

# FY 2025 NLG-L LB21 Applicant Webinar Recording

## Transcript

0:04

Hello, my name is Sarah Fuller and I'm a Senior Program Officer in the Office of Library Services at the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

0:13

This webinar will cover the fiscal year 2025 National Leadership Grants for Libraries program and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant program.

0:26

Today we will briefly go over LESS and its strategic priorities and provide an overview of the National Leadership Grant and Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant programs.

0:37

We will also review eligibility criteria.

0:40

The project types take you through the application process and provide you with some tips to help make your application complete and competitive.

0:50

Most importantly, I'm Alas is pleased to announce a new Notice of Funding Opportunity format for fiscal year 2025, as well as a brand new project type, the Community Centered Implementation Project Type.

1:08

IMLS is an independent grant making agency and the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums.

1:16

IMLS helps ensure that all Americans have access to museum, library and Information Services.

1:24

You can read our mission and vision on this slide and on our website, [www.ims.gov](http://www.ims.gov).

1:35

If you have applied to IMLS in the past, you may note that the Fiscal Year 2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity appears in a different visual format.

1:45

IMLS hopes that this change makes the NOFO easier to read and navigate.

1:51

While the format is visually different from previous years, most of the content remains relatively similar to previous fiscal years.

1:59

Should you have questions about what's new and any changes, please contact an IMLS Program Officer who will be more than willing to assist you and resolve your concerns.

2:11

We will discuss the new Community Centered Implementation Project type a little later in the webinar.

2:21

The Strategic Plan lays out several goals for the agency's work championing lifelong learning, strengthening community engagement, and advancing collection, stewardship and access.

2:32

Each award that we make through our grant programs will align with one agency level goal and one associated objective and will contribute meaningfully to the achievement of both program and agency level goals.

2:49

Today we will be talking about two of our grant programs, both of which have a preliminary proposal deadline of September 20th, 2024.

2:59

The first is our National Leadership Grants for Libraries program, otherwise known as NLGNLG projects enhance the quality of library services nationwide by addressing critical needs in the library and archives fields.

3:14

The models, tools, research, findings, services, and partnerships resulting from these awards can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend and maximize the benefit of federal investment to libraries and archives of all sizes.

3:32

It is particularly important to note the importance of far reaching impact in a national leadership grant application.

3:41

The benefits of your work should extend well beyond one institution or geographic region.

3:47

Collaborating across institutions, considering institutional diversity in terms of geography, size and type of institution, and thinking through dissemination and replicability are essential for success.

4:01

The Community Centered Implementation Project type is an exception and we will talk about this more soon.

4:08

Note that we also do not accept applications that are strictly for digitization, and we cannot accept applications for construction.

4:19

The goal for this program is to generate projects that develop, enhance, or disseminate replicable practices, programs, models, or tools to strengthen library and archival services for the American public.

4:32

Each applicant should align their proposed project with the national leadership goal and one of the associated objectives.

4:40

An applicant should clearly identify their selected objective in the narrative and the library program information form.

4:51

The other program we are discussing today is the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, or I'll Be 21 for short.

5:00

This program is designed to build a diverse librarian archival workforce to meet the information needs of communities and increase the institutional capacity of libraries, archives, and library and information science graduate programs.

5:14

The program supports projects that provide training and professional development to library and archives professionals, develop faculty and information leaders, and recruit, educate, and retain the next generation of library and archives professionals.

5:31

Like NLG, projects are expected to influence practice, reflect an understanding of current practice and priorities, use strategic collaborations, disseminate activities, results and findings, and generate measurable results.

5:48

And just like NLG, far reaching impact is expected for all project categories except for the new Community Centred implementation category.

5:58

For both of these programs.

5:59

Please keep in mind that September 20th will be the only deadline for submitting applications in fiscal year 2025.

6:11

The goal for the Laura Bush 21st Century Program are route one, recruit and educate future library and archives professionals, faculty and staff.

6:21

Or two, Train and retain current library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff.

6:27

Each applicant should rely on their proposed project with one of these two program goals and one of the associated objectives.

6:35

Goal and objective choices should be identified clearly in the Narrative and the Library Program Information form.

6:45

Here we have provided some guidance for those of you who are unsure whether your project idea fits into NLG or LB21.

6:53

Note that NLD is focused on external services and direct work with the American public, whereas LB 21 is focused on building and training the current and future library and archival workforce.

7:06

If your project is primarily about education and training for information professionals, either formal or informal education, you should probably apply to LB 21.

7:18

If you are a non tenured tenure track faculty member and dress it in research funding, you will want to look at the Early Career Research Development category in Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant program.

7:32

If your project is focused on direct services for the American public, whether through practice or research, you should apply to NLG.

7:41

Please make sure to read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully to ensure your project is aligned with the correct grant program and that you meet eligibility criteria.

7:51

If you are unsure, feel free to contact one of our program staff for guidance.

8:00

On the IMLS website, we have landing pages for each of the two programs.

8:05

If you're on this webinar, it's likely you've already visited one or both.

8:09

These pages provide an overview of the programs.

8:12

Links to the full Notices of Funding Opportunity and also this webinar.

8:16

So if you want to refer to this applicant webinar later, that's where you will find it.

8:21

In addition, on each page you can find a list of the relevant program staff you should contact with any questions about the grant programs and the application process.

8:31

If you are unsure who to contact, please just reach out to one of us and we'll make sure you get connected to the program officer whose expertise best aligns with your project idea.

8:43

We highly suggest you reach out to one of us in advance of the preliminary proposal deadline.

8:52

Your organization is eligible to apply if it is one of the following types of organizations: 1. a unit of state or local government or A501C3 nonprofit organization, 2. located in the United States or territories and three, one of six types of organizations, which we'll list on the next slide.

9:15

Please also note that the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant Program has additional eligibility requirements for early career Research development proposals, so you should pay attention to that in the Notice of Funding Opportunity if that applies to you.

9:33

In addition to the criteria on the previous slide, your organization is eligible to apply if you are one of these six types of organizations, including a library, archives or parent organization, an academic or administrative unit, a digital library or archives, or a library or archival agency, consortium, association, or organization.

9:56

If you have any questions about your eligibility, please reach out to someone on our program staff.

10:04

You are not eligible to apply to these programs if you are a federally operated institution, a for profit institution, an individual, or a foreign country or organization.

10:16

A federally operated institution does not mean an institution that receives other federal grants.

10:22

It means that if you are a federal agency, for example the Library of Congress or Smithsonian, we cannot fund you if you are.

10:31

If you are an ineligible institution, we encourage you to partner with an eligible institution.

10:36

While you cannot be the lead applicant, you can apply through a partnership with an eligible institution and may be able to receive funding in that manner.

10:45

More information about this is provided in the guidelines on our website, but the point here is that it is important to figure out early if you are eligible to apply for the program that is of interest to you.

11:00

To ensure you will be able to submit your application, Please ensure the following registrations are in place at your institution.

11:08

An applicant organization must have a unique entity identifier number, a current and active system for award management registration, and an [activegrants.gov](https://www.activegrants.gov) registration with an approved authorized organization representative.

11:26

We strongly recommend you check these registrations immediately to ensure that they are accurate, current, and active, as it can take a long time to update or renew them.

11:37

Your institution must be registered with Sam.

11:40

It's important to keep in mind that your Sam registration is good for only one year at a time and must be renewed annually.

11:49

That's something you don't want to be doing right before the deadline, so we recommend checking your status early on.

11:55

If it's not your job to track your Sam registration, we recommend you contact the person at your organization whose job it is so you can make sure this is in place.

12:05

You'll also need an account at grants.gov, which is the portal through which you will submit your application.

12:12

Allow at least two weeks for the registration process here.

12:15

And even if you know you're registered, make sure you know who is authorized for your institution and make sure they know their login information.

12:24

In fact, if you don't absolutely know for sure that all these registrations are in place, I'd recommend checking on it as soon as we get done today.

12:32

Again, it's not something you want to be trying to accomplish anywhere close to the deadline.

12:41

All applicants will also have to select a project type.

12:45

These categories each have different limits regarding the period of performance of the grant, which you can see in this table.

12:52

Planning grants are for preliminary project activities.

12:55

Many people think about this as planning for a larger grant, but that's not a requirement.

13:01

Planning activities may include conducting preliminary research, conducting an environmental scan, rapidly prototyping a new program or service, or working on creating partnerships to support larger future activities.

13:16

Forum grants are for convening experts and stakeholders around an issue of national significance.

13:22

This could be to support one large meeting or several meetings focused on a particular area to establish a shared agenda or understanding.

13:32

Planning and Forum grants must be for one to two years and both should demonstrate how you will measure and achieve far reaching impact.

13:41

National Implementation grants support full scale development, execution and evaluation activities that will achieve far reaching impact.

13:50

These are limited to one to three years.

13:54

The new Community Centered Implementation grants adapt existing practices, findings, models, tools, and or partnerships to a local or specific context.

14:08

This could either be one geographic region or a specific archival population.

14:13

For this type, you must identify an already established standard practice, toolkit, open source software, or research finding in your proposal and describe how you will adapt it to your specific context.

14:28

Your project should share resources and lessons learned that can be used by libraries and archives in other communities that may be interested in adapting a similar practice to their own community.

14:40

Please note your your institution may only submit one application under the Community Centered Implementation Project type.

14:49

Again, your institution may only submit one application under this project type.

14:56

Community Centered Inflammation implementation projects are limited to one to two years.

15:03

Applied research grants support the investigation of key questions relevant to libraries or archives, building on prior empirical, theoretical, or exploratory work in libraries and archives or other relevant disciplines.

15:17

Your project should share resources and lessons learned that can be used by library and archival professionals in other communities throughout the nation.

15:26

The Laura Bush 21st Century Program also offers the Early Career Research category, which supports the research of an untenured tenure track library and information science faculty member.



15:38

Both of these research types are one to two, one to three years.

15:47

To give you a better sense of the scale, here are the maximum dollar amounts you may request which are based on the project type you select.

15:56

There is flexibility within the funding levels, but you should keep in mind that we have limited funding and both programs are highly competitive.

16:04

We fund very few \$1,000,000 projects.

16:08

There is a value proposition that comes into play.

16:10

The higher the amount you are asking for, the more compelling your case must be for how your work will impact the entire field and represent a significant return on investment.

16:21

The Notice of Funding Opportunity also spells out these funding caps along with the corresponding cost share requirements.

16:29

Please note that the Community Centered Implementation category has a 25,000 to \$100,000 funding limit.

16:41

Cost sharing is not considered in the review of applications, but it is an eligibility criteria.

16:47

Again, this is spelled out in the Notices of Funding Opportunity.

16:52

Generally A1 to one cost share is required for both programs.

16:56

If you select the National Implementation Project type and you are requesting 250,000 or more in IMLS funds, Laura Bush 21st Century applicants requesting a National Implementation Grant of \$250,000 or more are required to provide 1 to one cost share less student support costs.

17:18

Please remember that if a cost is unallowable for IMLS funds, it is also unallowable for cost share.

17:26

Cost share is not required for Planning Forum, Community Centered Implementation, applied research, or Early career research grants.

17:35

We know that cost share can be confusing, so if you do have any questions, please reach out to a Program Officer before the deadline.

17:48

Each application must include two forms that are generated within grants.gov and a two page preliminary proposal narrative including a budget summary.

17:58

No other documents will be accepted.

18:00

Applications must be submitted through grants.gov before 11:59 PM Eastern Time on September 20th, 2024.

18:10

Imaless's internal system for receiving applications from grants.gov will only accept documents in PDF form.

18:18

Any applications that include a non PDF document will be bounced back by our system and will not be considered submitted.

18:26

We recommend ensuring all documents are in PDF format prior to submittal and submit early.

18:33

Do not wait until the night of the deadline to submit.

18:41

After proposals are submitted through grants.gov, IMLS staff screen them for completeness and eligibility.

18:48

After that, proposals undergo peer review.

18:51

After peer review, all applicants will receive review or comments and feedback.

18:56

The most competitive applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal for further consideration.

19:05

Applicants who are invited to submit full proposals will be notified by February and will need to submit full proposal applications by March 10th, 2025.

19:15

Note that this is a tight window to to develop a full application, so you will want your ideas to be well formed when you submit your preliminary proposal.

19:25

The required components for full proposals are much more extensive and are also listed in the Notice Funding Opportunity.

19:33

These applications are also submitted through grants.gov and will similarly undergo a peer review process.

19:40

Full proposal applicants will be provided reviewer comments and feedback regardless of whether the project is selected for funding or not.

19:49

The IMLS Director makes final funding decisions which will be announced in late July 2025, pending the availability of funds and at the discretion of the Director of IMLS.

20:05

For the final part of this webinar, we'll go over some tips for preparing a competitive application.

20:11

At this first phase of the proposal process, you should think about the preliminary of what a full proposal would include.

20:22

We recognize that it is quite a challenge fitting all of the information about your project into two pages, so you'll want to be as succinct and specific as possible.

20:33

The Search Awarded Grants section of the IMLS website has the full and preliminary proposals associated with the Laura Bush 21st Century and NLG projects that have been funded over the past few years, which can be helpful to review as you start to work on your proposal.

20:50

The preliminary proposal should follow the general sections of a full proposal narrative and include an introduction, project justification, project work plan, optional diversity plan, project results, and a budget summary.

21:07

Some elements you will want to address in your preliminary proposal include clearly identifying any project partners and the purpose of the project.

21:16

This can easily and quickly be done in the first sentence of the introduction.

21:21

Institution X and Institution Y will partner to make A or accomplish B.

21:27

They request Z dollars from IMLS.

21:31

We recommend foregoing lengthy introductions and getting directly into the substance of what your project is all about in the first sentence or two.

21:40

In your project justification, you will want to ground your project in current and relevant research and practice.

21:47

Please be succinct and provide data that supports your statements.

21:51

You will want to give an outline of your proposed work plan.

21:54

What will it look like and how will it be accomplished?

21:58

If it's a research proposal, you must articulate specific research questions and describe your data collection and analysis methods.

22:07

Optionally, you can include a statement of how you will how your project will strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field.

22:17

You should articulate the potential impact of your work, your projected outcome, and how you will disseminate results.

22:24

Please note a budget summary is required in all preliminary proposal narratives and must include the total anticipated cost of the project, including cost share if required, and a breakdown of how funds will be allocated into different cost categories.

22:41

Proposals that do not include this information will be rejected without review.

22:46

In the Notice of Funding Opportunity, you will see recommended amounts of paragraphs for each of these sections to give you an idea of how much space in your proposal should be spent on each IMOS.

23:04

Program officers are available to discuss your project ideas with you and to look over a draft of your preliminary proposal.

23:12

If you'd like a Program Officer to look at a draft, please e-mail it to one of us by August 30th, 2024.

23:20

Sending it even earlier is preferred, but August 30th will be the last day we are able to accept your drafts.

23:28

One of us will look at it, and then we can schedule a call with you to discuss your draft and to answer any questions you might have.

23:36

Please refer to the list at the end of this presentation to identify the program officer whose expertise best aligns with the subject matter in your proposal.

23:46

While we can continue to answer questions you may have about the process, we can only read and provide feedback on one draft submission for each proposal.

23:55

We highly recommend you take advantage of this opportunity.

24:02

IMLS will instruct reviewers to consider the following review criteria when evaluating preliminary proposals.

24:09

Applicants will want to keep these in mind when writing the two page proposal for the project Justification.

24:16

How well does the proposal address current significant needs, problems, or challenges in the field?

24:22

How well does it differ from complement, build on, or adapt existing models, standards, theories, scholarships, or practice?

24:30

How well does the proposal align with the program goal and objectives for the project work plan?

24:39

What elements are in place and what elements are missing for successful execution of the proposed project?

24:46

What recommendations do you have for improving the proposal for the optional Diversity Plan?

24:52

To what degree will the project strengthen the field's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices?

24:59

Additionally, for Laura Bush proposals, to what degree will the proposal contribute to the recruitment, development, and or retention of a diverse workforce of library and archives professionals?

25:11

For project results, how well do the intended results support the project's purpose, and will the results be well disseminated to the intended audiences?

25:21

Considering the topic, project type, selection, amount of funds requested, and scope of potential impact, should the applicant be invited to submit a full proposal at this time?

25:32

Why or why not?

25:41

The Notice of Funding Opportunities have specific guidance for applications in the Applied Research and Early Career Research Development categories.

25:49

This slide lists some of the questions we asked you to consider, including thinking about the research questions, theoretical framing, research methods, and other aspects of your proposed project.

26:00

Please note that the Applied Research and Early Career Research Development preliminary proposals must include research questions in the preliminary proposal narrative.

26:13

As a summary, here are some things that you can do to ensure you are submitting your most competitive proposal.

26:19

The first you've already accomplished by viewing this webinar.

26:23

Next, you want to choose the grant program goal and objective that best aligns with your proposal idea.

26:29

Schedule time with an I/meless program officer to help refine your ideas and submit a draft.

26:35

Some other tips are that you should read through a few of the funded preliminary proposal narratives from previous years to get some idea of what's successful and of what was successful and how they use the limited 2 pages of space.

26:49

Articulate your project goals as quickly as possible in the preliminary proposal, include a budget paragraph and be sure that you are submitting all the completed and required documents in PDF format.

27:01

I highly recommend having a colleague unfamiliar with your project read through your proposal prior to submission.

27:08

We all get too close to our work and this will ensure that the proposal you're submitting clearly communicates your project idea.

27:17

Here are all the important dates you need to be aware of during this year's application cycle.

27:23

Of most importance right now is the optional draft proposal and preliminary proposal deadlines.

27:29

Again, please read through the noses of finding opportunity carefully to ensure you are meeting eligibility criteria and have fulfilled all application requirements.

27:45

As we mentioned already, program staff are available to assist with any questions you have about the proposal process.

27:52

Here are some of the topical areas reflected in each program officers expertise and funding portfolio.

27:59

This table is not intended to be comprehensive, but more so is intended to give you a sense of the best person to reach out to.

28:06

We are a close group, so if we believe one of our colleagues has better expertise to discuss your project, we will ensure the person with the closest expertise gets back to you.

28:17

And don't forget, program staff are available to discuss your project ideas with you and to look over a draft of your preliminary proposal.

28:25

To take advantage of this opportunity, you must e-mail the draft of your proposal no later than the end of day on Friday, August 30th.

28:35

One draft submission is a limit for each proposal.

28:38

You are more than welcome and even encouraged to e-mail or contact us well in advance of that deadline.

28:45

Thank you for joining us for this presentation and we look forward to hearing from you soon.