Introduction

Video Chapters

Using This Video

Watch
Watch this video in its entirety

Review
Review the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) at www.imls.gov/grants

Refer
Refer to this video as needed

What is Museums Empowered?

Museums Empowered

Museums Empowered is a special initiative of the MFA grant program.

Designed to strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public...

by using the transformative power of *professional development* and training to generate *systemic change* within a museum.

ME and Your Strategic Plan

Museums Empowered projects are expected to focus on a key component of your museum's strategic plan.

IMLS wants to support your museum in advancing priority areas that ultimately benefit your community.

ME is for Museums

- Museums must

  - ✓ Have at least one full time or equivalent professional staff person, either paid or unpaid

  - ✓ Have a physical location that it owns or operates

  - ✓ Have been open to the public for at least 120 days in the year prior to the application deadline

  - ✓ Own or use tangible objects

- Museums may be stand-alone organizations, or they may be part of a larger institution, such as a college, university, Tribe, or a state or local government.

ME is for all types of museums

- Anthropology museums
- Aquariums
- Arboretums
- Art museums
- Botanical gardens
- Children's/youth museums
- General museums
- Historic houses/sites

- History museums
- Natural history
- Nature centers
- Planetariums
- Science/technology centers
- Specialized museums
- Zoological parks

What Can Museums Empowered Grants Fund?

ME Funds Projects

What is a "project"? A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.

- A project is **temporary** in that it has a defined beginning and end in time, and therefore defined scope and resources.

- And a project is **unique** in that it is not a routine operation, but a specific set of operations designed to accomplish a singular goal.

Museums Empowered Program Goals

Digital Technology	Goal 1: Provide museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into museum operations.
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Goal 2: Support museum staff in providing inclusive and equitable services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.
Evaluation	Goal 3: Strengthen the ability of museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes.
Organizational Management	Goal 4: Strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture

Digital Technology Goal

- Support <u>staff learning and integration</u> of digital communication platforms and social media tools to enhance audience engagement and community outreach.

- Support <u>staff learning and integration</u> of digital tools and services that enhance access to museum collections.

Digital Technology Example

Phillips Collection

Log Number: **ME-252033-OMS-22**

The Phillips Collection will improve staff understanding of digital asset management (DAM) practices and build consensus around how best to steward these assets. A cross-departmental staff team will engage in informal and formal training designed to develop skills that will allow them to select and rollout the museum's first digital asset management system (DAMS). The staff team will participate in a professionally facilitated needs assessment, attend DAM-related conferences, and meet with peer institutions that use DAMS. The team will hire a digital asset manager and develop a digital asset management policy. As a result of this project, staff will have the skills, knowledge, and infrastructure to incorporate a DAMS in their daily work, mitigating the risk to museum digital assets through loss, lack of use, or misuse.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Goal

- Create training and learning opportunities that increase cultural competency of museum staff and enhance relevancy of museum programs.

- Develop and implement inclusive and equitable fellowship, internship, and mentoring programs to increase support for emerging professionals from diverse communities entering the museum field.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Example

New-York Historical Society

Log Number: **ME-256041-OMS-24**

The New-York Historical Society will build staff cultural competency in accessibility and improve K-12 programming for students with disabilities. The project will create sustainable systems and structures for ensuring that all programs take the needs of students with disabilities into account; establish a pattern of consistent accessibility training for all museum education staff; and create space for staff to learn from and network with peer organizations. Project activities will include building an advisory council of teachers and parents, conducting quarterly trainings for museum educators, consulting among peers to build a network of access, and hiring an expert consultant to assess K-12 student programs. The project will also develop pilots for two types of access-specific K-12 programming that will be implemented, assessed, and revised. The project will result in a strategy document that will continue implementation of the initiative for a period of five-years to ensure the sustainability of the program and benefits to the students.

Sample Application Available

Evaluation Goal

- Increase staff knowledge of program evaluation methods and the usefulness of evaluation reports, tools, data and metrics.

- Provide museum staff with the tools and strategies to adapt evaluation methods to address a specific audience or institutional need.

Evaluation Example

Mid-America Science Museum

Log Number: **ME-255504-OMS-24**

The Mid-America Science Museum will build capacity of staff to use evaluation as an ongoing cycle of inquiry when creating or improving museum programs and exhibits. Project activities include hiring an expert consultant to train staff on evaluations. As part of this training, departmental teams will work with the consultant to conduct evaluation studies on programs and exhibits to gain practice in developing goals, designing data collection instruments, and analyzing information. As a result of the project, staff will have developed the skills needed to implement and sustain a consistent evaluation practice that will instill a culture of evaluation within the institution for the long-term benefit of the museum and future visitors.

Sample Application Available

Organizational Management Goal

- Develop comprehensive organizational learning opportunities that address one or more emerging priorities facing a museum.

- Develop programs that address the specific learning and growth opportunities identified by staff needs assessments.

Organizational Management Example

Peabody Essex Museum

Log Number: **ME-255937-OMS-24**

Peabody Essex Museum will create a professional development initiative that will improve the workplace environment and fill gaps in expertise, while creating an environment that supports staff in their professional growth and varied learning, working, and management styles. Project activities will include developing and implementing a learning agenda for approximately 243 staff as well as establishing a leadership program, which will be made up of 53 managers and staff interested in becoming managers. A series of customized skill-building workshops for all staff that include managerial, communication, and project management training will be composed by senior staff from Employee Experience, Executive Office, Collection Management, and Education and Civic Engagement divisions. As a result of the project, staff will be better able to navigate public expectations and provide museum experiences that respond to a wide range of diverse audiences' needs and interests.

Sample Application Available

Choosing a Program Goal

Digital Technology   Diversity & Inclusion   Evaluation   Organizational Management

1. Think carefully about what is "in the center" of your project. Who or what will benefit from your work? What will be improved once you've finished your project?

2. Decide who you want to review your application. What kind of skill set and experience do you want them to have?

3. List all the activities you plan to carry out and assign each to a goal. Which goal gets the most? Where will most of the resources be spent?

What Size Are ME Projects?

ME project budgets can range in size.

$5,000 - $250,000 in federal grant funds with **1:1 cost share required.**

Scale your budget request to the needs of your project.

How Many ME Projects Get Funded?

You can find a list of awards on the IMLS website under "Search Awarded Grants"

Application Components

Overview

Application Components

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) includes a complete list of all the application components.

Most of these components are created and saved as a PDF for uploading as part of your application package in Grants.gov.

Required Documents

These components are required of __all__ applications.

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424S)
- IMLS Museum Program Information Form
- Organizational Profile
- Strategic Plan Summary
- Narrative (7 pages max.)

- Schedule of Completion
- Performance Measurement Plan
- IMLS Budget Form
- Budget Justification
- List of Key Project Staff and Consultants
- Resumes

Conditionally Required Documents

These components are required of <u>some</u> applications.

- Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status

- Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

- Digital Products Plan

Supporting Documents

These components are <u>optional</u>. Include only those that supplement the Narrative and support the project description provided in the application.

- Letters of commitment from partners, consultants, or any third-parties you will work with on your project
- Bibliography or references relevant to your proposed project design or evaluation strategy
- Letters of support from experts and stakeholders
- Relevant images
- Exhibit design plans

- Reports from planning activities
- Contractor or vendor quotes
- Equipment specifications
- Products or evaluations from similar projects
- Collections, technology, or other departmental plans applicable to the proposed project
- Web links to relevant online materials
- Needs assessments

Application Components Continued

In the following sections of this presentation, we will focus on two application components:

- Narrative

- Budget

The Notice of Funding Opportunity offers complete instructions on how to prepare and complete all application components.

Application Components

Narrative

Narrative: Project Justification

Tell us:
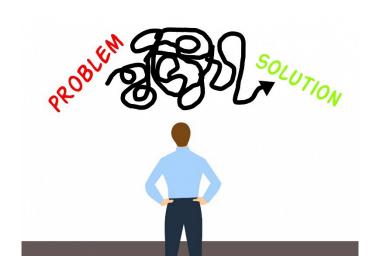
- Which Museums Empowered program goal and associated objective will your project address?

- How will your project advance your museum's strategic plan?

- What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?

- Who is the primary audience for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

- Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

Narrative: Project Justification Continued

Reviewers will look for:

- How well does the proposal align with the selected Museums Empowered program goal/project category and objective(s)?

- Does the project advance the institution's strategic plan in specific and measurable ways?

- How well has the applicant used relevant data and other evidence to describe the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed?

- Has the applicant appropriately defined the primary audience and beneficiaries, as applicable, for this work?

- Have the primary audience and other project stakeholders been involved appropriately in planning the project?

Defining a need, problem, or challenge

- Remember that the federal government wants its investment to result in something getting better.

- Articulate what will get better as a result of your project as precisely as possible.

- Identify why it is important that this change happens.

- Hone your problem definition carefully.

- Present data that support your problem definition.

Narrative: Project Work Plan

Tell us:

- What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

- What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

- How will you organize and structure the project team to support equitable and inclusive engagement of all participants?

- What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

- How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

Narrative: Project Work Plan Continued

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the proposed activities informed by relevant theory and effective practice in professional development, organizational dynamics or change management?

- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?

- Are the time, financial, personnel, and other resources identified realistic for the scope and scale of the project?

- Is the proposed project team structured in a way that is equitable and mutually beneficial to those involved?

- Are the goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated?

- Will the proposed methods for tracking the project's progress allow course adjustments when necessary?

- Will the proposed methods for tracking the project's progress provide reliable and measurable information about the project results?

Defining risks

- Every project has potential risks.

- Show that you are aware of the risks and have a plan for dealing with them.

- Answer the question, "What if?"

Examples of Risk

o What if cost-share funding is unavailable by the time the project starts?

o What if a needs assessment suggests alternative priorities for training?

o What if one or more key staff are not available during the project period?

o What if a key project partner or consultant drops out mid-project?

Narrative: Project Results

Tell us:

- What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?

- How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the primary audience change as a result of your project?

- How will the proposed activities result in organizational growth or systemic change for the museum?

- What products will result from your project and how will you make them accessible to the primary audience?

- How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

Narrative: Project Results Continued

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the project's intended results clearly articulated, realistic, meaningful, and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project?

- Is the plan to effect meaningful change in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes solidly grounded and appropriately structured?

- Is it clear that the federal investment made through this grant will generate identifiable benefits to society?

- Will the products created by the project be made available and accessible to the target group?

- Is the plan to sustain the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance reasonable and practical?

Defining Intended Results

- Answer the question, "What will be better as the result of this work?"

- Know how you will recognize success and how you will measure it for each of your high-level activities.

- Tie everything back to your need, problem, or challenge.

- Consider constructing a logic model or an outcomes-based evaluation tool to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

Narrative Recap

- Your Narrative has three sections—Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results

- 7-page maximum

- Refer to the review criteria in the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application Components

Budget

IMLS Budget Form

The IMLS Budget Form accommodates up to three years of project activities and expenses.

The budget should include the project costs that will be charged to grant funds as well as those that will be supported by cost share.

Allowable Cost Examples

- ✓ personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits
- ✓ travel expenses for key project staff and consultants
- ✓ materials, supplies, software, and equipment related directly to project activities
- ✓ equipment to improve collections storage and exhibit environments
- ✓ third-party costs
- ✓ publication design and printing
- ✓ program evaluation
- ✓ staff and volunteer training
- ✓ paid internships/fellowships
- ✓ indirect or overhead costs

Unallowable Cost Examples

- ◎ general fundraising costs
- ◎ contributions to endowments
- ◎ general operating support
- ◎ acquisition of collections
- ◎ general advertising or public relations costs
- ◎ construction or renovation of facilities
- ◎ social activities, receptions, or entertainment
- ◎ research projects

Budget Justification

The Budget Justification is in an opportunity to provide in a more a detailed narrative format, an explanation or justification for the project costs itemized in the IMLS Budget Form.

- In Salaries and Wages you should identify each person whose salary or wages will be paid with IMLS funds or included as cost share. If cost share is being provided by unpaid volunteers, explain how you arrived at the dollar amount used to represent the value of their services.

- In Supplies, Materials and Equipment you should list each type of supply, material, and equipment you propose to purchase or provide as cost share for the project. Provide vendor quotes or price lists as Supporting Documents with your application.

Application Tips and Next Steps

Application Tips

We can make grants only to **eligible** applicants that submit **complete** applications, including attachments, **on or before the deadline.** So…

- ✓ Start early.

- ✓ Become familiar with Grants.gov Workspace.

- ✓ Be sure your application is complete.

- ✓ Make sure all application components are in the proper format and follow the correct naming conventions.

- ✓ Submit to Grants.gov **early** so you can correct any errors.

Application Tips Continued

Check your registrations and know your usernames and passwords.

System for Award Management (www.sam.gov)

- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- **Registration must be renewed every year!**

Grants.gov (www.grants.gov)

- **Passwords expire every 60 days!**
- Accounts are deactivated after 365 days of inactivity.

START EARLY, DON'T DELAY

Additional Application Tips

Peer reviewers will be selected by IMLS to read each application and provide constructive comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed projects.

To help make sure your Narrative is as clear and complete as possible:

- ✓ Follow the Narrative outline in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- ✓ Use headings, subheadings, or numbered sections in your Narrative.
- ✓ Consider the review criteria associated with each section of the Narrative.
- ✓ Avoid generalities, acronyms, and jargon.
- ✓ Ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit it.

Sample Applications

Home > Grants > Apply for a Grant > Sample Applications

Sample Applications

- Grant Programs
- Apply for a Grant
  - Eligibility Criteria
  - Sample Applications
  - Notices of Funding Opportunities
  - Outcome Based Evaluations
- Manage Your Award

Inspire! Grants for Sma...

Lifelong Learning
- Iroquois Indian Museum (PD...
- Muncie Children's Museum (PDF, 339...
- Museum of Craft and Design (PDF, 4...

Institutional Capacity
- SEE Science Center (PDF, 335KB)

Collections Stewardship and...
- The Black Mountain College Museum...
- Historic Saranac Lake (PDF, 270KB)
- Midwest Miniatures Museum (PDF, 3...

Museums Empowered

Digital Technology
- Exploration Place (PDF, 982KB)

Diversity & Inclusion
- National Museum of Mexican Art (PDF, 287KB)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (PDF, 300KB)

Evaluation
- Armory Center for the Arts (PDF, 224KB)

Organizational Management
- Perot Museum of Nature and Science (PDF, 1.15MB)
- Seattle Art Museum (PDF, 245KB)

Sample applications of recently funded grants are available on the IMLS website

Sample Applications Continued

Perot Museum of Nature and Science Proposal, Page 1

Project Justification

Project Goal/Category

The Perot Museum of Nature and Science is seeking a Museums Empowered grant under Goal 4 Organizational Management: Strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture; Objective 4.1: Develop comprehensive organizational learning opportunities that address one or more emerging priorities facing a museum. This project will support the IMLS's strategic goals of championing lifelong learning, knowledge sharing and professional development. All aspects of the project will be conducted through the lens of diversity, inclusivity, equity and accessibility. The Perot Museum is a bilingual institution with a diverse staff serving a diverse population with great intentionality.

One of the three primary goals of the MFA program is to champion lifelong learning. For museums to be truly effective in their endeavor to inspire a love of learning, they need to start within their own house by supporting the training and professional development of their workforce. The Perot Museum strives to be an excellent place to work whether it is for a season or to build a career in informal education. To attract talent and help grow the next generation of museum leaders, the Museum is intentionally building a people-centered coaching and learning culture that will result in a more engaged, innovative, collaborative and empowered workforce. This grant project will provide training to roughly 120 full-time museum employees, advancing skills by building interpersonal relationships, listening for understanding, team building...

Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Tasks	2023				2024												2025							
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Core Values Academy																								
Dare to Lead Training Sessions																								
Dare to Lead Application Sessions																								
Crucial Conversations																								
Crucial Accountability																								
Pulse Survey																								
Gallup Engagemet Survey																								
Engagement Action Planning for Managers																								

Each sample application includes a copy of narrative and the schedule of completion.

Important Dates and Times

Applications are due by 11:59 pm EST on **November 15, 2024.**

- Awards will be announced in **August 2025.**

- Projects must start **September 1, 2025.**

Next Steps

Connect with IMLS Program Staff in the Office of Museum Services to ask questions about the:

- Museums Empowered grant program

- Application Components

- Review Process

https://www.imls.gov/grants/grant-programs

Credit

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