INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

2024 REPORT

# Evaluation of IMLS's Native Communities Grant Programs

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# About the Institute of Museum & Library Services.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation in which museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

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# Foreword.

In early 2021, IMLS initiated its first-ever evaluation of four grant programs that are specifically available to support museum and library services within Native Communities. Staff recognized the importance of incorporating the cultural perspectives and values of Indigenous populations and worked to adopt best practices as outlined by the American Evaluation Association[1] into the evaluation design and throughout the course of the study.

Examples of these best practices included contracting with Kituwah Services, a Tribally owned evaluation company, enlisting Native subject matter experts to serve as peer reviewers throughout the study, and engaging with the IMLS program officers who oversee these four grant programs.

All parties involved in this study identified opportunities and challenges with incorporating culturally responsive principles into Western-designed evaluation methodology. For example, many Native Communities prefer to engage with others verbally and directly, while mixed methods evaluations typically rely on a low-contact survey as a critical data collection tool. Additionally, as with any federal undertaking, the ability to customize support for an individual entity may be limited because of how a statute or regulation is written and interpreted. As such, evaluators are also challenged by how to best personalize support for the unique needs or wants of individual Indigenous Communities.

Furthermore, the incredible amount of diversity across Native Communities presents a challenge for federal evaluators whose research goal, in part, is to assess data at the grant program level. Federal evaluators may also find themselves challenged to recognize the unique differences across Native Communities because of the statutory eligibility criteria for certain federal programs. The 20 U.S.C. § 9101 et seq. authorization statute for IMLS programs sets the criteria for IMLS funding eligibility, generally referred to as "Federally Recognized Tribes"[2]. As such, federal evaluators might not be able to assess Tribal entities that are not Federally Recognized Tribes. As a result, much of this evaluation's findings and recommendations are generalized across Native Communities, rather than specific to any.

IMLS worked with Native subject matter experts, evaluators, and program officers to adjust common practices to best practices where they related to cultural awareness and respect. This report took three years to develop, and its findings and recommendations capture many important learnings that took place along the way. IMLS staff are incredibly grateful for the wisdom, patience, and collaboration provided to them by the Native voices who agreed to help shape this work. While there remains much to improve upon, IMLS's mission is one of learning and adaption. IMLS staff look forward to continuing to improve upon the agency's grantmaking and evaluation practices to better serve Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (Kānaka Maoli) communities.

**IMLS staff are incredibly grateful for the wisdom, patience, and collaboration provided to them by the Native voices who agreed to help shape this work.**

1 American Evaluation Association's Statement On Cultural Competence In Evaluation. Retrieved October 4, 2024, from https://www.eval.org/About/Competencies-Standards/Cutural-Competence-Statement.

2 For certain provisions relating to IMLS Native American programs and eligibility, please see 20 U.S.C. §§ 9101(5) (Definitions), 9161 (Services for Native Americans [library programs]), and 9173(d) (Services for Native Americans [museum programs]) 20 USC Ch. 72: MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES. Please note that the criteria in sections 9161 and 9173(d) for the IMLS Native Hawaiian program is for "organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians (as defined in section 7517 of this title)"–which may be different than the eligibility for Native Hawaiian entities under other federal agencies' programs.

# Executive Summary

This report evaluates the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) four grant programs specifically designed to support library and museum services in Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (Kānaka Maoli) communities.[3]

Conducted by a combination of Kituwah Services, LLC (Kituwah Services), ICF, and IMLS, the evaluation examined grant data from FY2015 to FY2021. The evaluation assessed the programs' effectiveness in meeting the needs of Native library and museum service providers and identified recommendations for improvement. While this executive summary provides overall findings across all assessments, the four primary sections of the report reflect the findings of the distinct evaluation efforts. The detailed methodology for each evaluation assessment are described in Appendix B: Methodology.

## KEY FINDINGS

1. **Capacity-Building Challenges:** Indigenous libraries and museums face critical challenges related to organizational capacity. Many of these organizations struggle with limited staffing, a lack of strategic planning, inadequate technology, and insufficient space for collections management and cultural activities.
2. **Urban and Rural Disparities:** The majority of Indigenous populations now reside in urban areas, underscoring a need for expanded outreach to Urban Indian Organizations. Furthermore, rural and remote communities, particularly those located in Alaska and Hawai'i, face additional barriers to accessing grant opportunities.
3. **Diverse Needs of Indigenous Communities:** Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Native villages and corporations, and Kānaka Maoli all have unique needs, governance structures, and cultural differences. A one-size-fits-all approach to grantmaking is insufficient to address these diverse operational and cultural contexts.
4. **Grant Flexibility and Accessibility:** IMLS's Native Communities grant programs have been effective in their allowed flexibility of the use of funds. Specifically, the Native American Library Services: Basic Grants' non-competitive nature provides small, hard-to-reach Indigenous communities access to much-needed funding.
5. **Barriers to Accessing Grants:** Applicants often face difficulties in navigating the grant application process due to limited staff and unclear eligibility criteria. Many Native American, Alaska Native, and Kānaka Maoli organizations lack the capacity to apply for competitive grants, particularly those with more rigorous requirements. Some also may be further challenged if their own respective governance structure requires approval to apply, the grant cycles do not align with their own internal planning calendars, or the application solicitation windows are too short.

3 The legal definitions for eligibility for each program are described in the section "IMLS and Native Communities."

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations reflect opportunities for IMLS to improve its grantmaking activities for its four programs. These are the recommendations based on the collective findings and assessments from all authors. Within each section, the authors also have outlined their own independent set of findings and recommendations based on their analysis.

1. **Enhance Technical-Assistance:** IMLS should expand and improve its grant writing workshops and provide more tailored technical assistance to Indigenous organizations. This support would increase the quality and quantity of grant applications from underrepresented groups.
2. **Broaden Outreach Efforts:** IMLS should engage harder-to-reach populations, particularly Urban Indian Organizations and small rural tribes. Clearer communication about grant impacts and successes is also needed to foster greater community awareness and public engagement.
3. **Refine Grantmaking Processes:** Adjustments to application language and eligibility criteria will make it easier for underserved groups and nonprofits serving Kānaka Maoli to apply. IMLS should also improve the language it uses to describe library and museum services to reflect the many types of cultural organizations in Indigenous Communities that may be eligible to apply for its funds.
4. **Strengthen Partnerships:** IMLS should collaborate with other grantmakers, Tribal organizations, and advocacy groups to improve outreach, technical assistance, and capacity building.
5. **Support Community-Developed Evaluation and Impact Measurement:** IMLS should help grantees establish better systems for measuring program outcomes and impacts, which will enable them to demonstrate the value of their projects and secure future funding.

## CONCLUSION

This evaluation seeks to identify and understand opportunities for IMLS to improve grantmaking to Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities beyond or in addition to those eligible entities it currently serves. The assessment found that IMLS's grant programs have made significant strides in supporting Indigenous libraries and museums, but also have numerous opportunities to enhance the impact of these programs. By addressing capacity-building challenges, expanding outreach to urban and rural communities, improving grantmaking processes, developing partnerships, and supporting performance measurement, IMLS can strengthen its support for Native cultural organizations and advance its mission of promoting self-determination and cultural preservation within Native Communities.

# IMLS and Native Communities.

The United States has established relationships with Native Communities through legal precedents set forth in the Constitution, treaties, statutes, executive orders, administrative regulations, and judicial precedent. These laws and statutes also form a commitment to protect Native peoples' unique rights while respecting their inherent sovereignty.

In alignment with this commitment, Congress authorized IMLS to award grants in support of museum and library services to Indian tribes[4] and organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians.[5] IMLS subsequently established grant programs specifically reserved for those Native entities within each of its two offices responsible for grantmaking: the Office of Library Services (OLS) and the Office of Museum Services (OMS). For over two decades, IMLS has made awards to these entities through the following four grant programs, which are the focus of this evaluation:

- **Native American Library Services: Basic (NAB) Grants** (since 1998) are non-competitive[6] one-year grants designed to assist Federally Recognized Indian Tribes, including any Alaska Native villages, regional corporations, or village corporations in providing core library services for their communities.
- **Native American Library Services: Enhancement (NAE) Grants** (since 1998) are competitive two-year grants designed to assist Federally Recognized Indian Tribes, including any Alaska Native villages, regional corporations, or village corporations, in improving core library services for their communities.
- **Native Hawaiian Library Services (NH) Grants** (since 1998) are competitive two-year grants designed to assist nonprofit organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians in improving core library services for their communities.
- **Native American/Native Hawaiian (NANH) Museum Services Grants** (since 2005) are competitive, one-to-three-year grants designed to support Federally Recognized Indian Tribes, including any Alaska Native villages, regional corporations, or village corporations, as well as nonprofit organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians, in sustaining Indigenous heritage, culture, and knowledge.

IMLS has been awarding NAB/NAE/NH library services grants since 1998 and NANH museum services grants since 2005. From inception to FY2021, the total amount awarded through all four Native-serving programs is $110,226,316 in support of 6,128 projects (see Table 1).[7]

For the remainder of this paper, the authors will use "NA/AN/NH" or "Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian grant programs," as the abbreviation or shorthand of the above described four grant programs. This abbreviation is intended to better recognize the distinct structure of the Alaska Region with its additional villages and corporations but is not intended to suggest that IMLS has separate programs made available only to Alaska Native entities.

4 "Indian tribe," which means any tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village, regional corporation, or village corporation (as defined in, or established pursuant to, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act [43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.]), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes). (20 U.S.C. §§ 9101(5), 9161, and 9173(d)).

5 As the term is defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7517. (20 U.S.C. §§ 9161 and 9173(d)).

6 Awards are made available based on eligibility and funding availability.

7 All publicly available awarded grants data (1998–2021) was aggregated for each of the four grant programs. Retrieved January 26, 2022, from https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded-grants.

**Table 1. Total Grants and Funds Awarded by Program**

| Office | Years (FY) | Grant Program | Total Grants | Total Funds Awarded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OLS | 1998–2021 | Native American Library Services: Basic (NAB) | 5,322 | $33,750,273 |
| OLS | 1998–2021 | Native American Library Services: Enhancement (NAE) | 368 | $47,152,510 |
| OLS | 1998–2021 | Native Hawaiian Library Services (NH) | 46 | $9,935,666 |
| OMS | 2005–2021 | Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services (NANH) | 392 | $19,387,867 |
| **Total** | | | **6,128** | **$110,226,316** |

*For additional information about the current grant amounts and eligibility requirements for each of these four grant programs, visit IMLS's Grant Program page at* ***https://www.imls.gov/grants/grant-programs****.*

## LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

As a federal agency, IMLS operates within the parameters of its Congressional authorization and all applicable federal regulations. The terminology commonly used within these authorities may not necessarily be the language Native Community members would choose to describe themselves, nor might it adequately capture the diverse array of unique cultural practices and sociopolitical organizations within Native communities. IMLS recognizes this diversity and acknowledges the unique culture, knowledge, and history possessed by each Native Community. As such, throughout this paper, IMLS will use the terms "Indigenous Communities" or "Native Communities" as inclusive of Native American, Alaska Native, and Kānaka Maoli peoples.

## FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES: NATIVE AMERICANS AND ALASKA NATIVES

The United States currently recognizes 574 Federally Recognized Tribal entities[8] spanning 12 geographical regions, as identified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2024a). Figure 1 displays the 12 BIA regions alongside the number of Federally Recognized Tribes in each region, as indicated in the BIA Tribal Leaders Directory (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2024b).

Number of Federally Recognized Tribes by BIA Region:

- Alaska Region (227)
- Eastern Region (34)
- Eastern Oklahoma Region (20)
- Great Plains Region (16)
- Midwest Region (30)
- Navajo Region (1)
- Northwest Region (44)
- Pacific Region (103)
- Rocky Mountain Region (9)
- Southern Plains Region (24)
- Southwest Region (24)
- Western Region (42)

8 The following is a list, as of January 8, 2024, of such entities: Federal Register: Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Figure 1: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Geographic Regions**

To view the BIA map please visit: https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 (43 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.) further divides the BIA's Alaska Region into 12 distinct regions defined by the common heritage and shared interests of the Indigenous peoples within each geographic area. ANCSA established a unique structure for Alaska Native corporations and villages, creating 12 regional for-profit corporations and over 200 village corporations, each owned by enrolled Alaska Native shareholders. This structure was designed to promote economic development and self-sufficiency among Alaska Native Communities (ANCSA Regional Association, 2024). Figure 2 displays the 12 ANCSA regions alongside the number of Federally Recognized Tribes within each region, as indicated in the BIA Tribal Leaders Directory. This evaluation also includes the Annette Island Reserve, the only Tribal Reservation in Alaska and home to the Metlakatla Indian Community.

**Figure 2: Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Regions**

Number of Federally Recognized Tribes in Alaska by ANCSA Region:

- Ahtna Region (8)
- Aleut Region (13)
- Arctic Slope Region (9)
- Bering Straits Region (20)
- Bristol Bay Region (31)
- Calista Region (56)
- Chugach Region (5)
- Cook Inlet Region (8)
- Doyon Region (37)
- Koniag Region (10)
- NANA Region (11)
- Sealaska Region (18)
- Annette Island Reserve (1)

## KĀNAKA MAOLI COMMUNITIES

Unlike Federally Recognized Tribes, there is no list of federally recognized Native Hawaiian entities. Congress established the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations (ONHR) within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) in 2004 to serve as a liaison with the Native Hawaiian Community. This office maintains a Notification List of Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs), but rather than serving as an authoritative designation of eligibility for funding or services, this list is designed to assist DOI and other agencies in locating and communicating with Kānaka Maoli communities for consultation purposes. It is not comprehensive nor definitive. Inclusion on the list is voluntary but signifies that listed NHOs have certified they serve and represent the interests of Kānaka Maoli, their primary and stated purpose is the provision of services to Kānaka Maoli, and their organization has expertise in Native Hawaiian affairs (72 Fed. Reg. 54672, 2007). As of July 2024, there were 184 NHOs included on the Notification List (DOI, 2024). Inclusion on this Notification List does not necessarily mean that an organization is eligible for IMLS grant programs for "organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians" under IMLS legislation at 20 U.S.C. §§ 9161 and 9173(d).

# Evaluation Overview.

This evaluation aligns with IMLS's commitments to advancing the field of museums and libraries, providing targeted grants to entities serving Native Communities, and conducting evidence-based research.

Kituwah Services, ICF, and IMLS conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the four distinct grant programs between FY2015 and FY2021 to (1) determine how well IMLS's grantmaking aligns with the needs of communities served by the grant programs; (2) lay a foundation for improving the quality, reach, and impact of the agency's grant programs in the future; and (3) inform efforts to increase the organizational capacity of eligible applicants to submit high-quality grant applications and of grantees to complete their award responsibilities successfully.

The evaluation considered a universe of 574 Federally Recognized Tribes (including Alaska Native Villages), 12 Alaska Native Corporations, and 114 nonprofits primarily serving and representing Kānaka Maoli (NHOs). The evaluation team identified the NHOs by using a Notification List developed by the Department of Interior (2024).

From FY2015 to FY2021, through these four grant programs, IMLS awarded grants to 322 unique eligible entities. Out of the 1,802 applications submitted during that time frame, 1,629 were awarded funding, resulting in a 90.4% award rate. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the awards by program and applicant type.

There are no direct federal estimates for Tribal populations at the Tribal level; however, the U.S. Census Bureau provides population estimates across *American*

**Table 2: IMLS Eligible Entities Evaluation Period (2015–2021) Grants and Funds Awarded by Program and Community**

| Grant Awards by Primary Native Community Type | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Office** | **Grant Program** | **Federally Recognized Tribe** | **Alaska Native Village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation** | **Organizations That Primarily Serve and Represent Native Hawaiians** | **Total Grants** | **Total Funds Awarded** |
| OLS | Native American Library Services: Basics | 1,216 | 107 | N/A | 1,323 | $11,490,105 |
| OLS | Native American Library Services: Enhancements | 123 | 9 | N/A | 132 | $17,197,486 |
| OLS | Native Hawaiian Library Services | N/A | N/A | 23 | 23 | $3,256,123 |
| OMS | Native American / Native Hawaiian Museum Services | 110 | 11 | 30 | 151 | $9,735,142 |
| **Total** | | | | | **1,629** | **$41,678,856** |

*Indian Areas, Alaska Native Areas, and Hawaiian Home Lands within the United States.*[9] To better understand communities receiving IMLS grant funding, Kituwah Services and ICF compared the list of grantees to the Census data, using the area-based estimates as a proxy for Tribal populations. Internal estimates based on the Census data indicate that roughly 60–70% of Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska native villages, regional corporations, and village corporations that received IMLS funding during the evaluation period had populations of fewer than 10,000. This provides some evidence that IMLS grant opportunities are accessible to and received by communities that are most likely to have limited resources within their communities.[10]

## EVALUATION ACTIVITIES: KITUWAH SERVICES, ICF, AND IMLS

Beginning in 2021 through June of 2024, IMLS contracted with Kituwah Services to independently conduct the evaluation, building on a set of 30 IMLS-developed research questions that sought to answer the three evaluation goals listed above. The full list of research questions can be found in Appendix A: Evaluation Research Questions.

In order to best answer these questions, Kituwah Services conducted the following evaluation activities:

1. Reviewed existing research about Native Communities;
2. Analyzed IMLS grant applications and awards from FY2015–FY2021;
3. Identified all 574 Federally Recognized Tribes as well as 114 NHOs, using a qualified list developed by the Department of the Interior;
4. Conducted interviews with 19 individuals across 4 cohorts: Grantees (10 individuals), Eligible Non-Applicants (3 individuals), Unsuccessful Applicants (2 interviews), and Federal Agency Staff (4 individuals from the Administration for Native Americans; Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Indian Economic Development; Economic Development Administration; and the Federal Communications Commission); and
5. Hosted an Appreciative Inquiry (Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1987) Summit consisting of 10 Indigenous library and museum professionals from 7 of the 12 BIA regions. An Appreciate Inquiry Summit is a participatory form of an evaluation approach that focuses on organizational strengths, asking participants what is working well and what could be done to make operations better. This approach uses a 4-D model: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny in its design (Coghlan et al., 2003).

**IMLS grant opportunities are accessible to and received by communities that are most likely to have limited resources within their communities.**

IMLS and ICF conducted three additional assessments to supplement Kituwah Services's evaluation. These assessments are topical in nature and relied on data and analyses conducted by Kituwah Services as well as additional elements gathered by IMLS to supplement the evaluation. The three assessments with support of ICF:

- Institutional Needs Assessment
- Native Grantmaking Processes Assessment
- Native Grant Outcomes Assessment

The remainder of this report includes Kituwah Services's evaluation followed by ICF's and then IMLS's topical assessments and concludes with overall reflections from IMLS about the findings and the evaluation process.

9 Terminology reflects that of the U.S. Census Bureau geographies. These geographical regions include Native Reservations, off-Reservation Land Trusts, and designated Native Hawaiian Home Lands. Detailed maps of these areas can be found at: https://data.census.gov/map/010XX00US$2500000?layer=VT_2022_250_00_PY_D1&loc=50.5456,-114.7128,z2.6790.

10 It is important to note that the Census geographical areas do not allow for differentiating the proportion of Tribal members in areas shared by more than one Native American Tribe or Alaska Native village, nor do they account for Tribal members who live outside of the American Indian Areas, Alaska Native Areas, and Hawaiian Home Lands. This would result in an overestimation of Tribal populations for smaller Tribes living on shared lands and a general underestimation of Tribal populations due to the inability to capture Tribal members who do not live on Reservations or off-Reservation Land Trusts. For the sake of the internal analysis, proxy estimates were only included for areas that had a direct inclusion of the grantees' organization/institutional name. For example, the population estimate for the Hoopa Valley Tribal Council corresponds to the Census population for the Hoopa Valley Reservation. Additionally, the geographically based estimates from the Census do not provide insight into the number of Kānaka Maoli served by Native Hawaiian organizations.

# Kituwah Services: Talking Leaves, Sacred Voices, and Healing Medicine: Pathway to Strong Resources for Tribal Nations, Alaskan Communities, and Kānaka Maoli.

An Independent Evaluation by Kituwah Services of the IMLS Investment in Indigenous Libraries and Museums

In 2021, IMLS contracted with Kituwah Services, LLC, a Tribally owned business, to conduct an evaluation of its grantmaking practices with eligible Indigenous Communities to identify ways that IMLS can improve the impact of its grant programs for Native Communities. These potential improvements included enhancing engagement with potential or existing grantees, increasing the organizational capacity of eligible applicants to submit high-quality grant applications, and improving project implementation and grants management to enable grantees to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. The evaluation considered grantmaking activities across four Native American and Native Hawaiian grant programs from FY2015 to FY2021.

## OVERVIEW

IMLS instituted the study as part of its statutory mission to conduct analyses, identify trends, and measure the impact of its programs (20 U.S.C. § 9101 et seq.). The study relied on existing application and award data and also included new data collection efforts by way of a survey, interviews, and an Appreciative Inquiry Summit. The data collection activities were planned to occur from July 2022 through November 2022, with the analysis continuing through June of 2024.

The evaluation design consisted of: 1) a series of analyses of IMLS Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian grant programs between FY2015 and FY2021; 2) secondary research informing the cultural context section of the report; and 3) primary research that engaged representatives from Indigenous Communities, IMLS program staff, and other federal agencies. This mixed-methods design included research of administrative records from IMLS Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian grant program applications and award records and primary research from surveys, interviews, and an Appreciative Inquiry Summit.

Throughout the course of the evaluation, Kituwah Services and IMLS worked together to understand the limitations of conducting an evaluation of museum and library services within Indigenous Communities that are not only culturally different relative to their Western peers, but also across tribes. Kituwah Services experienced data collection and analyses challenges of low survey and interview response rates that come from trying to engage hard-to-reach populations of any kind. They also experienced assessment feasibility limitations that come with summarizing findings across hundreds of Tribes with their own distinct national identities. As a result, Kituwah Services limited their report findings to those associated with the broader goals noted in the Evaluation Overview section above and, where data were available, sought to answer the research questions described in Appendix A: Evaluation Research Questions.

### Methodology

Kituwah Services took a mixed-methods evaluation approach, analyzing primary administrative data to gain the broadest understanding of the cultural context in which library and museum services provide and tend to

the needs of the Indigenous Communities in which they are located. Kituwah Services, a Tribally owned entity with evaluators who are Tribal members themselves, integrated Indigenous Communities' values and worldviews into the study design. Of particular note, Kituwah Services's evaluation outlined Indigenous cultural contexts (detailed in Cultural Context: Understanding Indigenous Communities, below) into the design of the data collection instruments and activities. Further detail about the data collection approaches and their limitations can be found in Appendix B: Methodology.

### Primary Research: Survey, Interviews, and Appreciative Inquiry Summit

To add depth to the evaluation, Kituwah Services incorporated survey research, interviews, and an Appreciative Inquiry Summit into the research design. The universe for primary research encompassed organizations potentially eligible to apply for IMLS's Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian grant programs.

- **Survey:** From March to May 2023, Kituwah Services conducted survey data collection. The survey targeted 878 potentially eligible entities, including existing grantees, eligible non-applicants, and unsuccessful applicants. The response rate for the survey was 13.9% and included 80 grantees, 41 eligible non-applicants, and 1 unsuccessful applicant. To prevent the risk of disclosure, the 1 unsuccessful applicant was excluded from survey data analysis.
- **Interviews:** Kituwah Services conducted 19 interviews across four cohorts: Grantees (10 individuals), Eligible Non-Applicants (3 individuals), Unsuccessful Applicants (2 interviews), and non-IMLS federal agencies (4 individuals). Kituwah Services designed the interview protocols based on Appreciative Inquiry principles. These principles center on an affirmative inquiry that is co-constructed, leads to positive change, is rich in stories, and is future-oriented (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005).
- **Appreciative Inquiry Summit:** On July 12, 2023, Kituwah Services led an Appreciative Inquiry Summit with 10 participants. The participants consisted of Indigenous library and museum professionals and represented 7 of the 12 BIA regions, including Alaska, but no Kānaka Maoli organizations were represented. Kituwah Services structured the summit using an Appreciative Inquiry participatory framework focusing on organization strengths, defining opportunities, and helping shape future actions (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). Its line of questions prompts participants to identify what is working well and how things could be made even better.

## CULTURAL CONTEXT: UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous libraries and museums play a central role in strengthening communities by providing a wide range of programs and services. For Native Communities in particular, they fulfill a crucial need to preserve and promote Indigenous knowledge, heritage, and language. Many of these organizations thrive because of the hard work and dedication of a few who are passionate about engaging community and celebrating their heritage with the world. These Indigenous Communities fundamentally differ in sovereignty, governance, and their relationships with the U.S. Federal Government as noted in the Native Communities Information section. These differences directly influence how IMLS and other federal agencies design and deliver programs to each of the Native Communities and their organizations. However, with few exceptions, Indigenous libraries and museums operate with limited resources.

The evaluation analysis and findings incorporate cultural considerations as they relate to Indigenous Communities. This context, as noted below, informed the evaluation approach, analysis, and recommendations.

**Indigenous libraries and museums play a central role in strengthening communities by providing a wide range of programs and services.**

### Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

While there is much diversity among Indigenous peoples, scholars point to notable commonalities in epistemologies and pedagogies across Indigenous societies worldwide (Cajete, 1994; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Hampton, 1993; Henderson, 2002; Marker, 2004). Indigenous ways of being are an intermeshed construction of knowledge, practices, and beliefs, based

upon more than a collection of factual understandings. Indigenous ways of knowing are culturally grounded and shape Indigenous peoples' worldview and interactions with the world. Three themes surface when examining literature related to this concept: Relationality, Sacred and Secular, and Holism (Antoine et al., 2018).

- **Relationality –** We are all related to each other, to the natural environment, and to the spiritual world. These relationships bring about interdependencies.
- **Sacred and Secular –** Many Indigenous ways of knowing are shaped by connections between the sacred and the secular. According to Ross Hoffman's *Respecting Aboriginal Knowing in the Academy* (2013, p. 190), "aboriginal ontologies and epistemologies are rooted in worldviews that are inclusive of both the sacred and the secular. [In Indigenous ontologies] the world exists in one reality composed of an inseparable weave of secular and sacred dimensions."
- **Holism –** Linked to relationality, holism is the notion that parts of a whole are in intimate interconnection, such that they cannot exist independently from the whole (e.g., physical, biological, and social), which is regarded as greater than the sum of its parts. Cindy Blackstock (2007), the Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, identifies four interconnected dimensions of ancestral knowledge that are common in Indigenous epistemologies: "emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical." This is a way of thinking that incorporates all things because everything is related. Compared to Western ontologies, Indigenous knowledge systems often embrace spirituality as a key element of learning and understanding.

From a Hawaiian perspective, a Kānaka Maoli person comprises four pillars as summarized below:[11]

| | |
|---|---|
| **'Ike Ku'una**<br>ancestral knowledge | **Ōelo**<br>language |
| **Pili 'Uhane**<br>spirituality | **Lawena**<br>behavioral character |

Together, these pillars stress the importance of passing on knowledge through the Hawaiian language (Komeiji et al., 2019).

## Self-Determination

The U.S. Government has a unique legal relationship with Tribal governments as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, and court decisions. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975) "declares that the Congress recognizes a Federal obligation to be responsive to the principle of self-determination through Indian involvement, participation, and direction of educational and service programs." Princeton University defines the principle of self-determination as a community's right to people to decide their own destiny.[12] As such, Indigenous leaders (e.g., Tribal governments, nonprofit leaders, etc.) often consider the effect of decisions on their community's advancement of sovereignty and self-determination as they make decisions that involve U.S. Government engagement. Alternatively, Kānaka Maoli are not viewed as members of a sovereign nation, but do have an historical relationship with the federal government.

## Diversity of Indigenous Governance

Indigenous Communities, distinct governance structures, geography, and ties to colonization can influence a Native Community's approach to working with the Federal Government. The 12 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regions reflect some of these cultural differences. For instance, some Native American (NA) communities in the Eastern Woodlands, such as the Onondaga Nation, exercise full sovereignty from the U.S. Government and live on their ancestral Tribal homeland (Onondaga Nation, 2024). Tribes living on reservations, largely located in the Western portion of the United States, have an integral relationship with the U.S. Government, which holds the land title on behalf of the tribes (BIA, 2017). In each of the examples, the ways in which the Tribes engage with the Federal Government differs according to their governance structures and whether they are located on their own land or that which is managed by the United States.

## Enterprising Versus Non-Enterprising

A distinguishing factor that influences a Native entity's capacity to apply for, and administer, grants is whether their community is able to generate revenue through a Tribal enterprise. Federal Government defines a Tribal enterprise as a "commercial activity or business managed or controlled by an Indian Tribe" (25 U.S.C. § 4302[10]).

11 Kumu Honua Mauli Ola: An Indigenous Educational Philosophy. Retrieved October 3, 2024, from https://www.olelo.Hawaii.edu/en/olelo/khmo.
12 Self-Determination. Retrieved September 10, 2024, from https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/656.

Enterprising communities or organizations are those that are able to independently raise revenue through, for example, hospitality/gaming, by operating a wide range of businesses in other sectors such as natural resources and utilities and/or by 8(a) federal contracts, a program administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Enterprising organizations often have access to capital for discretionary purposes and can build capacity to advance organizational objectives through direct funding. Non-enterprising organizations, by contrast, may have limited revenue sources or are dependent on Federal appropriations and competitive grants.

### Urban Indian Organizations

Urban Indian Organizations, as defined in 25 U.S.C. § 1603(29) (2021), "means a nonprofit corporate body situated in an urban center, governed by an urban Indian controlled board of directors, and providing for the maximum participation of all interested Indian groups and individuals, which body is capable of legally cooperating with other public and private entities for the purpose of performing the activities described in section 1653(a) of this title." An estimated 87% of Tribal citizens, inclusive of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, live in urban areas (U.S. Office of Minority Health, 2024). In 2019, the U.S. Census estimated that about 152,601 (roughly 24%) of the estimated 628,683 Kānaka Maoli and Pacific Islanders reside in Hawaii (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

To remain connected culturally, the significant Native American/Alaska Native population that lives in metropolitan areas across the United States must seek programs and services offered by the members' respective Tribes virtually or take advantage of programs offered by the 41 501(c)3 Urban Indian Organizations locations in 22 states (Indian Health Service, 2024).

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

Indigenous libraries and museums are an essential element in the fabric of their communities. For community members who engage with library and museum programs, the experience is meaningful. These organizations operate as community hubs that offer programs and services and also support efforts to promote and preserve Native heritage and language.

### Organizational Capacity—Libraries and Museums

Much of the research in this evaluation centers around the concept of organizational capacity. Data collected in the interviews, survey research, and Appreciative Inquiry Summit captured organizational capacity as an overarching theme for the evaluation, regardless of the cohort—grantee, unsuccessful applicant, or eligible non-applicant. Library and museum leadership expressed a need to increase organizational capacity to better serve their communities.

**Continued investment that promotes growth and adaptability is a challenge even for well-resourced organizations.**

All interviewees stated that they are not adequately funded to develop or advance staff, facilities, or strategic plans to meet the needs of their communities. Libraries and museums operate in an evolving environment driven by technology, digitization, and constant content generation. These cultural organizations have to: engage professional staff in areas such as information science, knowledge management, and digital media; establish technology infrastructure; and keep collections and programming relevant to meet the needs of patrons. Continued investment that promotes growth and adaptability is a challenge even for well-resourced organizations.

### Staffing for Community Needs and Grants Management

Interviewees noted limited staff as a challenge to meeting the needs and expectations of their communities which indicated a need to increase investment in staffing, adequate training, and professional advancement opportunities. To build capacity to meet the unique needs of their communities, Indigenous libraries and museums require additional staff with professional and/or technical skills to also align with their cultural identities. These library and museum service organizations expressed commitment to cultivating the talent of Tribal citizens and Kānaka Maoli by expanding opportunities and providing the professional development necessary to build capacity.

Most of the organizations represented in the interviews reported having one to three full-time employees. One organization interviewed was a library incorporated into their community's education department, with one staff member responsible for managing daily operations, developing programs, securing funding, and performing all administrative and reporting requirements.

Often, interviewees stated that their organizations are led by a single person who attempts to do all of the work in the library or museum, engage with the community, secure resources to advance cultural practice, and establish programs and services that are culturally or technologically relevant. Throughout the evaluation, it also became clear that many organizations rely on a single individual (or a few individuals) to advance their organization's mission. In such cases, the organization relies heavily on the commitment of these persons to develop programs, oversee day-to-day operations, and seek growth opportunities. This means staff may have limited capacity to apply for or manage grants.

### Investment in Strategic Planning

IMLS grants promote organizational capacity building through their allowance for activities like the development of a strategic plan. Engaging in strategic planning helps Indigenous libraries and museums identify their communities' needs, understand the barriers or challenges to meeting those needs, and develop a plan to invest their limited resources to shape future programs. Strategic plans also support organizations ability in building capacity and advancing their mission into the future.

Nearly all interviewees clearly defined their library or museum's community and organizational needs. They also shared a vision for the future. Participants imagined the future of their organizations as fully operational, active spaces led by the current youth of their communities. However, only one organization shared that they have a formal strategic plan for their museum. One other was in the process of establishing a strategic plan for their museum.

Regardless of having a formal strategic plan, interviewees expressed strong interest in learning directly from peers about best practices to inform long-term, sustainable planning for their libraries and museums.

### Access Through Technology and Digitization

Organizational leaders who were interviewed stated that community members have a strong desire to learn more about their heritage and advance traditional practices. They want to access the collections and other cultural resources, as well as engage in programs designed to advance cultural literacy and language. Digitizing and establishing a robust web-based platform presents a tremendous opportunity to meet that desire, particularly for those Indigenous Community members who do not live on a Reservation or locally. However, the changing times and landscape of these communities present challenges to provide useful access. Younger generations are searching for online applications to access the data and information in these programs and organizations, while older generations struggle to utilize technology designed to increase access to these cultural assets.

**Organizational leaders who were interviewed stated that community members have a strong desire to learn more about their heritage and advance traditional practices.**

Advances in technology present a double-edged sword. On the one hand, there is an incredible opportunity to expand access. On the other hand, this opportunity challenges organizations' capacity in terms of both staff and infrastructure. The fast pace of information consumption, driven by technology, has changed patron expectations. This reality further challenges organizations to offer a digital experience that parallels those offered by greater-resourced organizations.

Libraries and museums are also searching for ways to preserve the valued cultural assets they have, and to present the content in ways their community will use them. Given the day-to-day demands of their organization, staff often do not acquire the necessary skills to create and maintain effective access to the organization's digitized collection. For instance, one organization stated it had decades of historic documentation and archived material that needed to be cataloged and then digitized. Accomplishing this work would take a significant amount of time and resources.

Indigenous libraries and museums often lack staff with the required technical skill sets, do not own or license imaging tools and/or software needed to fully digitize collections (particularly three-dimensional objects), and exist in communities with inadequate broadband infrastructure to facilitate a digital platform with high-resolution images. Some interviewees expressed concern regarding untrained staff handling culturally sensitive or fragile artifacts and materials during the digitization process. Interviewees are also unsure of their community's ability or willingness to use a digital platform to access cultural resources.

Indigenous libraries and museums are looking to discard obsolete hardware and software. One museum director mentioned they are committed to installing new technology that their community could use to access their collection, but have very little understanding of what would be best. Indigenous libraries and museum are interested in learning how to motivate and train current staff on using new hardware and software. They see opportunities to hire additional employees who are technologically savvy, and they recognize they will have to train community members on the technology as well.

For a number of libraries and museums, the lack of knowledge in advanced technology, coupled with the need for training at the staff level and across their community, presents a challenge and poses a barrier that can be overwhelming. Planning and guidance from outside experts in both technology and sociotechnical systems are needed to acquire new technology and introduce it effectively to achieve meaningful use and sustained engagement.

### Lack of Space and Facilities Investments

The lack of space—particularly, dedicated space for collections management, exhibitions, and educational programs—limits the extent to which Indigenous libraries and museums can advance heritage preservation and education. Museum and library interviewees explained that the lack of space and/or sharing space with other departments has put a constraint on increasing collections. In some cases, limited broadband infrastructure impacts digitization and the ability to create access to virtual exhibits and collections. This is particularly challenging for communities and organizations with limited or outdated technology that could otherwise make an item available virtually.

Education classrooms, are also greatly needed for designing and delivering the programs that communities desire. As local leadership learns more about their community's desire to advance heritage preservation, they are discovering a need to promote activities and ceremonies that advance concepts of traditional living. These activities and ceremonies require additional space and accommodations beyond what is required to house exhibits or collections. One interviewed leader saw their library and museum as critical to engaging Tribal citizens and dedicated roughly 20,000 square feet, or a third of its new Tribal Administration building, for a library, museum, and archive.

Access to an organization's assets can be severely constrained when space limitations require an organization to store its physical items off-site. One Native American participant stated they warehouse documents, artifacts, art, and other exhibits at climate-controlled facilities in New York, Florida, Oklahoma, and at the American Indian Records Repository in Kansas out of necessity.

### Programs, Outreach, and Marketing

Library and museum programs have evolved beyond their traditional work of checking out books and displaying exhibits of fine art and artifacts. Despite capacity constraints, when possible, they adapt to the needs of their community patrons to build their awareness of history, heritage practices, and abilities needed to participate in economic development activities (e.g., apply for jobs, read and write, use computers , etc.). Libraries and museums also have developed valued workshops and have shifted their practices to promote and foster heritage ceremonies and provide life skill learning.

Most libraries and museum leaders that participated in the Appreciative Inquiry Summit or interview sessions noted their organizations are at their best when there is a greater number of participants at their events who are gaining knowledge, acquiring information, and sharing with others in their community. Outreach and marketing activities are often necessary to generate new interest and grow audiences. Most interviewees mentioned the use of local newsletters, social media, and public radio stations to advertise events, programs, and special activities, but also reported challenges with regularly promoting this work. Developing a promotional plan to more regularly elevate investments in these valued resources would significantly benefit these libraries and museums.

### Barriers in Accessing Federal Grant Funding

In addition to IMLS awards, some survey respondents reported receiving funding from their Tribal government and other federal grants. While IMLS grant funds are critical for these library and museum staff, those funds are limited in part by federal regulations and to the allowances under which they are awarded. Grant funds most often allow for project-based investments, but they typically limit the ways in which an entity can invest in operational costs. This hinders the ability of a library or museum to expand organizational capacity via staff or infrastructure-based investments. IMLS's NAB grant program is an exception to the limitation. Analysis of the grant distribution suggests this allowance is particularly necessary for smaller-sized Native Communities.

The approval process for pursuing grant funds also varies across Native American and Alaska Native (NA/AN) communities. Some Tribes require the governing body to pass a resolution with specific language referencing the grant program in order to apply for funding. Further, for some NA/AN communities, the ability to pass a resolution requires a vote of the general council (a quorum of voting-age citizens), which may only meet once or twice a year. The timelines required for the approval to apply for a grant can often exceed the amount of time between the announcement and the closing of the application period for any kind of grant. The resulting mismatch between a Tribe's governmental process and a federal funder's grant cycle can prohibit these respective libraries or museums from obtaining critical funds. Several interviewees stated they do not feel they have the autonomy or authority to solicit financial support on behalf of their Tribe or nonprofit organization. This means eligible entities may be limited in their institutional-level pursuit of new funding sources, programming expansion, and increased organization development opportunities.

**IMLS funding currently reaches more than half of the 574 Federally Recognized Tribes. The majority of that reach extends to NA communities within the lower 48 states.**

In contrast to NA/AN communities, nonprofits primarily serving Kānaka Maoli are not restricted in their pursuit of funding by Tribal authority. However, receipt of IMLS grant funding requires that an eligible institution: 1) is a nonprofit organization; 2) and primarily serves and represents Native Hawaiians. Interpretation of the second criterion has created uncertainty for some as to whether they are eligible to receive an IMLS grant.

### IMLS Outreach to Indigenous Communities

As reported earlier, IMLS funding currently reaches more than half of the 574 Federally Recognized Tribes. The majority of that reach extends to NA communities within the lower 48 states. This reach is particularly notable within the Basic (NAB) Grants program, which allows for NA/AN communities to apply for up to $10,000 in non-competitive grant funds for core operational activities and thus make up the majority of IMLS awards (5,322 between 1998 and 2021).

In many cases, even if an interviewee had not applied for a grant from IMLS before, they were aware of the opportunities for funding. While further study is warranted, this may suggest IMLS is an exemplary federal agency in its grant program outreach to Indigenous Communities, especially considering these populations are often very small and located in remote areas across the contiguous United States.

Certain subsets of these Indigenous Communities, however, are not as well connected to IMLS and its grant programs, particularly those that are physically distant in the states of Hawaii or Alaska. IMLS also is not reaching Indigenous Communities whose organizational structures are not represented in the federal regulations that inform IMLS eligibility criteria, such as tribes that are not Federally Recognized or Urban Indian Organizations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING IMLS GRANTMAKING

IMLS's investment in Indigenous libraries and museums has been significant in expanding access to cultural resources and education programs. Kituwah Services's evaluation surfaced the following recommendations for IMLS to consider as it continues its commitment to improving grantmaking efforts in Indigenous Communities. These recommendations align with the broad goal driving the evaluation study's activities: to identify ways that IMLS can improve its grantmaking processes.

### Recommendation 1: Broaden/Clarify Notice of Funding Opportunity Statements

The evaluation revealed a misalignment between the statutory language that governs IMLS grantmaking, as evidenced in the Notice of Funding Opportunities, and the expanded role of Indigenous libraries and museums operated by Native Communities. These libraries and museums are dynamic, interactive spaces. Multiple evaluation participants described their organizations as "alive" and "living, breathing" parts of their community. The standard definition of "library" and "museum" derives from Western ideas and traditions. The extensive breadth of programming and services and active cultural engagement demonstrates the wide-ranging, powerful capacity that libraries and museums can have in Native Communities.

Indigenous libraries and museums function as community hubs that provide a wide range of programs and services, including heritage or language preservation. The survey revealed that a number of respondents consider their organization a community center, cultural center, education program, and archive that delivers many types of community activities, not to mention those programs and services traditionally found in libraries and museums.

For some interviewees, the definitions create a bit of confusion as to eligibility for IMLS funding. Opportunity exists for IMLS to expand or clarify the language in its Notice of Funding Opportunity statements to reflect the nature of the organizations that serve Indigenous Communities, and the breadth of the programs and services delivered.

Of particular note, nonprofit organizations that primarily serve and represent Kānaka Maoli reported that the eligibility criteria can be confusing to understand. Greater clarity about what IMLS considers "nonprofit organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians, as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7517" would further expand the universe of this subset of potential applicants.

### Recommendation 2: Expand IMLS Engagement to Eligible Entities About Grant Opportunities, Especially With Sub-Populations of the AN Communities and Nonprofits Primarily Serving and Representing Kānaka Maoli

Cultivating relationships with all eligible entities is critical to expanding access to and knowledge about IMLS's grants. A number of grantees mentioned their desire to have IMLS program staff visit the Reservation and experience their community's library and/or museum firsthand. While IMLS's grantmaking reaches over half of the Federally Recognized NA/AN Tribes, the ability of IMLS to engage with AN or Kānaka Maoli entities is significantly less given the number of small and physically distant communities.

Cultivating relationships with all eligible entities is critical to expanding access. Kituwah Services acknowledges that the extent to which this effort can be carried out is challenged by IMLS staffing levels and administrative funding. With the limitations of IMLS current staffing capacity, the agency could expand its reach through increased investment in its staff or through partnerships with entities such as inter-Tribal organizations, AN corporations, and advocacy groups and professional associations.

### Recommendation 3: Increase Capacity by Adopting Technical Assistance and Outreach Practices

Due to limited organizational capacity or technical ability, somelibrary or museum services entities do not even attempt to secure IMLS funding. IMLS provides technical assistance via grant-writing workshops and one-on-one office hours. However, data from the survey identified technical assistance as an area where IMLS could improve its work.

Kituwah Services recommends IMLS consider adopting a program similar to the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), which is one of the most comprehensive technical assistance programs for a discretionary grant. ANA contracts with an outside contractor to provide technical assistance in organizational/strategic planning, project development, proposal development, and fiscal and programmatic grant management. The same technical assistance provider supports grant implementation, serving as additional support to the program officer. Recognizing the limited staff and resources IMLS has to provide such support, Kituwah Services recommends that IMLS either increase the number of its staff or reallocate resources to better provide technical assistance throughout the grantmaking process.

### Recommendation 4: Expand the Universe of Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for IMLS funding is statutorily limited to Federally Recognized Tribal entities and nonprofits that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians (NHOs). The evaluation revealed that the majority of Indigenous people live in metropolitan areas across the United States

and are identifiable through Urban Indian Organizations. As mentioned previously, 87% of NA/AN citizens live in urban areas. Many of these metropolitan areas are represented by Urban Indian Organizations, which are 501(c)3 organizations that have similar structures to IMLS-eligible NHOs. To increase access to Indigenous library and museum services, it is important to understand the role of Native organizations that operate in environments outside of reservations and Alaska Native villages. IMLS should consider extending its grantmaking to these 41 Urban Indian Organizations, which operate across the United States.

The evaluators recognize the statutory challenges of expanding eligibility for IMLS NA/AN/NH grants to make changes to those criteria. Recognizing those limitations, Kituwah Services as an alternative recommends that IMLS develop relationships with the 41 Urban Indian Organizations and educate them on the breadth of other IMLS funding programs as a starting point. Kituwah Services recommends this extension only if IMLS can prevent or minimize negative impact to the existing eligibility universe. Expanding IMLS's reach through Urban Indian Organizations would strengthen the betterment of community health through expanded versions of services offered through libraries and museums.

### Recommendation 5: Strengthen Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being in the IMLS Grantmaking Process

The IMLS grantmaking process and the regulations to which it must adhere limit the ability to completely adapt NA/AN/NH grant programs to align with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. However, one example from the grant records analysis stood out as aligned with the principles of this concept. Specifically, the peer-review process—a step that involves applicant peers to review and rate the applications—ensures the assessment of grant applications is mindful of Indigenous ways of knowing. As a best practice, IMLS hired two program officers who are professionals in NA affairs to lead these grant programs, providing for these staff to champion efforts to better integrate this concept throughout the entire process. To further benefit the integration of cultural concepts into any targeted grant program, the evaluators recommend that IMLS extend professional development opportunities to all IMLS staff in cultural humility and, specifically with the NA/AN/NH grant programs, Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

### Recommendation 6: Increase IMLS–Grantee Engagement

Interviewees noted that it would be helpful to receive more frequent communications from IMLS regarding deliverables and upcoming submission dates before and during the grant period. Additionally, from its scan of IMLS grant documentation, Indigenous libraries and museum grantees have regular turnover of key staff. Keeping current with the grantee point of contact is important, particularly as IMLS continues its effort to engage potential applicants.

The number of Indigenous libraries that pursue an Enhancement (NAE) grant is small in comparison to those that apply to the NAB program because the latter is a small, non-competitive grant. IMLS has an opportunity to support a greater number of NAB program grantees in applying to the NAE program, creating greater depth and lasting impact. Targeted outreach to these grantees could facilitate an increase in NAE and Native American/Native Hawaiian (NANH) museum services grant applications, which are considerably more complex than the non-competitive NAB grants.

Lastly, the evaluators developed a federal funding matrix following the BIA's Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development model (see Appendix C: Federal Funding Grant Matrix). IMLS can share this asset with unsuccessful applicants to identify other federal grant programs that are aligned with their given project's scope.

**To further benefit the integration of cultural concepts into any targeted grant program, the evaluators recommend that IMLS extend professional development opportunities to all IMLS staff in cultural humility and, specifically with the NA/AN/NH grant programs, Indigenous ways of knowing and being.**

### Recommendation 7: Identify Other Partners to Leverage Investments and Impact

Indigenous libraries and museums serve a critical population in great need. In the funding ecosystem, IMLS's total grant portfolio demonstrates an ability to work with large and small organizations, as well as with organizations serving diverse interests. With nearly 30 years of grantmaking to libraries and museums, IMLS also has reached many Indigenous Communities. Cultivating strategic partnerships and alliances with other federal agencies, philanthropic interests, advocacy organizations, community groups, and academic institutions could further advance IMLS's impact on Native Communities.

IMLS has provided funding to partner organizations, like the Association of Tribal, Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM), to offer professional development opportunities aimed at increasing organizational capacity of Indigenous libraries and museums. Should IMLS want to further expand its partnership work, it should consider designing a complementary program in partnership with private foundation funding to expand its reach to a broader number of Indigenous libraries and museums, driving more transformation within these communities.

Lastly, agreements between federal agencies and Native Communities reflect a level of commitment to better respect the sovereignty of—and better use federal funds to serve—Indigenous populations. However, interviews with program staff indicate there is limited understanding of the impact of these types of agreements across federal agencies. Better coordination across federal agencies and staff could further advance the objectives outlined in these agreements and may result in greater impact through collaboration and measurement of successes.

### Recommendation 8: Support Grantees in Measuring Program Outcomes and Impact

Understanding the value of IMLS investments in library and museum services within Native Communities may vary significantly across Tribes and in comparison to their Western counterparts. The breadth of Indigenous programming extends beyond collections, including a cultural practice, education on language and oral traditions, active cultural preservation through heritage activities, and a safe space for ceremonies.

**The breadth of Indigenous programming extends beyond their collections and into a cultural practice, education on their respective language and oral traditions, active cultural preservation through heritage activities, and providing a safe space for ceremonies.**

The Native Community organizations that provide libraries and museums services also offer constituents that a place for healing, community empowerment, and the processing of historical trauma.

Outcome and impact measurement provides IMLS grantees with sound data that can be used to communicate their central role within their communities and help them to pursue other funding opportunities. However, a lack of grantee staffing capacity makes establishing evaluation and data collection systems challenging. Supporting grantees with collecting these data and assisting them with basic evaluation systems that are built into the grant management process can help grantees communicate the value of these grants in advancing their respective community's needs.

# ICF Assessment: Institutional Needs.

This analysis discusses the needs of organizations that serve Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and/or Kānaka Maoli, based on analysis of data collected from grantees, eligible non-applicants, and unsuccessful applicants.

For the purposes of this needs assessment, "institutional needs" are defined as what a given institution needs to provide the services and programs that are expected by their community. The institutional needs assessment aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current and various needs of Native American Tribes, Alaska Native Communities, and nonprofit organizations primarily serving and representing Kānaka Maoli that are eligible to apply for IMLS funds?
2. What are the top priorities of these eligible entities?

This assessment analyzes and summarizes a subset of the results from the survey responses and interviews that were most closely related to understanding needs. Kituwah Services administered, collected, and analyzed the survey and interviews. For this assessment, ICF analyzed the survey responses for the questions above, and validated the interview data analysis as reported by Kituwah Services. The data analyzed in this report are limited to the information collected from the study participants, who have differing professional roles within their organizations. As such, needs may not represent the full universe of organizations. For additional details on the responses and related methodology, please see Appendix B: Methodology.

General operating support or support to increase organizational capacity arose in both the survey responses and the interviews with organizations that serve Indigenous Communities, including improved and/or increased staffing and facilities. Due to the various limitations of this study, further research is needed before confidently identifying needs and priorities of the full universe of organizations that serve Native Communities. The assessment concludes with several recommendations to conduct a more targeted effort directly with Native populations to better understand needs beyond the organizations themselves.

## FINDINGS

The following sections outline the findings from the survey and interview data related to institutional needs. As noted above, both data collection efforts uncovered the overarching need to increase or improve upon organizational capacity—either to better meet community needs or, apply for more funding opportunities.

### Needs as Identified in Survey Data

The survey aimed in part to answer the research questions by asking about the needs and organizational priorities of organizations offering museum and library services within Tribes and nonprofit organizations primarily serving and representing Kānaka Maoli. The survey also asked IMLS grant applicants and grantees about their experiences working with IMLS and the extent to which the four NA/AN/NH grant programs align with their priorities and needs. The survey data collection ended with a total of 80 grantee respondents and 41 eligible non-applicant respondents offering museum and/or library services within Tribes and nonprofit organizations primarily serving and representing Kānaka Maoli.[13]

To best understand the survey responses, ICF analyzed the most relevant needs-related questions within the survey as referenced in Appendix B: Methodology.[14] As detailed below, the findings indicate:

1. 38.3% of respondents cited that their reasons for applying related specifically to IMLS's grantmaking eligibility or structure in some way (e.g., the accessibility and flexibility of IMLS grants, or the alignment between IMLS grants and the organization's mission or strategic vision).

13 Due to not reaching the minimum of five responses to be included in analysis, the unsuccessful applicant survey response was not included in the dataset for analysis.

14 Survey questions 13, 17, and 37 in Appendix B: Methodology were determined to be most directly related to the needs of the organization.

2. Staffing, facilities, and funding were the most frequently expressed needs, with one or more included in over 80% of all responses. Although funding, broadly defined, can address both staffing and facility issues, respondents consistently stated that they needed staffing and/or facilities specifically. This could indicate that demand for those resources may be more important than direct access to funding.
3. Survey respondents rated general operating support, children's programs, and adult education programs as the highest priorities in their organization's effort to advance its mission.
4. No statistically significant differences were found among the most common responses between libraries, museums, and organizations identifying as "other."
5. Additionally, researchers discovered that 56% of respondents provided an open-ended description of the type of organization in which they work. This suggests that many respondents did not consider their organization to be accurately reflected by the predefined response categories of "library" and "museum." It appears that the explicit specification for a library described in the survey and lack of specification regarding the definition of a museum was determined to be an important contributing factor to the high proportion of alternative responses. While this observation is not specifically about needs, it suggests that even if statistically significant differences for these questions were found at the museum and library level, they may not have accurately represented the sub-population's stated needs, since over half of respondents would not have been categorized as a museum or library. See Recommendations for Future Studies in the section IMLS Assessment: Grantmaking Processes for additional insights into this finding.

## Needs as Identified in Interview Data

Based on analysis of Kituwah Services reporting of its 15 semi-structured interview responses from grantees (10), eligible non-applicants (3), and unsuccessful applicants (2), several overarching themes surfaced based on organizational issues that directly impact the ability to plan and apply for, implement, or manage grants for library and museum services. Overall, the greatest need expressed by all respondents was to increase their organizational capacity to better serve communities they represent. Respondents explained that a lack of organizational capacity plays a direct role in their ability to apply for, implement, or manage grants. Some of these needs are closely related, but were often discussed in different contexts.

Broadly, five concepts emerged from the interviews regarding ways to increase organizational capacity for meeting community needs and administering grants:

1. Staffing: Develop existing staff and/or acquire new staff with needed skill sets.
2. Strategic Planning: Engage in sound, community-driven strategic planning.
3. Technological Infrastructure: Establish critical technology infrastructure and adequately train staff for its use.
4. Facilities: Build or expand facilities for museums and libraries to house collections, management, exhibitions, and educational programs.
5. Outreach and Promotion: Broaden market outreach and promotion to better reach more community members.

Lastly, and as noted in Kituwah Services analysis, grant application language was noted as a potential barrier. Improve the clarity of the Notice of Funding Opportunity language to help organizations, especially those with limited staff, more easily understand and apply for grant programs.

### Staffing

Staffing challenges were the most frequently discussed organizational capacity need. Native libraries and museums often find themselves understaffed due to financial limitations, but grant-funded positions may not always meet the needs of a community. One interviewee recounted how its Tribal leadership had deep concerns about creating jobs that rely on non-recurring grant funding. Once a Tribal job is created, there is an expectation that the job will exist for the foreseeable future. If grant funds are not secured in subsequent years, the burden falls on the Tribal government to financially support that position.

Grantees reported that they and other staff commonly fill multiple positions using grant funding, which can lead to them feeling overwhelmed. Smaller Tribes often reported lacking lacking administrative support, a dedicated grant-writer, or a department focused on fundraising. These gaps place additional burden on existing staff who may have conflicting priorities or

**Participants repeatedly discussed the need for broadband infrastructure and the related benefits of offering online services and digitized collections.**

lack experience with grant-writing. Similarly, an eligible non-applicant (ENA) who was unfamiliar with the NA/AN/NH grant programs explained that their current staff do not have grant-writing experience, they struggle to administer the existing grants, and they have no strategic plan to direct which grants to pursue. The participant went on to explain that its Tribal leadership is sympathetic to the problem, but is also overwhelmed with its own respective day-to-day issues. As a result, when the Tribe pursued grant funding, it had to hire an outside consultant to assist.

Another ENA said the Tribe does employ a full-time planner/grant-writer with a track record of success; however, they focus primarily on federal opportunities for housing and healthcare funding, which are high priorities overall for the tribe. One unsuccessful applicant indicated that they often rely on an individual or small group within the community to serve as a "champion" that leads efforts to apply for IMLS funding on a project-by-project basis. Limited staffing capacity also required that the project champions assist the museum staff in managing the project development and implementation process.

Both unsuccessful applicants also reported staff turnover disrupted IMLS grant application efforts. In one case, the departure of a long-time staff member and loss of their institutional knowledge has prevented the library from pursuing IMLS grants since. The second unsuccessful applicant reported grant-seeking capacity disruptions related to 10 years of turnover of the organization's leadership.

### Strategic Planning

Like challenges with staffing and staff development, strategic planning often can take a back seat to day-to-day demands when an organization's staff is spread too thin. Not having the necessary capacity results in being unable to strategize for an organization's growth and advancement. Effective strategic planning often requires a focused team of dedicated stakeholders, such as a board of directors. In many Native libraries and museums, the Tribal administration assumes a role similar to a board of directors; however, Tribal leaders often face competing priorities and may not always have experience with the operational needs of a library or museum.

### Technological Infrastructure

Participants repeatedly discussed the need for broadband infrastructure and the related benefits of offering online services and digitized collections. In addition to broadband infrastructure, participants described additional needs for commercial imaging equipment and software to digitize artifacts. When infrastructure and equipment were available, some interviewees still expressed concerns about untrained staff handling culturally sensitive and fragile artifacts and materials during the digitization process.

Interviewees also expressed uncertainty regarding their community's ability and willingness to use a digital platform to access cultural resources. One museum director mentioned how they are committed to installing new technology that the community could use to access museum collections, but acknowledged having limited insight on how to proceed beyond that point. For several libraries and museums, a lack of technological expertise, coupled with the need to train staff and community members, presents a challenge that necessitates guidance from outside experts to achieve meaningful use and sustained engagement.

### Facilities

A lack of dedicated space for collections management, exhibitions, and educational programs limits the extent to which Native libraries and museums can advance cultural education and heritage preservation. Participants in all three cohorts explained the absence of space and/or having to share space with other departments constrained their efforts to expand collections, programs, or service offerings. In rural communities in particular, limited broadband infrastructure often necessitates that programs and services be offered in-person. For rural communities, the organizations needed not only broadband to update their facilities (see Technological Infrastructure, above), but also more facility space to support the demand for in-person services.

### Outreach and Promotion

Participants frequently described challenges with outreach and promotion around new offerings, such as additions to collections or new programs, stating that they commonly go under-promoted. As noted earlier, most interviewees mentioned using Tribal newsletters, social media, and local public radio stations for outreach and promotion, but explained that these avenues of promotion do not reach enough members within their communities. There were several comments also related to the value of Native networks. The conversations highlighted Native Community alliances as a source of inspiration and information that also provide the opportunity for professional connections and sharing of industry knowledge.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Survey and interview respondents both identified the need for increasing or improving their organizational capacity so that they can better serve their communities and apply for more grant funds when possible. Specifically, analysis of the survey and interview data found the need for staffing, facilities, and funding were of equal importance to all institution types, regardless of whether they offered museum or library services.[15]

To better understand the needs of organizations offering museum and library services within Tribes and nonprofit organizations serving primarily Kānaka Maoli—and more specifically the needs of those populations they serve—ICF recommends conducting a more targeted assessment. While the findings from the survey responses and interviews may not represent the needs of all Native Community organizations, the topics or issues raised in both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest some potential needs of the organizations that IMLS grantmaking could aim to address. Therefore, we recommend further exploration of the topics and issues reflected in the findings of this study. Additionally, ICF recommends the following:

1. Increase transparency and communication about the study and build rapport between IMLS and Native Communities before any primary data collection activities.
2. Recruit institution representatives who administer programs or services in addition to the leadership/management positions for surveys and interviews to better understand any variance in the day-to-day operations of the organizations.
3. Increase probing on the organizational structures and staff relationships to better understand roles and responsibilities of organizations for assessing needs.

15 Beyond the findings within the data analysis, ICF determined that changing elements of the survey and interview protocols and instruments would lead to improved responses about institutional needs and, more specifically, the needs of the communities that the organizations serve. Additionally, the limited number of responses to both the survey and interviews hampers the extent to which the analyses and findings can be attributed to the universe of all potential applicants to the four IMLS NA/AN/NH grant programs. Lastly, due to the limited data collected, we are unable to prioritize the findings by importance, which constrained the researchers from being able to answer the second research question listed in Appendix A: Evaluation Research Questions.

# IMLS Assessment: Grantmaking Processes

This IMLS assessment focuses on the processes and procedures involved in administering the four NA/AN/NH grant programs from the perspectives of grantee survey respondents.

IMLS staff employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative collection and analysis methods from data collected from the survey administered by Kituwah Services. Specifics on the IMLS research questions can be found in Appendix A: Evaluation Research Questions. The analysis findings suggest that there is a general satisfaction with the resources and communication provided by IMLS through the grant process. However, there are critical areas that require more focused attention for improving the administration of these grant programs.

Recommendations include: 1) conducting a deeper examination of the cultural-specific influences of why and how a Federally Recognized Tribe or nonprofit organizations primarily serving and representing Kānaka Maoli decides to apply for IMLS's NA/AN/NH grants; 2) evaluating the impact of grant-writing workshops delivered by IMLS; and 3) evaluating the impact of peer-review processes with a particular focus on examining the role Native voices play in contributing Indigenous knowledge during the award process.

## LIFE CYCLE OF A GRANT

While the four IMLS NA/AN/NH grants have distinct criteria, award amounts, and allowable activities, in general, the process to apply for each is similar, as outlined below. Figure 3 offers a visualization of the various steps involved in the life of a grant.

The grant life cycle begins with Congress authorizing and appropriating funds to IMLS, followed by the planning and designing of each grant program. IMLS determines the grant program's need, goals, objectives, eligibility criteria, and application and selection processes. Then, IMLS releases Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) and grant program guidelines about 30–90 days before the deadline. During this pre-award process for each grant program, IMLS also provides technical assistance to eligible applicants via phone calls, recorded webinars, and in-person presentations.

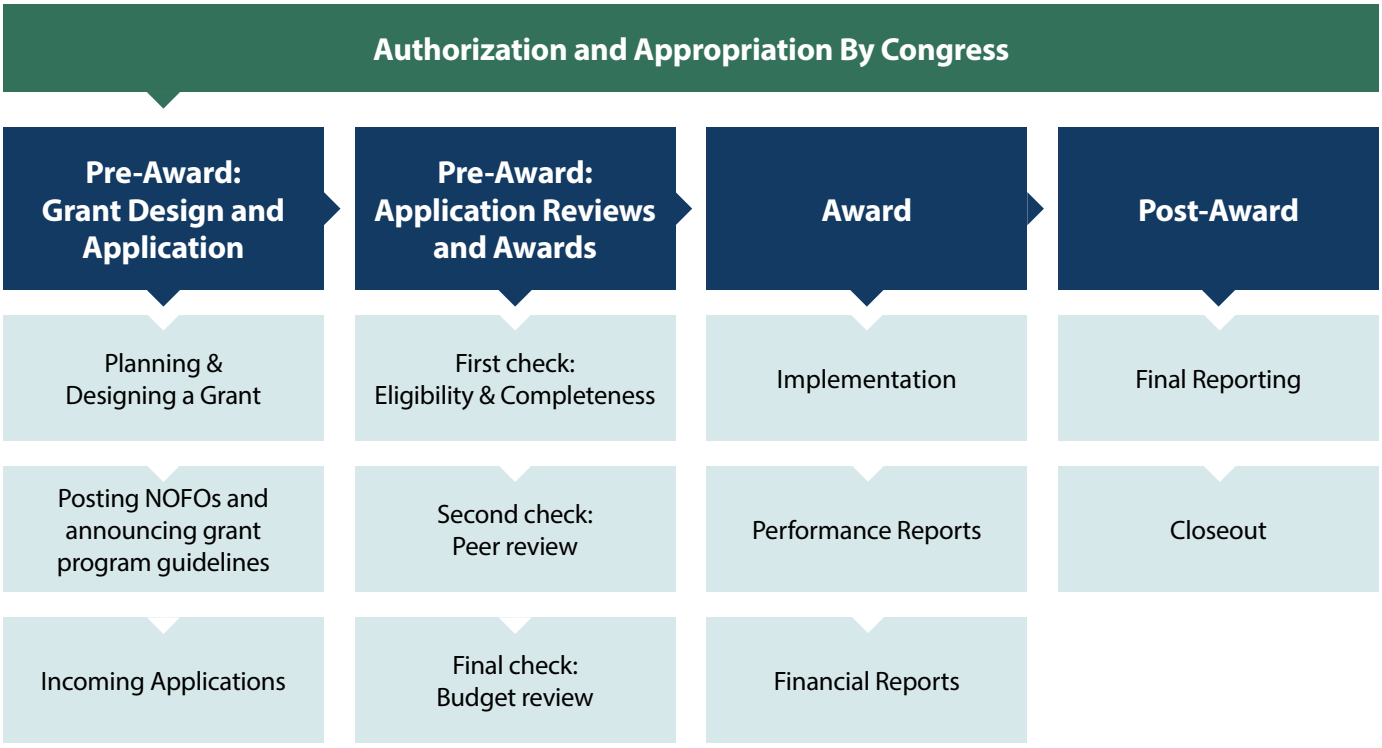
IMLS NA/AN/NH grant applicants are required to create a proposal demonstrating that their project meets a community need. While needs assessments and evaluation techniques are typically specific to communities themselves, current IMLS grant-writing procedures encourage applicants to be creative in the development of their applications and create their own success metrics for reporting.

Furthermore, the person writing the grant might work closely with other museum and library staff to design the application and obtain leadership clearance prior to submission. Collaboration ranges in form and execution throughout various Native or nonprofit organizations.

Once the deadline has passed, IMLS program staff review submitted applications for eligibility and completeness. Applications undergo an extensive peer-review process, followed by a budget review. Pre-award activities end with writing public award descriptions, creating official award notifications, preparing congressional and public award announcements, and sharing funding decisions.

A Senior Program Officer (SPO) in OLS or OMS serves as a point of contact on an award. A contact from the Office of Grants Policy and Management (OGPM) and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) also helps monitor and assist additional awardee requests. IMLS also utilizes eGMS REACH[16] as a digital platform for grant administrators and grantees to communicate with each other. During the award implementation stage, grantees can request to make amendments to their initial funding requirements or modify the scope or timeline of their proposed projects. Grantees are required to submit performance and financial reports, which are reviewed by an OLS/OMS SPO and OGPM, respectively. After the award terms have been met, OGPM conducts the post-award process, including approving all final reports and close out.

**Figure 3: Flow Chart Following the Life Cycle of a Grant**




## SURVEY FINDINGS

This section addresses Native Communities' experiences with the grant-writing process when applying to NA/AN/NH grant programs. Analysis in this section is based on the primary data collected by Kituwah Services from the grantee participant cohort and IMLS's program officers. To best understand the grant-writing experience of Native Communities and the intricate processes involved in the development and success of a grant proposal, researchers have sorted collected data into four steps involved in the life cycle of a grant: Grant design and application (pre-award); review & evaluation (pre-award); award; and post-award.

### Pre-Award: Grant Design and Application

Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate survey respondents' reported experiences locating and understanding application package information and other resources in the preparation of their grant. In general, grantees across organization types expressed ease when it came to locating and understanding application package information. On average, respondents from each organization type rated the information on the peer-review process as the hardest to locate and understand. Overall, IMLS's grant-writing workshops appear to be less useful than other resources, indicating that further research may be needed to determine how to improve them.

16 More information on the eGMS REACH platform can be found at https://reach.imls.gov.

**Table 3: Ease of Locating and Understanding Application Package Information**

| Question: When you were preparing your application, how easy was it for you to locate and understand the information in the application package? On a scale from 1, "Very Difficult," to 10, "Very Easy," please rate the following. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Respondent Organization Type** | **Libraries** | **Museums** | **Archives, Cultural Centers, Dual/Multi-Purpose Organizations, and Miscellaneous Grantees** |
| **Number of respondents[17]** | **35** | **11** | **34** |
| Grant program purpose | 8.76 | 8.11 | 8.76 |
| Grant program priorities | 8.88 | 7.89 | 8.71 |
| Grant selection criteria | 8.64 | 8.00 | 8.47 |
| Peer review process | 8.35 | 6.78 | 7.72 |
| Budget information and forms | 8.52 | 7.67 | 8.40 |
| Deadline for submission | 8.64 | 8.78 | 8.71 |
| Dollar limit on awards | 8.76 | 8.78 | 8.17 |
| Page limits | 8.56 | 7.56 | 8.54 |
| Format and submission requirements | 8.48 | 7.89 | 8.60 |
| Program contact | 8.92 | 8.00 | 8.29 |

**Table 4: Usefulness of Resources for Grant Preparation**

| Question: Think about the months leading up to the submission of an application, also known as the pre-application process. On a scale from 1, "Not At All Helpful," to 10, "Very Helpful," please rate the usefulness of the following services in preparing your application. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Respondent Organization Type** | **Libraries** | **Museums** | **Archives, Cultural Centers, Dual/Multi-Purpose Organizations, and Miscellaneous Grantees** |
| **Number of respondents** | **35** | **11** | **34** |
| Support for project planning and development | 8.06 | 6.00 | 8.22 |
| Grant writing workshop | 7.67 | 6.14 | 7.70 |
| Lessons from previous grantees | 8.27 | 6.29 | 8.17 |
| Guidance with program evaluation design | 8.15 | 6.25 | 8.32 |
| Review preliminary draft | 8.46 | 6.00 | 8.18 |
| Information from IMLS Website | 9.00 | 7.50 | 8.23 |

17 The survey respondent universe comprised 878 organizations. With 122 respondents (including 80 grantees, 41 eligible non-applicants, and 1 unsuccessful applicant), the response rate amounted to 13.9%. Due to receiving only 1 response from the unsuccessful applicants, we excluded this respondent from the survey results. We also excluded eligible non-applicants from the data shown in Tables 3–7.

## Pre-Award: Review and Evaluation

During the review and evaluation stage of applications in the four NA/AN/NH grant programs, IMLS first determines applicant eligibility. Once it identifies all eligible applicants, a panel of peer reviewers in the library and museum field reviews each application and rates the proposal based on a series of merit-based criteria required for each program.[18]

To the greatest extent possible for these NA/AN/NH grant programs, IMLS seeks to include museum and library professionals who work with Native Communities and are familiar with the proposal topic. These peers have firsthand knowledge of culturally specific concepts, such as Indigenous ways of knowing and being and self-determination, as described by Kituwah Services. It is at this point in the process that professionals who work with Native Communities can share the relative importance of a type of project or community need that is unique to a given Tribe or Kānaka Maoli. The IMLS Director considers the input from the review process and makes final funding decisions consistent with the purposes of the agency's mission and programs.

As part of its initial study design, Kituwah Services planned to analyze reviewers' comments and scores for the grant applications across the three competitive grant programs. It excluded the Native American Library Services: Basic (NAB) Grants program, which is non-competitive and funds all eligible requests. During its initial review of available documentation, Kituwah Services determined that the individual comments from each peer reviewer were not consistently available across years and programs. Consequently, Kituwah Services was unable to conduct a reliable analysis that provided credible information about the contributions of these Native voices during the review process or provide further insights that IMLS could use to improve this step in its award process.

## Award: Monitoring and Reporting

Tables 5 and 6 present the respondents' ratings of financial and performance reporting requirements. Respondents expressed general satisfaction with IMLS's clarity of reporting requirements and the support provided to complete the reports. In regards to both financial and performance reporting, the lowest rating pertained to respondents' understanding of how IMLS uses their data.

**Table 5: Responses for Financial Reporting Requirements**

| Question: Think about the IMLS financial reporting requirements for your grant and rate the following on a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent." | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Respondent Organization Type** | **Libraries** | **Museums** | **Archives, Cultural Centers, Dual/Multi-Purpose Organizations, and Miscellaneous Grantees** |
| **Number of respondents** | **35** | **11** | **34** |
| Clarity of reporting requirements | 8.77 | 8.25 | 8.44 |
| Ease of obtaining data required for reports | 8.45 | 7.88 | 8.65 |
| Ease of submitting report(s) | 8.86 | 8.00 | 8.52 |
| Availability of assistance required to complete report(s) | 8.57 | 8.00 | 8.86 |
| Usefulness of financial data to improve grant project | 8.27 | 7.50 | 8.43 |
| Organization's understanding of how IMLS uses their data | 7.77 | 7.25 | 7.51 |

18 Additional details on the peer-review process can be found at https://www.imls.gov/grants/peer-review.

**Table 6: Responses for Performance Reporting Requirements**

| Question: Think about the IMLS performance reporting requirements for your grant and rate the following on a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent." | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Respondent Organization Type** | **Libraries** | **Museums** | **Archives, Cultural Centers, Dual/Multi-Purpose Organizations, and Miscellaneous Grantees** |
| **Number of respondents** | **35** | **11** | **34** |
| Clarity of reporting requirements | 8.88 | 8.38 | 8.42 |
| Ease of obtaining data required for reports | 8.71 | 7.38 | 8.34 |
| Ease of submitting report(s) | 9.13 | 8.00 | 8.54 |
| Availability of assistance required to complete report(s) | 8.68 | 8.00 | 8.35 |
| Usefulness of financial data to improve grant project | 8.13 | 6.88 | 8.33 |
| Organization's understanding of how IMLS uses their data | 7.42 | 6.57 | 6.96 |

**Table 7: Survey Respondents' Post-Award Experience**

| Question: Think about your experience with post-award technical assistance provided by IMLS and rate the following on a scale from 1, "Not at all Helpful," to 10, "Very Helpful." | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Respondent Organization Type** | **Libraries** | **Museums** | **Archives, Cultural Centers, Dual/Multi-Purpose Organizations, and Miscellaneous Grantees** |
| **Number of respondents** | **35** | **11** | **34** |
| Implementing a grant program | 8.74 | 8.00 | 8.46 |
| Requesting approval of change | 8.96 | 9.00 | 8.53 |
| Closing out the grant | 8.91 | 8.29 | 8.92 |

### Post-Award: Reporting and Closeout

Table 7 outlines the survey responses regarding grantees' post-award experiences. The results show that all respondents had positive experiences with post-award technical assistance, from implementation to the award closeout stage.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

A key takeaway from this evaluation study is the need to consider the role of cultural and local (geographical and social) context on a Native Community's ability to apply and carry out a grant. As noted in Kituwah Services's evaluation, factors specific to Native Communities include ways of knowing and being, the sovereign structure of a given Tribe as it relates to how and when it decides to apply for a grant, and an organization's capacity to apply for and implement a grant project. Native organizations' progress and accomplishments are more likely to be seen holistically through the lens of culturally developed definitions of success, which

also serve as proof of empowerment. To develop these definitions, organizations must recognize and record the contributions they make to their community.

It is crucial to consider the steps a potential grantee takes that lead up to the submission of an application when evaluating the overall grantmaking process. These steps may include understanding the organization's capacity to apply for and implement the grant, determining the needs of their community, developing a program, estimating long-term effects should they receive the award, evaluating short-term impacts, and considering additional financial resources to continue to sustain the program.

Three future studies for addressing gaps in knowledge from the findings of this assessment are recommended with the goal of improving the grant application process specifically for entities seeking awards from IMLS's four NA/AN/NH grant programs.

### Recommended Future Study 1: Examining Culturally Specific Considerations for Applying to IMLS Grant Programs

From pre-application processes to closing out a grant, collaboration between library and museum professionals, IMLS program officers, and Tribal leadership becomes crucial. Certain grant proposals might also require the assistance of subject matter experts, such as language preservationists or elders with specialized knowledge. Therefore, in practice, it can take a lot of time and consideration for a Native organization to submit a grant application.

Subsequent studies should focus on acquiring more knowledge of the ways in which the cultural and local context of a community's members and service providers influence an organization's capacity to complete a grant application, including how to determine success metrics, implement initiatives, and identify community needs. The study should answer the following research questions:

1. What are the specific cultural elements embedded within Native Communities, and in what ways do they influence how a potential awardee submits an IMLS grant application?
2. How can IMLS better incorporate the important cultural differences of Native Communities in its grantmaking processes? How do cultural priorities or preferences differ between Native American, Alaska Native, and Kānaka Maoli populations?

### Recommended Future Study 2: Evaluating Grant-Writing Workshops

Due to the lack of data regarding the impact of grant-writing resources, including workshops, offered by IMLS and other agencies, a more targeted evaluation of workshops to assess benefits and identify areas of improvement is recommended. The study should answer the following research questions:

1. What elements of workshops and/or grant-writing resources are most used by Native organizations? What elements of workshops and/or grant-writing resources are of greatest need, but not currently made available by IMLS?
2. What are the key takeaways from workshops, according to attendees? Do these takeaways help to improve the grant application or implementation processes?
3. What mode of content delivery or learning styles are most preferred by Native Community workshop attendees?

### Recommended Future Study 3: Evaluating Impact of Peer Reviews on Grant Programs and Applications

Data collected in this evaluative study regarding the impact of peer-review processes was not sufficient. A targeted study to assess the impact of IMLS peer-review processes on grant programs and applications is recommended. The study should aim to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree have programs used representative peer reviewers that reflect communities these programs serve?
2. How does the current peer-review process ensure equity and inclusion of Native Community perspectives in the award process?
3. What is the applicant/grantee understanding of IMLS's peer-review process?
4. How helpful do grantees/applicants find the comments/feedback they received from the peer-review process?

# IMLS Assessment: Grant Outcomes.

This third and final assessment focuses on the outcomes of IMLS's NA/AN/NH programs.

This assessment focused on grants awarded between FY2015 and FY2021 and used qualitative and quantitative methods to identify the most frequent, impactful, and meaningful outcomes of the NA/AN/NH grant programs. Data analyzed in this assessment come from the self-administered survey, semi-structured interviews, and Appreciative Inquiry Summit conducted by Kituwah Services. To supplement these data, IMLS's Office of Research and Evaluation performed a qualitative analysis of grantee final performance reports and identified illustrative "grantee spotlights" (case studies).

This assessment addresses the following research question across seven outcome areas:

**How have the IMLS grant programs made a difference in the capacity of communities and their organizations to:**

1. Preserve or retain cultural heritage
2. Increase staffing and professional development
3. Expand or enhance the delivery of library or museum services
4. Provide lifelong learning activities
5. Understand and respond to evolving community needs
6. Develop or expand partnerships
7. Leverage new funding opportunities

The remainder of this assessment performed by IMLS staff provides background context for understanding the importance of these seven outcome areas, gives an overview of grant outcomes and a detailed synthesis of the data by outcome area, and concludes with a discussion of recommendations.

## BACKGROUND: ORGANIZATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND POLICY CONTEXT

This section outlines important contextual information for interpreting and understanding the outcomes assessment.

### Knowledge and Resource Centers

Kituwah Services reported important context about the organizations that participate in IMLS-funded projects. In its interview analysis, Kituwah Services explains that *"eligible activities within IMLS' funding guidelines are thriving in Tribal education departments, cultural centers, and elder programs just to mention a few."* Indeed, additional organizations beyond museums and libraries, such as Cultural Resources Departments, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, archives, and nonprofits provide museum and library services to their communities. Their programming *"extend[s] beyond what people often associate with traditional [museum and library] programs."* This assessment therefore uses the term "knowledge and resource centers" as a way to capture the broad array of organization types that offer museum and library services.

Importantly, Kituwah Services also finds that Indigenous knowledge and resource centers serve a key function of cultural preservation. As they state in their interview analysis, *"The majority of the activities and programming that pertain to Tribal museums and libraries are an act of cultural preservation. The libraries and museums are designed to safeguard the stories, language, objects and practices. They provide a safe space for Tribe members to engage with their culture through ceremonies, workshops and resources… [these organizations] present the space and opportunity for culture to be practiced and integrated into daily lives. It is emphasized that their culture is not a piece of the past, it is a part of identity and a part of life. Libraries and museums serve as the epicenter for cultural preservation, revitalization, and continuation."*

Through interviews, Kituwah Services found that *"Indigenous Communities are building dynamic hubs of cultural activities and education that transcend the labels of library or museum. …These are places where people gather to speak their native language, to share in cultural practice, to promote intergenerational learning, and to celebrate cultural traditions with visitors."* They are regarded as *"amazing places where people come together for personal growth and enrichment, often around language and culture, to share experiences and explore new possibilities… they serve as a catalyst for community conversations that reinforce identity and foster a sense of pride… At their best, these facilities are places with tremendous energy that inspires young people. They can serve as a catalyst for change… [and] can be cathartic places to reflect and to heal"* (Kituwah Services, 2024b).

### Self-Determination

The concept of Indigenous self-determination, or the right of Indigenous peoples to self-governance and free pursuit of economic, social, and cultural development (United Nations, 2007), is a second important contextual point to consider when interpreting the outcomes assessment results. Executive Order (EO) No. 14112 (2023) states that:

> *"We recognize the right of Tribal Nations to self-determination, and that Federal support for Tribal self-determination has been the most effective policy for the economic growth of Tribal Nations and the economic well-being of Tribal citizens. Federal policies of past eras, including termination, relocation, and assimilation, collectively represented attacks on Tribal sovereignty and did lasting damage to Tribal communities, Tribal economies, and the institutions of Tribal governance. By contrast, the self-determination policies of the last 50 years — whereby the Federal Government has worked with Tribal Nations to promote and support Tribal self-governance and the growth of Tribal institutions — have revitalized Tribal economies, rebuilt Tribal governments, and begun to heal the relationship between Tribal Nations and the United States."*
>
> *"We must ensure that Federal programs, to the maximum extent possible and practicable under Federal law, provide Tribal Nations with the flexibility to improve economic growth, address the specific needs of their communities, and realize their vision for their future. We must improve our Nation-to-Nation relationships by reducing administrative burdens and by administering funding in a manner that provides Tribal Nations with the greatest possible autonomy to address the specific needs of their people."*

While this Executive order addresses the U.S. relationship with Federally Recognized Tribal Nations specifically, the core intent can be applied, as by the United Nations (2007), to the rights of Indigenous peoples more broadly. Indigenous Communities are considered their own best experts on their assets and opportunities, and current federal policy aims to center this expertise, provide funding flexibility, and minimize burden to communities to support self-determination.

Consistent with EO 14112, IMLS allows applicants to determine their own funding needs and priorities, though they must align with the IMLS mission, goals, and objectives (currently, Lifelong Learning, Community Engagement, and Collections Stewardship and Access), as well as other Federal grantmaking regulations and IMLS's authorizing statute. The present assessment investigates how the results of IMLS grant programs support Native Communities and align with a framework of self-determination.

## IMLS FINDINGS

This section synthesizes data collected by Kituwah Services with narrative data from grantees' final performance reports (FPRs). FPRs are required reports that grantees submit to IMLS after completing their awards. As part of the report, grantees across all programs must provide a narrative description of the results of their project and any related activities performed during the grant period. An FPR provides an opportunity to understand project results in the grantee's own words, and to assess comparable data across all four grant programs. Integrating data from the FPRs with the primary evaluation data provides a richer context for understanding the outcomes of IMLS's NA/AN/NH programs, including their benefits for individuals, organizations, and communities.

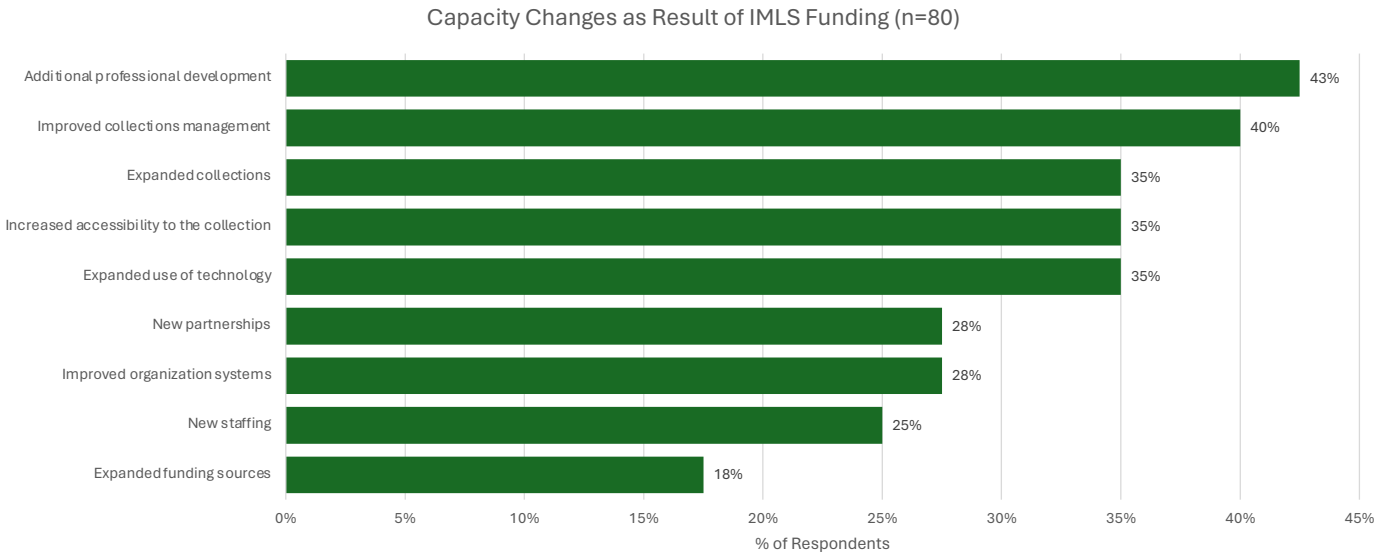
## Capacity Changes (Survey Results Analysis)

The survey results provide an initial overview of capacity gains realized as outcomes of IMLS grants. As displayed in Figure 4 below, grantees most commonly reported the following organizational capacity changes as a result of IMLS funding:

- Obtaining additional professional development (43% of respondents)
- Improving their organization's collections management (40%)
- Expanding their collections (35%)
- Increasing accessibility to their collections (35%)
- Expanding their use of technology (35%)

The least commonly reported organizational capacity changes as a result of IMLS funding were new staffing (25%) and expanding grantees' funding sources (18%).

**Figure 4. Capacity Changes as a Result of IMLS Funding**




**Survey Question: "Organizational Capacity: As a result of receiving IMLS grant funding, which of the following factors changed within your organization or department? (Check all that apply)."[19]**

## Project Results: Review of FPRs

Using the survey responses to understand self-reported capacity changes, the FPR analysis explored additional results of projects across the seven outcome areas. This analysis focuses on a snapshot in time (FY2021) due to data availability. Starting with FY2021 grants, a reporting requirement change resulted in grantees reporting more extensively about project results in their own words. An IMLS Office of Research and Evaluation analyst coded the narrative "Activities" and "Results" sections of grantees' performance reports for the presence (examples) of each of the outcomes indicated in the research questions (a deductive approach to content analysis of administrative records; see Appendix B: Methodology for details).

One finding of note is that each individual project tended to achieve many of the studied project outcomes, as opposed to having outcomes in a single area—with an average of four observed outcome categories per project. Of the sampled projects (Figure 5), all included examples of expanding or enhancing the delivery of library or museum services. A majority showed evidence of preserving cultural heritage, improving professional development and staffing, and providing lifelong learning activities. Understanding and responding to evolving community needs and developing or expanding partnerships were also common project outcomes.

19 The "Improved Organization Systems" label refers to the answer option, "Improved organization systems - approaches to work."

**Figure 5. Project Results by Program Area (FY 21, N=35)**

These results were also investigated by program, but because there was a small sample size for each separate program, the discussion below places less emphasis on individual programs and more on the combined categories of "museum services" and "library services."

## Findings by Outcome Area

The results above provide a high-level view of project results through self-reported survey data and a review of FPRs. The following section articulates the findings related to each outcome area. In addition to discussing the data relevant to each outcome area, "grantee spotlights" are included as examples to provide richer context into the value of grantees' work.

### 1. Preserve or Retain Cultural Heritage

This assessment interprets *"preserving or retaining cultural heritage"* broadly to include any activities designed to preserve Indigenous culture, heritage, language, or culturally significant items. Across data sources, preserving and perpetuating tangible and intangible components of cultural heritage emerged as one of the most common and important outcomes of grantees' work. As illustrated below, in the background section, and in Figure 5 above, cultural preservation was fundamental to the organizations that IMLS supports. Grantees used IMLS funds to not only preserve tangible and intangible heritage assets, but to actively revitalize and practice their cultures.

FPRs showed widespread evidence of preserving Indigenous culture. Of the sampled FY2021 grants, 86% demonstrated achievements in this area. Grantees most commonly demonstrated results in preserving culture and heritage (83%). A large share also preserved culturally significant items (34%) and Indigenous languages (26%). Notably, almost three-fourths (73%) of Basic (NAB) Grants sampled involved cultural preservation, even though this was not always indicated as a project's primary focus. For example, a project focused on expanding a library's book collection might note in their FPR that they increased the number of books by Indigenous authors.

Speaking to grantee outcomes discussed during the semi-structured interviews, Kituwah Services describes that grantees *"create cultural programs that help shape identity. Indigenous libraries and museums leverage IMLS funding in ways that encourage volunteerism, promote pro-social behavior, and deliver meaningful programs."* For example, one grantee explained that through hundreds of hours of volunteer work, they created a cultural center that included an exhibition telling their Tribe's story. They described that IMLS funding was a building block for expanding on their work and enhancing the way they share their Tribe's heritage (Kituwah Services, 2024b).

Similarly, Appreciative Inquiry Summit participants spoke of the need to teach their whole community, including future leaders, about their history, language, and cultural practices, and ensure understanding of these as expressions of living culture rather than historical practices. As Kituwah Services notes, *"Promoting the value of establishing a strong cultural practice among young Tribal citizens, educating leadership on the importance of disseminating cultural traditions, and advocating for support to deliver language training and other culture programs tied to Tribal identity is critical to civic life in Indigenous Communities"* (Kituwah Services, 2024a).[20]

The outcomes assessment found grantees consistently developed and implemented culturally significant projects focused on preserving and revitalizing culture and history, followed by preserving culturally significant items and language. Additionally, the high rate of outcomes related to cultural preservation in the Basic (NAB) program (73%) shows that while basic library grants often fund library "building blocks," cultural preservation is very much a core part of the work that basic library grantees perform.

### Grantee Spotlights: Preserving or Retaining Cultural Heritage

The following three grantee spotlights highlight projects for their work related to cultural preservation. Taken together, these grantee spotlights illustrate the numerous ways in which grantees utilize IMLS funds to not only preserve culture, but also to practice culture actively. Among other results, benefits of projects include language use, academic scholarship, community building, and intergenerational learning.

The importance of preserving cultural heritage and its value to the community is highlighted in the project *A Decade of Celebrating Native Culture: Educating with Archival Recordings of Southeast Alaska Native Dance & Song* **(Grantee Spotlight: A Decade of Celebrating Native Culture: Educating with Archival Recordings of Southeast Alaska Native Dance & Song)**. Sealaska Corporation preserved 338 historic recordings of an annual cultural festival called Celebration and made the recordings available to Tribal members, educators, and scholars. Community members were "incredibly excited to see grandparents or great grandparents in these captivating videos," and the videos also served a critical need to preserve culturally significant material. *"If not for this project, the footage of culturally significant material would be lost forever,"* the grantee reported. These videos have been integrated into educational lessons and are even being used by scholars who are studying how forms of Native song and dance have evolved over time (Institute of Museum and Library Services, n.d.).

Another grantee, The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government (ACSPI), used IMLS Basic (NAB) Grant funds to add archival resources and educational materials, including children's songs, to its tanamawaa.com website. The Tanam Awaa website is a repository for Unangam Tunuu (Aleut) language materials. ACSPI first developed this website using support from a 2013 IMLS Enhancement (NAE) grant and has maintained it with Basic (NAB) grants. Not only is this site a critical resource for Unangam Tunuu language material, but it also connects those who live away from the community to the Unangam Tunuu language. The website summarizes its purpose this way: *"In order for a nation to keep its language, ways, and stories going, its youth need to be provided opportunities to learn and utilize the knowledge and skills of the nation"* (Tanam Awaa, n.d.). The grantees report that after its website updates, *"The number of website visitors continue[d] to increase due to users being able to successfully find items of interest on the site."*

Preserving cultural heritage is equally important among NHOs. The nonprofit organization Papahana Kuaola developed a comprehensive set of educational programs for partner schools based on the mo'olelo, or stories, of Hawai'i to encouraging the practice of Hawaiian language and culture in the classroom, the outdoors, and the home (Grantee Spotlight: Ho'okahua). Their work included creating story-based educational materials and activities, teaching children about native plants, and leading Hawaiian-language family events focusing on home vocabulary. The grantee noted that *"Teachers at the participating schools continuously [expressed] gratitude and thankfulness regarding the program offerings."* Children not only learned to identify plants in the Hawaiian language, but also brought home cuttings and seeds to reintroduce 637 native plants in their communities. Additionally, educational programs encouraged non-Kānaka Maoli teachers to

20 Importantly, cultural "activation" is a critical goal for Native American communities, but it is not limited to these communities; interview participants from Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Communities also shared similar enthusiasm and energy around actively practicing their cultural heritage.

teach students about Hawaiian culture in their own classrooms. *"A teacher on Maui …shared that she would never have felt confident to teach Hawaiian culture but that the activities …and the supplies provided eased her concern and she just 'went for it.'"*

- **Grantee Spotlight: A Decade of Celebrating Native Culture: Educating with Archival Recordings of Southeast Alaska Native Dance & Song**
- **Grantee Spotlight: St. Paul Island Library Program**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Ho'okahua**

### 2. Increase Staffing and Professional Development

Results detailed here indicate that improving staffing and professional development is a key function of the studied IMLS grants. Professional development was a common project result across the grant programs, and correspondingly, professional development was the most commonly reported gain by survey respondents (Figure 4). Additionally, interviewees described conference attendance as a particularly important form of professional development facilitated by IMLS grants. Specifically, interviewees described IMLS–partner conferences such as the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums annual conference, as an important place where they have networked and learned from one another.

FPRs indicated that grantees participated in a wide range of professional development activities, including attending professional conferences, training with local universities, taking field-specific courses, participating in workshops (e.g. technology workshops, archiving workshops, etc.), and participating in online courses. Of the sampled FY2021 FPRs, 74% demonstrated outcomes related to building professional development and staffing. This most often came in the form of training and conference attendance, but also included funding for staff in some cases. Throughout the assessment data, grantees reported IMLS funds allowed them to hire new staff (e.g., an assistant librarian, an archivist, additional support staff for projects, etc.). However, some interviewees reported that temporary (grant-based) positions are not always the preferred means of staffing, and commonly reported longer-term or more permanent staffing needs.

This assessment found that grant outcomes that improve staffing and professional development meet the perpetual need for skilled staffing expressed by earlier evaluation findings (Staffing for Community Needs and Grants Management). Grantees have gained valuable experience through trainings, conferences, partnerships, workshops, and other professional development opportunities. These skills enabled grantees to better serve their communities, for example (as noted in grantee spotlights), through sharing knowledge acquired from these opportunities and providing access to historical materials.

#### Grantee Spotlights: Increasing Staffing and Professional Development

The next two grantee spotlights illustrate the kinds of professional development activities and staffing gains that grantee organizations have experienced through IMLS NA/AN/NH grant programs. These spotlights show that professional development goes beyond developing proficiency in new skills for Native library and museum professionals. In both examples, we see that the training staff received was subsequently leveraged to expand programming and increase access to existing services.

The Seneca Nation of Indians used an IMLS Native American/Native Hawaiian (NANH) Museum Services grant to support staff training for their *Living Longhouse Project* **(Grantee Spotlight: Living Longhouse Project)**. As the Tribe finished building a replica longhouse, their staff needed interpretive training to better serve as guides for visitors. Staff participated in training with experts in Seneca history at Ganondagan State Historic Site—a site with its own living longhouse and experienced interpretive guides. In their FPR, the grantees discussed that these trainings had already led to the *"planning of further joint staff development trainings, and interpretive trainings."* After the project, the longhouse and surrounding areas, such as a community garden, were *"being developed into an interpretive village, where visitors will be immersed in the living history of the Six Nations people."* In sum, the project better prepared staff in the short term while paving a path for further development, and in turn, the community as a whole benefited from *"cultural tours of our long-held lifeways… that many are no longer familiar with."*

The second example of staffing gains from IMLS funding comes from the *Delaware Nation's Historic Preservation Archives Assessment and Digitization Project* **(Grantee Spotlight: Delaware Nation Historic Preservation**

**Archives Assessment and Digitization)**. As part of this project, the Delaware Nation's Historic Preservation Office was able to hire an archivist from the Delaware Nation to support the planning, organization, and preservation of their Tribal archives. The project team and the new archivist gained professional training, learning from experts at the University of Oklahoma. The archivist took online training in digital archiving and *"was able to digitize and process over 36,000 files"* during the project period. The project's impact on the community came in the form of access: *"Photographs that were unorganized, not digitized and stored away out of the public's eye has now all been organized into safe and secure storage facilities, preserved digitally and cataloged for easy access, is now available for our tribal citizens to view in person or by reaching out to our archivist to receive digital copies."*

- **Grantee Spotlight: Living Longhouse Project**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Delaware Nation Historic Preservation Archives Assessment and Digitization**

### 3. Expand or Enhance the Delivery of Library or Museum Services

Expanding or enhancing the delivery of library or museum services is a broad category encompassing all areas of IMLS funding as a requirement. This section focuses more narrowly on museum and library services that are not covered in other sections of the report. The main topics highlighted in this section include the ways IMLS NA/AN/NH grant programs support work to expand or enhance services through increased community engagement, increased access to institutional resources, improved technology and facilities improvements, and other support to enhance service delivery.

Results from the survey (Figure 4) indicate 35% of all grantees associated their IMLS grant with expanded collections, increased access to collections, and expanded use of technology. Interviewed grantees articulated the important role technology plays in expanding access. As Kituwah Services summarizes, *"Being fully outfitted with the digital infrastructure allows Indigenous libraries and museums to expand their reach, offer innovative programs, and operate at their best. To reach audiences, to enhance program design and delivery, and to deepen the visitor experience, the use of digital media has increasingly become… expected."*

Meanwhile, Kituwah Services found through interviews that access does not always depend on technology reporting. *"IMLS funding provides their communities with critical resources to design and deliver quality cultural programs to individuals who otherwise would not have access. These grants, often no more than $10,000 (Basic Grants), have enabled libraries to purchase children's first books and build satellite little free libraries, expanding access."* Grantees interviewed also discussed other aspects of expanding collections, such as purchasing large-print books for Elders (Kituwah Services, 2024b).

All the sampled FPRs indicated grant projects enhanced or expanded the delivery of museum or library services in aligning with IMLS mission. The themes described above were all present in the sampled results. Organizations interviewed generally indicated that access and the ability to serve their community, regardless of where they live, was a top priority.

Overall, the outcomes assessment found that IMLS funds provided grantees with more flexibility to successfully achieve their organizational missions with activities ranging from expanding services to purchasing necessary supplies and resources or making equipment or facilities improvements. Kituwah Services states, *"Grantees state that they're able to provide more to their communities because of IMLS funding and can be more flexible in their activities because they do not have to request funding through their Tribes."* Kituwah continues, *"One Basic grantee explained that through the basic grant they were able to create a small library in their career center where they host children's programs and reading time"* (Kituwah Services, 2024b).

#### Grantee Spotlights: Expanding and Enhancing the Delivery of Library or Museum Services

The following grantee spotlights illustrate ways that IMLS grantees have expanded and enhanced the delivery of library and museum services. These projects show how grantees expand and enhance their services through increased community engagement, increased access to institutional resources, improved technology and facilities improvements, and other support that enhances service delivery.

The San Carlos Apache Tribal Council's project *Community Reading Corners: Connecting to the Library in My District* **(Grantee Spotlight: Community Reading Corners: Connecting to the Library in My District)** expanded

library collections (books) and provided "basic building blocks" (materials like carts) to support reading in the community. The Tribal Council created four Reading Corners to expand the reach of San Carlos Public Library and San Carlos Apache College Library. The Reading Corners established locations throughout the community where patrons could access library resources. These sites maintained small collections of materials for use by community members such as children and Elders who do not have reliable transportation. Of the project's impacts, the grantees noted, *"I learned this is a very good way to reach children and parents to open that pathway to literacy."* One community member noted, *"My grandchildren sit and read at the Gilson Wash gym when their parents visit for events. They talked with me about the books they read; my 9-year-old grandson asked me to get him a kid's cookbook since he saw it there at the Gilson Wash reading corner."* The project contributed to shaping identity and building community, as illustrated in the following quotes. *"There are books in the collection that relate to our community; one example was an Apache Girl's Coming of Age Ceremony, a book with information and pictures that our community can relate to since that ceremony is conducted here in San Carlos."* The grantees continue, that *"Brand new books, a new carpet to sit on, and a place where children are able to hold, touch and read the books in a very public environment is a positive connection to the community."*

The State of Hawai'i Department of Land & Natural Resources used IMLS funds to develop digital tools that gave community members access to resources virtually during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic **(Grantee Spotlight: Expanding Public Access to Kaho'olawe through Live-Stream Video and Virtual Reality)**. Together with the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, their project *Expanding Public Access to Kaho'olawe through Live-Stream Video and Virtual Reality* developed virtual methods to expand access to the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve. Among other resources, the grantees created a virtual reality Huaka'i, or expedition, of the island and made it available to individuals around the world through Google Maps. Of the project's significance, the grantees wrote, *"To the people of Hawai'i, especially to Native Hawaiians, Kaho'olawe is a symbol of resilience and an opportunity to rebuild a living and thriving cultural heritage."* The grantees noted that the project provided *"safe and meaningful access to [the] Reserve"* and that their tools can *"serve as models for other natural museum spaces that hope to maintain or expand public access beyond a physical means."*

- **Grantee Spotlight: Community Reading Corners: Connecting to the Library in My District**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Expanding Public Access to Kaho'olawe through Live-Stream Video and Virtual Reality**

### 4. Provide Lifelong Learning Activities

This section focuses on educational programming and organized learning activities, including exhibitions and interactive technological activities (websites, apps, etc.). IMLS funding supports a large range of projects including reading programs, storytimes, trainings, clubs, and historical exhibitions. Examples of lifelong learning outcomes include improved literacy, increased life- and employment skills, increased educational confidence and engagement, new opportunities for multigenerational learning, understanding of community histories, and expanded community building, among others.

Both the Appreciative Inquiry Summit and the semi-structured interviews discussed the importance of educational programming focused on literacy. Summarizing the Appreciative Inquiry Summit conversations, Kituwah Services writes that *"Improving literacy is one of the primary objectives shared across many of the participants. Participants approach their work in literacy with incredible passion and creativity. IMLS funds support book giveaway programs, literacy volunteer support, and access to education resources. It was expressed by a number of participants, without IMLS funding the impact on building literacy would be diminished"* (Kituwah Services, 2024a).

Interviews reinforced this theme. Kituwah Services writes, *"All of the Basic grant interviewees indicated that but for IMLS funding, the Tribe's library program would not exist. While these grants are limited in size, they are used for essential programs and services. This is regardless of organization size or capacity. For smaller communities interviewed, IMLS dollars were the only funds used to buy new books, support the computer lab, and offer literacy training"* (Kituwah Services, 2024b).

Additionally, on average, across all types of organizations responding to the survey, childhood programming and adult educational programming received the highest reported organizational priority after general operating support. Of the sampled FY2021 FPRs, 71% percent of projects facilitated lifelong learning activities. Examples included exhibitions, reading programs, storytimes, technology use and online research training, workshops, a healthy eating program, and clubs (gardening, makers club, etc.).

The assessment of grant outcomes found that Native libraries and museums consider lifelong learning activities an important priority for their communities, and grantees are designing programs that align with IMLS NA/AN/NH grant programs. In turn, IMLS's NA/AN/NH grant programs have supported a multitude of lifelong learning activities. Furthermore, IMLS grants have often been critical for the delivery of literacy programs and other educational programming for all ages.

### Grantee Spotlights: Providing Lifelong Learning Activities

IMLS's NA/AN/NH grant programs have been critical to providing lifelong learning activities, including literacy programs, educational programming, exhibitions, and activities for all ages. The grantee spotlights illustrate how IMLS grant projects have increased literacy, educational confidence, employment and life skills, multigenerational learning, understanding of community history, and community building.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe illustrates just one of many IMLS-supported exhibitions **(Grantee Spotlight: Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe - "400 Years Ago" Exhibit)**. The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe designed and installed a new museum exhibit to mark the 1620 landing of the Mayflower in Wampanoag territory, called *"400 Years Ago."* The exhibit teaches visitors about the cultural implications for the Tribal community during the first five years of English settlement in the area. It tells Wampanoag history in the voices of its own people and teaches about colonization in a way that a variety of age groups can understand. As the grantee states, *"The final installation looks great and has been well received. The final product is something all Wampanoag can be proud of… [Patrons] have embraced and enjoyed the fascinating new 400 years ago exhibit."*

The Wyandotte Nation's *Project REACH (Reading, Engineering, and Arts through Cultural Heritage)* illustrates the many kinds of learning activities that grantees develop **(Grantee Spotlight: Project REACH (Reading, Engineering, and Arts through Cultural Heritage))**. Through a Library Services: Enhancement (NAE) Grant, the Wyandotte Nation's library was able to offer Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STREAM) programming, set up a digital early literacy station, and provide language and cultural programming to library patrons. The grantee reported that these activities all increased interest in the library and that the STREAM-related activities have built *"digital literacy skills, confidence in science, technology, reading, engineering, art, and math among youth, [have] enhanced educational resources, and improved tools and resources for families and youth."* Outcomes for children include *"growth in confidence with [STREAM] topics."* The grantee also noted that *"The students have gained increased knowledge and self-esteem through participation and teamwork."*

The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community used an IMLS Basic (NAB) Grant to provide lifelong learning activities to its children **(Grantee Spotlight: Swinomish Early Education Center)**. They created a welcoming library space in their early education center and stocked it with culturally representative items and materials. They used this space for reading time and educational activities that proved enriching for the larger community. For example, 4th graders visited the center to read to younger children, and *"This win-win scenario encourages reading, skill development and relationships for both age groups."* Similarly, kids especially enjoyed being read to by the Swinomish Police Department, which is *"a great opportunity for the children to get to know their community helpers."* Other activities, such as a harvest curriculum with a hands-on gardening component, allow children to *"experience the natural world no matter their age or developmental stage."*

NA/AN/NH grant programs did not just benefit younger children, they reached populations of all ages. One example is the Modoc Nation's Basic (NAB) Grant project, *Multigenerational Learning Promoting Successful Lives and Preserving Culture* **(Grantee Spotlight: Multigenerational Learning Promoting Successful Lives and Preserving Culture)**. The Modoc Nation Library offered basic computer skills classes for adults, multigenerational healthy cooking classes, and child and caregiver storytelling and reading sessions. The grantee reported that this project *"strengthened community engagement with new learning activities and programs designed for community members of all ages."* Programming led to *"enhancing members engagement,*

*increasing employability skills, developing life skills, and providing a place for connection to all tribal programs,"* among other benefits featured in the grantee spotlight.

- **Grantee Spotlight: Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe - "400 Years Ago" Exhibit**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Project REACH (Reading, Engineering, and Arts through Cultural Heritage)**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Swinomish Early Education Center**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Multigenerational Learning Promoting Successful Lives and Preserving Culture**

### 5. Understand and Respond to Evolving Community Needs

Evaluation data and FPRs indicated that formal strategic planning and needs assessment activities occurred as part of some IMLS-funded projects, but these did not tend to be the grantees' *primary* goal for their projects; rather, projects were most often motivated by an existing need. Interviews revealed that Indigenous knowledge and resource centers, by design, are often already highly in touch with community needs, supporting the interpretation that grantees use IMLS support to enhance their capacity to respond to needs more than to define them.

Through interviews, Kituwah Services highlighted the dynamic and responsive nature of Indigenous knowledge and resource centers. Interview respondents noted always trying to understand the needs of their community and finding their own niche to provide services that were not being provided elsewhere. One interviewee described the experience at their organization as driven specifically by the visitors' needs. Kituwah Services describes Indigenous knowledge and resource centers as "*continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of their communities.*"[21] Grantees further noted in interviews that their job is to serve their communities and thus, their priority is their community's priority. Kituwah Services writes, *"the organizations need to be adaptive and responsive to the surrounding community"* (Kituwah Services, 2024b).

Just over a third of sampled FY2021 projects showed outcomes of explicitly aiming to understand and responding to evolving community needs (34%), for example, in the form of strategic planning or assessments to capture community needs or feedback. Native American Library Services Basic (NAB) Grants demonstrated this result most frequently (47%), often identifying a gap or need in the community such as increasing access to library locations or offering services to build employment skills, and then addressing that need through the grant. Other times, the staff assessed the offerings their community would like or observed evolving needs, such as needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The assessment data illustrated that understanding and responding to community needs was a central function of Indigenous knowledge and resource centers. Grant projects were most commonly designed to respond to already-defined needs, as opposed to measuring unmet needs or strategic planning activities. The ability of grantees to articulate the needs of their, communities is also critical to successful grant applications, as all IMLS applicants were asked to identify a need or challenge that their project would address as part of their grant application and project design.

#### Grantee Spotlights: Understanding and Responding to Evolving Community Needs

The following grantee spotlights illustrate the responsive, community-focused nature of grantee institutions, as well as ways in which grantees use IMLS funds to understand and adapt to changing community needs. Sometimes, this is through using IMLS funds to explicitly study current or future needs, but often, these organizations already understand community needs and use IMLS funds to help successfully respond to them. Additionally, these examples all illustrate the importance of IMLS providing flexibility to grantees to respond to community needs, as noted in Recommendation 4 below.

The Colusa Indian Community Council (CICC) successfully identified and served its community's needs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic **(Grantee Spotlight: Colusa Indian Community Council)**. CICC had planned to use its Library Services: Basic (NAB) Grant funding to refine tutoring spaces for their after-school youth program. However, when the pandemic forced children to stay home, CICC requested (and received IMLS approval for the change) to

21 The preceding examples draw on results from all interview cohorts, as opposed to just grantees.

create a virtual classroom—including additional computer equipment, bandwidth, and supplies. Barbie Buchanan, Director of Community Services at CICC, explained to IMLS, *"The kids expressed the need for help academically, emotionally, and socially. And not having access to the library areas and tutoring staff they have come to rely on so heavily is proving to be difficult for them."* Because of this, she explained, *"we knew we had to figure out a way to offer a path where everyone in the community can feel connected while we're all disconnected."* This effort to *"celebrate a new kind of learning and find ways to be creative"* proved successful, with parents showing gratitude for the activities and social outlet for their children (IMLS, n.d.).

Another example of understanding and responding to community needs comes from the Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, who conducted a Library Services: Basic (NAB) Grant project titled *Ojibwe Learning Center and Library Needs Assessment and Programming Development* **(Grantee Spotlight: Ojibwe Learning Center and Library Needs Assessment and Programming Development)**. They conducted a strategic planning exercise and built feedback channels to understand visitor and staff needs. As they stated in their FPR, *"Visitor feedback illustrated areas for improvement in visitor experiences that we were able to address … including accessibility, improved work stations, availability of social areas, and improved visual experience for viewing displayed artifacts from our collections."* Similarly, their staff needs assessment helped the center's director identify and provide needed staff trainings on museum exhibitions and collections management.

One project specifically aimed at planning is the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's NANH Museum Services, Grant *Interpretive Plan for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Museum* **(Grantee Spotlight: Interpretive Plan for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Museum)**. The goal of this project was to produce an interpretive plan to guide the future development of the Yavapai Nation's museum. The interpretive plan, based on broad community participation, provided a road map with clear steps for ongoing phases of development. As the grantee states, the award *"greatly improved the Culture department's ability to inform, educate, and showcase Yavapai history and culture for the community and the public."*

*"Since we have made many improvements to the museum, our Yavapai tours alone have sold out for the last two years in 2022 and 2023."*

- **Grantee Spotlight: Colusa Indian Community Council**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Ojibwe Learning Center and Library Needs Assessment and Programming Development**
- **Grantee Spotlight: Interpretive Plan for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Museum**

### 6. Develop or Expand Partnerships

Partnership development tied for the fourth most commonly reported capacity gain on the survey (Figure 4) and the fifth most commonly identified outcome in the FPRs (Figure 5). Although there was limited reporting of partnerships in the evaluation data and FPRs, it should be noted that partnerships are commonly included in grant applications and award data outside of the FPRs. Based on the assessment data, it does appear that new or enhanced partnerships can be extremely valuable to grantees who forge them.

Interviewed grantees reported that the partnerships built through IMLS grants were important and valued. One interviewee mentioned that the best outcome of their grant was establishing a collaborative relationship with all the organizations in their community that also promote reading literacy. Grantees also expressed the value of and desire for inter-Tribal support networks to share ideas, inspiration, and information.

Of the sampled FY2021 FPRs, 29% of reports contained references to partnerships as a component of the grant project, but not a primary outcome. Partnerships were most commonly referenced for the competitive library services grant programs (Library: Enhancement, Native Hawaiian Library Services: 63%).

The assessment found that collaboration with a common purpose allows grantees to learn more, deliver more, and ultimately maximize the benefits they deliver to their communities. Grantees report benefiting when they share resources with other community and educational organizations, as these partnerships increase the organization's capacity and the resources they can provide to their communities. Although partnerships are a less frequent outcome of the studied IMLS grants, roughly 1 in 4 sampled FY2021 projects developed or expanded a collaborative partnership and reported associated benefits.

### Grantee Spotlights: Developing or Expanding Partnerships

These grantee spotlights highlight the power of collaboration among organizations with shared goals, enabling grantees to enhance their knowledge, expand their impact, and ultimately maximize the benefits delivered to their communities. By working together, these organizations not only achieve their immediate objectives, but also foster sustainable partnerships that extend beyond the duration of the grant. This collaborative approach ensures that the positive outcomes and innovations developed during the projects continue to benefit the communities long after the initial funding period has ended.

The Alutiiq Museum's *Qayaq Angit'sqaq: The Returned Kayak Project* relied on a collaborative relationship between two museums **(Grantee Spotlight: Qayaq Angit'sqaq – The Returned Kayak Project)**. This project originated when Sven Haakanson from the Alutiiq Museum and Ronnie Lind, a Karluk Elder, discovered a rare 19th-century kayak at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. For their IMLS NANH Museum Services Grant, the Alutiiq Museum updated its current kayak exhibit, developed educational programming, and worked with the Peabody Museum to ship the rare kayak to the Alutiiq Museum for a 10-year loan. After the project, Harvard returned the kayak permanently to the Alutiiq Museum. Of the long-lasting partnership between the museums, and the ultimate return of the kayak, Haakanson said, *"I am… so appreciative of the respect given back to us in that act… This whole process hasn't been one of confrontation, it has been one of collaboration."* Regarding cultural and community benefits of this successful collaboration, Haakanson explains, "*it puts this knowledge back into a living context where when you see it, it changes how you see the past… it's there forever, for the community."* The return also *"opens up … opportunities for kayaks to start taking a new role back in our communities"* through the museum's plans to study and build more kayaks (Rogerson, 2023).

Another grantee spotlight shows the value of collaboration in the context of creating educational programming. The Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE), in partnership with the 'Ike Hawai'i Science Center, created mobile hands-on science exhibits as part of their NANH Museum Services project, *'Ike Hawai'i Science Center Exhibit* **(Grantee Spotlight: 'Ike Hawai'i Science Center Exhibit)**. Sanoe Marfil, Chief Programs Officer of INPEACE at the time, described to IMLS, *"I worked with a team of individuals including a project manager, a cultural specialist, and a scientist to achieve our goals."* Marfil shared, *"The most beneficial part of working on this project has been the opportunity to work with practitioners and experts who hold deep knowledge and have been crucial in the sharing of the practices with folks like us"* (IMLS, 2022).

- **Grantee Spotlight: Qayaq Angit'sqaq–The Returned Kayak Project**
- **Grantee Spotlight: 'Ike Hawai'i Science Center Exhibit**

### 7. Leverage New Funding Opportunities

Among the outcomes studied here, evidence is the least conclusive as to whether, and to what extent, grantees leverage new, external funding opportunities as an extension or outcome of their IMLS grants. This is partially due to the available data, as grant records are unlikely to report funding gains as project results. Survey (Figure 4) and interview respondents did sometimes report leveraging new funding, though they did not report this with high frequency compared to other outcomes.

The FY2021 sample of FPRs contained no reports of leveraging new funding opportunities as a result of IMLS funds. In interviews, two grantees spoke about funding gains that resulted from IMLS grants. In Kituwah Services' words, *"IMLS support conveys quality programming and organization capacity to other potential funders"* (Kituwah Services, 2024b). Another grantee also thought that demonstrating results from IMLS grants would help with generating future funding from other sources.

This assessment found that although grantee reports from the survey and interviews support the claim that IMLS funding can lead to leveraging new funding opportunities, this might not always be cited as a direct benefit of IMLS funding. Overall, relative to the other outcomes studied here, gaining new, external funding opportunities appears to be a less commonly tracked benefit of IMLS funding. More study is needed to fully understand the extent of this outcome.

### Grantee Spotlight: Leveraging New Funding Opportunities

Although rare, grantees did occasionally indicate the importance of new funding opportunities as outcomes of IMLS grants. For example, in FY2020, the Apsaalooke (Crow) Tribe launched a strategic planning initiative to guide the development of a cultural center on the campus of Little Big Horn College. The spotlight details how they received two other grants to continue their work as a *"direct result of [the] IMLS grant with which this project began"* **(Grantee Spotlight: Planning a Complete Apsaalooke (Crow) Indian Learning and Cultural Center at Little Big Horn College)**.

- **Grantee Spotlight: Planning a Complete Apsaalooke (Crow) Indian Learning and Cultural Center at Little Big Horn College**

## DISCUSSION

### Conclusions

The outcomes attributed to IMLS's NA/AN/NH grants are a critical measure of the impact and success of the Native grant programs. Across all outcome areas and grant programs, grantees reported meaningful results for their organizations, their staff, their visitors, and their communities. Considering the seven outcome areas, four stood out as especially prevalent, impactful, and meaningful to communities:

- **Preserve or retain cultural heritage.** Cultural preservation is fundamental to the Indigenous institutions that IMLS supports, and grantees used IMLS funds to preserve, revitalize, and actively practice their cultural traditions. Grantees demonstrated strong success in building culturally significant projects that preserve traditions, history, heritage, language, and culturally significant items. Moreover, grantees reported deeply meaningful personal and communal benefits resulting from their work, including community resilience, continuation, identity, and pride.

- **Increase staffing and professional development.** Professional development was a common grant result and was also the most commonly reported capacity gain among all of the studied outcomes. Grantees have gained valuable experience in the form of trainings, conferences, partnerships, workshops, and other professional development opportunities, all of which enabled grantees to better serve their communities. Increased staffing also occurred and was a valuable part of IMLS projects that required dedicated staffing; however, short-term, grant-based positions were not always sustainable solutions for grantees.

- **Expand or enhance the delivery of library or museum services.** IMLS requires that all projects enhance or expand museum or library service delivery. Projects often focused on enhancing collections, promoting access and patron/visitor engagement, and providing more basic building blocks that enable museum and library service delivery. These projects demonstrated community benefits including (but not limited to) increased access to educational programming, expanded programing through new and/or updated technology, and dedicated spaces for library and museum services.

- **Provide lifelong learning activities.** IMLS's Native grant programs provided a multitude of lifelong learning activities, with grants playing a critical role in literacy programs and other educational programming, exhibitions, and activities for all ages. Community benefits of these activities included, but were not limited to, improved literacy, increased educational confidence, employment and life skills, multigenerational learning, increased understanding of community histories, and community building.

The Native grant programs also demonstrated outcomes related to understanding and responding to evolving community needs, developing or expanding partnerships, and leveraging new funding opportunities. However, interpretation of these results is more subtle, because the data did not always directly report these outcomes. The assessment found that understanding community needs is an existing strength of Indigenous knowledge and resource centers, and thus, IMLS funding tends to expand and enhance what organizations can do in their communities. New partnerships were seen as valuable when they increase an organization's knowledge, capacity, and offerings, although new partnerships were usually an indirect outcome as opposed to a stated objective of a project. Lastly, although grantees reported that IMLS funding indicated quality programming to other funders, additional funding was not always reported to IMLS, making it difficult to understand the extent of this outcome.

## IMLS RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1: Study Long-Term and Longitudinal Program Outcomes

Reporting requirements and electronic systems frequently change over time, making datasets inconsistent and sometimes incomplete. This limitation made it challenging to comprehensively analyze project outcomes across the evaluation period, and ultimately restricted the analysis of FPRs to FY2021. Furthermore, there is no method to capture longitudinal information on project outcomes that may have occurred years or decades after grant completion. Finally, grant reporting requirements are designed to comply with administrative requirements and may not align with the goals of evaluative research.

This assessment found reliable evidence that IMLS grants lead to valuable outcomes for grantees and their communities. However, a more comprehensive outcomes study would require additional quantitative data, including administrative records, grantee reports, and longitudinal trends. Understanding the longitudinal impacts of projects is a particularly valuable opportunity for future study. For example, a review of grant records for repeat applicants could inform how community needs, grant projects, and outcomes change from year to year.

### Recommendation 2: Center Indigenous Definitions of Program Success

The definition of a successful grant program highlights an important distinction between the goals and evaluative criteria used by grant administrators and the outcomes that grantees hold to be most valuable to their communities. Throughout the course of the overall evaluation and this assessment, Indigenous study participants, researchers, and Indigenous subject matter experts (SMEs) highlighted examples of program success that were compatible with the goals of the IMLS Native grant programs, but not specifically identified in the original research questions. For example, in one discussion (see Appendix B: Methodology, Appreciative Inquiry Summit), Indigenous participants communicated that successful programs and services supported community resilience and sustainability, directly benefited the community, were available to the whole community, and promoted collaboration and sharing.

Similarly, IMLS consulted with Indigenous SMEs from the library and museum fields throughout this project. These SMEs noted that while grants may fund specific activities like digitizing collections or purchasing equipment, the ultimate "why" of these projects is bigger. Successfully implementing a grant can be defined in many ways. Administrative performance measures may include completing all planned activities and expending all grant funds within the project timeline, whereas community-centric, long-term, lasting impacts may encompass preserving Native languages, sustaining cultural practices, and promoting community cohesion and identity to support generational growth and stability. Future evaluations should underscore the importance of these distinctions and, to the extent possible, align the evaluative definition of "successful grant programs" with "success" as defined by grantees to better understand how IMLS can best support desired outcomes.

### Recommendation 3: Consider Ways to Expand Development of Professional Communities and Networks

Although there was limited direct evidence of new or expanded partnerships resulting from grant projects, partnerships are common, and grantees who reported partnerships discussed the benefits of collaborations for their projects and institutions. Furthermore, interviewees emphasized the value of IMLS-supported conferences as places to share ideas and connect with a community of professional peers. Encouraging collaboration is another sustainable way to help address gaps in organizational capacity (e.g., staff, resources) so that organizations can share knowledge and resources where possible.

Continued and expanded investment in networking opportunities could benefit communities in terms of idea sharing, resource sharing, collaboration, and grant-writing support. Networking between grantees and those who have not participated in IMLS programs would also help extend the benefits and knowledge of the IMLS grantee community. Finally, encouraging collaboration could also help Native libraries and museums identify new funding opportunities, as individuals share their knowledge of existing opportunities and advice on securing funding. Future research should examine the overlap between professional and social networks, financial resources, and grant opportunities to understand how these networks can support creating and strengthening assets of Indigenous cultural organization.

### Recommendation 4: Continue Promoting Program Design and Procedures That Enable Community Self-Determination

When conducting this study, Kituwah Services noted that IMLS's NA/AN/NH awards inherently support grantee self-determination because IMLS does not prescribe the type, focus, reach, or scale of each project. Instead, applicants are empowered to identify and prioritize their own needs and design their projects around meeting those needs. Interviews illustrated that staff at Indigenous knowledge and resource centers are attuned to their communities' needs and are experts at recognizing and responding to these needs. IMLS awards cover a broad range of activities, and interviewees reported that the application and post-award processes were relatively easy compared to those of other federal agencies. These characteristics enable grantees to readily develop and carry out projects that are important to their communities and facilitate self-determination.

Additionally, this report highlights the meaningful benefits that IMLS's NA/AN/NH grantees have produced for their communities through a wide variety of projects, including preserving languages and oral histories, building literacy programs, caring for and providing access to collections, connecting with community members both local and non-local, providing educational resources for Native and non-Native individuals of all ages, building children's educational confidence through youth programming, and much more. Given program success and the new federal policy of self-determination (EO 14112, 2023), which states, *"it is the policy of the United States to design and administer Federal funding and support programs for Tribal Nations, consistent with applicable law and to the extent practicable, in a manner that better recognizes and supports Tribal sovereignty and self-determination,"* it is a recommendation of this assessment that IMLS continues to allow flexibility in funding that supports self-determination, as opposed to developing prescriptive uses for funding. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that while the IMLS NA/AN/NH grant programs allow for a large degree of flexibility, some "limits" to self-determination currently exist. These include limits on allowable costs, the short-term duration of grants (1–3 years), and program eligibility constraints. It is therefore recommended that IMLS continue considering areas where it can maximize flexibility and reduce burden, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

# Conclusion.

Throughout the course of this evaluation study, IMLS learned a great deal about the importance of incorporating Native Community perspectives into not only its findings, but also the report development process itself.

As a result, the findings and recommendations speak broadly to what is important across museum and library service organizations within Native Communities, such as supporting organizational capacity-building needs and improving grantmaking practices to improve their accessibility. The findings also will provide information for IMLS to consider when making decisions and resource allocations and may better accommodate the unique distinctions and contributions of these populations. The uniqueness of organizational structures comes from the concepts of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, where museum and library services are seen not only as providers of books and information, but also significant contributors to a given community's overall health and wellbeing.

Of note, the Grant Outcomes section speaks to the value and meaning of these grant programs in Native Communities. The analyses found that four outcome areas stood out as both frequently occurring and impactful and meaningful to communities: preserving or retaining cultural heritage, increasing staffing and professional development, expanding or enhancing the delivery of library or museum services, and providing lifelong learning activities. The analyses found that community knowledge and resource centers—such as libraries, museums, cultural centers, archives, historic preservation offices, and more—are highly attuned and responsive to community needs and provide invaluable spaces for culture to thrive in communities. These assets enable IMLS grants to make strong organizational and community impacts.

The findings from this paper represent a midpoint of discovery for IMLS, where it will continue to build upon past success and use new learnings to advance the critical work of its grant programs for Native Communities. Specifically, these findings will help IMLS prioritize discussions with Native Communities as the agency considers making changes and improvements and wherever possible, support the critical principles of U.S. Government respect for Tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

# Appendix A: Evaluation Research Questions

# Appendix A: Evaluation Research Questions

The research questions and their sub-questions that informed the evaluation study include:

1. What are the current and various needs of Native American tribes and nonprofit organizations serving primarily Native Hawaiians that are eligible to apply for IMLS funds?
    a. What are the top priorities of these eligible entities with respect to the type and size of the organization and the characteristics of the communities and/or nations?
2. How do IMLS grantmaking goals, objectives, and grant requirements align with the community needs and priorities?
    a. Are the current funding allocations sufficient to support the types of grants communities are interested in applying for?
    b. How has the COVID pandemic influenced interests related to grant applications?
3. How many potentially eligible Native American tribes and nonprofits serving primarily Native Hawaiians exist?
    a. What are the differences in how they are organized and governed?
4. How many Native American tribes and nonprofits serving primarily Native Hawaiians have applied for an IMLS grant?
    a. How many have been awarded a grant?
5. What organization types (e.g., cultural center, museum, library, community center) are represented in applications for IMLS funds?
6. What organizational constraints keep tribes and organizations serving primarily Native Hawaiians from applying to IMLS?
7. What capacity do tribes and organizations serving primarily Native Hawaiians need to demonstrate to apply for and be awarded an IMLS grant?
8. How does the IMLS grantmaking process address the capacity limitations of potential applicants?
9. What can IMLS do to better connect to all potential applicants?
    a. How can IMLS address applicant capacity issues?
    b. How might IMLS consider expanding its reach to tribes and organizations serving primarily Native Hawaiians?
10. How can IMLS better communicate and partner with communities to increase the number and improve the quality of applications?
    a. Who should be the key partners and what are the best opportunities to build new relationships?
11. What are the barriers and challenges that entities face when applying for IMLS grants?
12. What is the level of understanding of eligibility and of the processes associated with preparing an application, reviewing an application, and carrying out an award?
13. What do successful vs. unsuccessful applications look like within each grant program and across all grant programs over time?
14. Are there any key factors that distinguish those who have applied and obtained grants vis-à-vis those who have not applied (e.g., size of institution, size of grant, geography, type of applicant, age of institution)?
15. Are there any key factors that distinguish between those who have applied and received grants vs. those who have applied but did not receive grants?
16. How does the IMLS peer review process incorporate cultural acknowledgment with respect to Native American and Native Hawaiian grant applicants?
17. How effective is peer review feedback to applicants as they revise applications and seek IMLS funding in subsequent funding cycles?

**18.** How effective has IMLS been in designing and administering grantmaking across the separate programs in OLS and OMS?

- **a.** What seems to work well and what causes challenges?

**19.** To what extent did the grantees report having built organizational capacity through new staffing, skills building, ability to take care of collections, etc., relative to their projects (e.g., leadership and staffing, organizational structures & systems, stewardship and quality of the library or museum collection, accessibility of library or museum collection)?

**20.** To what extent did the grantees report having built capacities due to funded project (e.g., developing new partnerships with other grantees, using grant to attract new funding sources)?

**21.** In what ways have grantees asked for approval of changes or extensions to their awards and why did they ask for changes?

- **a.** How often do changes need to be made?
- **b.** What are the internal processes needed to implement the changes?
- **c.** How well does IMLS respond to change requests from the grantee perspective?

**22.** What capacity do Native American/Alaska Native tribes and organizations serving primarily Native Hawaiians need to successfully implement an IMLS grant?

**23.** What characteristics do high performing grantees have in common (e.g., size of institution, size of grant, geography, type of applicant, age of institution, awarded multiple IMLS grants)?

**24.** How are other federal and non-federal entities meeting the funding and other needs of these communities, and what is IMLS's niche relative to their work?

- **a.** What can IMLS learn from them?

**25.** How have the IMLS grant programs made a difference in the capacity of the tribes and their organizations to:

- **a.** Expand or enhance the delivery of library or museum services?
- **b.** Preserve or retain cultural assets?
- **c.** Provide lifelong learning activities?
- **d.** Understand and respond to evolving community needs?
- **e.** Build organizational capacity (e.g., staffing, training)?
- **f.** Develop or expand partnerships; Who are these partners and in what ways are they collaborating?
- **g.** Leverage new funding opportunities?

**26.** How do the accomplishments differ based on grant program and award size?

**27.** If the grantee had not received financial support from IMLS, would the project have been realized?

- **a.** What funding sources would have been accessed?
- **b.** Would the timeline for implementation have been met?

**28.** Are there any promising practices/models that can be shared with other communities that may benefit from lessons learned?

**29.** How does IMLS define existing measures of performance and/or outcomes?

**30.** How do grantees experience the reporting requirements?

- **a.** How does IMLS staff utilize the information collected?

# Appendix B: Methodology

## OVERVIEW

IMLS contracted with Kituwah Services, a Tribally owned business, to conduct an evaluation of its four Native Communities grant programs. The evaluation was instituted as part of IMLS's statutory mission to conduct analyses, identify trends, and measure the impact of its programs (20 U.S.C. § 9101 et seq.) The evaluation considered grantmaking activities across the four grant programs:

- Native American Library Services: Basic (NAB) Grants
- Native American Library Services: Enhancement (NAE) Grants
- Native Hawaiian Library Services (NH) Grants
- Native American/Native Hawaiian (NANH) Museum Services Grants

Eligible entities[22] for the four grant programs serving NA/AN/NH communities include Federally Recognized Tribes (including Alaska Native village, regional corporations, and villages corporations (as defined in, or established pursuant to, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.) and organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians (as the term is defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7517).

The reference period for the evaluation is FY2015 to FY2021. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach that included the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, including administrative records, a self-administered survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, an Appreciative Inquiry Summit, and IMLS administrative records. The survey questionnaire, semi-structured interview protocols, and Appreciative Inquiry Summit outline are included for reference following the respective methodologies and limitations covered in this appendix. Data collection took place between July and November of 2022.

The evaluation design, including instrumentation, was developed by Kituwah Services in collaboration with an Urban Institute team experienced in conducting federal evaluations of programs that specifically serve NA/AN/NH communities. The evaluation plan and draft instruments were also reviewed by internal subject matter experts on NA/AN/NH communities, who provided recommendations to improve the availability of additional data, the clarity of questions and instructions, and the need for specific data elements.

## ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

### Application and Award Data

IMLS maintains administrative data for all NA/AN/NH grant applications and awards. This data classifies each submitted application as rejected, ineligible, awarded, or closed out across all NA/AN/NH grant programs. During the FY2015–FY2021 evaluation period, IMLS awarded 1,629 grants (1,478 Office of Library Services awards and 151 Office of Museum Services awards). Additionally, the application records provide the name of the applying organization, the program to which they applied, the amount requested, and, if approved, the amount awarded. Table 8 provides a summary of the number of grants awarded and the total funds awarded by each program during the evaluation period.

**Table 8: Summary of Awards by NA/AN/NH Program**

| Grant Program | Total Grants | Total Funds Awarded |
|---|---|---|
| Native American Library Services Basic (NAB) Grants | 1,323 | $12,005,541.00 |
| Native American Library Services Enhancement (NAB) Grants | 132 | $17,530,007.00 |
| Native Hawaiian Library Services (NH) Grants | 23 | $3,260,550.00 |
| Native American/Native Hawaiian (NANH) Museum Services Grants | 151 | $9,869,494.00 |
| **Total** | **1,629** | **$42,665,592.00** |

22 Please see IMLS authorization statute at 20 U.S.C. §§ 9101(5) (Definitions), 9161 (Services for Native Americans [library program]), and 9173(d) (Services for Native Americans [museum program]).

## SURVEY

Kituwah Services developed the survey questionnaire in coordination with the Urban Institute and IMLS. Additionally, IMLS hosted a public meeting of Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian organizations (NHOs) to solicit feedback on the proposed evaluation effort. This review led to the revision and consolidation of several questions to improve the survey's clarity and reduce respondent burden.

The questionnaire was administered using SurveyMonkey®. Respondents were given the option of receiving a mailed paper survey with a return envelope should they prefer that medium. No incentive payments or other gifts were offered to survey participants.

### Population Frame

The target population for the survey included all eligible entities for the four grant programs. Because the exact number of organizations or departments such as libraries, museums, archives, and cultural centers associated with eligible entities was unknown, Kituwah Services developed a population frame beginning with the known number of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)-designated Federally Recognized Tribes (n=574) and U.S. Department of the Interior-registered eligible NHOs (Department of the Interior, 2024) n=114) as described on page 12, section "Kanaka Maoli Communities." Additionally, IMLS grant records and Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) membership records revealed that 190 of the Federally Recognized Tribes and NHOs maintain both library and museum facilities, resulting in a population frame that included 878 Native organizations.

Kituwah Services stratified the 878 Native organizations into 3 cohorts based on the organizations' application history with IMLS. These cohorts included grantees, eligible non-applicants (ENAs), and unsuccessful applicants and are defined as follows:

**Grantee cohort:** According to IMLS administrative records, 1,630 grants were awarded between FY2015 and FY2021 across all four grant programs, with 1 application being subsequently withdrawn by the applicant. The grantee cohort includes 322 distinct applicants whose organizations were awarded funding for their grant application.

**Eligible non-applicant (ENA) cohort:** To derive the ENA cohort, Kituwah Services compiled a list of the 574 Federally Recognized Tribes, 114 Native Hawaiian organizations registered with the Department of the Interior, and 190 other eligible organizations identified through ATALM membership records. Kituwah Services then removed the 322 grantee organizations identified by IMLS administrative records. This resulted in 556 organizations in the ENA cohort.

**Unsuccessful applicant cohort:** According to IMLS records, 172 applications were rejected across all four grant programs between FY2015 and FY2021. For this group, Kituwah Services focused only on eligible entities that submitted at least 1 application between FY2015 and FY2021 and did not receive an award in any grant program during the evaluation period. Kituwah Services then removed duplicates of organizations that applied more than once, or organizations that were awarded grants reflected in other years' results, reducing the total rejected applicant cohort to 6 organizations.

### Response Rate

To encourage a high survey response rate, IMLS sent an email message announcing the survey and informing the recipients to expect an email invitation with the survey link from Kituwah Services within one week. Kituwah Services followed the IMLS email with an email invitation encouraging potential respondents to complete the survey via the SurveyMonkey® link specified in the message. Kituwah Services sent weekly reminder messages to all non-respondents. Native Communities with both a museum and a library were encouraged to complete a survey for each organization that received IMLS grant funding during the evaluation period. The survey requested that the person most familiar with the IMLS-funded program and/or project(s) complete the survey.

Kituwah Services expected a response rate of 30% to 35%. In total, 80 grantees, 41 ENAs, and 1 unsuccessful applicant responded to the survey. With an evaluation universe comprising 878 organizations, the response rate amounted to 13.9%. Due to receiving only 1 response from the unsuccessful applicants, Kituwah Services excluded this respondent from the survey results.

## INTERVIEWS

### Semi-Structured Design

Kituwah Services designed semi-structured interview protocols for four cohorts: grantees, ENAs, unsuccessful applicants, and federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The classification of the first three cohorts was the same as was used in the survey design. The fourth cohort included federal agencies and NGOs that support Native Communities through other initiatives that may complement IMLS.[23] The interviews were semi-structured to encourage conversational engagement and to enable follow-up questions to increase the depth or clarify responses. Kituwah Services designed the interview protocols based on Appreciative Inquiry principles.

Interview protocols were reviewed by subject matter experts prior to a review and approval by internal IMLS staff and the Urban Institute. Interviews were conducted with members of NA/AN/NH communities who are responsible for managing Native library and museum programs or services. Interviews lasted from 25 to 60 minutes.

### Interview Participation

Interviewees were recruited from a database of NA/AN/NH grant program contacts that was developed for this evaluation. The recruitment database included a grantee contact list provided by IMLS. ATALM assisted Kituwah Services in cross-referencing the grantee list with Native Communities that are eligible for IMLS funding but have never applied (i.e., ENAs). Kituwah Services then verified the contact information for each Native organization by conducting an Internet search and/or confirming through Native professional networks.

The goal of the qualitative interview portion of the IMLS evaluation was to conduct 26 interviews, 10 grantee interviews, 10 ENA interviews, and 6 unsuccessful applicant interviews. Efforts were made to recruit participants from across the 12 BIA regions and Hawaii, as well as from communities of varying sizes. Up to 4 emails and 2 follow-up phone calls were used to contact potential interviewees.

Ultimately, Kituwah Services recruited 10 grantees, 3 ENAs, and 2 unsuccessful applicants for a total of 15 semi-structured interviews. Interviewees held a range of positions, including Librarians, Museum Directors, Museum Curators, Administrators, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and both elected and appointed Tribal Officials. See Table 9 for the breakdown of interviews by cohort, organization, and services (library, museum, or both).

**Table 9: Interview Make Up by Cohort**

| Cohort | Federally Recognized Tribe | Alaska Native Community | Native Hawaiian 501(c)3 | Library | Museum | Both |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grantee | 6 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Eligible Non-Applicant | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Unsuccessful Applicant | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SUMMIT

Kituwah Services designed an Appreciative Inquiry Summit as a component to the IMLS Native American/Native Hawaiian grant program evaluation. The Appreciative Inquiry framework facilitates a participatory form of inquiry that focuses on organization strengths, defines opportunities, and helps shape future actions (Cooperrider and Whitney, 1999). One of the overarching objectives for the evaluation was to align the research with Indigenous epistemologies. Incorporating Appreciative Inquiry into the evaluation design served as a practical way of bridging Western and Indigenous approaches.

23 The federal agency cohort has not been included in the evaluation analysis because those interviews were unrelated to the community needs of Indigenous populations.

Using Appreciative Inquiry as an overarching framework reposition the inquiry to focus on self-determination and realizing opportunities to advance Indigenous ways of being. The Appreciative Inquiry approach helps construct a strong vision for the future based on existing assets. It encourages aspiration and fosters motivation to strive to realize a desired future. It also helps identify, construct, and realize opportunities that go beyond merely solving a problem or addressing a need.

### Summit Design

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit was designed as a 2.5-hour virtual convening conducted via Zoom, and had a recruitment goal of 30 participants representing Native Community organizations. To facilitate rich conversation among the participants, Kituwah Services designed the summit to include both large and small group discussions, using Zoom's breakout room feature. Full group discussions involved all participants, along with representatives from Kituwah Services. For small group discussions, the design included five virtual breakout rooms, each including up to six participants, two representatives from Kituwah Services, a facilitator, and a note-taker. Kituwah Services organized participants into breakout rooms based on organization type (library or museum) and geographical distribution.

### Summit Participation

Kituwah Services drew a purposeful sample of 60 organizations eligible for IMLS NA/AN/NH grants and assumed a 50% response rate to the invitation, with the goal of having 30 individuals participate. The sample included equal representation from libraries and museums with geographic distribution across the 12 BIA regions. Alaska Native villages and Native Hawaiian organizations were over-sampled relative to the 11 BIA regions comprising the contiguous 48 states. The Appreciative Inquiry Summit was scheduled for July 12, 2022, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time. Each organization received a "save the date" email message from IMLS 4 weeks prior to the summit. Kituwah Services followed up with 5 reminder messages over the 3 weeks prior to the event, and a final email reminder on the day of the summit. Participation fell short of expectations, with 10 participants attending the Zoom meeting. Seven of the 12 BIA regions were represented, including Alaska, but no Native Hawaiian organizations were represented.

## GRANTEE FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Final performance reports (FPRs) are required reports that grantees submit to IMLS after completing their awards. For FY 2021, a reporting requirement change provided a standardized format for FPRs across all four programs. Specifically, all grantees across all programs wrote a narrative statement on the results of their project in FY 2021 and reported on the activities they performed during the grant period. This provided an opportunity to understand project results in grantees' own words, and to assess comparable data for all four programs.

The analysis of FPRs was conducted by a researcher from IMLS's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and aimed to understand project goals and objectives and the outcomes that NA/AN/NH grantees ultimately achieved with their grants.

The IMLS ORE evaluator coded the "Activities" and "Results" sections of FY 2021 FPRs for the presence of each of the outcomes indicated in the research question (a deductive coding approach). These outcomes were:

1. Preserve or retain cultural heritage
2. Increase staffing and professional development
3. Expand or enhance the delivery of library or museum services
4. Provide lifelong learning activities
5. Understand and respond to evolving community needs
6. Develop or expand partnerships
7. Leverage new funding opportunities

The analysis considered all the available FY 2021 FPRs for IMLS's three competitive NA/AN/NH grant programs (Native American/Native Hawaiian [NANH] Museum Services Grants: N=12; Native American Library Services, Enhancement (NAE) Grants: N=7; Native Hawaiian Library Services [NH] Grants: N=1) and a randomly selected sample of FPRs from IMLS's noncompetitive Native American Library Services: Basic (NAB) Grants (N=15), totaling 35 reports. The main quantitative metric of interest was the percentage of grants demonstrating each key outcome area listed above. In addition to quantifying the frequency of outcomes, the review identified illustrative quotes demonstrating each theme. A selection of these projects was chosen to highlight the impact of each outcome area. These projects are referenced in the IMLS Assessment: Grant Outcomes section

of the evaluation as "grantee spotlights" (described below). The FPR analysis was a supplement to other data sources, conducted subsequent to the survey, semi-structured interviews, and Appreciative Inquiry Summit. It provides a one-year snapshot of program results, with particularly low representation for the Native Hawaiian Library Services (NH) Grants program (a program with only a few annual awards during the evaluation period). As such, it should not be considered a comprehensive accounting of all program results. Rather, it provides a valuable look at the many kinds of grantee achievements, as reported by grantees themselves.

## GRANTEE SPOTLIGHTS

To provide a richer perspective on the outcomes of IMLS-funded NA/AN/NH grants, an IMLS ORE researcher reviewed results of IMLS projects, referred to here as grantee spotlights. This analysis aimed to understand project results, with a special emphasis on grantees' own words about their projects, their organizational and community outcomes, and the value and meaning that individuals, organizations, and their communities derived from the work.

Grantee spotlights were selected from the FPR analysis, projects featured on the IMLS blog, program officer input, and conversations with SMEs. Grantee spotlights represent all four grant programs communities located in a broad range of geographic regions, and a range of evaluation period years.

Grantee spotlights focus on one project each, and describe the project based on adapted language from the grantee's application project description (Standard Form 424), public-facing IMLS project descriptions, and in some cases, for clarity, additional grant application narrative text. Spotlights then provide grantee quotes illustrating the outcomes of their projects. Quotes were drawn from FPRs, the IMLS blog, and public grantee and news websites. Written consent was obtained from grantees to highlight each project and to reproduce images.

## LIMITATIONS

Despite the limitations inherent in the evaluation design and data collection, IMLS strives to be transparent about the impact these limitations have on the results. Due to the low response rate in the survey, the results were not able to provide statistical insight or indicate statistically significant differences across cohorts or types of organizations. However, they do hold exploratory value and provide useful insights into advancing future evaluative research.

It is important to understand that the limitations found within this study are opportunities for improvement. Recognizing the limitations of the evaluation serves as impetus for improving future research and evaluation. For future studies regarding the NA/AN/NH grant programs, it is highly recommended to conduct exploratory efforts including pilot testing of communication materials and instrumentation. Additionally, future evaluations can benefit from improving the understanding of culturally specific preferences and the various governance structures of Native Communities prior to conducting additional data collection.

### Limitation 1: Study Design

The first limitation of the evaluation design was the challenge of integrating data from administrative records, semi-structured interviews, and surveys. This made it difficult to fully leverage the data collected at each stage and resulted in findings that did not always align perfectly with the original research questions posed by IMLS. Additionally, the expected participation rates for the interviews and the Appreciative Inquiry Summit, as well as the response rates for the survey, were higher than what is typically anticipated for research involving hard-to-reach populations. This discrepancy may introduce some bias in the qualitative findings and affect the precision of statistical analyses.

### Limitation 2: Instrumentation and Data Collection Protocols

As noted above, existing data was not fully utilized to inform instrument development, communication protocols, or data collection procedures. Administrative records, including grant histories and project descriptions, could have been valuable in developing interview protocols, and qualitative findings from the interviews might have enhanced the construct validity of survey questions. Additionally, subject matter experts were not always engaged at the optimal stages of development, which may have influenced overall recruitment efforts.

Kituwah Services acknowledged that the processes, procedures, and communication channels of Native

Communities were not fully understood during the initial stages of data collection. In discussions with subject matter experts about the low response rates, it was noted that Native Communities often prefer phone calls and direct interpersonal communication over email. This preference may partly explain the challenges faced in recruitment efforts, particularly for the survey, as all communications were conducted via email. However, it is important to recognize that communication preferences are not uniform across Native Communities, as NHOs were more responsive to emails than NA/AN contacts.

### Limitation 3: Organizational Influence on Participation and Response Rates

Participation in all components of the evaluation was lower than anticipated. Common issues affecting participation included uncertainty about the most appropriate person to involve and the need for leadership approval before participating. In one notable instance, Kituwah Services contacted the listed point of contact, who then referred them to another individual. This second contact, unsure of why they were being approached, consulted the Chief to determine the appropriate participant. The Chief recommended a third individual, who participated in the interview, but expressed confusion about why they were selected.

Even when the listed point of contact was suitable, administrative differences between self-governing NA/AN Communities and NHOs posed additional challenges. Nearly 40% of contacts from Federally Recognized Tribes required approval from Tribal leadership before committing to an interview. In some cases, Kituwah Services was directed to Tribal administrators or leaders as the appropriate contacts. Conversely, NHOs had more direct autonomy in deciding whether to participate. Native Hawaiian contacts were generally more responsive to email, did not require approval to participate, and were able to schedule and complete interviews more efficiently.

## DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The following data collection instruments were approved for use by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB Control Number 3137-0132, expiration 8/31/2025).

### Survey Instrument

Thanks for your time! We are asking you to complete this survey to learn about your organization's needs and capacity around grant funding—specifically, your knowledge of and experiences with the four IMLS grant programs designated for federally recognized Native American tribes (including Alaska Native villages, regional corporations, and village corporations) or nonprofits that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians.

### Organizational Characteristics

[This question section is for grantees and eligible non-applicants]

1. What is the name of [the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe that you serve/your Nonprofit Organization that serves primarily Native Hawaiians] (["Tribe"/"Nonprofit"]):
    a. [TEXT BOX]
2. How would describe the type of organization within your [Tribe/Nonprofit] in which you conduct your work? (Check one).
    a. A library that has posted regular hours and makes available library services and materials to the public and is under the supervision of at least one permanent professional staff librarian
    b. Museum
    c. Other (please specify):
3. What is the name of the organization or department within your [Tribe/Nonprofit] in which you conduct your work?
    a. [TEXT BOX]
4. Which of the following best describes your role within the organization? (Check one).
    a. Executive Director
    b. Department Director
    c. Project Manager

**d.** Grants Manager/Coordinator

**e.** Board Member

**f.** Other (please specify):

**5.** How long have you been in this role? (Check one).

**a.** Less than one year

**b.** Between 1-3 years

**c.** Between 4-10 years

**d.** More than 10 years

**6.** In addition to the organization type referenced above, does your [Tribe/Nonprofit] operate any other organizations or departments that represent the work of libraries and/or museums?

**a.** If yes, please provide the name and organization.

**7.** What is the staff size of the organization where you work? (Check one in each row.)

| Staff Type | Number of People | | | | | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less than 5 | 5-9 | 10-24 | 25-49 | More | |
| a. Full-time | | | | | | |
| b. Part-time | | | | | | |
| c. Volunteer | | | | | | |
| d. Student intern | | | | | | |
| Other (please specify): | | | | | | |

**8.** How would you classify your organization's annual operating budget? (Check one.)

**a.** Less than $100,000

**b.** $100,000 to $249,999

**c.** $250,000 to $499,999

**d.** $500,000 to $999,999

**e.** $1,000,000 and greater

**9.** Think about the various funding categories for your programs and services. What is the estimated percentage of your total annual operating budget that comes from the following sources? (Please enter a number as a percentage of your budget for each source; enter 0 if it is not a source.)

| Funding Stream | Percentage of your budget (%) |
|---|---|
| Tribal government | |
| State or local government | |
| Federal government | |
| IMLS | |
| Other government sources | |
| Private foundations | |
| Corporate sponsorship | |
| Individual donors | |
| Earned revenue (e.g., ticket sales, gift shop sales) | |
| Other (please specify): | |

## Familiarity with IMLS

[This question section is for grantees and eligible non-applicants]

**10.** How familiar is your organization with the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS's) four funding programs available to [Tribe\Nonprofit]? On a scale from 1, "Not at All Familiar," to 10, "Very Familiar," please rate your familiarity with the four IMLS funding programs.

- **a.** [Scale 1-10]

**11.** Over the last five years, did your organization or department submit one or more applications for funding through any IMLS grant program?

- **a.** Yes
- **b.** No [respondent flagged as eligible non-applicant, skip to Organization Programs]
- **c.** Not sure [skip to question 14]

**12.** [If yes] To what IMLS grant programs did your [Tribe/Nonprofit] submit an application for funding? (Check all that apply.)

- **a.** Native American Library Services: Basic Grants
- **b.** Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grants
- **c.** Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program
- **d.** Native Hawaiian Library Services
- **e.** CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museums and Library Services
- **f.** American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- **g.** Collections Assessment for Preservation
- **h.** Community Catalyst Initiative
- **i.** Digital Humanities Advancement Grants
- **j.** CARES Act Grants for Museums and Libraries
- **k.** Inspire! Grants for Small Museums
- **l.** Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program
- **m.** Museum Assessment Program
- **n.** Museum Grants for African American History and Culture
- **o.** Museum Empowered
- **p.** Museums for America
- **q.** National Leadership Grants for Libraries
- **r.** National Leadership Grants for Museums
- **s.** Save America's Treasures
- **t.** None of the above
- **u.** Not sure

**13.** [If yes, for applicants] Please share some details about your reasons for applying for IMLS funding.

- **a.** [TEXT BOX]

**14.** Has your [Tribe/Nonprofit] considered applying, or has it applied, to more than one grant program to the IMLS during the same fiscal year?

- **a.** Yes
- **b.** No [skip to Q17]
- **c.** Not sure

**15.** [If yes] Please list the grant programs to which you most recently applied within the same fiscal year, and indicate whether an application was unsuccessful.

- **a.** [TEXT BOX]

## Organization or Department Programs

[This question section is for grantees and eligible non-applicants]

**16.** Thinking about the quality of the work your organization performs, on a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent," please rate your activities related to the following. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Community outreach
- **b.** Children's programs
- **c.** Elders' programs
- **d.** Educational programs
- **e.** Language programs
- **f.** Digital/technology access
- **g.** Exhibitions
- **h.** Collections acquisition
- **i.** Collections/archival management
- **j.** Other (please specify):

**17.** Think about the work your organization performs. On a scale from 1, "Low Priority," to 10, "High Priority," please rate the priority of each of the following in your organization's effort to advance its mission. (Check one in each row).

- **a.** General operating support
- **b.** Children's programs
- **c.** Elders' programs
- **d.** Adult education programs
- **e.** Language programs
- **f.** Broadband infrastructure
- **g.** Collections/archives infrastructure
- **h.** Collections development
- **i.** Exhibition development
- **j.** Other (please specify):

**18.** Think about the work your organization performs. On a scale from 1, "Major Barrier," to 10, "Not At All A Barrier," please rate internal barriers you experience that inhibit your organization's ability to deliver the highest quality programs and services possible. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Overall funding
- **b.** Staff capacity
- **c.** Ability to secure grant funding
- **d.** Scope of programs and services
- **e.** Broadband infrastructure
- **f.** Internal grants process
- **g.** Organizational governing bodies (e.g., Tribal government, nonprofit boards)
- **h.** Transportation
- **i.** Collections and program management
- **j.** Other (please specify):

**19.** Website: Please think about your experience using the IMLS online resources on the IMLS.gov website. On a scale from 1,"Poor," to 10, "Excellent," please rate the strength of your experience with the following. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Ability to find specific grant application information
- **b.** Quality of content (e.g., materials are up-to-date, helpful)
- **c.** Ability to accomplish what you want on the site
- **d.** Accuracy of search results
- **e.** Relevance to your area of need
- **f.** Look and feel/visual appearance
- **g.** Clarity of instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity
- **h.** Sufficient detail of instruction to meet your needs
- **i.** Other (please specify):

## Experience with IMLS

[This question section is for grantees]

**20.** Information in Application Package: When you were preparing your application, how easy was it for you to locate and understand the information in the application package? On a scale from 1, "Very Difficult," to 10, "Very Easy," please rate the following. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Grant program purpose
- **b.** Grant program priorities
- **c.** Selection criteria
- **d.** Peer review process
- **e.** Budget information and forms
- **f.** Deadline for submission
- **g.** Dollar limit on awards
- **h.** Page limitations
- **i.** Format and submission requirements
- **j.** Program contact
- **k.** Other (please specify):

**21.** Over the last five years, has your organization or department sought technical assistance from IMLS during the application stage? (Check one).

- **a.** Yes
- **b.** No [go to Question 23]
- **c.** Not sure

**22.** Application Stage - Technical Assistance Provided by IMLS Staff: On a scale from 1, "Not At All Helpful," to 10, "Very Helpful," please rate your experience with the following. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Learning about IMLS program eligibility requirements
- **b.** Preparing a competitive application
- **c.** Reviewing panel comments
- **d.** Other (please specify):

**23.** Grantee Documents: Think about the information you received from the IMLS after receiving notification of your award including the award notification, reporting requirements, instructions for requesting approval of a change, requesting payment, submitting financial and performance reports, and other relevant documents. On a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent," please rate the documents on the following dimensions. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Clarity
- **b.** General information from IMLS (e.g., staff emails, eGMS messages)
- **c.** Sufficient detail to meet your program needs
- **d.** Relevance to your program needs
- **e.** Comprehensiveness in addressing the scope of challenges you encounter

**24.** Grantee Technical Assistance Provided by IMLS Staff: On a scale from 1, "Not At All Helpful," to 10, "Very Helpful," please rate your experience with IMLS Staff regarding the following. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Implementing a grant project
- **b.** Requesting approval of a change
- **c.** Closing out the grant
- **d.** Other (please specify):

**25.** Performance Reporting: Think about the IMLS performance reporting requirements for your grant and rate the following on a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent." (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Clarity of reporting requirements
- **b.** Ease of obtaining data for your required reports
- **c.** Ease of submitting report(s) electronically
- **d.** Availability of assistance to complete your report(s) (e.g., technical assistance and training)
- **e.** Usefulness of the performance data to help you improve your grant project
- **f.** Your understanding of how IMLS uses your data

**26.** Financial Reporting: Think about the IMLS financial reporting requirements for your grant and rate the following on a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent." (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Clarity of reporting requirements
- **b.** Ease of obtaining data for your required reports
- **c.** Ease of submitting report(s)
- **d.** Availability of assistance to complete your report(s) (e.g., technical assistance and training)
- **e.** Usefulness of the financial data to help you improve your grant project
- **f.** Your understanding of how IMLS uses your data

**27.** Changes: During the last five years, did you request approval for a change, including an extension of the period of performance, for your grant? (Check one).

- **a.** Yes
- **b.** No [skip to Question 28]
- **c.** Not sure

**28.** Think about the circumstances that required you to request a change. On a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10,"Excellent," please rate your experience in seeking approval of a change. (Check one in each row.)

- **a.** Overall ease of filing request
- **b.** IMLS staff responsiveness
- **c.** Clarity of instruction
- **d.** Submission process

**e.** Communication about the decision

**f.** Other (please specify):

**29.** Think about filing a request for approval of change in your grant. On a scale from 1, "Not a Factor," to 10, "Significant Factor," please rate the following factors for the reason you submitted the request. (Check one in each row.)

**a.** Delayed project start

**b.** Staff transition

**c.** Partner issues

**d.** Funding

**e.** Other (please specify):

**30.** Organizational Capacity: As a result of receiving IMLS grant funding, which of the following factors changed within your organization or department? (Check all that apply).

**a.** New staffing

**b.** Improved organization systems - approaches to work

**c.** Expanded collections

**d.** Improved collections management

**e.** Additional professional development and skill building

**f.** Increased accessibility to the collection

**g.** Expanded use of technology

**h.** New partnerships

**i.** Expanded funding sources

**j.** Other (please specify):

## Grants and Fundraising

[This question section is for grantees and eligible non-applicants]

**31.** Think about the months leading up to the submission of an application, also known as the pre-application process. On a scale from 1, "Not At All Helpful," to 10, "Very Helpful," please rate the usefulness of the following services in preparing your application. (Check one in each row.)

**a.** Support for project planning/ development

**b.** Grant writing workshop

**c.** Lessons from previous awardees

**d.** Guidance with program evaluation design

**e.** Review preliminary draft

**f.** Finding the information that you need on the IMLS website

**g.** Other (please specify):

**32.** Think about your organization or department's fundraising efforts. On a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent," please rate the capacity of your organization or department to secure funding from the following. (Check one in each row.)

**a.** Federal agency grant programs

**b.** State agency grant programs

**c.** Private foundations

**d.** Corporate sponsorship

**e.** Individual donors

**f.** Other (please specify):

**33.** Think about the process in which your organization or department engages when seeking grant funds. On a scale from 1, "Poor," to 10, "Excellent," please rate the capacity of your organization or department to seek and secure grant funds along the following dimensions. (Check one in each row.

**a.** Staffing levels to research and identify potential grant opportunities

**b.** Staff skills necessary to develop competitive proposals

**c.** Experience with developing grant-funded projects

**d.** Organization's ability to manage awarded grants

**e.** Experience with administrative and reporting requirements

**34.** Think about your organization's or department's need for technical assistance from IMLS staff when seeking and/or securing grant funds. On a scale from 1, "Not At All Useful," to 10, "Extremely Useful," please rate the usefulness of the following types of technical assistance. (Check one in each row.)

**a.** Strategic/organizational planning

**b.** Project planning and development

**c.** Grant writing

**d.** Project management

**e.** Other (please specify):

**35.** How do you receive information regarding potential funding opportunities? (Check all that apply).

**a.** Funder Website

**b.** Grants.gov

**c.** Google or other search engine

**d.** Tribal Administrator/Government

**e.** Service Organization

**f.** Inter-Tribal Organization

**g.** Colleague in your professional network

**h.** Other (please specify):

### Organizational Strengths & Wishes

[This question section is for grantees and eligible non-applicants]

**36.** Thinking about the work your organization or department performs, what are the three greatest strengths that help you advance your mission?

**a.** [TEXT BOX]

**37.** Thinking about the best ways to advance your organization's or department's mission, describe three wishes.

**a.** [TEXT BOX]

**38.** Would you be willing to provide your contact information in case the evaluation team has follow up questions? (Check one.)

**a.** No, thank you [go to closing survey message]

**b.** Yes [if checked display the following question]

**39.** Thank you! Please share your contact information below

**a.** Name:

**b.** Phone number:

**c.** Email:

### CLOSING SURVEY MESSAGE

**Thank you! Thank you for your time completing this survey! The information you provided will be used to help improve IMLS programs serving organizations such as yours. For more information about IMLS grant programs, please visit: https://imls.gov/**

# INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR GRANTEES

## Organizational Characteristics

We would like to start by learning a bit about your organization or department.

1. Describe your organization or department.
   a. What is the organization type [prompts: department within Tribal government, 501c3 nonprofit]?
   b. What is the organization's annual budget?
   c. How many full-time and part-time staff or volunteers do you have?
   d. What are your core programs and services?
   e. Whom do you consider your primary audience?
   f. How is the organization funded?

2. Think about your visitor experience. Describe [Name of Organization] when it is at its best?

3. Think about your organization or department's development over the next five years. What are the greatest opportunities for growth, raised visibility, or greater community impact? What are your most significant challenges? [prompts: What should you be doing more of? What should you be doing less of? What should you be doing that is completely different?]

## Impact of IMLS Funding

We want to reflect on the project(s) that IMLS funds have supported.

4. Remember a standout experience associated with the IMLS-funded project(s).
   a. Briefly describe the project and its core goals.
   b. What happened?
   c. Who was involved?
   d. What did you contribute to the experience?
   e. What were the key factors that made the project possible?
   f. Tell your story describing the experience in detail.

5. How did the project advance your organization's or department's mission? Describe any changes to how you conduct your work as a result of IMLS funding. What efficiencies, gains or improvements, if any, were realized with IMLS funding? Did the project result in an increase in visitors or increased participation in programs?

6. What impact, if any, did the project have on organizational capacity? What organization systems were established? How did staff benefit from the project? What partnership(s) emerged from the project?

7. How did IMLS funding change the size and scope of the organization? How, if at all, has staffing changed? What impact has IMLS funding had on the organization's budget? How will you sustain this change over time?

## Sustainability

Transitioning slightly, we want to learn more about the sustainability of the project and what potentially would have happened without IMLS funding.

8. When the grant came to an end, were you able to sustain activities funded through IMLS [if so, how]? How did IMLS funding impact your organization's or department's earned income? Were you able to leverage IMLS funding for other grant funding or charitable support [if so, how]?

9. If IMLS funding was not awarded, would you have been able to conduct and/or complete the project? What changes would you have had to make to conduct and/or complete the project? What other funding sources would you have sought?

## Grant Application Process and Program Administration

Think about your work in seeking grant funding from IMLS, the proposal development process, submitting a proposal, receiving reviewer feedback, executing your grant agreement, and managing the grant once the award was received.

10. What resources and/or support from IMLS did you find useful? Describe any resources, such as direct technical assistance from staff or online instruction, that were helpful during the following grant lifecycle stages:
    a. Proposal development process
    b. Application submission
    c. Reviewer feedback
    d. Executing the grant agreement
    e. Managing and reporting on the grant
    f. Closing out the grant

11. How could IMLS strengthen its support during the application process?

12. How could IMLS improve its outreach and communications about upcoming grants?

13. What are you're the greatest strengths and greatest challenges in applying for and managing IMLS funding of your organization or department?

### Grants and Fundraising

Part of this evaluation's goal is to better understand the funding landscape for organizations like yours.

14. Describe the various sources of information you use to identify potential funding opportunities for your organization or department.
    a. What role do service organizations play? [prompts: An example of a service organization is the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM).]
    b. What role do intertribal organizations (ATNI) play? [prompts: Examples of intertribal organizations are the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) or the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians.]
    c. Are there other types of organizations that help identify potential funding sources? [prompts: State agencies.]

15. If you had to select two exemplary funders for your organization or department, what organizations would you choose? What is it about their funding practices makes them exemplary?

### COVID-19

Over the last two years we all have been responding to the COVID pandemic.

16. Describe how COVID affected your organization or department. How did your programming and services change and for how long? What are changes made during COVID that you likely will continue long past the pandemic?

### Closing Questions

We would like to end our time together with a couple of summary questions to help us better understand what recommendations to share with IMLS.

17. What questions would you like to ask IMLS staff to better understand their funding programs?

18. If you had three wishes for the continued development of [Name of Organization]'s work in the community, what would they be?

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ELIGIBLE NON-APPLICANTS

### Organizational Characteristics

We would like to start by learning a bit about your organization or department.

For the purposes of this interview, we define organizations or departments affiliated with eligible entities by these three types:

- A Tribe or Native Hawaiian nonprofit **library** accessible by community members and serves the information needs of patrons through a collection of books and other media for studying and/or borrowing. Some libraries provide computer access and public programs for patrons.

- A Tribe or Native Hawaiian nonprofit **museum** is an organization that collects, stores, and exhibits objects with cultural, historic, or artistic value. Some eligible entities retain these collections and perform these functions at a cultural center.

- A Tribe or Native Hawaiian nonprofit **archive** contains records of **permanent** value.

We recognize that some organization or departments consider themselves to be "cultural centers" that include multiple organization or department types, such as a museum and a library. We are interested in learning about the experiences and views on IMLS grants that support these organization or department types.

1. Describe your organization or department.
   a. What is the organization type? [prompts: department within Tribal government, 501c3 nonprofit]
   b. What is the organization's annual budget?
   c. How many full-time and part-time staff and volunteers?
   d. What are your core programs and services?
   e. Who do you consider your primary audience?
   f. How is the organization funded? What is its primary source of funding? Do you seek funding from external sources such as public agencies like IMLS? Do you seek funding from private foundations?

2. Think about your visitor experience. Describe {Name of Organization} when it is at its best?

3. Think about your organization or department's development over the next five years. What are the greatest opportunities for growth, impact, improvement? What are your most significant challenges? [prompts: What should you be doing more of? What should you be doing less of? What should you be doing that is completely different?]

## Familiarity with IMLS

We would like to learn a bit more about your familiarity with IMLS and any considerations you might have in applying to their grant programs.

4. Are you familiar with IMLS? Have you ever considered seeking funds from the agency? Why or why not?

## Grants and Fundraising

Part of this evaluation's goal is to better understand the funding landscape for organizations like yours.

5. How would you describe the capacity of your organization or department to pursue external funding sources? What are the greatest constraints to your organization's seeking and securing external funding?

6. What resources and support do you seek that may assist you with your proposal development? What are the greatest challenges your organization or department faces in applying for and managing externally-funded projects?

7. Describe the various sources of information you use to identify potential funding opportunities for your organization or department.
   a. What role do service organizations play? [prompts: An example of a service organization is the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM).]
   b. What role do intertribal organizations (ATNI) play? [prompts: Examples of intertribal organizations are the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) or the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians.]
   c. Are there other types of organizations that help identify potential funding sources? [prompts: state agencies.]

8. If you had to select two exemplary funders for your organization or department, what organizations would you choose? What is it about their funding practices that makes them exemplary?

## COVID-19

Over the last two years, we all have been responding to the COVID pandemic.

9. Describe how COVID impacted your organization or department. How, if at all, did your programming and services change and for how long? What are changes made during COVID that you will continue past the pandemic?

## Closing Questions

We would like to end our time together with a couple of high-level questions to help us better understand what recommendations to share with IMLS.

10. What questions would you like to ask IMLS staff to best understand their funding programs?

11. If you had three wishes for the continued development of [Name of Organization]'s work in the community, what would they be?

# INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

## Organizational Characteristics

We would like to start by learning a bit about your organization or department.

1. Describe your organization or department.
   - a. What is the organization or department type?
   - b. What is the organization's annual budget?
   - c. How many full-time and part-time staff and volunteers do you have?
   - d. What are your core programs and services?
   - e. Whom do you consider your primary audience?
   - f. How is the organization funded?

2. Think about your visitor experience. Describe {Name of Organization or Department} when it is at its best?

3. Think about the development of your organization or department over the next five years. What are the greatest opportunities for growth, raised visibility, or greater community impact? What are your most significant challenges? [prompts: What should you be doing more of? What should you be doing less of? What should you be doing that is completely different?]

## Outcome of Proposed Projects

We want to reflect on the project(s) for which you sought IMLS funding support or that you may have developed with IMLS funding in mind.

4. Were you able to complete the project with other funding?
   - a. If yes, what were the key factors that made the project possible? What adjustment did you have to make to the project scope to meet the amount of funding available?
   - b. If no, what was the consequence of not undertaking the project?

## Grant Application Process

Think about your work in seeking grant funding from IMLS, the proposal development process, submitting a proposal, and receiving reviewer feedback.

5. What resources and support from IMLS did you find useful? Describe any resources, such as direct technical assistance, from staff or online instruction, that were helpful during the following grant lifecycle stages:
   - a. Proposal development process
   - b. Application submission
   - c. Reviewer feedback

6. How could IMLS improve its outreach and communications process about its grant offerings?

7. What are the greatest challenges your organization or department faces in applying for IMLS funding?

8. Describe how the reviewer comments helped provide a better understanding of how best to strengthen future IMLS proposals or if they hindered your understanding of how to apply. How can IMLS better integrate reviewer comments to help improve the grant application process?

## Grants and Fundraising

One of this evaluation's goals is to better understand the funding landscape for organizations like yours.

9. Describe the various sources of information you use to identify potential funding opportunities for your organization or department.
   - a. What role do service organizations play? [prompts: An example of a service organization is the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM).]
   - b. What role do intertribal organizations (ATNI) play? [prompts: Examples of intertribal organizations are the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) or the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians.]
   - c. Are there other types of organizations that help you identify potential funding sources? [prompts: state agencies]

10. If you had to select two exemplary funders for your organization or department, what organizations would you choose? What is it about their funding practices makes them exemplary?

## COVID-19

Over the last two years, we all have been responding to the COVID pandemic.

11. Describe how COVID impacted your organization or department. How did your programming and services change and for how long? What are changes made during COVID that you will continue long past the pandemic?

### Closing Questions

We would like to end our time together with a couple of high-level questions to help us better understand what recommendations to share with IMLS.

**12.** What questions would you like to ask IMLS staff to best understand their funding programs?

**13.** If you had three wishes for the continued development of [Name of Organization]'s work in the community, what would they be?

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC AGENCY OR PRIVATE FOUNDATION FUNDERS

### Organizational Characteristics

We would like to start by learning a bit about your organization or department.

**1.** Describe [Name of the Organization] funding programs, eligibility requirements, and range of grant amounts. What are [Name of the Organization] funding priorities and/or strategic initiatives?

**2.** In considering [Name of the Organization]'s funding portfolio, what is the estimated percentage of grantees that are Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native organizations or that primarily serve Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native constituents?

### Outreach

After learning a bit more about your grant programs, it would be helpful to hear a little more from you on how you attract applicants via outreach.

**3.** Describe the outreach you conduct to attract Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native applicants. What are the specific strategies you use to reach these potential applicants?

### Applicant/Grantee Capacity and Technical Assistance

Given your knowledge of the field, we would love to learn a bit more from you about what you think the opportunities and challenges are for organizations in this space.

**4.** Describe the opportunities your organization or department provides to Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native communities. Describe the greatest challenges these communities experience in accessing your funding and how best would they overcome those challenges.

**5.** How would you describe Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native organizational capacity or readiness to secure grant funds? Describe the technical assistance and support your organization or department typically provides to applicants.

### COVID-19

Over the last two years, we have all been responding to the COVID pandemic.

**6.** Describe how COVID impacted your organization or department. How did your programming and services change and for how long? What are changes made during COVID that you will continue past the pandemic? How do these changes impact how you fund or support Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian communities?

## SUMMIT OUTLINE

### Consent Language for Participants

The following consent language was shared with participants during the Welcome portion of the summit.

*Your participation in this virtual convening is completely voluntary. You are welcome to leave at any point for any reason and you may decline to engage in any discussion. Your responses will be used to inform our understanding of the IMLS grant programs and their role in supporting grantee outcomes, the landscape of Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native museums and libraries, and opportunities for further attention by IMLS and others.*

*We will be taking notes during this convening and would like to record the conversations to ensure we are accurately capturing the information you provide. We will take all possible steps to protect your confidentiality. Additionally, we will not quote anything you say unless we receive your express, written consent. The notes and the recording will be accessed only by the Kituwah Services evaluation team, all of whom have signed confidentiality pledges. Individual response data will not be shared with IMLS except in de-identified aggregate/group form.*

*Your decision to participate will not affect your interactions with the Federal Government, including IMLS grant programs.*

*We want to be sure that you freely consent to participate in this convening and that you are aware that you are not obligated to answer any questions you do not wish to. If you do not consent to participate, please leave at this time.*

## IMLS Appreciative Inquiry Summit Agenda

The following is the run-of-show outline of the virtual convening.

1. Welcome – 2 minutes
2. Appreciative Inquiry introductions – 15 minutes
3. Summit Overview, Outcomes and Process – 3 minutes
4. A Brief Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry and its 4-D Model of Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny – 10 minutes
5. Discovery – 40 Minutes

| Evaluation Prompt | Activity Type |
|---|---|
| Who are we at our best? | Small group discussion |
| Describe the outcomes associated with grant funding | Small group discussion |
| Positive Core Map (themes from small group discussions) | Large group discussion |

6. Break – 10 minutes
7. Dream – 30 minutes

| Evaluation Prompt | Activity Type |
|---|---|
| Consensus visioning for an ideal museum and library grant program | Large group discussion |
| Opportunity Map (themes from small group discussions) | Small group discussion |

8. Design – 30 minutes

| Evaluation Prompt | Activity Type |
|---|---|
| High-impact program design elements (e.g., strategies, processes, best practices) best suited to Native American/Native Hawaiian organizations | Large group discussion |

9. Destiny – 30 minutes

| Evaluation Prompt | Activity Type |
|---|---|
| Generation of possible actions | Small group discussion |

10. Large Group Closing – 10 minutes

# Appendix C: Federal Funding Grant Matrix

# Appendix C: Federal Funding Grant Matrix

This document serves as a list of grant opportunities as of 2021 available to Native Communities including Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and Alaska Native Villages, and nonprofit organizations primarily serving and representing Kānaka Maoli. This listing is not exhaustive and is not meant to imply eligibility or application criteria. Users of this list may also want to access the Capital Clearinghouse (**https://www.bia.gov/atc**) to find additional information about federal funding resources for Tribal governments, Tribal enterprises, Native entrepreneurs, and Native Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). Additionally, the National Endowment for the Arts has compiled information on federal resources for Native arts and cultural activities. More information can be found at: **https://www.arts.gov/about/publications/federal-resources-native-arts-cultural-activities**.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION GRANTS

| Economic Development Administration (EDA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Local Planning and Technical Assistance** | EDA makes planning and local technical assistance investments to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. https://www.eda.gov/strategic-initiatives/economic-development-integration/funding-resources | | ✔ |

| Head Start | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Early/Head Start** | Early Head Start programs promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers through safe and developmentally enriching caregiving. This prepares these children for continued growth and development and eventual success in school and life. https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov | ✔ | |

| Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Indian Community Development Block Grant** | The purpose and goal of the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program is the development of viable Indian and Alaska Native communities, including the creation of decent housing, suitable living environments, and economic opportunities primarily for persons of low and moderate income. https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/cfo/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/ICDBG | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant** | This program helps transform neighborhoods by redeveloping severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted housing and catalyzing critical improvements in the neighborhood. The program creates the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community. https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/cfo/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/FY24_Choice_Neighborhoods_Planning_Grant | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Endowment for the Arts | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Challenge America** | Challenge America seeks to address potential barriers for organizations seeking funding. The program features an abbreviated application, a standardized $10,000 grant amount, and a robust structure of technical assistance to facilitate entry to NEA funding opportunities. This category may be a good entry point for organizations that are new to applying for federal funding. https://www.arts.gov/grants/challenge-america | | ✔ |

| National Park Service | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Tribal Historic Preservation Office Grant** | The National Park Service Tribal Preservation Program assists Indian Tribes in preserving their historic properties and cultural traditions through the designation of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and through annual grant funding programs. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/project-grants.htm | | ✔ |

| United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Community Facilities** | This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial, or business undertakings. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) Program** | The purpose of the TCEG Program is to provide funding to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans in the food and agricultural sciences. The TCEG Program is intended to strengthen institutional capacity to deliver relevant formal education opportunities. https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/nifa-tribal-programs/tribal-equity-grants-program | ✔ | |

## INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

| Administration for Native Americans | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Social Economic Development Strategies** | Competitive financial assistance grants support locally determined projects designed to reduce or eliminate community problems and achieve community goals. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/programs/social-economic-development-strategies-seds | ✔ | ✔ |

| Department of the Interior | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **HŌʻIHI NATIVE Act Grant Program for Native Hawaiian Organizations** | The NATIVE Act establishes a more inclusive national travel and tourism strategy and has the potential to deliver significant benefits for Native Hawaiian organizations (NHOs) as distinctly defined in the NATIVE Act, including job creation, elevated living standards, and expanded economic opportunities. https://www.doi.gov/hawaiian/hoihi | | ✔ |

| Economic Development Administration (EDA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Local Planning and Technical Assistance** | EDA makes planning and local technical assistance investments to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. https://www.eda.gov/strategic-initiatives/economic-development-integration/funding-resources | | ✔ |

| Federal Communications Commission | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **E-Rate: Universal Services Program for Schools and Libraries** | The FCC's E-Rate program makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries. With funding from the Universal Service Fund, E-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries. https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/universal-service-program-schools-and-libraries-e-rate | ✔ | |

| Head Start | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Early/Head Start** | Early Head Start programs promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers through safe and developmentally enriching caregiving. This prepares these children for continued growth and development and eventual success in school and life. https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov | ✔ | |

| Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Indian Community Development Block Grant** | The purpose and goal of the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program is the development of viable Indian and Alaska Native communities, including the creation of decent housing, suitable living environments, and economic opportunities primarily for persons of low and moderate income. https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/cfo/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/ICDBG | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant** | This program helps transform neighborhoods by redeveloping severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted housing and catalyzing critical improvements in the neighborhood. The program creates the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community. https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/cfo/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/FY24_Choice_Neighborhoods_Planning_Grant | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Endowment for the Arts | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Challenge America** | Challenge America seeks to address potential barriers for organizations seeking funding. The program features an abbreviated application, a standardized $10,000 grant amount, and a robust structure of technical assistance to facilitate entry to NEA funding opportunities. This category may be a good entry point for organizations that are new to applying for federal funding. https://www.arts.gov/grants/challenge-america | | ✔ |

| National Endowment for the Humanities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Promotion of the Humanities Challenge Grants** | The purpose of the program is to strengthen the institutional base of the humanities by enabling infrastructure development and capacity building. Awards of federal matching funds aim to help institutions secure long-term support for their core activities and expand efforts to preserve and create access to outstanding humanities materials. https://www.neh.gov/grants | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Park Service | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **National Park Service** | The National Park Service Tribal Preservation Program assists Indian Tribes in preserving their historic properties and cultural traditions through the designation of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and through annual grant funding programs. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/project-grants.htm | | ✔ |

| National Science Foundation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Smart and Connected Communities** | This program supports use-inspired research that addresses communities' social, economic, and environmental challenges. Projects must work with community stakeholders on pilots that integrate intelligent technologies with natural and built environments. https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/smart-connected-communities-scc/nsf22-529/solicitation | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Telecommunications and Information Administration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)** | BTOP helps bridge the technological divide; create jobs; and improve education, health care, and public safety in communities across the country. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, BTOP projects are deploying broadband Internet infrastructure, enhancing and expanding public computer centers, and encouraging the sustainable adoption of broadband service. https://www.ntia.gov/report/2024/office-internet-connectivity-and-growth-2023-annual-report/introduction-to-funding-programs/broadband-grant-programs | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program** | The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program supports Tribal governments with broadband deployment on Tribal lands for telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion. https://www.ntia.gov/page/tribal-broadband-connectivity-program | ✔ | ✔ |

| United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Community Facilities** | This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial, or business undertakings. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant** | The DLT grant program helps rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the internet to improve education and health care; two of the most crucial keys to successful rural economic and community development. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Community Connect** | Community Connect provides financial assistance to eligible applicants providing broadband service in economically challenged rural communities where service does not exist. https://www.rd.usda.gov/community-connect | ✔ | ✔ |
| **ReConnect Loan and Grant Program** | The ReConnect Program offers loans, grants, and loan-grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in areas of rural America that currently do not have sufficient access to broadband. In facilitating the expansion of broadband services and infrastructure, the program will fuel long-term rural economic development and opportunities in rural America. https://www.usda.gov/reconnect | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) Program** | The purpose of the TCEG Program is to provide funding to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans in the food and agricultural sciences. The TCEG Program is intended to strengthen institutional capacity to deliver relevant formal education opportunities. https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/nifa-tribal-programs/tribal-equity-grants-program | ✔ | |
| **Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Programs** | The local utility passes the funding to ultimate recipients for such eligible projects as: Community development assistance to nonprofits and public bodies (particularly for job creation or enhancement). Technical assistance. Facilities and equipment to educate and train rural residents to help economic development. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-economic-development-loan-grant-program | ✔ | ✔ |

## PROGRAM GRANTS

| Administration for Native Americans | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Native American Language Preservation and Maintenance** | These grants encompass language preservation and maintenance programs. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/fact-sheet/active-grants-native-languages-preservation-and-maintenance | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Esther Martinez Immersion: Preserving the Heart of our Cultures** | This program provides funding for community-based projects that ensure continuing vitality of Native languages through immersion-based instruction. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants-gov/350187 | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Social Economic Development Strategies** | Competitive financial assistance grants support locally determined projects designed to reduce or eliminate community problems and achieve community goals. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/programs/social-economic-development-strategies-seds | ✔ | ✔ |

| Department of Education | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Office of Elementary and Secondary Education: Innovative Approaches to Literacy** | The IAL program supports high-quality programs designed to develop and improve literacy skills for children and students from birth through 12th grade in high-need local educational agencies and schools. The Department intends to promote innovative literacy programs that support the development of literacy skills in low-income communities. https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/well-rounded-education-programs/innovative-approaches-to-literacy | ✔ | |

| Department of the Interior | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **HŌʻIHI NATIVE Act Grant Program for Native Hawaiian Organizations** | The NATIVE Act establishes a more inclusive national travel and tourism strategy and has the potential to deliver significant benefits for Native Hawaiian organizations (NHOs) as distinctly defined in the NATIVE Act, including job creation, elevated living standards, and expanded economic opportunities. https://www.doi.gov/hawaiian/hoihi | | ✔ |

| Administration for Children & Families | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI)** | A Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI) is a partnership between Tribal communities and the Administration for Children & Families designed to better coordinate Tribal early learning and development programs. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/tribal/tribal-early-learning-initiative | ✔ | ✔ |

| Economic Development Administration (EDA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Local Planning and Technical Assistance** | EDA makes planning and local technical assistance investments to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States. https://www.eda.gov/strategic-initiatives/economic-development-integration/funding-resources | | ✔ |

| Head Start | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Early/Head Start** | Early Head Start programs promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers through safe and developmentally enriching caregiving. This prepares these children for continued growth and development and eventual success in school and life. **https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov** | ✔ | |

| Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant** | This program helps transform neighborhoods by redeveloping severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted housing and catalyzing critical improvements in the neighborhood. The program creates the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community. **https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/cfo/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/FY24_Choice_Neighborhoods_Planning_Grant** | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Endowment for the Arts | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Challenge America** | Challenge America seeks to address potential barriers for organizations seeking funding. The program features an abbreviated application, a standardized $10,000 grant amount, and a robust structure of technical assistance to facilitate entry to NEA funding opportunities. This category may be a good entry point for organizations that are new to applying for federal funding. **https://www.arts.gov/grants/challenge-america** | | ✔ |
| **Grants for Arts Projects** | Through project-based funding, this program supports opportunities for public engagement with the arts and arts education, for the integration of the arts with strategies promoting the health and well-being of people and communities, and for the improvement of overall capacity and capabilities within the arts sector. **https://www.arts.gov/grants/grants-for-arts-projects** | | ✔ |
| **Our Town** | Our Town projects engage a wide range of local stakeholders in efforts to advance local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes in communities. Competitive projects are responsive to unique local conditions, authentically engage communities, center equity, advance artful lives, and lay the groundwork for long-term systems change. These projects have a required partnership component. Grants range from $25,000 to $150,000, with a minimum nonfederal cost share/match equal to the grant amount. **https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town** | | ✔ |
| **Translation Projects** | Through fellowships to published translators, the National Endowment for the Arts supports projects for the translation of specific works of **prose, poetry,** or **drama** from other languages into English. Grants are up to $25,000. Award amounts are determined by the National Endowment for the Arts. **https://www.arts.gov/grants/translation-projects** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Research Awards** | Research Grants fund research studies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts, either as individual components of the U.S. arts ecology or as they interact with each other and/or with other domains of American life. Matching/cost share grants of $20,000 to $100,000 will be awarded. **https://www.arts.gov/grants/research-awards** | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Endowment for the Humanities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities** | Humanities Initiatives strengthen the teaching and study of the humanities at institutions of higher education by developing new or enhancing existing programs, resources (including those in digital format), or courses that explore, interpret, and preserve the diversity of human cultures, ideas, and practices, past and present. Projects must address a core topic or set of themes drawn from humanities areas such as history, philosophy, religion, literature, or humanities-informed composition and writing skills. **https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-tribal-colleges-and-universities** | ✔ | |
| **Cultural and Community Resilience** | The Cultural and Community Resilience program supports community-based efforts to mitigate climate change and COVID-19 pandemic impacts, safeguard cultural resources, and foster cultural resilience through identifying, documenting, and/or collecting cultural heritage and community experience. The program prioritizes projects from disadvantaged communities in the United States or its jurisdictions, and NEH encourages applications that employ inclusive methodologies. **https://www.neh.gov/program/cultural-and-community-resilience** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Promotion of the Humanities Challenge Grants** | The purpose of this program is to strengthen the institutional base of the humanities by enabling infrastructure development and capacity building. Awards of federal matching funds aim to help institutions secure long-term support for their core activities and expand efforts to preserve and create access to outstanding humanities materials. **https://www.neh.gov/grants** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Digital Projects for the Public** | The Digital Projects for the Public program supports projects that interpret and analyze humanities content in primarily digital platforms and formats, such as websites, mobile applications and tours, interactive touch screens and kiosks, games, and virtual environments. **https://www.neh.gov/grants/public/digital-projects-the-public** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations** | Public Impact Projects grants seek to assist small and mid-sized organizations in meeting their community's needs by expanding the scope, reach, and excellence of their public programs. These awards support a variety of activities that focus on enriching interpretive strategies, strengthening interpretive skill sets, or enhancing community engagement with public-facing programs. This program aims to meet small and mid-sized organizations by supporting projects that are appropriate in scope and content to each organization's resources and community needs. **https://www.neh.gov/program/public-impact-projects-smaller-organizations** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Humanities Collections and Reference Resources** | HCRR advances scholarship, education, and public programming in the humanities by helping libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations across the country steward important collections of books and manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and moving images, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, art and material culture, and digital objects. The program strengthens efforts to extend the reach of such materials and make their intellectual content widely accessible. Awards also support the creation of reference resources that facilitate the use of cultural materials, from works that provide basic information quickly to tools that synthesize and codify knowledge of a subject for in-depth investigation. **https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/humanities-collections-and-reference-resources** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Public Humanities Projects** | The Public Humanities Projects program supports projects that bring the ideas of the humanities to life for general audiences through public programming. Projects must engage humanities scholarship to analyze significant themes in disciplines such as history, literature, ethics, and art history. Awards support projects that are intended to reach broad and diverse public audiences in non-classroom settings in the United States. Projects should engage with ideas that are accessible to the general public and employ appealing interpretive formats. **https://www.neh.gov/grants/public/public-humanities-projects** | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Media Projects** | The Media Projects program supports the development, production, and distribution of radio programs, podcasts, documentary films, and documentary film series that engage general audiences with humanities ideas in creative and appealing ways. Projects must be grounded in humanities scholarship and demonstrate an approach that is thoughtful, balanced, and analytical. Media Projects offer two levels of funding: Development and Production. **https://www.neh.gov/program/media-projects** | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Endowment for the Humanities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Humanities Connections** | The Humanities Connections program seeks to expand the role of the humanities in undergraduate education at two- and four-year institutions. Awards support innovative curricular approaches that foster partnerships among humanities faculty and their counterparts in the social and natural sciences and in pre-service or professional programs (such as business, engineering, health sciences, law, computer science, and other technology-driven fields), in order to encourage and develop new integrative learning opportunities for students. https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-connections | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Dynamic Language Infrastructure - Partnership with NSF** | This funding partnership between the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Endowment for the Humanities supports projects to develop and advance knowledge concerning dynamic language infrastructure in the context of endangered human languages—languages that are both understudied and at risk of falling out of use. https://www.neh.gov/program/dli-del-fellowships | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections** | Cultural institutions, including libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations, face an enormous challenge: to preserve humanities collections that facilitate research, strengthen teaching, and provide opportunities for lifelong learning. To ensure the preservation of books and manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and moving images, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, art, and historical objects, cultural institutions must implement measures that slow deterioration and prevent catastrophic loss from emergencies resulting from natural or human activity. https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/sustaining-cultural-heritage-collections | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Preservation Assistance Grants for Small Institutions** | Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions—such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, cultural organizations, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities—improve their ability to preserve and care for their significant humanities collections. These may include special collections of books and journals, archives and manuscripts, prints and photographs, moving images, sound recordings, architectural and cartographic records, decorative and fine art objects, textiles, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, furniture, historical objects, and digital materials. https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-assistance-grants-smaller-institutions | ✔ | ✔ |

| National Park Service | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Grants** | Federal grants are available to museums, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations to assist in consultation, documentation, and repatriation under NAGPRA. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/repatriation-grants.htm | | ✔ |
| **Tribal Historic Preservation Office Grant** | The National Park Service Tribal Preservation Program assists Indian Tribes in preserving their historic properties and cultural traditions through the designation of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and through annual grant funding programs. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/howtoapply.htm | | ✔ |
| **Underrepresented Communities Grant** | The National Park Service's Underrepresented Communities Grant Program (URC) works towards diversifying the nominations submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. URC grants are funded by the Historic Preservation Fund and are administered by the NPS. Projects include surveys and inventories of historic properties associated with communities underrepresented in the National Register, as well as the development of nominations to the National Register for specific sites. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/underrepresented-community-grants.htm | | ✔ |

| National Science Foundation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Documenting Endangered Languages** | This funding partnership between the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities supports projects to develop and advance knowledge concerning dynamic language infrastructure in the context of endangered human languages—languages that are both understudied and at risk of falling out of use. https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/nsf-dynamic-language-infrastructure-neh/nsf22-615/solicitation | | ✔ |
| **Smart and Connected Communities** | This program supports use-inspired research that addresses communities' social, economic, and environmental challenges. Projects must work with community stakeholders on pilots that integrate intelligent technologies with natural and built environments. https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/scc-smart-connected-communities | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Racial Equity in STEM Education** | This program supports projects focused on advancing racial equity in STEM education and workforce development that are led or co-developed by individuals and communities most impacted by the inequities caused by systemic racism. https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/racial-equity-stem-education-ehr-racial-equity/nsf22-634/solicitation | | ✔ |

| Office of Community Services | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Community Services Block Grant** | These grants support services and activities for individuals and families with low incomes that alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/community-services-block-grant-csbg | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Community Economic Development** | The Community Economic Development program is a federal grant program that expands employment for individuals with low income in communities facing persistent poverty and high unemployment. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ced/ced-planning-grant | | ✔ |

| United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grant Title** | **Description** | **Libraries** | **Museums** |
| **Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) Program** | The purpose of the TCEG Program is to provide funding to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans in the food and agricultural sciences. The TCEG Program is intended to strengthen institutional capacity to deliver relevant formal education opportunities. https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/nifa-tribal-programs/tribal-equity-grants-program | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Strategic Economic and Community Development** | The local utility passes the funding to ultimate recipients for such eligible projects as: Community development assistance to nonprofits and public bodies (particularly for job creation or enhancement). Technical assistance. Facilities and equipment to educate and train rural residents to help economic development. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-economic-development-loan-grant-program | ✔ | ✔ |
| **Rural Community Development Initiative** | Program funds may be used to improve housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/rural-community-development-initiative-grants | ✔ | ✔ |

# Appendix D: Grantee Spotlights

SPOTLIGHT

# Preserving Cultural Heritage

A Decade of Celebrating Native Culture: Educating with Archival Recordings of Southeast Alaska Native Dance & Song

**GRANTEE**
Sealaska Corporation

**LOCATION**
Juneau, AK

**PROGRAM**
Native American Library Services: Enhancement, FY 2015

**DESCRIPTION**
This project preserved a unique collection of 338 video recordings of traditional Southeast Alaska Native song and dance performances. The performances had been presented at "Celebration" cultural festivals, sponsored by the Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) between 1982 and 1992. These videotapes were old and inaccessible due to their outdated format and were in critical need of preservation measures. The recordings were made widely available to Tribal members, educators, scholars, and the public, and Celebration content was integrated into lessons for K–12 teachers and university instructors.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"[People] were incredibly excited to see grandparents or great grandparents in these captivating videos. There were so many people who wanted to see more of this footage that hadn't been seen or experienced in more than 30 years."

**Jennifer Treadway, Archivist, SHI**

"Digitizing more than 250 outdated videotapes that include this rare material was so critical... If not for this project, the footage of culturally significant material would be lost forever. Instead, we were able to preserve this rare audiovisual footage for many generations to come. It was also a beautiful experience to see our Council of Traditional Scholars experience these tapes and their history."

**Jennifer Treadway**

"Besides substantially increasing access to these historical performances by Southeast Alaska Natives and school-age children, these tapes will provide a significant opportunity for scholars (Native and non-Native) to observe and study changes in singing and dancing practices over time."

**Chuck Smythe, History and Culture Director, SHI**

"Through ...educational materials and videos ...Native American history [was] integrated into lessons, promoting cross-cultural identity and appreciation."[1]

1 Quotes from: https://www.imls.gov/grant-spotlights/digitizing-30-years-alaskan-tribal-heritage

SPOTLIGHT

# Preserving Cultural Heritage

St. Paul Island Library Program

**GRANTEE**

Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

**LOCATION**

Saint Paul Island, AK

**PROGRAM**

Native American Library Services: Basic, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**

The Aleut Community of St Paul Island Tribal Government (ACSPI) sought to further develop and sustain the tanamawaa.com website. The website is the main digital/external repository for source materials for the Unangam Tunuu (Aleut) Language program. The current website was developed through a 2013 IMLS Enhancement Grant and maintained by subsequent IMLS Basic grants. The website attracts over 2,000 visitors per year and has been used by teachers in the local school district, an Unangam Tunuu fluency-building team in the community, other community members, and Unangan living in other communities. This project expanded the website, added a section for archival and resource materials, and digitized existing archival materials for upload and use within the website.

Website banner from tanamawaa.com, reading: Nation's Work: Tanam Awaaa. Revitalizing the ways of the Unangax̂ through contemporary tools; bridging the values and stories of our ancestors into the present and beyond for us and for the coming generations we don't see yet, for their time here. (Image courtesy of Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

**The focus of the grant was to ensure the sustainability of the cultural website tanamawaa.com. As stated there:**

**"Approximately 66% of the enrolled membership of the ACSPI lives away from the homelands; and an unknown but sizeable percentage of the enrolled membership, both at home and abroad, utilize technological tools such as the Internet and websites to acquire information... In order for a nation to keep its language, ways, and stories going, its youth need to be provided opportunities to learn and utilize the knowledge and skills of the nation. The Internet is a tool much utilized by the youth of the ACSPI."[1]**

**As stated in their Final Performance Report:**

**"New material, including song videos in Unangam Tunuu (Aleut Language) that were used by the St. Paul School elementary teachers were uploaded to website."**

**"The number of website visitors continue[d] to increase due to users being able to successfully find items of interest on the site."[2]**

1 Quote from: https://tanamawaa.com/background/
2 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Preserving Cultural Heritage

## Ho'okahua

**GRANTEE**

Papahana Kuaola

**LOCATION**

Kaneohe, HI

**PROGRAM**

Native Hawaiian Library Services, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**

Papahana Kuaola developed an online and in-person program focused on the mo'olelo (stories) of Hawaii to perpetuate traditional Hawaiian knowledge and methodologies. This project increased access to culture-based education resources, and strengthened interest in reading, understanding, and appreciation of Hawaiian culture through literature.

Through Papahana Kuaola's *Ho'okahua* project, many kūpuna (grandparents) became the main caregivers of keiki (children) during the time of COVID. Papahana Kuaola developed *Mo'olelo Monday* to bring online Hawaiian culture-based resources through mo'olelo (stories) to families. (Image courtesy of Papahana Kuaola)

Wai'anae Elementary School students pose for a photo after a virtual huaka'i (field trip) with Papahana Kuaola educators. The Mo'olelo of "Hāloa the Little Huli" was read to them by their classroom teacher prior to the virtual huaka'i. The Papahana Kuaola educators then shared information about the land and the kalo (taro), crossed over the stream, walked them through lo'i (taro patches) and showed them how to huki (pull/harvest) the kalo. (Image courtesy of Papahana Kuaola)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

**"Aloha Aina - Learning malama aina practices. Participants ...learned to identify [Native] plants and were given seeds or cuttings to grow or plant in their school communities, [adding] 637 native plants ... to their communities."**

**"Ho'opoeko - to encourage the use of Hawaiian language in the home, 11 Hawaiian language sessions were conducted.... The non-academic approach... focused on phrases and vocabulary commonly used in the home... [Families attending also] participated in 2 Hawaiian language ...cooking and painting [events]."**

**"Mo'olelo Monday - 12 mo'olelo ... depicting the culture, values, language or traditions of Hawaii, [were] developed and produced by staff in video format and made accessible on the Papahana Kuaola website."**

**"Teachers at the participating schools continuously responded ... with gratitude and thankfulness regarding the program offerings."**

**"A teacher on Maui stated, 'I conducted the Read Alouds and cultural activities as a classroom lesson. We loved the fish pond building and string figures.' This teacher shared that she would never have felt confident to teach Hawaiian culture but that the activities listed on the activity cards and the supplies provided, eased her concern and she just 'went for it.'"[1]**

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Increasing Staffing and Professional Development

## Living Longhouse Project

**GRANTEE**
Seneca Nation of Indians

**LOCATION**
Salamanca, NY

**PROGRAM**
Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2020

**DESCRIPTION**
The Seneca-Iroquois National Museum conducted educational activities centered around building a new replica longhouse on their cultural center campus. Museum staff participated in professional development, with a special focus on cultural interpretation to hone their interpretation skills for the public. The museum also recreated objects that would have been found in use during the period of this pre-colonial longhouse.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

**"The onsite trainings took place at the Ganondagan State Historic Site... a 17th century Seneca town site... which also has an interpretative Living Longhouse... 2 of the trainers we enlisted have been working for the Ganondagan State Historic Site for over 20 years... These 2 trainers are not only experts in Seneca history, but they also were interpretive guides for their longhouse replica..."**

**"The relationships established throughout this project with other museums and cultural workers, have already been utilized in the planning of further joint staff development trainings, and interpretive trainings."**

**"The immediate project outcomes are ... positive community engagement in the construction and use of the structure, cultural tours of our long-held lifeways... that many are no longer familiar with... and the written and oral materials created from the experience."**

**"The area ...is being developed into an interpretive village, where visitors will be immersed in the living history of the Six Nations people."[1]**

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Increasing Staffing and Professional Development

## Delaware Nation Historic Preservation Archives Assessment and Digitization

**GRANTEE**
Delaware Nation

**LOCATION**
Anadarko, OK

**PROGRAM**
Native American Library Services: Enhancement, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**
The Delaware Nation Historic Preservation Office assessed, organized, and developed a plan to preserve its Tribal archives, which promote the heritage and culture of the Lenape people. This project enabled staff to conduct a full assessment of its Delaware Nation Collection and hire an archivist to increase access to these collections. The project was critical for the Delaware Nation to preserve and protect their history and culture.

Delaware elder Linda Poolaw hearing her mother's voice along with a photo for the first time since she passed years ago. The kiosk has allowed the Delaware Nation to display Tribal members' photos, language documents and audio. This is not only something special for our elders but contributes to teaching our younger generation. (Image courtesy of Delaware Nation)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"The results of this project, including hiring an archivist [from the Delaware Nation] and digitizing our collection of archives, is of great benefit to the Delaware Nation community."

"Photographs that were unorganized, not digitized and stored away out of the public's eye [have] now all been organized into safe and secure storage facilities, preserved digitally and cataloged for easy access, [are] now available for our tribal citizens to view in person or by reaching out to our archivist to receive digital copies."

"We met with professionals from the University of Oklahoma to go over metadata, documentation, finding aids and other information important to the digital preservation of our archival collection. The archivist also attended training sessions online pertaining to digital archiving."

"Our archivist completed all digitization work of our archival materials including cataloging and processing all digital files into accessible collections on the department's server storage... She was able to digitize and process over 36,000 files."

"We were able to draft an archives policies and procedures document discussing our archival collection, physical access, research, restrictions, and copyright."

"We've begun another project that relied on the accomplishments of this project, which is installing interpretive digital kiosks for our visitors to our new museum and library to use to view our digital collection of archival materials."[1]

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Expanding and Enhancing the Delivery of Library or Museum Services

## Community Reading Corners: Connecting to the Library in My District

A child reads at the Seven Mile District Reading Corner. (Image courtesy of the San Carlos Community and Apache Tribe)

**GRANTEE**

San Carlos Apache Tribal Council

**LOCATION**

San Carlos, AZ

**PROGRAM**

Native American Library Services: Basic, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**

This project aimed to expand the reach of the joint San Carlos Public Library/San Carlos Apache College Library to the four community districts of the San Carlos Apache Reservation: Bylas, Gilson Wash, Peridot, and Seven Mile. Because many community members, including Elders and children, lack consistent and reliable transportation, visiting the downtown San Carlos Public Library regularly is not possible for some. By putting small collections (selected with input from the districts) in places close to their homes, community members could become more engaged with library materials, programming, and offerings.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"The Council staff were most excited to receive over 200 new books in a new cart with posters describing the Community Reading Corner project."

"The books provided ...ranged from toddler board books to adult study guides. There are books in the collection that relate to our community; one example was an Apache Girl's Coming of Age Ceremony, a book with information and pictures that our community can relate to since that ceremony is conducted here in San Carlos."

"Seven Mile District... [set up the Reading Corner] in the Tribal Administration lobby. That was a great choice as many tribal community members visit offices there and bring their children... Our Bylas District Council staff were excited to have the book collection in their lobby, and the staff sat down right away to read the books we brought."

"My grandchildren sit and read at the Gilson Wash gym when their parents visit for events. They talked with me about the books they read; my 9-year-old grandson asked me to get him a kid's cookbook since he saw it there at the Gilson Wash reading corner."

"I learned this is a very good way to reach children and parents to open that pathway to literacy, just by having the books available in an area in their community. Brand new books, a new carpet to sit on, and a place where children are able to hold, touch and read the books in a very public environment is a positive connection to the community."[1]

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Expanding and Enhancing the Delivery of Library or Museum Services

## Expanding Public Access to Kaho'olawe through Live-Stream Video and Virtual Reality

### GRANTEE

State of Hawai'i Department of Land & Natural Resources

### LOCATION

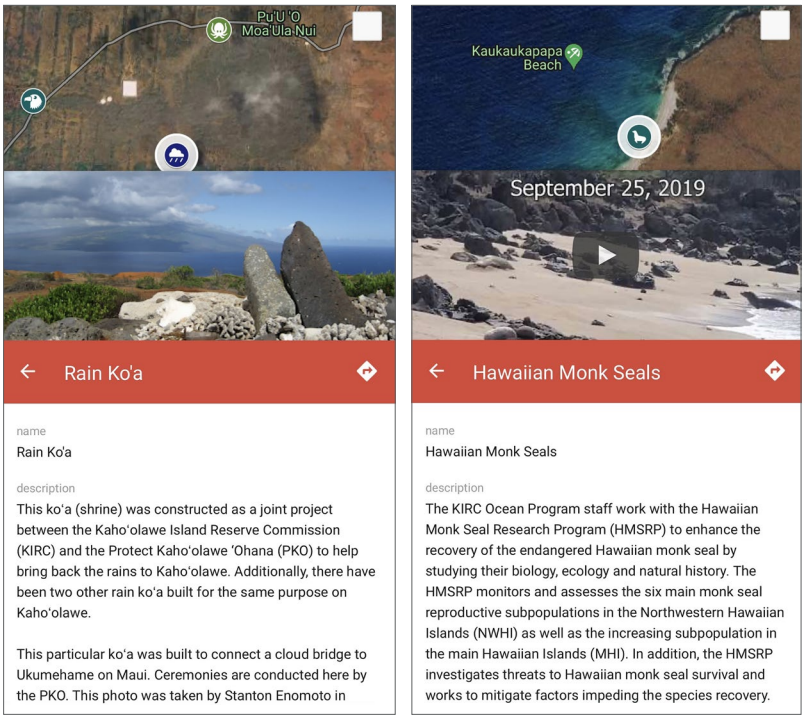
Honolulu, HI

### PROGRAM

Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2021

### DESCRIPTION

With a mission to restore, preserve, and provide safe, meaningful access to the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve, the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) implemented new ways for the public to access the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the site. Due to limitations on physical access related to funding constraints and COVID-19, KIRC developed digital tools to provide the greater community with access to the Reserve through virtual means. One of these products was a Kaho'olawe virtual reality Huaka'i, or expedition, now available to those in Hawai'i and around the world on Google Maps.




**Left:** One of the documented historic Hawaiian sites on the KIRC Virtual Huaka'i on Google Maps including a picture and description on the Rain Ko'a. **Right:** One of the documented endangered species on the KIRC Virtual Huaka'i on Google Maps with a video link to watch and a description for the user to read about the Hawaiian Monk Seals. (Images courtesy of Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission)

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

**"To the people of Hawai'i, especially to Native Hawaiians, Kaho'olawe is a symbol of resilience and an opportunity to rebuild a living and thriving cultural heritage."**

**"...[The products produced can] serve as models for other natural museum spaces that hope to maintain or expand public access beyond a physical means to individuals both in Hawai'i and around the world."**

**Six months after launching, the KIRC Kaho'olawe Virtual Field Trip was accessed over 1,800 times, including through "direct sharing with schools and community organizations."[1]**

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Providing Lifelong Learning Activities

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe - "400 Years Ago" Exhibit

**GRANTEE**

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

**LOCATION**

Mashpee, MA

**PROGRAM**

Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2020

**DESCRIPTION**

In anticipation of the Plymouth 400th anniversary, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe designed and installed a new museum exhibit to mark the 1620 landing of the Mayflower in Wampanoag territory. The exhibit teaches visitors about the cultural implications for the Tribal community during the first five years of English settlement in the area.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

**"This exhibit allows the visitor to explore the events and cultural implications during the ... English settlement... The story itself is difficult to tell; colonization is a delicate matter that we hope to approach in a mature comprehensive way for the variety of age groups and language abilities."[1]**

**"This exhibit provides a unique perspective on the first 50 years of colonization, presented through a Wampanoag lens. [It communicates] in our own voice what the first fifty years were like."**

**"There was significant research done to contribute towards the 27 exhibit panels. Elders from three Wampanoag Communities participated and are represented in the material content of the exhibit."**

**"The final installation looks great and has been well received. The final product is something all Wampanoag can be proud of... [Patrons] have embraced and enjoyed the fascinating new 400 years ago exhibit."[2]**

1 Quote from: https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/museum
2 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Providing Lifelong Learning Activities

## Project REACH (Reading, Engineering, and Arts through Cultural Heritage)

**GRANTEE**
Wyandotte Nation

**LOCATION**
Wyandotte, OK

**PROGRAM**
Native American Library Services: Enhancement, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**
Through Project REACH, the Wyandotte Nation provided its Tribal community with an early literacy station, cultural books, and Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, and Mathematics (STREAM) activities, including activities with a focus on Wyandotte language and crafts.

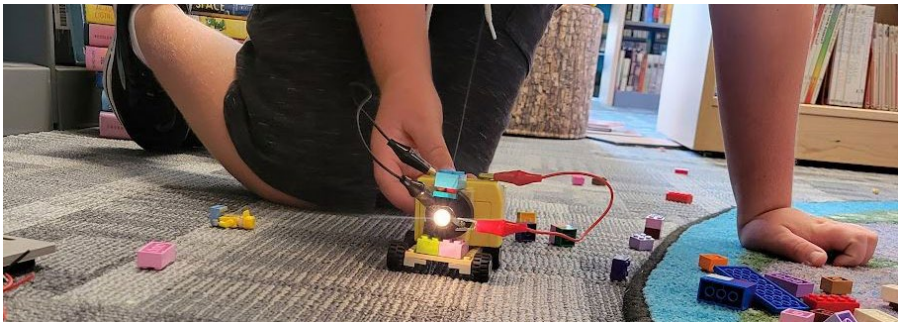


Photo taken during LEGO club of a student's creation. This was created during free build time using LEGOS and STEM items students have access to during LEGO club. (Image courtesy of the Wyandotte Nation Historical Library)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"The students have gained increased knowledge and self-esteem through participation and teamwork."

"[The] early literacy stations have increased youths' interest in the library."

"These literacy centers support early childhood lifelong learning, digital literacy skills, confidence in science, technology, reading, engineering, art, and math among youth, have ... enhanced educational resources, and improved tools and resources for families and youth."

"The LEGO/STREAM club has increased youths' interest in the library. There has been growth in confidence with topics of science, technology, reading, engineering, art, and mathematics."

"The cultural craft lessons increased the amount of participation in the library, enhanced educational and cultural programs and activities provided in the library, and enhanced knowledge of cultural crafts. The cultural workbooks are expected to enhance and support cultural knowledge and learning for tribal citizens and library guests/patrons."[1]

Photo of a Wyandotte Nation preschool student during library time with her class. This library lesson included students taking turns at different centers to build with all different types of building materials. (Image courtesy of the Wyandotte Nation Historical Library)

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Providing Lifelong Learning Activities

Swinomish Early Education Center

**GRANTEE**
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

**LOCATION**
La Conner, WA

**PROGRAM**
Native American Library Services: Basic, FY 2018

**DESCRIPTION**
This project created a comfortable space within the Susan Wilbur lLop-che-ahl Early Education Center (SWEEC) for children and parents to enjoy reading together and to borrow books for home use. The staff grew the collection of culturally relevant materials in the library and utilized the space for reading time and educational programs.

Swinomish community members read together. (Image courtesy of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"We wanted to create a welcoming place where parents and teachers could step out of the classroom and have a library feel with the children... The library has also been helpful for children that ...need a quiet place away."

"A main goal is to have items in the library representative of the Swinomish community, culture and children. We visited our local trading post for an experience in all things Coast Salish. We purchased a wide variety of animal puppets whose images are relevant to the Swinomish people. Each puppet has a name and a story to tell."

"4th graders ... come to our library ...to read to the preschoolers... This win-win scenario encourages reading, skill development and relationships for both age groups."

"This has also been a great opportunity for the children to get to know their community helpers."

The library hosts activities developed by other Tribal departments, such as "a curriculum that follows the harvest cycle... Each activity highlights one or more aspects of environmental health... [the] approach recognizes that humans are a component within the food web and are affected by the plants and animals within that ecosystem."

"[The] youngest Swinomish community members [learn about] one plant each month and ... its lushootseed name... We have also created a garden for children to tactilely learn about ...taking care of growing plants. ... [this allows] children to experience the natural world no matter their age or developmental stage."[1]

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Providing Lifelong Learning Activities

Multigenerational Learning Promoting Successful Lives and Preserving Culture

**GRANTEE**
Modoc Nation

**LOCATION**
Miami, OK

**PROGRAM**
Native American Library Services: Basic, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**
The Modoc Nation Library strengthened community engagement with new learning activities and programs designed for community members of all ages. The library hosted monthly storytelling/read-aloud sessions for children and their caregivers, integrated with Modoc language and cultural sessions. At the end of each session, children received a book to take home. In addition, library staff offered training classes on basic computer skills for adults ages 18 and up. With additional Tribal support, the library held adult and child healthy cooking classes to encourage multi-generational learning.

Modoc Nation library staff member reads with a group of children. (Image courtesy of Modoc Nation)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"The Modoc Nation Library strengthened community engagement with new learning activities and programs designed for community members of all ages."

"Adult and child healthy cooking classes were ... held to encourage multi-generational learning. Cooking sets ... purchased through another Tribal program to support the IMLS program... were given to children participating in the classes. Participants were taught how to make jerky, dried fruits and vegetables as well as stew and chili."

"Library staff continually offered training classes on basic computer skills for adults ages 18 and up."

"Services were improved enhancing members engagement, increasing employability skills, developing life skills, and providing a place for connection to all tribal programs."

"Libraries have become especially innovative with coming up with smart and effective ways to continue serving their communities. Libraries are diverse centers that offer endless opportunities and resources to their communities ...Offering unique classes that combined hands on activities as well as integrating our culture and language helped establish a wide age range of participants in our classes."

"We learned from this project that we will want to incorporate classes like this again to keep tribal members of all ages engaged in activities offered at the Tribal Library."[1]

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Understanding and Responding to Evolving Community Needs

Colusa Indian Community Council

**GRANTEE**

Colusa Indian Community Council (CICC)

**LOCATION**

Colusa, CA

**PROGRAM**

Native American Library Services, Basic, FY 2019

**DESCRIPTION**

Originally, CICC planned to refine their tutoring spaces for an after-school youth program. When the COVID-19 pandemic arose, CICC submitted a budget change request to IMLS to use their remaining funds to purchase additional bandwidth, computer equipment, and supplies to create an environment that would support a virtual classroom.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"CICC provides tutoring for grades K–12, but for many youth, the real draw is the social connection with their peers and tutoring staff."

"The kids expressed the need for help academically, emotionally, and socially. And not having access to the library areas and tutoring staff they have come to rely on so heavily is proving to be difficult for them."

Barbie Buchanan, Director of Community Services at CICC

"We went from seeing the kids on a daily basis to not seeing them at all. So, we knew we had to figure out a way to offer a path where everyone in the community can feel connected while we're all disconnected."

"We wanted to provide the youth the services they need—wherever they are."

"We wanted to celebrate a new kind of learning and find ways to be creative during this time."

"Parents who had to become educators for their children overnight are thankful for the array of activities that CICC provides, as well as the social outlet the virtual program gives their children."[1]

1 Quotes from: https://www.imls.gov/grant-spotlights/how-colusa-indian-community-bringing-youth-together-across-digital-divide

SPOTLIGHT

# Understanding and Responding to Evolving Community Needs

Ojibwe Learning Center and Library Needs Assessment and Programming Development

**GRANTEE**

Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

**LOCATION**

Sault Sainte Marie, MI

**PROGRAM**

Native American Library Services: Basic, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**

The Ojibwe Learning Center and Library provides meaningful educational materials to promote and preserve Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin (Native way of life) for the Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The library undertook a strategic planning exercise to help identify ways to better engage with the community and meet learning and cultural needs over the long term. Library staff conducted an assessment to identify ways to strengthen current programming and develop new programs.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

**"Instead of a weakness/threat mindset, we adopted a challenges mindset–what challenges do we face and where can we improve performance. We also identified positives of strengths and opportunities for growth."**

**"By creating a system for staff and visitor feedback, we began to identify needs and sought ways to improve those services."**

**"With these [staff] responses, the project director obtained training materials to help staff acquire necessary skills. One requested skillset was museum exhibitions. Other targeted skills are collections management."**

**"Visitor feedback illustrated areas for improvement in visitor experiences that we were able to address ... including accessibility, improved work stations, availability of social areas, and improved visual experience for viewing displayed artifacts from our collections."[1]**

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Understanding and Responding to Evolving Community Needs

## Interpretive Plan for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Museum

**GRANTEE**
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

**LOCATION**
Fort McDowell, AZ

**PROGRAM**
Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2021

**DESCRIPTION**
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation produced an interpretive plan to guide the future development of its museum. The current museum exhibits had been displayed since 2012 with minimal interpretive graphics in an 800-square-foot area of a former church building in the historic center of the community. The interpretive plan was based on broad community participation in facilitated meetings using participant engagement techniques. The plan provided a road map with clear steps for ongoing phases of development and demonstrated the Tribe's commitment to developing a museum that tells the Nation's story the way they want it to be told.

Dr. Carlos (Wassaja) Montezuma, the first male Native American doctor who was a Yavapai from Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation. (Image courtesy of Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation)

**Top:** Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Museum/Center. **Bottom Left:** Photograph - Exodus, 1887. **Bottom Right:** 1903 Yavapai Leaders and old Fort Replica. (Images courtesy of Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"The award has greatly supported and bolstered our Native American community's Cultural Museum/ Center... [and] contributed to the reawakening and sustaining of our Yavapai language, culture, and history within our community and abroad."

The award "greatly improved the Culture department's ability to inform, educate, and showcase Yavapai history and culture for the community and the public."

"Since we have made many improvements to the museum, our Yavapai tours alone have sold out for the last two years in 2022 and 2023."

"Patrons were surveyed for each tour and rated the Yavapai tour at a 97% positive rating."[1]

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

SPOTLIGHT

# Developing or Expanding Partnerships

## Qayaq AngIt'sqaq–The Returned Kayak Project

**GRANTEE**
Koniag, Inc.

**LOCATION**
Anchorage, AK

**PROGRAM**
Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2015

**DESCRIPTION**
After discovering a rare 19th-century kayak at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, the Alutiiq Museum undertook Qayaq AngIt'sqaq: The Returned Kayak Project. The Alutiiq Museum worked with the Peabody to borrow, ship, and install the historic kayak back to Alaska to be featured in a kayak exhibit. This project advanced knowledge of Alutiiq kayaks, created a public lecture series and educational programming, and helped to revitalize traditional Alutiiq kayak construction. After the project's end, the Peabody legally, permanently transferred the kayak to the Alutiiq Museum.

Alfred Naumoff examines the kayak in storage at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, 2011. (Photo by Sven Haakanson Jr., courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum)

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

"I am … so appreciative of the respect given back to us in that act… This whole process hasn't been one of confrontation, it has been one of collaboration."

**Sven Haakanson, former Executive Director of the Alutiiq Museum**

"[The kayak] is really, really important because it puts this knowledge back into a living context where when you see it, it changes how you see the past… Seeing it in person and knowing it's there forever, for the community… opens up … opportunities for kayaks to start taking a new role back in our communities… Instead of having only seven collected, original kayaks, we can have hundreds more in the future."[1]

1 Quotes from: https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2023/01/30/harvard-museum-transfers-ownership-of-rare-culturally-significant-kayak-to-kodiak-museum/

SPOTLIGHT

# Developing or Expanding Partnerships

## 'Ike Hawai'i Science Center Exhibit

### GRANTEE

Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture

### LOCATION

Kapolei, HI

### PROGRAM

Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2019

### DESCRIPTION

The Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE) created a mobile science exhibit to support improved academic outcomes in science and math for students from preschool to eighth grade. With the collaboration of science experts, teachers, students, and cultural practitioners, the project team identified and designed exhibits using a culture-based educational approach. The project linked Indigenous knowledge and practices with scientific theory, providing hands-on experiences designed to engage youth in STEM learning.

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

**"For the 'Ike Hawa'i Science Center Exhibit, I worked with a team of individuals including a project manager, a cultural specialist, and a scientist to achieve our goals."**

**Sanoe Marfil, Former Chief Programs Officer at INPEACE**

**"The most beneficial part of working on this project has been the opportunity to work with practitioners and experts who hold deep knowledge and have been crucial in the sharing of the practices with folks like us."**

**Sanoe Marfil**

**"Based on the outcomes from this project, INPEACE is working on two additional mobile exhibits—one about mahina (the moon) and another about lawai'a (fishing practices)."[1]**

**Left:** A keiki (child) is focused on playing the "Planting with the Mahina" game at the "Kaulana Mahina: Look Up, Look Down, Look All Around" exhibit. As they move pieces to plant crops according to the moon phases, they're learning how lunar cycles influence planting and harvesting in traditional Hawaiian practices. **Middle:** A kumu (teacher) guides her haumana (students) through the fascinating process of fermentation used in making kapa at "The Science of Kapa" exhibit by INPEACE Kaulele. **Right:** A young keiki (child) learns the traditional art of kapa making by using an 'opihi shell to scrape the wauke plant at "The Science of Kapa" exhibit. This hands-on activity teaches visitors the intricate process of transforming wauke bark into kapa, just as Native Hawaiians have done for generations. (Images courtesy of INPEACE)

1 Quotes from: https://www.imls.gov/grant-spotlights/connecting-culture-and-science-hawaiian-communities

SPOTLIGHT

# Leveraging New Funding Opportunities

## Planning a Complete Apsáalooke (Crow) Indian Learning and Cultural Center at Little Big Horn College

Architectural rendering of the planned Apsáalooke Cultural Center and Museum, by 7 Directions Architects & Planners. (Image courtesy of Little Big Horn College Center of Apsáalooke [Crow] History and Culture)

### GRANTEE

Crow Tribe of Indians

### LOCATION

Crow Agency, MT

### PROGRAM

Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services, FY 2020

### DESCRIPTION

The Crow Tribe launched a strategic planning initiative to guide the development of a cultural center on the campus of Little Big Horn College. A master planner and an architect led the process, and each stage involved students, faculty and staff, Crow community members, and other interested parties through surveys and community meetings. The work team used the accumulated data to produce a strategic plan and final concept plan. The cultural center will serve as an access point, along with a Tribal library and archives, to perpetuate Crow culture and history through rotating displays and cultural activities.

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

**As reported in their Final Performance report, additional funding and plan development "was the direct result of this IMLS grant with which this project began."**

**"Under a WESTAF grant, the logical follow up to the IMLS-funded activities were taken with the production of a conceptual design with programming statement and floor plans ... which are two essential building blocks on the way to the next step."**

**"That next step was funded by the Economic Development Administration in September 2022 with a grant of $1.943 million for the creation of the schematic design, design development and construction documents."[1]**

**"We'll finally have a center that would house everything about our culture and tradition of the Crow tribe, whether it's the history, artifacts, or maintaining our traditions and our customs ...It would be a central location that would house all of these things that we're trying to preserve."[2]**

1 Grantee quotes from Final Performance Report

2 Quote from: https://www.ypradio.org/tribal-affairs/2022-09-09/little-big-horn-college-receives-federal-funds-for-new-crow-nation-cultural-center

# Appendix E: NA/AN/NH Evaluation Report References List

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