



Museums Empowered Grant Program

Applicant Information Session





Introduction



Video Chapters

- 1 **Chapter 1:** What is Museums Empowered?
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- 5 **Chapter 5:** Application Components – Budget
- 6 **Chapter 6:** Application Tips and Next Steps



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 November 15th, 2023
 - ✓ 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

- Aquariums
- Arboretums
- Art museums
- Botanical gardens
- Children's/youth museums
- General museums
- Historic houses/sites
- History museums
- Natural history/ anthropology museums
- 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.

What Makes an ME Project Successful?



INSTITUTIONAL
IMPACT



IN-DEPTH
KNOWLEDGE



PROJECT-BASED
DESIGN



DEMONSTRABLE
RESULTS



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 staff learning and integration of digital communication platforms and social media tools to enhance audience engagement and community outreach.
- Support staff learning and integration of digital tools and services that enhance access to museum collections.

A dark blue header bar with a white starburst graphic on the left and the text "Digital Technology Example" in white.


Digital Technology Example

Children's Museum of Indianapolis

Log Number: **ME-249264-OMS-21**

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis will increase its capacities to prepare for and respond to new and evolving cybersecurity threats, including those related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Project activities will include enhancements to critical information technology (IT) infrastructure, cybersecurity training and coaching for museum staff with a consultant, and implementation of the existing IT Disaster Recovery Plan by introducing physical and cloud-based offsite backup systems. The impact of the project activities will be an improvement to security infrastructure and practices across the museum, enhancing the museum's ability to serve its public safely and securely through innovative new virtual programs launched at the outset of the pandemic.

Project Proposals

Attachment	Size
 me-249264-oms-21_sample_application.pdf	521.64 KB

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/me-249264-oms-21>



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.

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/me-252033-oms-22>

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

Wildlife Conservation Society

Log Number: **ME-252972-OMS-23**

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) will create a new training program for supervisors of internship programs in the five New York City wildlife parks operated by WCS — the Bronx, Central Park, Prospect Park, and Queens Zoos, and the New York Aquarium. The professional development training program will focus on positive youth development, cultural competence, supervising young adults, and mentoring and career support to help the intern supervisors develop the necessary skills to succeed in this important role. Project activities include hosting listening sessions with current intern supervisors to understand their needs, gathering existing training resources, developing a training curriculum, delivering supervisor training, and conducting training follow-up. The new training program will ensure the internship program is effective, inclusive, and supportive, transforming the zoo into a more welcoming place resulting in a broader representation of youth participating in the internship program.

Project Proposals

Attachment	Size
 ME-252972-OMS-23 Sample Application	300.46 KB

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/me-252972-oms-23>



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Example

Boise Art Museum

Log Number: **ME-251700-OMS-22**

The Boise Art Museum will increase its ability to serve members of its community with disabilities. With an emphasis on the Deaf and hard of hearing community, the museum will facilitate a series of participatory planning processes with consultants, community members, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to identify and test tools to make the museum more accessible. Project activities respond to needs that were previously identified by members of the community and include testing the use of ASL video interpretation for artwork labels, interpretive panels, and audio guides. The museum will engage local arts leaders in discussions about, and implementation of, ways to make arts experiences more inclusive and accessible to all audiences.

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/me-251700-oms-22>

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

Armory Center for the Arts

Log Number: **ME-253490-OMS-23**

The Armory Center for the Arts will improve the design and outcomes of its youth programs by developing a comprehensive approach to youth program evaluation. Project activities include engaging an evaluation consultant and hiring a part-time evaluation associate who, along with the project team will actively engage youth in the evaluation process to co-cocreate evaluation protocols and techniques including a new arts-based, multisensory evaluation framework then piloting the new evaluation strategies on the museum's educational programs on a rolling basis. The project will equip museum staff with new insights to capture youth experiences in the arts and create a thriving culture of evaluation at the museum.

Project Proposals

Attachment	Size
 ME-253490-OMS-23 Sample Application	224.5 KB

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/me-253490-oms-23>



Evaluation Example

Fairchild Tropical Garden

Log Number: **ME-251640-OMS-22**

The Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden will improve the design and outcomes of its programs by developing an institution-wide approach to evaluation. Project activities include creating an evaluation strategic plan, which will identify shared outcomes; staff trainings; and developing a resource library with evaluation tools to better understand visitor attitudes and dispositions. Trainings, which will be co-developed by staff and a consultant, will give staff the knowledge and skills to conduct evaluations that are appropriate for the ages, diversity, and experiences of visitors. The project will increase the staff's ability to design evaluation plans, implement studies, analyze data, and utilize those findings to continually improve the visitor experience.

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/me-251640-oms-22>

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

Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Log Number: **ME-253492-OMS-23**

The Perot Museum of Nature and Science will develop a leadership professional development program to attract talent and help grow the next generation of museum leaders. The program consists of four training categories: a core values academy where participants will learn how to lead with clarity, confidence, and connection; leadership training that develops curious leaders; crucial conversations for mastering dialogue training that helps leaders develop dialogue skills to have important conversations in the moment; and crucial conversations for accountability training that prioritizes the person and not the process through candid coaching, identifying goals, and supporting professional development. The project will generate an empowered and passionate workforce who recognize their value in serving the museum's mission creating a culture of welcoming and excitement for learning for all visitors.

Project Proposals

Attachment	Size
 me-253492-oms-23-sample-application.pdf	1.15 MB

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/me-253492-oms-23>



Organizational Management Example

Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco

Log Number: **ME-251998-OMS-22**

The Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco will strengthen staff leadership and training as part of its new succession plan. An external consultant will work with the museum's director to facilitate project activities, beginning with an assessment of staff's strengths and areas of potential growth. Training opportunities will respond to needs identified during the assessment process and will include leadership coaching for the executive director and the leadership team; individual and group training sessions for staff; and mentorships pairing new and emerging professionals with former staff, Board, or community leaders. Some trainings will be incorporated into regular staff meetings and other parts of the overall organization structure so that they will be systematized as an ongoing organizational practice. The project will result in increased access to learning opportunities for the museum's staff, leading to strengthened organizational resilience and staff retention.

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/me-251998-oms-22>



Organizational Management Example

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Log Number: **ME-251398-OMS-22**

The Denver Museum of Nature and Science will develop a training program for emerging leaders in the museum. Six cohorts of 12 staff members will participate in a 12-week training program led by a newly hired training specialist to develop leadership skills. The curriculum will help participants learn about themselves, their work styles and strengths, and museum operations and initiatives; the goal is to prepare employees for advancement within the museum, the community, and the museum field. Long-term outcomes of the leadership training include strengthened leadership capacity; increased employee engagement; and progress in succession planning through growing diverse future leaders. This project will develop a tested leadership training model for museum professionals and strengthen the museum's organizational culture.

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/me-251398-oms-22>

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.



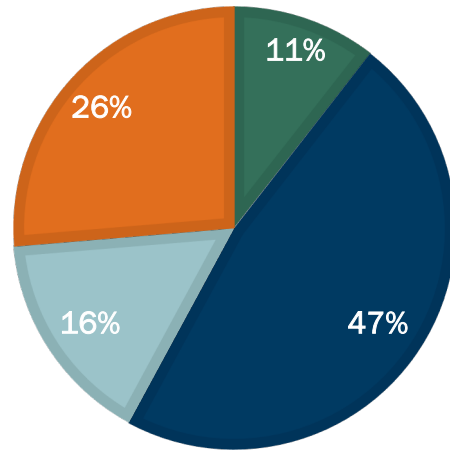
\$5,000 - \$250,000 in federal grant funds with **1:1 cost share required**.

Scale your budget request to the needs of your project.

How Many ME Projects Get Funded?

MUSEUMS EMPOWERED AWARDS FY23

- Digital Technology
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Evaluation
- Organizational Management



In FY23 IMLS made 19 Museums Empowered awards for a total of \$3.8M.

How Many ME Projects Get Funded?

Home > Grants > Search Awarded Grants

Search by Keywords...

SUBMIT

CLEAR ALL FILTERS

Fiscal Year
Select All
 FY 2023 FY 2022 FY 2021
Show more

Funding Office

Grants to States
Libraries

Office of Library Services

of Museum

Table DOWNLOAD THE DATA

Note: (a) denotes an amendment made outside of the original award Page 1 of 155 results

Log Number	Institution	Fiscal Year	Program	Federal Funds	Funding Office	City	State
ME-253031-OMS-23	Museum of Us	2023	Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff	\$249,393	Office of Museum Services	San Diego	CA
ME-253454-OMS-23	MASS MoCA	2023	Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff	\$100,078	Office of Museum Services	North Adams	MA
ME-	Discovery	2023	Museums	\$200,240	Office of	Acton	MA

The Search Awarded Grants gives you an opportunity to explore our archive of 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 some applications.

- Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status
- Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Digital Products Plan



Supporting Documents

These components are optional. 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

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(s) 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 target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?
- Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

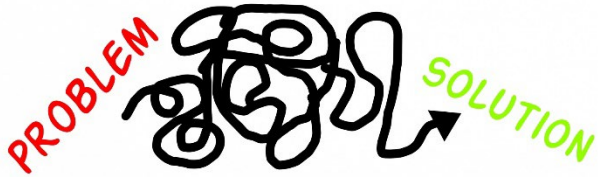


Narrative: Project Justification

Reviewers will look for:

- How well does the proposal align with the selected Museums Empowered program goal/project category and objective(s)?
- Are the ways in which this project advances the institution's strategic plan specific and measurable?
- How well has the applicant used relevant data and best practices to describe the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed?
- Are the project activities designed to use professional development and training to generate systemic change within the museum?
- Has the applicant appropriately defined the target group(s) and beneficiaries, as applicable, for this work?
- Have the target group 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?
- What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?
- Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?
- How will you organize and structure the project team to support equitable and inclusive engagement of all participants?
- What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?
- How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?



Narrative: Project Work Plan

Reviewers will look for:

- Are the proposed activities informed by relevant theory and practice?
- Are the goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated?
- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work successfully?
- Is the proposed project team structured in a way that is equitable and mutually beneficial to those involved?
- Are the time, financial, personnel, and other resources identified realistic for the scope and scale of the project?
- Will the proposed methods for tracking the project's progress toward achieving the intended results allow course adjustments when necessary and result in reliable and measurable information about the results of the project?



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

- What if cost-share funding is unavailable by the time the project starts?
- What if a needs assessment suggests alternative priorities for training?
- What if one or more key staff are not available during the project period?
- 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 target group change as a result of your project?
- What products will result from your project?
- How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?



Narrative: Project Results

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 section E of the Notice of Funding Opportunity



Application Components

Budget



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 an opportunity to provide in a more 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

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



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 Small Museums Empowered

Lifelong Learning

- Iroquois Indian Museum (PDF, 335KB)
- Muncie Children's Museum (PDF, 335KB)
- Museum of Craft and Design (PDF, 400KB)

Institutional Capacity

- SEE Science Center (PDF, 335KB)

Collections Stewardship and

- The Black Mountain College Museum (PDF, 270KB)
- Historic Saranac Lake (PDF, 270KB)
- Midwest Miniatures Museum (PDF, 300KB)
- Seattle Art Museum (PDF, 245KB)

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

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, strengthen staff by building professional relationships, increase formal and informal learning opportunities, and build a...

Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Additional
commu
the Mu
Museum
embed
employ
access
skills li
Strateg
The Pe
STEM-
welcom

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																									

As the engine behind its mission of inspiring minds through nature and science, the museum's staff is integral to the strategic plan and in maintaining its status as the premier science museum in North Texas. The third pillar of the strategic plan, welcoming new audiences and better serving visitors, includes specific goals for staff professional development:

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, 2023.**

- Awards will be announced in **August 2024.**
- Projects must start **September 1, 2024.**



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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