

FY2025 ME Informational Video Transcript

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Hello and welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services informational video, "Museums Empowered Grant Program Applicant Information Session."

0:16

My name is Mark Isaksen and I'm one of the program staff in the Office of Museum Services at IMLS and I'll be narrating this presentation for you.

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The goal of this video is to provide an overview of our Museums Empowered grant program and the process of preparing an application for funding.

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The video is organized into six chapters.

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The first is "What is Museums Empowered?" and this is an introductory section and explains the purpose and design of the grant program.

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Next is "What can Museums Empowered Grants Fund?" and in this section we'll give some detail on the types of projects funded in this grant program and the amount of funds that can be requested.

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Next is the Application Components and Introduction where we describe the types of documents that are needed to create a grant application.

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Then we'll go into the "Application Components, Narrative" to talk about guidance on composing the narrative part of the application.

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And finally, in the Application Components, we'll talk about the budget and what you need to include in your project budget.

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The final chapter is "Application Tips and Next Steps."

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And in this section, we give you a few tips and talk about next steps.

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The complete set of instructions for how to prepare and submit a Museums Empowered grant application are found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, published on Grants.gov and also available on the IMLS website.

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Please refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the most detailed information to prepare your application.

2:05

To get the most out of this video, we recommend that you watch it in its entirety, and this will give you an understanding of the Museums Empowered grant program, the types of projects that can be funded, and the necessary application components.

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You may also want to review the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity before, during, or after you watch the video.

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

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All of the NOFOs can be found at imls.gov/grants.

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

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And 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.

2:59

Next we're going to talk about "What is Museums Empowered?" and provide information on the purpose and intent of this grant program and who it is designed to serve.

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Museums Empowered is a special initiative of the Museums for America grant program. Like MFA, our Museums for America program,

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this Museums Empowered grant program is designed to strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public.

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However, what's unique in Museums Empowered is the emphasis on helping your museum tap into the transformative power of professional development and training to generate systemic change or organizational growth within your museum.

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These projects are expected to involve multiple levels of staff, leadership, volunteers, and a set of logical, interrelated activities tied to directly addressing a key need or challenge in your strategic plan.

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Museums Empowered, sometimes referred to as "ME," is a grant program that supports projects that focus on a key component of your museum strategic plan.

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IMLS wants to help advance something that's a priority for your museum and hopefully something that will ultimately benefit your community.

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And to help demonstrate that connection in your grant application, we ask for a summary of your strategic plan, usually no more than two pages, so that reviewers will be able to understand how your proposed project's activities will further your institutional goals and objectives.

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Now, the strategic plan summary is your opportunity to make a thoughtful and well-constructed connection between the proposed project and your museum's priorities.

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Museums Empowered is a grant program for museums. And as a museum, you should keep in mind that all applicants must meet certain requirements to be eligible for funding.

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

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Your organization must be a unit of state, local or Tribal government or a private nonprofit organization with tax exempt status.

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If you meet those two requirements, then the next step is to consider what it means to be eligible for IMLS funding as a museum.

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Museums have at least one full-time equivalent professional staff person, either paid or unpaid.

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Museums should have a physical location that you own or operate.

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Museums should be open to the public for at least 120 days in the year prior to the application deadline, and museums should own or use tangible objects.

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

6:04

Now the Museums Empowered program is for all types of museums, and here's a brief list of some of the types of museums that routinely apply to this grant program.

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In this section we will answer the question "What Can Museums Empowered Grants Fund?"

6:22

Providing details of the types of projects and associated goals within the Museums Empowered grant program, as well as offer some summary data on the number and type of projects that were funded.

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Museums Empowered grants are designed to support project-based activities, so let's take a minute to consider just exactly what that means.

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The Project Management Institute has a good definition which is "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result."

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And they go on further to explain that a project is temporary because it has a defined beginning and an end, and therefore a defined scope and set of resources.

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A project is unique in that it is not a routine operation, but rather a specific set of operations designed to accomplish a singular goal.

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And we recommend that you keep this definition in mind as you conceptualize your IMLS project.

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Think of it as a temporary, non-routine set of activities which collectively have a beginning and an end in time, a defined scope requiring specific resources which are designed to accomplish a specific singular goal.

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Let's look a little bit further at some of the key characteristics of successful Museums Empowered applications.

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The first is Institutional Impact.

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The project should use professional development as a catalyst to generate systemic change or organizational growth within a museum.

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Successful projects should also demonstrate In-depth Knowledge.

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The project design should reflect a solid understanding of relevant theory and effective practices in professional development. And there should be a Staff-Centered Design to the project.

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That means that the work plan engages staff, leadership, and volunteers in a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge.

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Successful projects will most often exemplify these characteristics and fit well within the Museums Empowered grant program.

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It's also been our experience that unfunded applications fail to deliver convincingly on one or more of these areas.

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If project-based design and institutional impact are core elements of your project,

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then now it's time to consider how your application aligns with the grant program goals and associated objectives.

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IMLS, you know, we recognize that there's many challenges facing individual museums and a need to invest resources, time and energy towards nurturing the professional development of staff and strengthening museum operations.

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So in this grant program, we've identified 4 areas of museum operations to focus for professional development and these are listed in the following grant program goals.

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Goal One is to provide museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into museum operations.

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Goal Two,

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support museum staff in providing inclusive and equitable services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.

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Goal Three,

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strengthen the ability of a museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes.

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And Goal Four, which is to strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture.

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So let's take a look at each goal in a little more detail.

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Goal One supports projects that provide museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into museum operations.

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And this might involve activities that support staff learning and integration of digital communication platforms and social media tools to enhance audience engagement and community outreach, or activities that support staff learning and integration of digital tools and services that enhance access to museum collections.

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The emphasis here is on staff learning and integration of these new tools, not just on the acquisition of the tools.

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And here's an example of a Digital Technology focused project that was funded recently.

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The Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. was awarded about \$239,000 to improve staff understanding of digital asset management practices and build consensus around how best to steward these assets.

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This involved a cross-departmental staff team.

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They worked with specialized staff and consultants to develop this plan and to work together to develop a long-term strategy that would help the museum over time.

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Goal Two focuses on diversity, equity and inclusion and supports projects that help museum staff in providing inclusive and equitable services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds and to individuals with disabilities.

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Now, this might involve activities that create training and learning opportunities, that increase cultural competency of museum staff, and enhance relevancy of museum programs. Or activities that develop and implement inclusive and equitable fellowship, internship, and mentoring programs to increase support for emerging professionals from diverse communities entering the museum field.

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Here are some examples of recently funded projects.

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The New York Historical Society was awarded \$189,000 in 2024 to build staff cultural competency and accessibility and improve K-12 programming for students with disabilities.

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And this project really is about creating sustainable systems and structures for ensuring that all programs that the museum offers takes the needs of students with disabilities into account.

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It also creates a pattern of consistent accessibility training for all museum education staff, as well as creating space for staff to learn from and network with peer organizations.

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We have also made this available as a sample application, with the narrative and schedule available as a PDF on the IMLS website.

13:34

Go to Search Awarded Grants and search by log number to find this entry.

13:44

Goal Three supports projects that help strengthen the ability of museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes.

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This might involve activities that increase staff knowledge of program evaluation methods and the usefulness of evaluation reports, tools, data, and metrics; or activities that provide museum staff with the tools and strategies to adapt evaluation methods to address a specific audience or institutional need.

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Here's an example of a recently funded project that was focused on evaluation.

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The Mid-America Science Museum was awarded \$46,000 in 2024 to build capacity for staff to use evaluation as an ongoing cycle of inquiry when creating or improving museum programs and exhibits.

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This involved hiring an expert consultant to train staff on evaluations and also opportunities for department teams to work with a consultant to do evaluation studies on programs and exhibits and gain practice in developing goals, designing data collection instruments, and analyzing information.

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We've also made this award available as a sample application, with the narrative and schedule available as a PDF on the IMLS website.

15:09

Go to Search Awarded Grants and search by log number to find this entry.

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Goal Four in Museums Empowered is about organizational management and is intended to support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture.

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And this might involve activities that help you to develop and implement comprehensive organizational learning opportunities that address one or more emerging priorities facing a museum. Or perhaps activities that help you develop and implement programs that address the specific learning and growth opportunities identified by staff needs assessments.

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Here's an example of a recently funded project focused on Organizational Management.

16:00

The Peabody Essex Museum was awarded \$250,000 in 2024 to create a professional development initiative that will improve the workplace environment and fill gaps in expertise while creating an environment that supports staff in their professional growth and varied learning, working and management styles.

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The activities include developing and implementing a learning agenda for all 243 staff as well as establishing a leadership program for 53 managers and staff interested in becoming managers.

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The organization will undertake a series of customized skill building workshops for all staff, and as a result, staff will be better able to navigate public expectations and provide museum experiences that respond to a wide range of diverse audience needs and interests.

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We've made this available as a sample application, with the narrative and schedule available as a PDF on the IMLS website.

17:05

Go to Search Awarded Grants and search by log number to find this entry.

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Projects should fit within one of these four program goals, but sometimes there's an overlap in the kinds of activities you're proposing, which may make it difficult to select one program goal.

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Here are a few strategies to help you select the goal that aligns best with your project.

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Think carefully about what is in the center of your project, who or what will benefit from the work, and what will be improved once you've finished your project.

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Also think about who you want to review your application and what kind of skill sets and experiences you want them to have.

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List all the activities.

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Another option is to list all the activities you plan to carry out and assign each to a goal, and then see which goal gets the most activities.

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Where will most of the resources be spent?

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You can try any of these options, but you might ask, why is the decision about which goal to choose so important?

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Well, because it does impact the review process and your application will be reviewed by museum professionals who have experience and expertise that's aligned with the goal that you select.

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So in addition, your application will be competing against others who have chosen the same goal.

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So our advice is to choose one program goal and write your proposal accordingly.

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Regardless of the goal selected, all Museums Empowered project budgets must stay within a specific range of funding.

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Your project budget can request a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$250,000 in federal funds.

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If you ask for less than \$5,000 or more than \$250,000 in federal grant funds, your application may be rejected and not reviewed.

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Remember to keep your budget aligned to the scope and the scale of your project, including all costs necessary to complete the proposed activities. And in this grant program,

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all project budgets are required to have at least a one-to-one cost share, and cost share can take a number of forms.

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Among them are cash, staff time, volunteer time, third-party contributions, grants from foundations, or support from state or local government.

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Cost share cannot come from other federal sources.

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The number of applications received and the number of awards made can vary from year to year.

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In the most recent application cycle, we received 72 applications requesting over \$13 million.

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From these applications, we selected 18 projects to receive funding totaling about \$ 3.3 million.

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On the IMLS website, you can use the Search Awarded Grants function to explore our archive of grants to see what we have awarded in past years. There are currently about 155 Museums Empowered awards listed there.

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And in addition, the 18 awards that were just announced in August.

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You can search this database using a variety of criteria such as institution name, location, and keyword, and your search will retrieve basic information about each award, including the amount of federal funds awarded and a brief description of the proposed activities and expected results.

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In this section, we will introduce the components of a Museums Empowered grant application and provide an overview about the required, conditionally required, and supporting documents.

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The Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunity includes a complete list of all the application components.

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Most of these are created by applicants and saved as a PDF for uploading as part of your application package in Grants.gov. The Table of Application Components in the NOFO list which application components are required as well as those that are conditionally required.

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For example, some components are included in the application depending on the type of applicant or the type of project.

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Aside from the SF-424S and the IMLS Museum Program Information Form, which are completed in the Grants.gov Workspace, all application components must be submitted as PDF documents.

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On this slide, you'll see the list of required documents.

21:48

All applications must include the documents listed here.

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Omission of even just one might result in your application's rejection.

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Also important to note, there's a seven-page limit for the narrative.

22:01

If you exceed the page limit specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, we will remove the extra pages before your application goes out for review.

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That means

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the reviewer may well see a paragraph or sentence end in mid-air and will wonder about your organizational skills and your attentiveness to detail.

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So, make sure your content fits into the page limit specified in the NOFO, and make sure that the number of pages holds when you convert your document to a PDF.

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The second category of application components is that of Conditionally Required Documents.

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Some applications must include one, two, or even all of these, and it's your job to figure out which are required.

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So, for example, if you're applying as a nonprofit, then you must include your proof of nonprofit status issued by the Internal Revenue Service.

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We will not accept the letter of State sales tax exemption as proof of nonprofit status.

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And if you're using a federally negotiated indirect cost rate in your budget, then you must include a copy of your final rate agreement.

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And if you're going to create a digital product during the course of your project, well, then you must complete and submit a Digital Products Plan following the guidance in the NOFO.

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Now, just like the required documents, omission of one of these might result in your application's rejection.

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And please note that the term "digital product" includes anything digitized or born-digital content, resource, or assets, as well as software that's being created.

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And if you are creating any of these materials, you must include the form with your application.

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The third group of application components is Supporting Documents.

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And supporting documents are optional and you may submit some or none.

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Include only those items that will supplement your proposal.

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This is not the place to introduce brand new information.

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Rather, it's an opportunity to provide documents that support your project justification, your project work plan and project results, as well as your budget justification.

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For example, have you identified a partner whose involvement is key to the project success?

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And if you've done that, then a letter of support or commitment would go a long way to reassuring reviewers that this partner is on board and the project will succeed.

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Pictures can help give reviewers who may not be familiar with your institution a better idea of what you're describing within your narrative.

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Vendor quotes or equipment specifications show you've done some of the legwork in getting appropriate estimates for your project.

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Now we recommend that you be respectful of your reviewers' time and avoid any temptation to include hundreds of pages of extraneous material.

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Being judicious really does work to your benefit, as supporting documents can make or break an application.

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Include what is important, what is helpful and directly relevant to your project, and stop there.

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Now in the following sections of this presentation, we'll focus on two parts of the application: the Narrative and the Budget. And be sure to go to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for complete instructions.

25:38

In this section, we will go over the questions you'll need to answer in your project narrative and offer details on the review criteria associated with each section: the Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results.

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So let's talk about the narrative of your proposal.

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You have 7 pages to cover three very important issues, and the Notice of Funding Opportunity provides lengthy guidance on what the narrative should cover.

26:05

First is the Project Justification.

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In this section, we're going to ask what need, problem or challenge will your project address?

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You want to describe how you've used any data or evidence to define the need, problem, or challenge and how you use that to develop the scope for the project.

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We also want to know who is the primary audience for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

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"Primary Audience" refers to those who will most immediately and positively be affected by your project.

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You want to identify the number of individuals in this primary audience group.

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And we also want you to think about the primary or the ultimate beneficiaries for this project.

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Now, "Beneficiaries" refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long-term by your project.

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Now, this might be different than your primary audience, and we also want you to, you know, just talk about the individuals who will benefit from your project in the long-term.

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In the Notice of Funding Opportunity under Review Criteria, you'll find a list of questions that reviewers are asked to consider when they review your proposal.

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And it's a good idea to refer to these as you craft your narrative to be certain you're providing reviewers clear and solid information.

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And you'll see that they correspond fairly directly with the prompts you are given to write your narrative.

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One of the essential questions in Museums Empowered applications is the focus on project activities designed to use professional development and training to generate systemic change or organizational growth within the museum.

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So we want to see that built into the justification for your project.

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One of the prompts in the Project Justification section of the narrative is the identification of the need, problem, or challenge that you're going to address.

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It's a foundational part of the application because the federal government wants to invest in something that's going to make an improvement, make something better.

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So as you define your need, problem or challenge, you want to articulate what will get better as a result of your project and describe it as precisely as possible.

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Or, you know, let us know, how will someone learn something new? And will they develop a new skill or change in attitude?

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It's important to identify why it's important that this particular change happens.

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And hopefully you'll be able to describe your problem definition in clear and succinct terms and gather and present relevant data to support your problem definition.

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And the next part of the narrative is the Work Plan.

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And so, if we think about the Project Justification, the first part of the narrative, as the why, the Project Work Plan section is where you identify the who, what, when and how. Who will do the activities, when, and using what resources?

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You want to explain how you will track your progress and what you'll need to do to correct course if something changes.

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We also asked you to think about risks, the ones that are inherent in your particular project, and tell us how you've taken that into account in your planning.

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And particularly, we want to know how you're going to organize and structure the project team to support equitable and inclusive engagement of all participants.

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Here's a list of the questions that reviewers are asked to consider when they review your proposal.

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You want to make sure that again, your Work Plan narrative is answering these questions. And the Museums Empowered reviewers are really going to be looking closely to see if the proposed project team is structured in a way that is equitable and mutually beneficial to those involved.

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Now let's dig a little deeper here.

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One of the questions we ask in this work plan is about risk and there are some inherent risks, perhaps for your particular project, and you'll need to tell us how you're taking that into account on your planning.

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This is sort of the "What If?" question, and there's no checklist of risks, but every project has them and the best proposals will show that you're aware of them and have thought through a plan for dealing with them.

31:04

Look at your activities and think about what could go wrong, and focus on the ones where your experience tells you that yeah, that could happen, and here's some things we might need to build into our Work Plan.

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The third section of your narrative should be devoted to articulating your project's intended results.

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And this section is your chance to convince the reviewers that your project will result in something getting better.

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The need or problem you identified in your Project Justification will be addressed directly, and it will be diminished or eliminated altogether perhaps.

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We ask you to tell us what data you're going to collect and report in order to measure your project's success.

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And then if you're going to generate some tangible products, this is the opportunity to describe them and make the case that they will be useful and accessible to the intended audience.

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Now, again, here's the list of review questions that reviewers are asked to consider when they read and score the Project Results section of your Narrative.

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And these are all found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

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Overall, when you think about results, you want to make sure that they tie back to your need, problem, or challenge that you identified in the Project Justification.

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We often hear that defining intended results and success measures is challenging for applicants.

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So let's talk a little bit about that in more detail.

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So we think back, we want you to think back to the questions we referenced a few slides ago when we talked about defining the need, problem, or challenge that your project is addressing.

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And if you said someone will learn something, well, how will you know?

33:02

And if you want to generate systemic change or organizational growth in your museum, how are you going to measure that?

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This focus on results and measuring success in meaningful ways is not new.

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There's been a tremendous amount of work done on ways to measure success.

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For you as an applicant though, we encourage you to consider using a logic model or maybe an outcomes-based evaluation tool to explain your intended results and your plan for achieving them.

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So to recap, your Narrative has three sections, Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results, and you have 7 pages for it.

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The sections are all equally important.

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You should write clearly, address what we asked you to address, and keep an eye on those review criteria.

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We're telling you exactly what the reviewers will look for, so make it easy for them to find it in the narrative and understand your logic.

34:09

In this section, we will provide information on what to include in your Project Budget and Justification and provide some examples of allowable and unallowable costs.

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An important component of your application is the budget.

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This is the part of the application where you specify all the costs associated with your proposed project.

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The budget consists of two required components, the IMLS Budget Form and Budget Justification.

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The budget form is a fillable PDF that accommodates up to three years of activities and expenses.

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The budget should include the project cost that will be charged to grant funds as well as those that will be supported by cost share.

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In-kind contributions to cost share may include the value of services such as donated volunteer or consultant time, or some percentage of paid staff contributing to the project activities, or even equipment donated to the project between the authorized start and end dates of your project.

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All the items listed, whether supported by grant funds or cost share, must be necessary to accomplish project activities.

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They need to be allowable according to the applicable federal cost principles,

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auditable, and incurred during the award period of performance.

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As you develop your budget, keep in mind that there are certain costs that are either unallowable or allowable according to federal regulations.

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The allowability of a cost item for all federal grants is specified in the Code of Federal Regulations, also known as the CFR, and in this section called "2 CFR 200," which is where you find cost principles and audit requirements for federal awards.

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Using the 2 CFR 200 as a basis, we've developed a short list of allowable costs that are most common in our grant applications.

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The Notice of Funding Opportunity includes a partial list of the most common examples, and this short list is just shown on this slide as an example.

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These costs may be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for with federal funds or what you will pay for as part of your cost share.

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The rules about allowability apply equally to grant funds as well as cost share.

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There are also some costs which are unallowable according to the federal regulations in 2CFR 200.

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These are also listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and on this slide.

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Unallowable costs may not be part of what you ask IMLS to pay for, nor can they be part of what you'll pay for as part of your cost share.

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In fact, unallowable expenses can't show up anywhere in your proposal.

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As you prepare your application, it's a good idea to compare your list of proposed expenses against these lists of allowable and unallowable costs and against the appropriate set of cost principles.

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Now, if after doing that, you have some specific questions, please contact us and we'll be happy to talk you through it.

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In addition to the IMLS Budget Form, you'll also prepare a Budget Justification.

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This is an opportunity to provide, in a more detailed narrative format, an explanation or justification for the project costs.

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The Budget Justification should be written to follow the cost categories in the IMLS Budget Form.

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In the justification, you will identify each expense and show the method of cost computation used to determine each dollar amount, including any that you may have consolidated and summarized on the IMLS budget form.

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In other words, this is where you show your math.

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For example, in the section on salaries and wages, you should identify each person whose salary or wage will be paid with IMLS funds or by cost share.

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You need to provide their names and describe their role in the project.

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You should document the method of cost computation by including the base salary or wage for each person and the percentage of time that each person is allocated to the project activities. And that can be shown as a percentage of time, number of days, number of hours, whatever works for you.

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This is your place to show the detail.

38:31

If cost share is being provided by unpaid volunteers, you can list that here, but be sure to explain how you arrived at the dollar amount used to represent the value of their services.

38:44

In the section for 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.

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Detail the number and unit cost for each item and explain how you arrived at the dollar amounts.

39:02

You may also provide vendor quotes or price lists as Supporting Documents with your application.

39:11

In this final section of our presentation, we offer some application tips and next steps.

39:17

We can only make grants to eligible applicants that submit complete applications, including attachments, on or before the deadline.

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So here are some tips to help you do just that. Start the process early.

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And by watching this information video, you're off to a good start.

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You should become familiar with Grants.gov's Workspace.

39:38

There's many good features, such as the opportunity to collaborate with others in creating your application, as well as a validation process that helps you identify errors prior to submission.

39:51

Tutorials are also available on Grants.gov.

39:55

Be sure your application is complete.

39:57

Check it against the Table of Application Components in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

40:02

Make sure all application components are in the proper format and follow the correct naming conventions.

40:08

Submit your application in Grants.gov well before the deadline so you can correct any errors and avoid any issues by technology challenges.

40:19

It's also important to get your application submitted online through Grants.gov before the deadline.

40:24

We don't accept applications by mail or e-mail, so in order to submit your application in Grants.gov, you must have an active SAM.gov registration and a Unique Entity Identifier number.

40:38

Make sure your registrations for both of these sites are complete and your accounts are active, and that any necessary passwords are current.

40:46

These registrations expire periodically, so don't wait until it's time to hit the submit button to check on them.

40:53

And you might want to coordinate with other staff, such as your Authorized Organizational Representative, who may hold the accounts and passwords you'll need.

41:01

Both SAM.gov and Grants.gov have robust help features, FAQs, and help desks.

41:09

If you run into technical issues with either of these sites, you should reach out to them and request a tracking number, case number, or ticket number in order to document your issue and any attempt to resolve it.

41:22

Failure to have an active SAM.gov registration or Grants.gov registration by the application deadline is not an excuse for submitting a late application. So again, start early.

41:36

There are many components that make up the entire application, and the Narrative is an essential and critical part of the package.

41:43

Peer Reviewers, museum professionals from all types of museums, will be selected by IMLS to read each application and provide constructive comments on the strength and weakness of the proposed projects.

41:55

They also base their reviews only on the information contained in the application.

42:00

So don't assume that a reviewer or IMLS will know something about your museum or your proposed project.

42:07

To help make sure your Narrative is as clear as possible, here are a few tips.

42:14

Look at the Notice of Funding Opportunity and follow the narrative outline it provides.

42:19

Use headings, subheadings, or numbered sections in your narrative to make it easy for reviewers to read.

42:25

Be sure to consider the review criteria associated with each section of the narrative.

42:32

Avoid generalities and acronyms.

42:35

The people who are going to read your application are museum professionals, but they may not be totally familiar with your shorthand, so make it easy for them to understand what you mean.

42:47

And an advantage to starting your application early is that you can ask a colleague to review everything with fresh eyes before you submit.

42:56

Ask them to act like a reviewer who's seeing it for the first time.

43:02

Now we've also posted the narrative and scheduled of completion from several successful applications.

43:08

You can find these examples by going to the Sample Applications section on the IMLS website and scroll down the page to find the Museums Empowered examples.

43:19

Each sample application PDF contains a copy of the seven-page narrative and also the schedule of completion.

43:27

Many of these samples were identified by our peer reviewers as good examples of well written applications that provided all the essential information necessary for them to review the application.

43:40

Looking at these proposals might help clarify your thinking about your own.

43:45

Here are a few important dates related to Museums Empowered applications.

43:49

Applications must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on November 15th, 2024.

43:58

Your application will be time stamped by Grants.gov.

44:03

After the deadline, IMLS staff will review your application for completeness and eligibility.

44:08

You'll hear from us by e-mail if there are any problems.

44:12

Next, we'll select experienced and knowledgeable peer reviewers to read your application and provide scores and comments based on the criteria outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

44:23

IMLS staff will examine your budget, your financials, and your track record with past and current grants.

44:30

We then prepare materials for the IMLS Deputy Director as well as the IMLS Director, and by law, the IMLS Director is charged with the authority and responsibility to make final award decisions, and this typically happens by July.

44:48

In early August 2025, we'll notify you by e-mail of the award decisions and provide the scores and comments created by the reviewers.

44:57

All Museums Empowered projects must be scheduled to start in the first day of September 2025.

45:06

And in conclusion, as you read through the NOFO and prepare your application, additional questions may arise.

45:12

We can help you with learning more about the Museums Empowered grant program or other grant programs at IMLS, and we can help address any specific concerns you may have with the various application components or help you understand the review process.

45:26

You may contact IMLS program staff by e-mail or phone.

45:30

Contact information is listed on the grant program landing page on the IMLS website.

45:36

You may also schedule a counseling call to meet directly with program staff.

45:40

Use the links found on the Grant program landing page to find an available time slot on our calendar.

45:47

You will then receive an e-mail with a calendar invite and a Microsoft Teams meeting link.

45:52

Thank you again for listening to our presentation and best of luck to you in preparing and submitting your IMLS grant application.