FY2025_Getting Started with IMLS Museum Grants Recording

0:04
Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Office of Museum Services Informational video Getting Started with IMLS Museum and Grants.

0:15
The goal of this video is to provide a high level overview of our grant funding opportunities and the process of applying for them.

0:24
This video is organized into six chapters.

0:27
What is IMLS?

0:28
Is my institution eligible for an IMLS Museum grant?

0:32
Which grant program should I apply to?

0:35
How do I apply?

0:36
What if I have more questions, and what if I'm not ready to apply this year?

0:43
To get the most out of this video, we recommend that you watch it in its entirety.

0:47
This will give you an idea of the funding opportunities that best fit your organization.

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Once you have done that, we recommend reading the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the programs you are considering.

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Notices of Funding Opportunities, also known as NOFOs, are documents that detail the requirements of each of our grant programs.

1:07
All of our NOFOs can be found at

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imls.gov/grants.

1:12
Once you've selected a funding opportunity, you'll be ready to begin the application process.

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As you navigate the process, you can use this video as a reference tool.

1:22
If you'd like to skip to a specific section, please use the time bar below or the links in the description box to navigate the chapters.

1:32
Now that we understand the structure of this video, let's talk about IMLS.

1:38
IMLS is an independent federal grant making agency and the primary source of federal support for the nation's museums and libraries.

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The IMLS vision and mission statements were adopted as part of the agency's current strategic plan.

1:53
Both emphasize that IMLS is here to support museums and libraries and their work of serving their communities.

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IMLS Vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

2:06
Our mission is to advance, support and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grant making, research, and policy development.

2:16
Our full strategic plan is available at imls.gov.

2:22
OMS or the Office of Museum Services is a key component of IMLS and our last annual grant cycle, we awarded approximately $55 million in funding to a diverse group of institutions, including art, history and science museums, zoos, aquaria, professional associations, universities, and Native American Tribes.

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We encourage you to apply for IMLS funding to support your institution's goals or those of the museum field.

2:49
Our current application cycle opened on August 15th and will close on November 15th.

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Let's discuss some eligibility ground rules for applying to our grant programs.

3:02
It's important to remember that each IMLS grant program has its own specific requirements.

3:07
Those are detailed in the NOFOs, and we'll discuss them in Chapter 3 of this video.

3:12
For now, let's go over the federally mandated requirements that all potential applicants should be aware of.

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Your organization must be located in one of the United States, 50 states, its territories, or the District of Columbia.

3:26
Your organization must be a unit of state, local, or tribal government or a private nonprofit organization with tax exempt status.

3:36
Three of our grant programs, Museums for America, Museums Empowered, and the Inspire Grants for Small Museums are only available to individual museums.

3:46
In order to qualify for our museum programs, your organization 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, and own or use tangible objects.

4:08
Museums may be stand alone organizations or they may be part of a larger institution such as a college, university, Tribe, or state or local government.

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Here are some examples of the types of organizations that could be considered museums.

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Please note that this list is not exhaustive. For five other OMS programs -

4:32
21st Century Museum Professionals,

4:35
National Leadership Grants for Museums,

4:37
Museum Grants for African American History and Culture, Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture, and the Native American Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program -

4:47
additional eligibility requirements exist.

4:50
We will address this in Chapter 3 of this presentation.

4:53
Please refer to the Eligibility section of the Program NOFOs for detailed guidance.

5:00
Once you've determined whether your organization is eligible for a given grant program, you'll want to know what types of activities or projects it can fund.

5:09
Expenses must relate to specific project activities, not the general operation of your institution.

5:15
Some of these project related expenses may include: salaries, wages and fringe benefits; travel expenses; materials and supplies; third-party costs; publication design and printing; program evaluation; staff and volunteer training; internships and fellowships; adaptive and/or assistive technologies and to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities;

5:39
equipment to improve collection storage program; program-specific overhead costs.

5:45
There are also some types of expenses that are not allowed in your IMLS budget request or in your cost share. These include: general fundraising costs, such as development, office staff or other staff time devoted to general fundraising; contributions to endowments; general operating support; the acquisition of collections; construction or renovation of facilities; and social activities, receptions and entertainment.

6:11
Now that we have covered the basics of our eligibility requirements and allowable versus unallowable cost, let's get into some program specific details.

6:21
As mentioned previously, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is currently offering 8 grant programs.

6:27
It is important to know how these programs are alike and different so that you apply to the program that best meets your needs and eligibility.

6:37
Museums for America, or MFA, is our biggest grant program, receiving the largest number of applications each year and the one through which we make the most awards.

6:48
MFA supports museum projects focusing on exhibitions, educational/ interpretive programs, digital learning resources, professional development, community debate and dialogue, audience-focused studies, and/or collections management, curation, care, and conservation.

7:04
These projects should address a key component of your institution's strategic plan.

7:09
As an applicant, you must align your project with one of the IMLS's agency level goals by choosing a project category.

7:17
Your options are Lifelong Learning, Community Engagement, Collection, Stewardship, and Access.

7:24
Grant request may range from $5,000 to $250,000.

7:29
MFA requires a 1:1 cost share.

7:32
This means that for every dollar you request from IMLS, you must plan to provide an additional dollar in cash from a non-federal source, staff or volunteer time, or third-party in-kind contributions.

7:45
Please note that MFA is only available to museums.

7:48
Projects can be scheduled to last from one to three years and they must begin on September 1, 2025.

7:57
Museums Empowered, or ME, is a special initiative of Museums for America.

8:02

The program supports projects that use the transformative power of professional development and training to generate systemic change within museums of all types and sizes.

8:12
The Museums Empowered Grant program identifies four areas of museum operations to focus on for professional development: Digital Technology; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Evaluation; and Organizational Management.

8:26
Grant requests may range from $5,000 to $250,000 for project scheduled to last from one to three years.

8:34
Like MFA, ME requires 1:1 cost share and is only available to museums.

8:39
All projects must begin on September 1, 2025.

8:44
Inspire Grants for Small Museums, another special initiative of the Museums for America program, is designed specifically to help small museums address the priorities identified in their strategic plans.

8:56
As an applicant, you must align your project with one of three project categories: Lifelong Learning; Institutional Capacity; or Collection, sStewardship, and Access.

9:07
When applying to this program, you must make a case as a small museum using attributes such as staff size, operating budget, and size relative to other organizations within your discipline or geographic region.

9:20
There are two funding levels in Inspire and each has its own cost share requirement.

9:25
For smaller scale projects requesting $5,000 to $25,000, no cost share is required.

9:31
For larger projects requesting $25,001 to $75,000, a 1:1 cost share is required.

9:40
Just like MFA and ME, this opportunity is only available to museums.

9:45
Inspire projects must begin on September 1, 2025 and may last from one to three years.

9:53

The National Leadership Grants for Museums Program, or NLG-M, supports projects that advance the museum field's ability to provide engaging learning opportunities, address community needs, and steward collections through projects that result in model tools and resources, training and professional development, research findings, and forums that explore current challenges and emerging issues.

10:17
NLG-M is open to: museums; organizations or associations that engage in activities designed to advance the well-being of museums and the museum profession; and to institutions of higher education.

10:30
There are two NLG project types.

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Non-research projects support efforts that result in tools and resources for the field.

10:38
Non-research grant requests may range from $50,000 to $750,000 for project scheduled to last one to three years and requires a 1:1 cost share.

10:50
Research projects pose questions of importance to the field and use accepted research methodologies to collect, analyze, and share the data that answers those questions.

11:00
Research grants may range from $50,000 to $750,000 for projects scheduled to last one to three years with no cost share required.

11:10
All NLG-M projects must begin on September 1, 2025.

11:16
The 21st Century Museum Professionals Grant Program supports projects that offer professional development to the current museum workforce; employ strategies to train and recruit future museum professionals; and support evaluation efforts to identify and share effective practices.

11:33
We expect successful 21MP projects to involve partnerships that build career pathways and strengthen professional networks beyond a single institution, as well as employee inclusive and equitable recruitment and selection strategies to reach target audiences.

11:49
The 21MP program encourages applications from museum associations, museum studies, programs at institutions of higher education, and museums that serve as essential parts of the professional learning and training environment.

12:03
All 21 MP projects began on July 1, 2025.

12:10
The goal of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture Program, or AAHC, is to build the capacity of African American museums and to support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums and historically Black colleges and universities.

12:27
There are two funding levels in AAHC and each has its own cost share requirement.

12:32
For smaller scale projects requesting $5,000 to $100,000, no cost share is required.

12:38
For large projects requesting $100,001 to $500,000, a 1:1 cost share is required.

12:47
AAHC is open to museums whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is African American life, art, history, and/or culture;

12:56
not-for-profit museum service organizations or associations whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is to support such museums; and to the federally designated Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

13:10
HBCUs may be eligible even if they do not have a museum.

13:14
Projects may be scheduled to last from one to three years and projects must begin on July 1, 2025.

13:23
The Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture, or ALHC, program supports projects that build the capacity of American Latino history and culture museums to serve their communities, and broadly advance the growth and development of a professional workforce and American Latino cultural institutions.

13:42
ALHC is open to museums whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is American Latino life, art, history, and/or culture,

13:51
not-for-profit museum service organizations or associations whose primary purpose, as reflected in its mission, is to support such museums.

14:00
Grant requests may range from $5,000 to $500,000 for projects scheduled to last from one to three years.

14:07
All projects must begin on July 1, 2025.

14:13
The Native American Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program, or NANH for short, is open to federally recognized Tribes, including Alaskan Native villages and corporations and organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians.

14:29
Other types of organizations, such as museums, may partner, but not serve as the legal applicants for this program.

14:36
The goal of the NANH program is to build the capacity of Native American tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to provide museum services to their communities.

14:47
Museum Services is defined broadly for this program, but is meant to support projects that sustain Indigenous heritage, culture, and knowledge.

14:55
Some of the ways NANH grantees do this is through exhibitions, educational programs, language preservation, training and professional development, organizational capacity building, community engagement, and collections stewardship.

15:10
NANH projects can be scheduled to last from one to three years and must begin on July 1, 2025.

15:17
Grant requests may range from $5,000 to $250,000, and no cost share is required for this program.

15:25
Keep in mind that there is no limit to the number of programs that you can apply to, but if an organization submits multiple applications, they must be for separate and distinct projects.

15:36
For further details on each program, please keep their full Notice of Funding Opportunity at imls.gov/grants, or feel free to contact one of our program officers listed on the web page associated with the applicable grant program.

15:54
Once you have determined which opportunities you are interested in, it's time to apply.

16:00
Again, the cycle for these 8 grant programs opened on August 15th.

16:05
We'll be accepting applications for these programs until 11:59 PM Eastern Time on November 15, 2024.

16:13
We recommend starting your application as soon as you can.

16:16
Unexpected delays may arise, and we cannot accept late applications.

16:23
The first step in applying is to register for sam.gov.

16:26
SAM stands for System for Award Management.

16:30
SAM is a federal repository that centralizes information about grant applicants and recipients and is free to all users.

16:37
Applicants must be registered with SAM before registering with grants.gov.

16:42
All grant payments will be made to the bank account that is associated with the organization's SAM registration.

16:49
Your registrations must be complete and up to date for you to submit an application to IMLS or to receive an award.

16:56
If this is your first time applying for IMLS funding, it's important to know that you must complete the sam.gov registration before moving on to any other steps in the application process.

17:09
If you have registered with SAM in the past, you must renew your account before moving on to any other steps in the process.

17:15
An expired registration will prevent an organization for submitting applications via grants.gov and receiving awards or payments.

17:24
We strongly recommend that you begin or update these registrations immediately.

17:29
Doing so is completely free.

17:31
To begin, visit sam.gov and use the FAQs to answer questions.

17:35
If you need further assistance, call the Federal Service Desk at 866-606-8220 Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Eastern Time.

17:49
The second place you need to register is with grants.gov.

17:52
It is the portal through which all Federal grant applications must be submitted.

17:57
Once your SAM registration is active, you can log into your SAM record to locate your Unique Entity Identifier or UEI.

18:05
You need this active UEI to register in grants.gov.

18:09
Grants.gov is a website owned and operated by the federal government and is also free to all users.

18:16
Please allow several weeks to complete the grants.gov registration.

18:21
The grants.gov website is extensive and its help capabilities are numerous and well staffed.

18:26
Begin with the website and its FAQs, but if you need additional help, you may call their helpline at 1-800-518-4726, which is available 24/7 except on federal holidays.

18:40
Visit their support page at the website listed here or e-mail them at support@grants.gov.

18:48
If we haven't answered all of your questions in this video, don't fear.

18:51
There are plenty of ways to learn more about our programs.

18:56
Our website, www.imls.gov, has the wealth of information.

19:01
There you can find our strategic plan, information about each grant program, project descriptions of previously awarded grants, sample applications, and contact information of IMLS staff.

19:15
After you've reviewed the IMLS website, keep an eye out for additional upcoming videos.

19:20
Program specific videos are prepared for each funding opportunity.

19:24
Those will delve into the specific requirements for each opportunity and provide tips for creating a competitive application.

19:32
You'll be able to find these and additional video content@imls.gov/ webinars.

19:39
If you'd like to ask individualized questions, we recommend one-on-one counseling sessions with Office of Museum Services staff.

19:47
These are 30 minute meetings between program staff and potential applicants.

19:51
To sign up for a counseling session, visit imls.gov/grants and navigate to the program you are interested in.

20:01
We hope that all potential applicants will take full advantage of the resources in Chapter 5 of this video and reach out to a staff member with any lingering questions.

20:10
However, we understand that this may not be the ideal time for your institution to participate in our programs.

20:16
If you're not ready to apply this funding cycle, we have a couple of recommendations.

20:22
One option is to apply to become a peer reviewer.

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Peer reviewers are industry professionals who play a critical role in our award selection process by reading and scoring the grant applications.

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As a reviewer, you'll get a behind the scenes view of the review process and gain a better understanding of what makes a proposal successful.

20:42
To apply to become a peer reviewer, please visit www.imls.gov/grants/peer-review and click on "Apply to Become a Museum Reviewer".

20:55
You can also find our webinar for potential museum reviewers through our webinar page.

21:02
Another tool that can help you prepare for the grant application process is an assessment program.

21:09
IMLS offers two assessment programs for institutions that would like to better understand their own needs.

21:15
These are the Museum Assessment Program, or MAP, and the Collections Assessment for Preservation program, or CAP.

21:22
IMLS supports these two technical assistance programs through cooperative agreements with the goal of helping museums strengthen their operations, identify collections care priorities, and plan for the future.

21:35
Participating in an assessment program is a great starting point for small and mid-sized museums.

21:41
The documents that result from these assessments can be used to implement future IMLS grant applications.

21:48
The Museum Assessment Program, or MAP, is funded by IMLS and managed by the American Alliance of Museums.

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It is available to small and mid-sized museums of all types and its purpose is to help organizations strengthen their operations, plan for the future, and meet professional standards through self-study and a consultative site visit from an expert peer reviewer.

22:10
MAP participants can choose from four assessment types: the Organizational Assessment; the Collection Stewardship Assessment; the Education and Interpretation Assessment; and the Community and Audience Engagement Assessment.

22:23
To learn more, please visit www.aam-us.org/map, or call 202-289-9118.

22:36
The next application deadline is expected to be February 1, 2025.

22:43
To be notified when the next application period

22:45
is open and to receive updates about the MAP program, please send your contact information to map@aam-us.org.

22:56
Also funded by IMLS but administered by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation or FAIC, the Collections Assessment for Preservation Program, or CAP for short, provides small and mid-sized museums with support for general conservation assessments.

23:12
These assessments consist of a self-study and a two-day onsite visit by assessors to specialize in collections conservation and building preservation.

23:22
CAP is often the first step for small and mid-sized museums that wish to improve the condition of their collections.

23:28
A CAP assessment can assist your institution by helping you decide how to invest limited funding and staff time; facilitating the development of a long-term preservation plan; and serving as a fundraising tool for future conservation projects.

23:44
For more information about the CAP program and application process, please visit the FAIC's website at www.culturalheritage.org/cap, or email cap@culturalheritage.org.

24:00
Thank you for your interest in IMLS's Museum funding opportunities.

24:04
Before you go, I'd like to leave you with some final reminders.

24:09
Each of our grant opportunities have different requirements and goals.

24:12
Please visit https://www.imls.gov/ grants to learn more.

24:22
It is very important to register early with sam.gov and grants.gov. If you have registered previously,

24:29
remember that these registrations expire, and be sure you know the usernames and passwords you'll need well in advance of the day you submit your application.

24:38
Applications to all IMLS Museum grant programs are due November 15, 2024.

24:44
But don't wait until the last minute to submit.

24:47
Throughout the application period,

24:49
we will offer additional webinars that can be viewed at imls.gov/webinars.

24:54
You can also schedule one-on-one counseling calls with program staff to answer your specific questions.

25:01
Thank you and good luck.