

Fiscal Year 2025

---



# Panel Reviewer Handbook

Native American/Native Hawaiian  
Museum Services

Office of Museum Services

# Table of Contents

- Welcome!..... 1
- Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Overview..... 2
  - Executive Summary ..... 2
  - NANH Program Goals and Objectives..... 2
    - NANH Program Goal..... 2
  - Funding Amounts ..... 2
- Step-by-Step Instructions for Reviewers..... 3
  - Step 1: Sign in to eGMS Reach..... 3
  - Step 2: Read Panel Review Criteria and Applications ..... 3
    - NANH Panel Review Criteria..... 4
  - Step 3: Draft Comments..... 5
  - Step 4: Assign Scores ..... 7
    - Scoring Definitions..... 7
  - Step 5: Review Your Work ..... 8
  - Step 6: Enter Scores and Comments by the Evaluation Due Date ..... 8
  - Step 7: Completing Your Service as a Reviewer ..... 9
- Appendix A: Confidentiality and Application and Review Process ..... 10
  - Confidentiality and Use of Artificial Intelligence ..... 10
  - Application and Review Process ..... 10
- Appendix B: Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest..... 11
- Appendix C: Example Peer Reviewer Comments ..... 14

# Welcome!

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a peer reviewer for this year's Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grant program. We hope you find this to be a rewarding experience and draw satisfaction from helping Native American Tribes, Alaska Native Villages and Corporations, and Native Hawaiian organizations build their capacity to provide museum services to their communities. Your contribution of time and expertise will be invaluable to IMLS and to the applicants who will receive your comments.

In this handbook, you will find the information you need to carry out panel review, including information about the program, tips for writing effective comments, and three appendices with important reference material.

Additional guidance for peer reviewers includes:

- [Webinar for Potential Museum Reviewers](#)
- [Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest](#) (PDF, 88 KB)
- [How to Use Login.gov to Access eGMS Reach](#) (PDF, 1.3 MB)
- [How to Review Applications in eGMS Reach](#) (PDF, 1.1 MB)

If you have any questions about this material or the processes described, please do not hesitate to contact your panel chair at any time.

Once again, thank you for the service you are about to render to Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian applicants and the communities they serve.

# Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Overview

---

## Executive Summary

The Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program (NANH) supports Native American Tribes (including Alaska Native Villages and Corporations) and Native Hawaiian organizations in sustaining heritage, culture, and knowledge. The program supports projects such as educational services and programs, workforce professional development, organizational capacity building, community engagement, and collections stewardship.

---

## NANH Program Goals and Objectives

NANH has one program goal and three associated objectives. Each applicant should align their proposed project with the program goal and one or more of the associated objectives. The choice of objective(s) should be identified clearly in the Project Justification section of the Narrative and align with the objective selected by the applicant on the IMLS Museum Program Information Form.

---

## NANH Program Goal

Build the capacity of Native American Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to provide museum services to their communities.

---

### Objective 1

Support the preservation and perpetuation of Indigenous languages and cultural practices.

---

### Objective 2

Support the professional development of the workforce of Indigenous museums.

---

### Objective 3

Support the management and care of Indigenous collections and their associated documentation.

---

## Funding Amounts

Amount of Individual Awards	\$5,000 - \$250,000
Cost Share Requirement	No cost share required
Period of Performance	1 to 3 years

---

# Step-by-Step Instructions for Reviewers

At this stage, IMLS has screened applications only for institutional eligibility and application completeness. We are counting on you to determine how good a job each applicant does in:

- ✓ meeting the goal and objectives of the NANH grant program, and
- ✓ presenting a clear justification for the project, detailing the project workplan, and articulating the project results.

As you begin the process, you need to set aside enough time to read each application, understand the review criteria, and write your evaluation. The amount of time it takes to complete this work may vary significantly depending on the complexity of the application and your familiarity with the review process. Reviewers may spend from 1 to 3 hours on each application and often need to reread an application before completing their review.

---

## Step 1: Sign in to eGMS Reach

eGMS Reach is IMLS's platform that you will use to access and review applications. To securely access eGMS Reach, users are required to have an account through [Login.gov](#). You will receive an email with the subject line "eGMS Reach Account Information," that includes a link to the reviewer portal. If you do not receive such an email, please check your junk folder. If you still do not see the email, contact [imls-museumreviewers@imls.gov](mailto:imls-museumreviewers@imls.gov).

Once you have the email, please visit <https://grants.imls.gov/Reach/> and follow the instructions located in the [How to Use Login.gov to Access eGMS Reach](#) Job Aid to create a Login.gov account or link your email to an existing Login.gov account.

Instructions for navigating eGMS Reach are available in the [How to Review Applications in eGMS Reach](#) Job Aid, which is accessible on the IMLS website here: <https://imls.gov/grants/peer-review/reviewer-resources/museum-reviewer-resources>

Visit the [Federal Service Desk](#) or call 1-866-606-8220 for questions about registering or renewing your registration with Login.gov. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

---

## Step 2: Read Panel Review Criteria and Applications

We recommend that you begin by reviewing the [FY 2025 Native American/Native Hawaiian Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) which guided applicants in creating their applications. This document is also available in the "Shared Files for all Panel Participants" section of the Files and Forms tab in eGMS Reach. Then, read the applications, keeping in mind the panel review criteria listed below. You do not need to reference each bullet point in your comments, but these questions should guide your thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of each application.

# NANH Panel Review Criteria

## Project Justification

Does the project meet the goal of the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services (NANH) funding opportunity to build the capacity of Native American Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to provide museum services to their communities?

- How well does the proposal align with the NANH program goal and the applicant's selected NANH program objective?
- Are the ways in which this project strengthens museum services specific and measurable?
- How well has the applicant used relevant data and other evidence to describe the need, problem, or challenge to be addressed?
- Has the applicant appropriately defined the primary audience(s) and beneficiaries, as applicable, for this work?
- Have the primary audience and other project stakeholders been appropriately involved appropriately in planning the project?
- If applicable, are the collections and/or records that are the focus of the project and their current condition described and quantified in enough detail?

## Project Work Plan

Is the project poised for successful implementation?

- Are the proposed activities clearly described and in a logical sequence?
- Are the goals, assumptions, and risks clearly stated?
- Do the identified staff, partners, consultants, and service providers possess the experience and skills necessary to successfully complete the work?
- Are the time, financial, personnel, and other identified resources appropriate for the scope and scale of the project?
- If present, does the Digital Products Plan reflect appropriate practices and standards for creating and managing the types of digital products proposed?
- Are the proposed methods for tracking the project's progress reliable and measurable, and will they allow course adjustments when necessary?

## Results

If funded, will the project achieve its intended results?

- Are the project's intended results clearly articulated, realistic, meaningful and linked to the need, problem, or challenge addressed by the project?
- Is the plan to effect meaningful change in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes solidly grounded and appropriately structured?
- Will the products created by the project be made available and accessible to the primary audience?
- Is the plan to sustain the benefits of the project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance reasonable and practical?
- If applicable, will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records improve as a result of the project?

## Step 3: Draft Comments

For each application you review, we ask you to write a constructive and substantive comment for each of the panel review criteria: Project Justification, Project Work Plan, and Project Results. All three areas have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.

You may wish to prepare your comments in a separate document for later copying and pasting into the eGMS Reach evaluation form. Otherwise, be certain to save your work as you proceed so as not to risk the system ‘timing out’ and losing your comments!

### When drafting your comments...

- Take all the review criteria questions for each section into consideration. It is not necessary to restate the review criteria questions in your comments.
- Use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively.
- Judge the application on its own merits, and do not base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution.
- Make sure your comments justify the scores you provide. A highly complimentary comment does not remove the sting of a low score, and a negative comment does not even out a high one. Comments and scores must complement each other and make sense as a whole.

### Characteristics of Effective and Poor Panel Reviewer Comments

Effective Comments...	Poor Comments...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are presented in a constructive manner.</li><li>• are both substantive and easy to read and understand.</li><li>• reflect the resources of the institution.</li><li>• are specific to the individual application.</li><li>• reflect the numeric score assigned.</li><li>• highlight the application’s strengths and identify areas for improvement.</li><li>• are directed to applicants—not IMLS or panel reviewers—for their use.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• simply summarize or paraphrase the applicant’s own words.</li><li>• make derogatory remarks.</li><li>• penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money.</li><li>• offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information.</li><li>• compare the application to others in the review group.</li><li>• make vague or overly general statements.</li><li>• question an applicant’s honesty or integrity.</li></ul>

See [Appendix C](#) for examples of effective comments, as they appear to applicants.

## What Should Not be Considered in Your Reviews

Sometimes reviewers ask about or mention characteristics that are outside the scope of the NANH review criteria. This is a list of commonly identified factors that you should NOT consider when reading NANH proposals:

- An applicant’s overall financial or staffing needs
- Whether a project is innovative
- Whether a project is new or a resubmission
- The size or age of a Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization
- An applicant’s indirect cost rate (IMLS honors indirect cost rate agreements that applicants have negotiated with another federal agency, or accepts the 15% rate in the absence of a negotiated agreement)
- Cost share is not required for the NANH program and should not be considered in the evaluation

## Bias in the Review Process

Everyone has biases, which are informed by our own experiences as well as our cultural and social environments. Recognizing this is an important step in mitigating the effects of bias in your reviews. The chart below shows different types of bias that commonly happen in the review process. Think about what may feel familiar as you review applications.

AFFINITY BIAS	CONFIRMATION BIAS	CONFORMITY BIAS	CONTRAST EFFECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favoring those like you</li> <li>• Applicants who “speak the lingo” get less scrutiny</li> <li>• Seen as more believable/trustworthy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on information that aligns with preconceived notions</li> <li>• Rejecting ideas or actions that challenge held notions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency to be swayed by the majority or loudest voices</li> <li>• Can lead to false consensus and dampening of multiple perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating quality and other characteristics relative to its surroundings (e.g., other applications in review group) rather than on its own merits</li> <li>• Can result in unfair assessment of risk and capacity</li> </ul>

As you review, pay attention to your preferences—for example, a project may be well conceived and ready to implement even if the narrative is poorly formatted or has spelling errors. We all have biases but staying aware of your preferences and what makes you feel comfortable can interrupt your bias and help ensure that every application is reviewed fairly.



### Example Biased Comments

The following comments contain bias	Explanation
"I couldn't figure out what this project was about because the narrative was filled with spelling mistakes that were very distracting."	Comment demonstrates affinity bias.
"While it's important that tribes connect with their communities, tribal museums should not be the lead for social service projects like a food bank in the museum. That type of work is not mission critical for museums."	Comment demonstrates confirmation bias.
"The project timeline seems ambitious, especially since two key partners aren't identified/confirmed. That said, [Applicant Name] is one of the top museums in the US, and I'm sure they'll be able to make this happen."	Comment demonstrates conformity bias.
"The risks identified in the narrative were not as realistic and robust as those I read in other proposals."	Comment demonstrates contrast effect bias.

## Step 4: Assign Scores

Assign a single preliminary score for the overall project keeping all three sections of the review criteria in mind. Use a scale of 1 to 5, as described in the Scoring Definitions chart.

### Scoring Definitions

Score	Rank	Description
5	Exceptional	The application is outstanding and provides exceptional support for the proposed project.
4	Very Good	The application provides solid support for the proposed project.
3	Good	The application is adequate but could be strengthened in its support for the proposed project.
2	Some Merit	The application is flawed and does not adequately support the proposed project. The project proposal could be revised and strengthened for a future submission.
1	Poor	The application does not fit the program goals, is inadequate, or provided insufficient information to allow for a confident evaluation.

Strive to apply the same approach to all the applications you review. Evaluate each application using the criteria in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and in the Reviewer Resources—not against other proposals. It is theoretically possible for you to have been

assigned all “Exceptional” proposals, or all “Poor” proposals, meaning that you could arrive at all very high scores or very low scores. You do not need to evaluate on a curve of any kind.

If the project is misaligned to the goals or objectives of the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grant program your comments and scores should reflect it.

---

## **Step 5: Review Your Work**

IMLS provides reviewers’ comments to applicants, directly and in their entirety without editing. We do this to make sure our process is as transparent as possible, and to provide anonymous feedback to applicants from their peers. If an applicant is unsuccessful, then they may use these comments to improve their proposal for resubmission. If they are successful, they may use the comments to improve their funded projects.

We hear repeatedly from applicants that getting reviewer comments is one of the most highly valued things about IMLS museum grant programs, therefore, please review your draft comments and preliminary scores. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to reflect your written evaluation more accurately. Scores should support comments, and comments should justify scores.

See [Appendix C](#) for examples of effective comments.

---

## **Step 6: Enter Scores and Comments by the Evaluation Due Date**

When you are ready to enter your scores and comments, visit <https://reach.ims.gov/> and sign in with your Login.gov email and password. Refer to the [How to Review Applications in eGMS Reach Job Aid](#) for instructions on completing comments and selecting scores. Your reviews must be completed and entered in eGMS Reach by the **Evaluation Due Date** listed in the Panel Information tab in eGMS Reach.

Panel Information		Files and Forms	Applications	Messages	Readings
<b>Panel Information</b>					
Date(s)	2/11/2022				
Coordinator					
Chair	<b>Helen Wechsler</b> 202-653-4779 <a href="mailto:hwechsler@imls.gov">hwechsler@imls.gov</a>				
Evaluation Due Date	3/4/2023				
Instructions	<p>Thank you for agreeing to serve as an IMLS peer reviewer for the FY22 Museums for America grant cycle.</p> <p>Guidance for reviewers is accessible under the Panel Files Tab below.</p> <p>Before proceeding to the Application Tab, you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the Conflicts of Interest Statement located under your Personal Files (to review the statement, click the paper icon); and</li> <li>2. Certify that you have reviewed the Conflicts of Interest Statement and that you have no conflicts with the applications that have been assigned to you (to certify that you have reviewed the statement and have no conflicts, click the pen icon to access the click-through signature function).</li> </ol> <p>The deadline for completing your reviews is Friday, March 4 at 11:59:59 PM EST.</p>				

Screenshot. Panel Information tab illustrating where to find the Evaluation Due Date.

## Step 7: Completing Your Service as a Reviewer

Once you have completed your reviews, please keep any notes or copies of files in a secure place in case there are any follow-up questions from IMLS staff. You may delete electronic files and shred paper copies of applications and notes after August 31, 2025.

If you requested an honorarium when you submitted the Peer Reviewer Services Agreement, you may expect to receive the electronic payment 4-6 weeks after completing your service. Please email [IMLS-museumreviewers@imls.gov](mailto:IMLS-museumreviewers@imls.gov) with any questions.

If you would like to be notified when final award decisions are announced by IMLS, go to the [Subscribe](#) link to ensure you receive these updates.

# Appendix A: Confidentiality and Application and Review Process

---

## Confidentiality and Use of Artificial Intelligence

The information contained in grant applications is strictly confidential. Do not discuss or reveal names, institutions' project activities, or any other information contained in the applications. Because Artificial Intelligence (AI) generative tools rely upon the submission of substantial information, and because AI users are unable to control where the information they have submitted will be sent, saved, viewed, or used in the future, IMLS explicitly prohibits its peer reviewers from using AI tools to analyze and critique IMLS grant applications.

While funded applications become a matter of record, IMLS does not release information about applications that are not funded through our programs, nor do we share peer reviewers' names or other identifiable information. You may share that you have served as an IMLS peer reviewer, but do not share details about the program on which you are working or the applications you are considering. This applies to communications that are in person, in email, and through all forms of social media.

---

## Application and Review Process

The success of IMLS grant programs depends upon the quality of its peer review process, through which hundreds of reviewers consider thousands of eligible applications fairly, candidly, and impartially in order to make recommendations for funding each year. Below is a summary of the process from application submission through award announcements.

1. Organizations submit their applications electronically using [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), the central portal of the United States government for receipt of electronic applications.
2. IMLS receives the applications, and staff members check them for organizational eligibility and application completeness.
3. IMLS staff members identify a pool of available peer reviewers with appropriate expertise. Peer review takes place in one or two tiers, depending on the grant program: field review, panel review, or both. Each complete application submitted by an eligible organization typically receives between three and six reviews.
4. For the applications ranked most highly by peer reviewers, IMLS staff members carefully assess the budgets and past organizational performance.
5. IMLS staff members provide a list of applications recommended for funding to the IMLS Director.
6. The IMLS Director makes all final funding decisions.
7. IMLS notifies all applicants whether they have received an award. With their notifications, all applicants receive anonymous copies of the field and/or panel reviews. IMLS also sends notification of the awards to each participating reviewer.

# Appendix B: Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

---

As a Reviewer for IMLS, you perform a vital role in ensuring the integrity of the IMLS's peer review process and must carry out your duties in accordance with government ethics rules. Before you evaluate applications, we ask that you review the following *General Principles of Ethical Conduct* and *Summary of the Conflict of Interest Laws*. You will be asked to certify compliance with the IMLS Reviewer Conflict of Interest Statement and Certification. IMLS allocates up to one hour of your reviewer time for you to consider these materials.

If, at any time in the course of performing your duties at IMLS, you believe you may have a conflict of interest, please contact the IMLS program officer coordinating your review process. Other questions about the ethics rules and responsibilities may be directed to IMLS's Designated Agency Ethics Official at [ethics@imls.gov](mailto:ethics@imls.gov); (202) 653-4787; 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20024-2135.

---

## General Principles of Ethical Conduct

1. Public service is a public trust, requiring you to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.
2. You shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
3. You shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
4. You shall not, except pursuant to such reasonable exceptions as are provided by regulation, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by IMLS, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of your duties.
5. You shall put forth honest effort in the performance of your duties.
6. You shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
7. You shall not use public office for private gain.
8. You shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
9. You shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
10. You shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.

11. You shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
12. You shall satisfy in good faith your obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those – such as Federal, State, or local taxes – that are imposed by law.
13. You shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.
14. You shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that you are violating the law or the ethical standards.

---

### Summary of Conflict of Interest Laws

**18 U.S.C. § 201** – Prohibits you from acceptance of bribes or gratuities to influence Government actions.

**18 U.S.C. § 203** – Prohibits you from accepting compensation for representational activities involving certain matters in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest.

**18 U.S.C. § 205** – Prohibits you from certain involvement in claims against the United States or representing another before the Government in matters in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest.

**18 U.S.C. § 207** – Imposes certain restrictions on you related to your activities after Government service.

**18 U.S.C. § 208** – Prohibits you from participating in certain Government matters affecting your own financial interests or the interests of your spouse, minor child, general partner, or organization in which you are serving as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee.

**18 U.S.C. § 209** – Prohibits you from being paid by someone other than the United States for doing their official Government duties.

---

### Sample Reviewer Conflict of Interest Statement

As a Reviewer or Panelist for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), you may receive a grant application for review that could present a conflict of interest. Such a conflict could arise if you are involved with the applicant institution, or in the project described in the application, as a paid consultant or through other financial involvement. The same restrictions apply if your spouse or minor child is involved with the applicant institution or if the application is presented on behalf of an institution with which you, your spouse or minor child is negotiating for future employment.

A present financial interest is not the only basis for conflict of interest. Through prior association as an employee or officer, you may have gained knowledge of the applicant that would preclude objective review of its application. Past employment (generally more than

five years prior to submission of the application) does not by itself disqualify a Reviewer so long as the circumstances of your association permit you to perform an objective review of the application.

If you believe you may have a conflict of interest with any application assigned to you for review, please notify us immediately.

You may still serve as a Reviewer even if your institution is an applicant in this grant cycle or you were involved in an application submitted in this grant cycle, as long as you do not review any application submitted by your own institution or any application in which you were involved.

However, if you believe that these or any other existing circumstances may compromise your objectivity as a Reviewer, please notify us immediately.

If an application presents no conflict of interest at the time you review it, a conflict of interest may still develop later on. Once you have reviewed an application, you should never represent the applicant in dealings with IMLS or another Federal agency concerning the application, or any grant that may result from it.

Pending applications are confidential. It is not appropriate, for your purposes or for the purposes of the institutions or organizations you represent, for you to make specific use of confidential information derived from individual applications that you read while you were serving as an IMLS Reviewer. Accordingly, you must obtain approval from IMLS before sharing any proposal information with anyone, whether for the purpose of obtaining expert advice on technical aspects of an application or for any other reason.

If you have any questions regarding conflict of interest, either in relation to a specific application or in general, please contact the IMLS program officer who is coordinating the review process.

### **Certification**

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the ethics training materials and the Conflict of Interest Statement above. To the best of my knowledge, I have no conflict of interest that would preclude my service to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

**Note:** Once you have reviewed this document, return to eGMS Reach to affirm that you have approved its contents.

# Appendix C: Example Peer Reviewer Comments

The following samples are the anonymized comments made available to both successful and unsuccessful applicants after funding decisions are announced.



**Sample 1: Panel Peer Reviewer Evaluation  
Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program**

**MN-123456-OMS - Name of Applicant Museum**

**Panel Reviewer 1**

**Project Justification:**

This is a clear well-designed project to tackle several institutional concerns. Augmenting, organizing, and preserving older program content is critical as well as planning for new episodes with the precious few, first speaker Elders. Your museum has demonstrated you know your audience and what that constituency finds beneficial with these language lessons and the methods in which this information is shared. It is great that the museum has a succession plan and plans for new staff to take over this important program.

**Project Work Plan:**

The work plan is well organized and reflects the program's maturity. The planning to include expanding your Collective Access database to include this resource is important and will be such a helpful way to manage this growing resource. It is a good schedule with appropriate staff and consultants to complete this project. In year 2, I was curious to learn more about the evaluating of the module and what that would look like. I appreciate that you are doing some evaluation, so I was a bit curious about this step.

**Project Results:**

This project is so well organized and thought out. I was pleased to see the letters of support from the community and your media partners. It seems to be such an appreciated resource and it is great that you are planning for this program's long-term care and viability into the future. I appreciate your broad distribution of this program and multiple ways it can be enjoyed by the community.

**Overall Score**

**5**

**Sample 2: Panel Peer Reviewer Evaluation**  
**Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program**

**MN-123457-OMS - Name of Applicant Museum**

**Panel Reviewer 2**

**Project Justification:**

The project goals, which are based on an exhibition need faced by the organization, are specific and clearly articulated, and in alignment with the NANH program goal and chosen objective. When completed, the project will benefit the intended target audience and described beneficiaries. One concern is there seems to be little involvement of the tribal community in the redesign and updating process. There is also little to no justification for the applicant choosing the contracted exhibit designer beyond the portfolio sample provided. Having a clearer connection to this choice would have strengthened the proposal.

**Project Work Plan:**

The projected two-year schedule of completion will provide ample time for the project team to be successful in executing the proposed project activities and achieving the intended results. The project work plan is clear and sequential. The knowledge and experience of the project team members will contribute to this project's overall success. One aspect of the plan that could be improved is the inclusion of the tribal community in the planning and design phase of the project. One potential challenge for successful implementation is the hiring of the project manager at the onset of the project start date. Unless the organization already has an individual or pool of individuals in waiting, completing the hiring process in less than a month, which is the time between award notice and start date, doesn't seem realistic.

**Project Results:**

The funding provided by IMLS will allow them to jump start the project and develop a permanent, ultimately tribally funded, position at the museum. The project, when completed, will provide the target audience and beneficiaries with an opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of current and future issues affecting the people and community. However, the means of measuring that change is not addressed in the proposal. The proposal could have been strengthened by providing a sample of what type of tool will be used to determine gains in knowledge and understanding that result from interaction with the exhibit.

**Overall Score**

**3**

**Sample 3: Panel Peer Reviewer Evaluation**  
**Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program**

**MN-123458-OMS - Name of Applicant Museum**

**Panel Reviewer 3**

**Project Justification:**

The Museum requests technology upgrades/enhancements, funding to support operations by employing a full-time staff person and funding to develop a procedure manual. While the general idea of supporting management and operations will strengthen museum services, the application needed to provide many more details. There was no specific needs assessment or other indication from the community of their desire to improve the Museum so that it could be used to promote tribal culture and history. While the applicant did a good job of describing the history of the Museum and why its management under tribal rule is vital to tribal sovereignty, there was little detail as to what collections and/or records would be used to tell this story. As for the defined target group, there seemed to be several: tribal members, travelers over the age of 50, and "future beneficiaries," including K-12 and community college students. No information was provided as to the involvement of these target groups or other stakeholders in the project planning.

**Project Work Plan:**

The applicant lists many desired outcomes, and notes that it intends to collaborate with other area museums for "best practice" suggestions. The sheer magnitude of the deliverables for the single curatorial hire seems quite daunting, from coordinating and implementing displays to gift shop oversight, from developing local artisans and storyteller registries to programming, from calendar maintenance and promotion to a security assessment and finally, a comprehensive procedural manual. As the prospective hire is not identified, it is difficult to assess whether a single individual would have the necessary experience to undertake all these tasks. Moreover, the schedule of completion indicates the numerous activities the curator will be responsible for, the majority of which are year-round tasks. Given the numerous tasks, the Performance Measurement Plan could have benefited from more details. As such, it is difficult to determine how the applicant might adjust course should that be necessary.

**Project Results:**

The applicant is excited at the prospect and potential of the Museum to further self-determination and the protection and perpetuation of language and cultural practices. However, the applicant does not clearly articulate what these project results will be. How many educational displays will be created? How many programs? What is the process for exhibit development? How are stakeholders being included? What specific artifacts, archival records, etc. will be used? Why does the application note technology upgrades and enhancements but there is no matching budget allocation? There are many questions that remain unanswered. While this application has great potential, in its current form it is too vague and ambitious.

**Overall Score**

**1**