



IMLS Reauthorization

Request

- We urge Congress to enact legislation reauthorizing the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which is due for FY 2017.

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, historic sites, history museums, military museums, natural history museums, nature centers, planetariums, science & technology centers, zoos and more—in their work to educate students, preserve and digitize collections, and connect with their communities. The current IMLS strategic plan aims to help museums place the learner at the center of the museum experience, promote them as strong community anchors and support collections stewardship, among other goals.

Principles for IMLS Reauthorization

Data Collection and Research about the museum field and its impact is a key agency function.

- The agency should continue to conduct data collection and research in collaboration and consultation with national, state, and regional museum organizations.

Museums are for everyone, and the agency’s work to highlight that is vital.

- Museums continually strive to be open and accessible to everyone in their community. The agency should continue to encourage and amplify these efforts, including through the Museums for All initiative.

State and Regional Collaboration helps museums work more effectively to serve the public.

- Just as states and regions have their own unique needs, so do statewide and regional museum communities. The agency should continue to support museum connections at the state and regional level.

Interagency Partnerships are an important tool for this relatively small agency to amplify its impact.

- Despite limited capacity, IMLS has successfully partnered with other agencies on initiatives and materials to support museums’ activities. The agency should continue to seek and execute interagency partnerships that magnify its support for museums.

Greater Investment in our nation’s museums is sorely needed.

- Congress should increase authorized funding for grants to museums to \$50 million.



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.
- By leveraging significant private, state, and local funding, OMS grants amplify a small federal investment in museums for maximum impact in the community.
- In addition to awarding grants that benefit individual museums and communities, IMLS also awards National Leadership Grants for Museums, which support projects with the potential to advance practice in the profession so that museums can improve services for the American public.
- 37 percent of museums are free at all times. Through IMLS' Museums for All initiative, many museums also offer free or greatly reduced admission to anyone with an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.
- The current authorization level of \$38.6 million, first enacted in 2004, would be over \$50 million if adjusted just for inflation. This does not even consider increased attendance.
- In 2014, the Office of Museum Services received grant applications requesting over \$86 million. The fundable need is likely much higher as many museums may be deterred from applying by the low success rate.
- To learn more about grants awarded to museums in your state/district, visit: imls.gov/grants/awarded-grants

Additional Information About Museums

- Museums support jobs and the economy. They spend \$21 billion annually, employ more than 400,000 Americans and spur tourism from around the world.
- Museums are an essential part of the nation's educational infrastructure, tailoring educational programs and materials to state and local curricula, spending more than \$2 billion a year on education and promoting lifelong learning.
- Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics and science in third grade than children who did not. This benefit is also seen in the subgroup of children who are most at risk for deficits and delays in achievement.
- Museums are beloved community anchors, attracting over a million volunteer hours every week.
- Museums are part of a robust arts and cultural production sector, which the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis has measured at \$698 billion annually—4.3 percent of the nation's economy.
- Many museums have developed innovative programs to meet the growing needs of their individual communities. For example, some 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.

Background

In late 2010, a bill to reauthorize IMLS for five years was passed—unanimously—by both the House and Senate. The bill (now Public Law 111-340) was introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), with original cosponsors Senators Burr (R-NC), Harkin (D-IA), and Enzi (R-WY). It included several provisions proposed by the museum field, including enhanced support for conservation and preservation, emergency preparedness and response, and efforts at the state level to leverage museum resources.