



# IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service Nominee Information

September 2021



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# History of the Medals Program

- The Medals program has been in existence for over 25 years.
- It is the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities.
- Over 200 organizations have received the Medal.
- <https://www.imls.gov/our-work/national-medals/national-medal-winners>





# Medals Program Overview

- The National Medals program recognizes outstanding libraries and museums of all types and sizes that deeply impact their communities by:
  - fostering a lifelong passion for learning for all people, nourishing curiosity and imagination from early childhood through adulthood, for people of all abilities and needs;
  - by providing access to information through advancing digital capacity, focusing on digital inclusion and access to digital and informational resources, including e-books and materials to help address workforce development and public health;
  - by transforming the lives of community members by being trusted community spaces for convening, connection, and conversation; enlightenment and shared thoughts and opinions; and preserving natural and cultural heritage and community memory; and/or
  - by continuing to engage their communities during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, and planning for the institution's future, with enhanced focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, through providing information, programming, and services virtually, or taking innovative and imaginative steps toward continuing services and reopening their physical spaces.



# Eligibility Requirements for Museums

To qualify as a “museum,” an organization must:

- Be a unit of State or local government or be a private, nonprofit organization that has tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code;
- Be located within the United States and its territories;
- Use a professional staff;
- Be organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes;
- Own or use tangible objects, either animate or inanimate;
- Care for these objects; AND
- Exhibit these objects to the general public on a regular basis through facilities that it owns or operates (generally open to the public for at least 120 days a year).



# Eligibility Requirements for Libraries

To qualify as a “library,” an organization must:

- Be one of the following: Academic and Research Libraries/Archives, Digital Libraries, Library Associations, Library Consortia, Public Libraries, Research Libraries/Archives that make information available to the public and that are not an integral part of an institution of higher learning, Public School Libraries, Tribal Libraries, and Private or Special Libraries that are considered libraries as determined by the State in which they are located;
- Be a unit of State or local government or be a private, nonprofit organization that has tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code; AND
- Be located within the United States and its territories.

# Nomination Process

**Who may nominate a library or museum for the National Medal?**

Anyone, including the organization's employees, board members, members of its community, and elected officials, may nominate a museum or library for this honor.

**What does the organization being nominated need to do?**

An organization that is nominated either by an outside nominator or by self-nomination must complete the Nomination Form to be considered.





# Nomination Form

- The National Medals nomination form can be accessed at this link:  
<https://www.ims.gov/form/national-medal>
- A reference copy of the questions is available at this link: <https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/2021-09/fy22-nationalmedals-nomination-form-reference.pdf>
- This form must be completed by the nominated organization





# Nomination Form Components

- There are four components of the National Medals nomination form. They are:
  - A) Organizational Information
  - B) Organizational Overview, Mission, and Statement of Purpose
  - C) Narrative
  - D) Letters of Support



# Nomination Narrative

- There are four sections to the nomination narrative. They are:
  - 1) Community and Community Needs
  - 2) Programs and Services
  - 3) Impact
  - 4) Financial Sustainability



# Letters of Support

- Letters of Support are required for this program
- Up to three non-Congressional letters of support can be submitted
- Congressional letters of support are NOT required, but are accepted and must be emailed to [nationalmedals@imls.gov](mailto:nationalmedals@imls.gov)



# Important Dates and Numbers

All nomination materials must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on Monday, November 1, 2021

All National Medal nominees will be notified of their status in the spring of 2022





# Medal Nomination Review Process

**How are the recipients of the National Medal selected?**

The Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, with the advice of the National Museum and Library Services Board, selects the recipients of the National Medals. In addition to the Medal, IMLS may provide a monetary award.

**How many finalists and Medalists will be selected?**

Fifteen libraries and fifteen museums will be selected as finalists, for a total of thirty. From these finalists, three museums and three libraries will then be selected to receive National Medals.



# Nomination Tips

- Start the process early
- Focus on the narrative questions in the nomination form; avoid including extraneous information
- Gather meaningful letters of support
- Have someone review your responses prior to submitting the nomination
- Reach out to your IMLS contacts:  
<https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/national-medal-museum-and-library-service>



# Online Information and Resources

- National Medals landing page:  
<https://www.ims.gov/grants/available/national-medal-museum-and-library-service>
- Medals nomination form:  
<https://www.ims.gov/form/national-medal>
  - Reference copy of all questions:  
<https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/2021-09/fy22-nationalmedals-nomination-form-reference.pdf>
- Medals blog posts, videos, publications, etc.  
<https://www.ims.gov/our-work/national-medal-museum-and-library-service>



# IMLS Staff Contacts

For questions about the nomination process, please contact:

Libraries: Laura McKenzie at [lmckenzie@imls.gov](mailto:lmckenzie@imls.gov)

Museums: Mark Feitl at [mfeitl@imls.gov](mailto:mfeitl@imls.gov)

For all other questions: [nationalmedals@imls.gov](mailto:nationalmedals@imls.gov)





**Good luck!**

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