

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Fact Sheet

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The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development.

Through grants and information resources, IMLS annually reaches thousands of museums and libraries in myriad ways—from providing much needed technical assistance for small institutions to establishing national and replicable models, strengthening state networks, and supporting professional development. Funding from the Institute helps museums and libraries gain visibility in their communities leveraging additional public and private support.



IMLS provides grant support in two ways: through formula grants to state library agencies to carry out carefully developed statewide plans and through a national competitive peer review process. This enables the agency to operate transparently and equitably and identify programs and projects that will have the greatest positive impact in communities.

And as an independent federal agency, the Institute also recognizes its fiduciary responsibility to America's taxpayers. It has stringent reporting requirements that track and measure the results of each grant. To aid institutions in program design, IMLS also provides tools for strategic planning and evaluation on its Web site at www.imls.gov.

Collecting results from funded projects has a vital secondary purpose: it allows the Institute to serve as a program clearinghouse. By knowing what programs are effective in reaching particular populations, the Institute is able to share this knowledge with museums and libraries nationwide. These knowledge-sharing activities—research, publishing, and convening meetings—spur the development of best practice standards and protocols.

Museums and libraries are leaders in their communities, making knowledge available to millions at little or no cost. The role of the Institute of Museum and Library Services is to provide leadership and funding, resources these institutions need to fulfill their mission of becoming centers of learning for life, which is crucial to achieving personal fulfillment, a productive workforce, and an engaged citizenry.