Despite the tremendous financial and psychological stress caused by the pandemic, museum professionals filled the gaps to meet the needs of their communities. They continue to demonstrate the critical role museums play in our country's infrastructure and deepened their impact in their communities.

Moving forward, OMS leadership and vital financial support is more important than ever to museums large and small, urban and rural, across our country. OMS provides museums essential help to navigate change and continue to improve their services to better enable them to champion lifelong learning, strengthen community engagement and advance collections stewardship and access to our nation's cultural heritage.

Despite its small size, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is the largest dedicated source of investment in our nation's museums, which typically support more than 700,000 jobs and contribute \$50 billion annually to the U.S. economy. OMS funding plays a significant role in this economic impact by helping museums reach more visitors and spur community development. In addition to their economic benefits, OMS grants support museums' advancements in areas such as public health upgrades, technology, lifelong community learning, and conservation and preservation. These successes notwithstanding, only a small fraction of the nation's museums is currently being reached and many highly rated grant applications go unfunded.

Museums are essential community infrastructure vital to their communities. Pre-pandemic, museums welcome annually more than 55 million schoolchildren, bring art, science and cultural heritage into communities, and partner with other nonprofits to meet the specific needs of their local population. Museums opened their doors to more people than ever with over 850 million visits each year – with many of these visitors offered free or reduced admission. Museums are also working to address a wide range of our nation's greatest challenges. For example, some museums are conducting medical research and creating energy efficient public buildings, while others are helping veterans heal physically and psychologically and collecting food for families in need.

Congress reauthorized IMLS in late 2018 by enacting the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-410). This legislation passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and by a wide margin of 331 to 28 in the House, showing Congress' renewed bipartisan support for the agency's programs and its commitment to providing funding. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants leverage significant private resources while supporting museums in every state.

We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2025 to support the important work museums do in our states. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to bolster our economy and continue to serve our schools and communities, and preserve our cultural heritage for future generations.

Again, we appreciate the Subcommittee's prior support for OMS and request this investment to strengthen and sustain the work of our nation's museums.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

(For more information or to sign onto this letter, please contact Ryan Kambich with Senator Gillibrand at ryan_kambich@gillibrand.senate.gov)

FY 2025 HOUSE appropriations letter in support of the IMLS Office of Museum Services

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write to thank the Subcommittee for its previous support, and to urge you to support robust funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Office of Museum Services (OMS) in the FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

The pandemic inflicted considerable damage on US museums, a large majority of which are 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organizations. While the museum field is making strides in its recovery efforts, it will take years to fully rebound to pre-pandemic levels of staffing, revenue, and attendance. [Survey data](#) shows two-thirds of museums continue to experience reduced attendance, averaging 71% of their pre-pandemic attendance. Despite the tremendous financial and psychological stress caused by the pandemic, museum professionals filled the gaps to meet the needs of their communities. They continue to demonstrate the critical role museums play in our country's infrastructure and deepened their impact in their communities.

Moving forward, OMS leadership and vital financial support is more important than ever to museums large and small, urban and rural, across our country. OMS provides museums essential help to navigate change and continue to improve their services to better enable them to champion lifelong learning, strengthen community engagement and advance collections stewardship and access to our nation's cultural heritage.

Despite its small size, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is the largest dedicated source of investment in our nation's museums, which pre-COVID-19 supported over 700,000 jobs and contributed \$50 billion annually to the U.S. economy. OMS funding plays a significant role in this economic impact by helping museums reach more visitors and spur community development. In addition to their economic benefits, OMS grants also support museums' advancements in areas such as public health upgrades, technology, lifelong community learning, and conservation and preservation. These successes notwithstanding, only a small fraction of the nation's museums are currently being reached and many highly rated grant applications go unfunded.

Museums are vital to their communities. Pre-COVID-19, they welcomed annually more than 55 million schoolchildren, bringing art, science, and cultural heritage into communities, and partnered with other nonprofits to meet the specific needs of their local population. In addition, our nation's museums opened their doors to more people than ever with over 850 million visits each year—with many of these visitors offered free or reduced admission. Museums are essential community infrastructure and part of a robust nonprofit community working to address a wide range of our nation's greatest challenges, from conducting medical research and helping veterans heal physically and psychologically, to creating energy efficient public buildings and collecting food for families in need.

Congress reauthorized IMLS in late 2018 by enacting the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (Public Law No: 115-410). This 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' bipartisan support for the agency's programs and a commitment to its funding. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants leverage significant private resources while supporting museums in every state.

We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2025 to support the important work museums do in our districts. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to bolster economic recovery, serve our schools and communities, and preserve our cultural heritage for future generations. Again, we appreciate the Subcommittee's prior support for OMS and request this investment to strengthen and sustain the work of our nation's museums.

Sincerely,

Paul Tonko
U.S. Representative

Chellie Pingree
U.S. Representative

Andy Barr
U.S. Representative

Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. Representative

(For more information or to sign onto this letter with one of its leads, please contact Darian Harbeck with Rep. Tonko at darian.harbeck@mail.house.gov, Hunt VanderToll with Rep. Barr at hunt.vandertoll@mail.house.gov, Evan Johnston with Rep. Pingree at evan.johnston@mail.house.gov, or Matthew Clarkin with Rep. Fitzpatrick at matthew.clarkin@mail.house.gov)