



Dear Colleague -

The Office of Library Services (OLS) is pleased that you are considering seeking support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for the important work that you do for your communities. As the 250th anniversary year of our nation's independence draws to a close, IMLS looks forward to working with you to keep the spirit of this celebration alive for years to come.

Now more than ever, we are thrilled to support America's libraries, which can and should serve as civic centers of learning and culture for a nation of citizens. Benjamin Franklin once hoped that America's libraries would make America's "common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries." It is our hope that the momentum built by libraries' active participation in our shared national celebration across America will continue to carry on Franklin's vision of libraries as bastions of education and culture in every community. We are excited not only to support general improvements across the library field, but also to promote libraries as they teach Americans about their heritage and history.

We encourage you to carefully read the Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for the library grant programs and shape your proposal in a way that responds to the Goals and Objectives of the program you choose.

In addition to the requirements set forth in the NOFOs, OLS encourages you to consider how your proposal might build upon, or relate to, OLS' field-wide programs and initiatives. OLS particularly welcomes projects that:

- Meaningfully engage and educate communities about our nation's great history and the incredible story of America's founding, in fittingly extending commemoration of the 250th anniversary of American Independence.
- Leverage libraries' roles in their communities to connect workers with employers, apprenticeship programs, skills training and the public workforce system. Applicants are encouraged to read and consider [Executive Order \(EO\) 14278](#), "Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future."
- Expand on the important roles libraries play in connecting their communities with health services, promoting overall physical excellence and mental wellness.
- Build bridges and further meaningful partnerships with other civic institutions in their communities, including but not limited to local governments and philanthropic organizations.

- Facilitate regular and family-friendly programming that is of social and educational benefit to children and parents alike.
- Creatively and effectively use new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), to improve both academic practices and visitor experiences at our nation's libraries. Applicants are encouraged to read and consider [EO 14277](#), "Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth," as they work on related projects.
- In his inaugural address, President Trump said, "We will stand bravely, we will live proudly, we will dream boldly, and nothing will stand in our way because we are Americans." We welcome proposals that refocus cultural institutions on what unites us by fostering respectful civil dialogue. In doing so, we acknowledge our core Constitutional Rights, including Free Exercise of Religion. Applicants may find it helpful to review and consider [EO 14188](#), "Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism," and [EO 14202](#), "Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias," as they develop relevant proposals to strengthen American civil society.

Upon reviewing the NOFOs, you will see that there are several programs within OLS. If you decide to apply to the grant program listed below, we provide the following additional information about topics and priorities that we seek to emphasize in this funding cycle:

- Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program: IMLS has a particular interest in exploring alternative pathways into the library services field. We are particularly enthusiastic about projects that explore innovative alternatives to traditional credentialing and librarian education. We are also interested in projects that explore cutting edge tools and fresh topics in the content and provision of continuing education.

To fulfill the President's promise that "the forgotten man and woman will be forgotten no longer," we enthusiastically welcome institutions which serve rural and remote communities to apply, as well as those that have not traditionally been recipients of federal funding. We also encourage institutions that promote a positive and uplifting vision of American history and our shared national achievements to consider applying to IMLS.

Thank you for your interest in working with IMLS to preserve America's histories and keep the spirit of 1776 alive for years to come. We look forward to partnering with your institution to share our nation's tremendous heritage with all our fellow citizens!

Sincerely,



Lisa Solomon
Senior Official Performing the Duties of IMLS Director



Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

Funding Opportunity Number: LB21-FY27

Assistance Listing Number: 45.313

OMB Control No.: 3137-0091

Expiration date: 7/31/2027

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Before You Begin

If you believe you're a good candidate for this funding opportunity, carefully review and follow these application instructions, and leave plenty of time to prepare.

Set up your SAM.gov (including Unique Entity Identifier) and Grants.gov registrations now. If you're already registered, check to make sure that your registrations are active, and that all your listed information is accurate.

Register in SAM.gov (registration can take several weeks):

Your organization must have an active [SAM.gov](#) account and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) before you apply. See [Registration Requirements](#) and [Guidance for Required Registrations](#).

Register in Grants.gov (registration can take several days):

You must have an active [Grants.gov registration](#). You'll need an active SAM.gov account and a Login.gov account to register and access Grants.gov. See [Registration Requirements](#) and [Guidance for Required Registrations](#).

Apply by:

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on November 13, 2026.

Bookmark these resources for important information:

- [eCFR: Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations \(C.F.R.\) Part 200 \(2 C.F.R. § 200\) – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)
- [General Terms and Conditions for IMLS Discretionary Awards](#). IMLS may update the General Terms and Conditions before making awards for this program.
- [Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program page \(IMLS.gov\)](#)



This NOFO has internal links to help you quickly find what you need. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard



Review the Opportunity

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1. Basic Information

Opportunity Overview

Federal Awarding Agency	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Funding Opportunity Title	Laura Bush 21 st Century Librarian Program
Announcement Type	Modification of fiscal year (FY) 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity
Funding Opportunity Number	LB21-FY27
Assistance Listing Number	45.313
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Application Deadline	Submit through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on November 13, 2026.

Award Overview

Key Dates

Anticipated date of notification of award decisions	July 2027 (subject to the availability of funds and IMLS discretion)
Anticipated start dates for new awards	Projects must begin on August 1, 2027.
Anticipated period of performance	August 1, 2027 – July 31, 2030. Project activities may be carried out for one to three years, based on the selected project type. See Project Types .

Funding Details

Total amount of funding IMLS expects to award through this announcement	\$8,500,000	
Expected performance indicators, targets, baseline data, and data collection	See Performance Measures .	
Anticipated number of awards	35	
Award amount range	Planning	\$75,000 - \$200,000
	Forum	\$75,000 - \$200,000
	Community-Centered Implementation	\$25,000 - \$100,000
	National Implementation	\$75,000 - \$1,000,000
	Early Career Research	\$75,000 - \$750,000
	Applied Research	\$75,000 - \$750,000
Average amount of funding per award experienced in previous years	\$266,507	

The funding in the above Award Overview is subject to the availability of funds and the Institute of Museum and Library Services’ (IMLS’s) discretion. We are not bound by any estimates in this announcement.

Contingent upon the availability of funds, the quality of applications, and IMLS’s discretion, we may make additional awards from the pool of unfunded applications from this competition.

Executive Summary

Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian (LB21) projects build a library and archival workforce that can meet the information needs of communities of all types and sizes and increase the institutional capacity of libraries, archives, and library and information science graduate programs across the country.

The program supports projects that include, but are not limited to:

- explore alternative pathways into the library services field including innovative alternatives to traditional credentialing and librarian education;
- use cutting edge tools and fresh topics in the content and provision of continuing education;
- provide training and professional development to library and archives professionals;
- develop faculty and information leaders; and
- recruit, educate, and retain the next generation of library and archives professionals.

Projects can support the recruitment, education, training, and retention of pre-professionals, students, faculty, and the current library and archives workforce.

Eligibility is restricted to organizations that are:

- Located in the United States or any U.S. Territories or Freely Associated States; AND
- A unit of a State, local or Tribal government or a private, nonprofit organization; AND
- One of seven types of qualifying organizations:
 1. A library or a parent organization, such as a school district, a municipality, a State agency, or an academic institution, that is responsible for the administration of a library;
 2. An academic or administrative unit, such as a graduate school of library and information science that is part of an institution of higher education through which it applies;
 3. A digital library or archives, if it makes materials publicly available and provides library or archival services, including selection, organization, description, reference, and preservation, under the supervision of at least one permanent professional staff librarian/archivist;
 4. A library or archival agency that is an official agency of a State, Tribal, or other unit of government and is charged by the law governing it with the extension and development of public library and archives services within its jurisdiction;

5. A library or archives consortium that is a local, statewide, regional, interstate, or international cooperative association of library or archives entities that provides for the systematic and effective coordination of the resources of eligible libraries or archives, as defined above, and information centers that work to improve the services delivered to the clientele of these libraries or archives;
6. A library or archives association that exists on a permanent basis; primarily serves libraries, archives, or library or archival professionals on a national, regional, state, or local level; and engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of libraries, archives, and the library, and archives professions; or
7. A nonprofit organization affiliated with a library or archives whose sole mission includes supporting the specified library or archives, has the ability to administer the project, and can comply with the terms of this NOFO and applicable laws, including the IMLS Assurances and Certifications. We require that you provide an agreement from the library or archives that details the activities the applicant and library will perform and binds the library to the statements and assurances in the application.

Agency Contact Information

IMLS staff are available by phone and/or email to answer programmatic and administrative questions relating to this grant program.

2. Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for an award under the LB21 Program, your organization must meet **all three** of the following eligibility criteria.



Your organization must be:

- ✓ a unit of a State, local, or Tribal government; or
- a private, nonprofit organization that has nonprofit status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended. [See Conditionally Required Documents](#) for more information);

and:



Your organization must be located in:

- ✓ one of the 50 States of the United States of America,
- ✓ the District of Columbia,
- ✓ the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,
- ✓ the U.S. Virgin Islands,
- ✓ Guam,
- ✓ American Samoa,
- ✓ the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,
- ✓ the Republic of the Marshall Islands,
- ✓ the Federated States of Micronesia; or
- ✓ the Republic of Palau.

and:



Your organization must qualify as one of the following seven types of organizations:

- (1) A library or a parent organization, such as a school district, a municipality, a State agency, or an academic institution, that is responsible for the administration of a library. To be eligible for an award under this NOFO, the library must be open and operational to the public at the time of application submission. “Open and operational” means that the library:
- Provides library services to the public, including access to collections, programs, or information resources;
 - Maintains regularly scheduled public service hours;
 - Has staff (paid or volunteer) responsible for ongoing operations; and
 - Is not solely in a planning, development, construction, or pre-opening phase.

Applicants that have not yet started public operations, including libraries under construction, in planning stages, or not yet open to the public, are not eligible for funding under this NOFO.

Eligible libraries include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Public libraries. | ✓ Private or other special library, but only if the State in which such private or special library is located determines that the library should be considered a library for purposes of the Library Services and Technology Act (see 20 U.S.C. §§ 9121-9165). |
| ✓ Public elementary and secondary school libraries. | |
| ✓ Tribal libraries. | |
| ✓ College (including community college) and university libraries and archives. | |
| ✓ Research libraries and archives that are not an integral part of an institution of higher education and that make publicly available library or archival services and materials that are suitable for scholarly research and are not otherwise available. | ✓ Archives, including institutional, community-based, and special collections, that are under the supervision of at least one permanent professional staff member and are available to the public. |

- (2) An academic or administrative unit, such as a graduate school of library and information science that is part of an institution of higher education through which it applies;

(3) A digital library or archives, if it makes materials publicly available and provides library or archival services, including selection, organization, description, reference, and preservation, under the supervision of at least one permanent professional staff librarian/archivist;

(4) A library or archival agency that is an official agency of a State, Tribal, or other unit of government and is charged by the law governing it with the extension and development of public library and archives services within its jurisdiction;

(5) A library or archives consortium that is a local, statewide, regional, interstate, or international cooperative association of library or archives entities that provides for the systematic and effective coordination of the resources of eligible libraries or archives, as defined above, and information centers that work to improve the services delivered to the clientele of these libraries or archives; or

(6) A library or archives association that exists on a permanent basis; primarily serves libraries, archives, or library or archival professionals on a national, regional, state, or local level; and engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of libraries, archives, and the library, and archives professions.

(7) A nonprofit organization affiliated with a library or archives whose sole mission includes supporting the specified library or archives, has the ability to administer the project, and can comply with the terms of this NOFO and applicable laws, including the IMLS Assurances and Certifications. We require that you provide an agreement from the library or archives that details the activities the applicant and the library will perform and binds the library to the statements and assurances in the application.

Native American Tribal organizations are encouraged to apply if they otherwise meet the above eligibility requirements.

We recognize the potential for valuable contributions to the overall goals of the LB21 Program by entities that do not meet the eligibility requirements above. Although such entities may not serve as a lead applicant, they are encouraged to participate in projects. Consult with an IMLS Program Contact about any eligibility questions before applying.



[Find IMLS contact information for the LB21 program.](#)

Other Eligibility Information

Application Limits



- We will not consider applications proposing to renew or add funding to active IMLS awards.
- There is no limit to the number of applications you may submit under the **Planning, Forum, National Implementation, Applied Research, or Early Career Research** project types.
- You may submit only one application under the **Community-Centered Implementation** project type.
- You may not submit the same proposal under more than one project type.
- Individual Project Directors may be named on multiple applications.

Partnerships and Collaborations



- Applications involving partnerships or collaborations are welcome.
- When two or more institutions or organizations work together on a project, one of them must meet all eligibility requirements, serve as the lead applicant, and administer the award on behalf of the other(s).
- If we fund the project, the lead applicant will be programmatically, fiscally, and legally responsible for the award.

Ineligible Applicants



- We will not review applications from or make awards to ineligible applicants. We will notify you if your application will not be reviewed because your organization is determined to be ineligible.
- To receive an IMLS award, your organization must be determined to be eligible and must comply with all [applicable IMLS, administrative and national policy requirements](#).

Application Deadlines, Funding Range, and Completeness

- You must submit your application by the deadline in accordance with the Submission Dates and Times section of this NOFO. IMLS generally will reject applications received after the deadline. At its discretion and in rare circumstances, IMLS may consider a late

application. IMLS retains the sole discretion to determine whether to accept a late application, and such determinations are final.

- If your request for federal funding as shown on the IMLS Budget Form, including all direct and indirect costs, is outside the applicable funding level range for your selected project type, we may reject your application.
- Your application must be complete, and your project and budget must adhere to the program’s [funding restrictions](#) and application instructions.

Cost Share Requirements

The requirements to provide cost share from non-federal sources differ by project type. Cost sharing is an eligibility criterion and is not considered in the peer review of applications.

Cost share is the portion of a project’s total costs that is not paid by IMLS funds. Common examples of cost share include cash outlays; contribution of property and services; and in-kind contributions, such as staff or volunteer time that support project activities.



[Learn more about Cost Sharing in the Budget](#)

Carefully calculate cost share that you include in your project budget. If you receive an award, you must meet your cost share commitments.

Project Type	IMLS Funding Range	Cost Share Requirement
Planning	\$75,000 - \$200,000	No cost share required.
Forum	\$75,000 - \$200,000	No cost share required.
Community-Centered Implementation	\$25,000 - \$100,000	No cost share required.

Project Type	IMLS Funding Range	Cost Share Requirement
National Implementation	\$75,000 - \$1,000,000	Requests of more than \$299,999 in IMLS funds require at least 1:1 cost share from non-federal sources. To calculate the minimum required cost share, subtract Student Support costs (direct costs only) from the total requested IMLS funds (direct and indirect costs).
Early Career Research	\$75,000 - \$750,000	No cost share required.
Applied Research	\$75,000 - \$750,000	No cost share required.

3. Program Description

Agency Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The mission of IMLS is to advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. These goals guide our grantmaking.

Agency-Level Goal 1 Champion Lifelong Learning	Objective 1.1 Advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities for all. Objective 1.2 Support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.
Agency-Level Goal 2 Strengthen Community Engagement	Objective 2.1 Promote broad public engagement. Objective 2.2 Support community collaboration and foster civic discourse.
Agency-Level Goal 3 Advance Collections Stewardship and Access	Objective 3.1 Support collections care and management. Objective 3.2 Promote access to museum and library collections.

The LB21 Program supports the achievement of **agency-level Goal 1, Champion Lifelong Learning, and Objective 1.2, Support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.** Like all IMLS grant programs, it is designed to facilitate delivery of significant results consistent with IMLS’s federal authorizing legislation ([20 U.S.C. § 9101](#) et seq.; in particular, [§ 9165 \(Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program\)](#)). Each award that we make through the LB21 Program will contribute meaningfully to the achievement of both program and agency-level goals.

LB21 Program Goals and Objectives

The LB21 program supports the recruitment, development, and retention of library and archives professionals to meet the information needs of their communities.

We encourage applicants to work collaboratively with partners such as archives, libraries, museums, school systems, universities, extension programs, youth-serving organizations, and workforce/economic development organizations, where applicable.



We expect LB21 projects to:

- address critical community needs and advance the public good by cultivating research, learning opportunities, and partnerships that prepare current and future librarians and archivists to engage effectively with their communities and real-world information challenges;
- influence practice across one or more disciplines within the library and archives fields;
- reflect a thorough understanding of current practice, knowledge about the subject matter, and an awareness of and support for current priorities in the field;
- use collaboration, as needed, to demonstrate buy-in, input, and access to appropriate expertise;
- employ outreach strategies to disseminate activities, results, and findings; and
- generate measurable results.

The LB21 Program has two program goals and two objectives associated with each goal. You must align your proposed project with one of these program goals and one of the associated objectives. Clearly identify your selected goal and objective in your project narrative.

LB21 Program Goal 1

Recruit and educate future library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff

Objective 1.1

Develop or enhance practices, programs, or initiatives encouraging students to pursue careers in library and information science.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- alternative pathways into the library and archives fields;
- needs assessments;
- pre-professional recruitment;
- middle school, high school, and undergraduate exposure programs;
- summer institutes;
- workshops;
- certificate programs;
- paid internships;
- mentoring;
- fellowships; and
- cohort activities.

Objective 1.2

Develop or enhance initiatives, programs, or curricula to increase the capacity of institutions to educate or retain library and information science students.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- alternative pathways into the library and archives fields;
- needs assessments;
- summer institutes;
- workshops;
- certificate programs;
- paid internships;
- mentoring;
- fellowships;
- cohort activities;
- organizational dynamics; and
- curricula development.

LB21 Program Goal 2

Train and retain current library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff

Objective 2.1

Develop or enhance professional development and training programs to enable the library and archival workforce to meet the needs of their communities.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- programming and civic partnerships;
- institutes;
- trainings;
- summer programs;
- workshops;
- certificate programs;
- fellowships;
- mentoring;
- communities of practice; and
- working groups.

Objective 2.2

Support the research of untenured, tenure-track library and information science faculty, furthering the faculty member’s long-term research interest, career trajectory, and professional development.

Choose Objective 2.2 if you are applying for an Early Career Research project.

Project Types

The LB21 Program has six project types. You must designate one for each application you submit.

You may submit more than one application to the LB21 Program; however, you may not submit the same proposal under more than one project type. Also, **you may submit only one proposal to the Community-Centered Implementation project type.**

Planning, Forum, National Implementation, Applied Research, and Early Career Research proposals must demonstrate how you will achieve and measure far-reaching impact.

See below for the full list of LB21 project types, the characteristics of each, and corresponding periods of performance.

Project Type	Project Characteristics
Planning 1-2 years	Planning projects support exploratory activities, such as: ✓ analyzing needs and feasibility; ✓ solidifying partnerships; or ✓ developing project work plans, prototypes, proofs of concept, curricula, and pilot studies. You should identify planning activities that have the potential to lead to future implementation or research efforts. You should demonstrate how you will achieve and measure far-reaching impact.

Project Type	Project Characteristics
Forum 1-2 years	Forum projects support convening qualified experts and key stakeholders, including those from adjacent fields as appropriate, to help explore current or emerging issues or opportunities for library and archives professionals across the nation. Reports and other deliverables should be prepared for wide dissemination. You should demonstrate how you will achieve and measure far-reaching impact.
Community-Centered Implementation 1-2 years	Community-Centered Implementation projects support the recruitment, education, training, and retention of current and future faculty or library and archives professionals by adapting existing models (practices, findings, tools, and/or partnerships) to a specific organizational context. You must identify and align your proposed work with an established model (standard, practice, toolkit, open-source software, or research finding). Your project should demonstrate how it is using or adapting what you have identified. Your project should share resources and lessons learned that can be used by library and archival professionals in other communities throughout the nation. Note: <i>An institution may submit only one LB21 application under the Community-Centered Implementation project type.</i>

Project Type	Project Characteristics
National Implementation 1-3 years	National Implementation projects support the recruitment, development, and retention of current and future faculty, library, and archives professionals by developing or expanding tools, resources, products, or services for new audiences or in new contexts. You should design your proposed work to ensure that what is produced is easily adaptable, sustainable, and widely implemented across the field. You should demonstrate how you will achieve and measure far-reaching impact.

Project Type	Project Characteristics
Early Career Research 1-3 years	Early Career Research projects support untenured, tenure-track library and information science faculty, furthering the faculty member’s long-term research interest, career trajectory, and professional development by investigating key questions relevant to library or archival professional practice. You must include clearly articulated research questions. You should demonstrate how you will achieve and measure far-reaching impact. See further guidance in the Applied Research project type description below. Special eligibility: Your proposal must have a single Project Director with no co-Project Directors; however, you may include consultants, students, and post-doctoral scholars. The Project Director must: ✓ hold a doctoral degree, ✓ be untenured, tenure-track library and information science faculty, ✓ have both teaching and research responsibilities, and ✓ have not previously received funding support under any Federal Government early career program. Applicants must include a letter of departmental endorsement verifying that the Project Director meets all of the above criteria.

Project Type	Project Characteristics
Applied Research 1-3 years	Applied Research projects support the investigation of key questions relevant to library or archival professional practice, building on prior empirical, theoretical, or exploratory work in libraries and archives or other relevant disciplines. You must include clearly articulated research questions. Projects should also feature appropriate methods, including relevant theoretical or conceptual approaches, data collection, and analysis. Dissemination activities should occur throughout the period of performance and include activities beyond publishing journal articles and presenting at academic conferences to ensure far-reaching impact beyond just the academic research community. You should demonstrate how you will achieve and measure far-reaching impact. Proposals focused on evaluation or designed with a deterministic agenda are not appropriate for the Applied Research project type.

Performance Measures

We use four performance measures as a basis for understanding how well the LB21 program is meeting its goals and how awardees are managing individual projects.



Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results of the LB21 program



Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used while generating maximum value for the target group



Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group (This is different from evaluating the performance of your project)



Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the timeframe proposed

You will need to provide a Performance Measurement Plan to describe how you will use these four performance measures to monitor and assess your performance in carrying out your project and meeting your selected [program goal and objective](#).



[Learn more about creating a Performance Measurement Plan](#)

Funding Restrictions

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

You may use IMLS funds and cost share only for allowable costs as set forth in the OMB government-wide cost-principles and in IMLS's supplemental regulations.

Please consult [2 C.F.R. § 200](#) and [2 C.F.R. § 3187](#) for additional guidance on allowable costs.

The following lists include some examples of generally allowable costs and unallowable costs, both for IMLS funds and for cost share funds (if applicable), under this announcement.



Allowable Costs

- ✓ personnel salaries, wages, and fringe benefits, including annual cost of living increases
- ✓ travel expenses for key project staff and consultants
- ✓ materials, supplies, software, and equipment related directly to project activities
- ✓ adaptive and/or assistive technologies and other resources and services to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities
- ✓ participant support costs, including temporary dependent care, if documented in written policies
- ✓ third-party costs
- ✓ design and publication costs
- ✓ program evaluation
- ✓ staff and volunteer training
- ✓ paid internships/fellowships
- ✓ stipends or honoraria for project advisors and participants
- ✓ indirect or overhead costs
- ✓ pre-award costs, at the discretion of and with prior written approval from the agency.



Unallowable Costs

- ✖ general fundraising costs, such as development office staff or other staff time devoted to general fundraising
- ✖ contributions to endowments
- ✖ general operating support
- ✖ general advertising or public relations costs designed solely for promotional activities other than those related to the specific project
- ✖ construction or renovation of facilities (generally, any activity involving the construction trades is not an allowable cost)
- ✖ social activities, receptions, or entertainment.

You must [explain all proposed expenses in the Budget Justification](#).

If you have questions about whether specific activities are allowable, [contact us for guidance](#).

Costs for Third Parties

When a project requires the payment of federal funds to third parties (such as partners, consultants, collaborators, vendors, and/or service providers), it is your responsibility to determine whether you should characterize a third party as a subrecipient or a contractor and include that determination in your agreement with them.

IMLS grant funds cannot be provided to any federal agency serving as a third party.



Learn more:

[2 C.F.R. § 200.1 for definitions of *contract*, *contractor*, *subaward*, and *subrecipient*](#)

[2 C.F.R. § 200.331 \(Subrecipient and contractor determinations\)](#).

Indirect Costs

In your budget, you can decide to:

- ➔ use a rate that does not exceed their current indirect cost rate already negotiated with a federal agency;



See [Indirect Costs in the Budget](#)

- use a rate proposed to a federal agency for negotiation, but not yet finalized. However, the rate must be finalized by the time your budget is approved before we make an award;
- use a rate not to exceed 15 percent of the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) if your organization currently does not have a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and is not subject to other requirements; or
- not include any indirect costs.

Authorizing Statute and Regulations



Statute: [20 U.S.C. § 9101](#) et seq.; in particular, [§ 9165 \(Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program\)](#).

Regulations: [45 C.F.R. Chapter XI](#), [2 C.F.R. Chapter XXXI](#), and [2 C.F.R. § 200](#)

Award recipients must follow the regulations that are in effect at the time the award is made.

The OMB guidance on Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) is set forth at [2 C.F.R. § 200](#).

*Please note: OMB is in the process of updating the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR § 200 ([Uniform Guidance Revisions](#)). For IMLS grant awards made on or after October 1, 2026, the Uniform Guidance Revisions will apply.

IMLS regulations at [2 C.F.R. § 3187](#) formally adopt the Uniform Guidance and include certain agency-specific provisions.

Equal Opportunity

IMLS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.

For further information, email ogc@imls.gov or write to the Office of the General Counsel, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 200 Constitution Ave. NW, Suite N-3627, Washington, DC 20210.



Prepare and Submit Your Application

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4. Application Contents and Format

Get Ready to Apply

Registration Requirements

Before you apply, your organization must have:

- ✓ a **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** number;
- ✓ a current and active **System for Award Management (SAM)** registration; and
- ✓ an **active Grants.gov registration** with an approved Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).

Check your materials and registrations now to ensure that they are accurate, current, and active.

We strongly recommend that you obtain a UEI number and complete registration with SAM and Grants.gov well ahead of the application deadline.



See [Guidance for Required Registrations](#) for detailed information and resources to help you make sure your required registrations are complete and active by the time you're ready to apply.

Application Package

You must apply electronically through Grants.gov Workspace or a Grants.gov system-to-system solution.

Use one of the following identifiers to locate the application package in [Grants.gov](#):

- **Funding Opportunity Number:** LB21-FY27
- **Assistance Listing Number:** 45.313

To request an audio recording of this announcement, call 202-653-4744. To request a paper copy of this announcement, call 202-653-4744 or email imls-librarygrants@imls.gov.

Readiness Checklist

Applying for an award takes time. Registering with [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) can take several weeks. There are a few important things you'll need to do before you can apply.

Be sure to...

- ☐ [Review the eligibility requirements for this program](#) and confirm that your organization is eligible.
 - 1. Organization type
 - 2. Organization location
 - 3. Library eligibility criteria
 - 4. Special eligibility criteria
- ☐ [Review the Funding Restrictions](#) and keep them in mind as you develop your application and budget.
- ☐ Register in SAM.gov (or make sure your organization's registration is current) as early as possible. **Remember that SAM.gov registration can take several weeks.**

To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and click Get Started.

See the [SAM.gov Entity Registration checklist](#) for what you'll need to register in SAM.
- ☐ Get a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. You'll get your organization's UEI when you register in [SAM.gov](#).
- ☐ [Register in Grants.gov](#).
- ☐ Make sure you understand the [review criteria](#).
- ☐ Review the [post-award requirements](#) to make sure you can meet them.
- ☐ Find the application package. Go to [Grants.gov](#) and search for **Funding Opportunity Number: LB21-FY27** or **Assistance Listing Number: 45.313**
- ☐ Get familiar with [Grants.gov Workspace](#).
- ☐ [Contact an IMLS Program Officer](#) to discuss your project ideas or if you have questions related to the application process.

Prepare Your Application

This section outlines the components, format, and content requirements to help you prepare a complete application.

Application Components

Required Documents

You must include all these components for your application to be considered complete.

Component	File Requirements
<u>The Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form</u> (SF-424S)	Format: Grants.gov web form
<u>IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form</u>	Format: Grants.gov web form
<u>Narrative</u>	File Format: PDF Page Limit: 10 pages max. File Name: Narrative.pdf
<u>Schedule of Completion</u>	File Format: PDF Page Limit: 1 page per year (recommended) File Name: Scheduleofcompletion.pdf
<u>IMLS Budget Form</u>	File Format: IMLS PDF form File Name: Budget.pdf
<u>Budget Justification</u>	File Format: PDF File Name: Budgetjustification.pdf
<u>Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants</u>	File Format: PDF Page Limit: 2 pages each (recommended) File Name: Resumes.pdf

Component	File Requirements
<u>Digital Products Plan</u>	File Format: PDF Page Limit: 2 pages (recommended) File Name: Digitalproduct.pdf
<u>Performance Measurement Plan</u>	File Format: PDF Page Limit: 2 pages (recommended) File Name: Perfmeasurement.pdf

Conditionally Required Documents

You must include these components if they are applicable to your institution or your project. Refer to [Conditionally Required Documents](#) to determine which, if any, you need to include in your application.

Component	File Requirements
<u>Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status</u>	File Format: PDF File Name: Proofnonprofit.pdf
<u>Proof of Foundation Status</u>	File Format: PDF File Name: Prooffoundation.pdf
<u>Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement</u>	File Format: PDF File Name: Indirectcostrate.pdf
<u>Public Access Plan for Research Projects</u>	File Format: PDF Page Limit: 2 pages (recommended) File Name: PublicAccess.pdf
<u>Letter of Departmental Endorsement for an Early Career Research Proposal</u>	File Format: PDF File Name: Endorsement.pdf

Supporting Documents

You may include the following additional documents as needed to support your proposal.

Component	File Requirements
Supporting Documents	File Format: PDF
	File Name(s):
	Supportingdoc1.pdf
	Supportingdoc2.pdf
	Supportingdoc3.pdf

Format, Name, and Sequence of Application Components

Document Format and File Size

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

Use standard formatting and fonts in your application components and limit individual file sizes to 200mb or less.

Page Limits

Note the page limits listed in the [table of Application Components](#). We will remove any pages over the stated limits and they will not be sent to peer review; any additional pages will not be considered part of your application.

Naming Convention

Use the naming conventions indicated in the [tables of Application Components](#).



IMPORTANT: Attachment file names are limited to the following characters: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space, period (.). If attachment file names use any other characters, the application may be rejected by Grants.gov.

Attachment Order

In Grants.gov, attach all application components in the sequence listed in the table above. Use all 15 fields in the “Attachments Form” first. If your application requires more than 15

attachments, select the “Other Attachments Form. Note that if you select the “Other Attachments Form,” you will be required to upload the 16th attachment in the “Mandatory Other Attachment” field first; any subsequent attachments should be uploaded under the “Optional Other Attachments.”

Instructions for Required Documents

Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424S)

The SF-424S is part of the application package that you complete in Grants.gov Workspace. It collects basic information about your organization and your project.

IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form

The IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form is part of the application package that you complete in Grants.gov Workspace. In this form, we collect details about your project, its goals, and financial information.



Find detailed instructions to help you complete these Grants.gov forms:

- [Detailed instructions for completing the SF424S](#)
- [Detailed instructions for completing the IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form](#)

Narrative

Write a Narrative using the structure and format below and save it as a PDF. Be clear and concise and limit the use of technical jargon and acronyms. Include references throughout your Narrative to any Supporting Documents that provide supplementary material.

When writing your narrative, consider the [review criteria](#).

Proposal Narrative - Required Format

Page Limit: 10 numbered pages

We will remove any pages over the limit and will not send them to peer review; and additional pages will not be considered part of your application.

File Name: Narrative.pdf

IMPORTANT: Attachment file names are limited to the following characters: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space, period (.). If attachment file names use any other characters, the application may be rejected by Grants.gov.

File Format: PDF

Font Size: 11-point or higher

Margins: 0.5 inches or greater

Components: Organize the Narrative using the following section headings:

- Introduction
- Project Justification
- Project Work Plan
- Project Results
- For Research projects, include clearly defined research questions in your Narrative.

Guidance for Narrative Sections

Narrative Section	Guidance
Introduction 	In one paragraph, briefly summarize the following: → the name of the lead applicant organization; → the amount of IMLS funds requested and the amount of funds provided as cost share (if required); → the need, challenge, or opportunity your project will address; → the names of partner organizations; and → the intended project results. Community-Centered Implementation projects must also identify the established model (standard, practice, toolkit, open-source software, or research finding) you are using. Early Career Research and Applied Research projects must also include clearly defined research question(s).
Project Justification 	Describe: → the need, challenge, or opportunity your proposal addresses and how it was identified; → how this project differs from, complements, builds upon, or adapts existing models, standards, theories, scholarship, or practice; and → who will benefit from the project and its results. For Early Career Research: how this work fits within the Project Director's long-term research agenda.

Narrative Section Guidance

Project Work Plan



Describe:

- the activities you will carry out and the sequence in which they will occur;
- who will plan, implement, and manage your project. Demonstrate that the identified staff, partners, and consultants have the experience and skills necessary to complete the work. Ensure all key staff are identified by name if possible;
- how you have involved stakeholders in the planning and development of the project and how you will incorporate their input throughout the project; and
- how you will evaluate and demonstrate impact.

For Applied Research and Early Career Research proposals only:

- the research question(s), methods, theoretical framing, and plans for analysis. Explain why these are appropriate for addressing the identified need, challenge, or opportunity and will ensure generalizability; and
 - if your study requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, explain the steps you have taken to secure IRB approval.
-

Project Results



Describe:

- the intended results and deliverables;
 - how they will address the need, challenge, or opportunity you identified;
 - how you will ensure they are readily adaptable, generalizable, and usable by other institutions and communities;
 - how you will disseminate them (e.g., conference presentations, workshops, or publications), to reach the intended beneficiaries; and
 - how you will sustain the benefits of your project beyond the conclusion of the award period of performance.
 - **For Planning and Forum projects:** how results and deliverables will be used to inform future work with far-reaching impact.
-

[Refer to the Evaluation Resources on the IMLS website](#) for program planning tools, evaluation definitions, and examples.

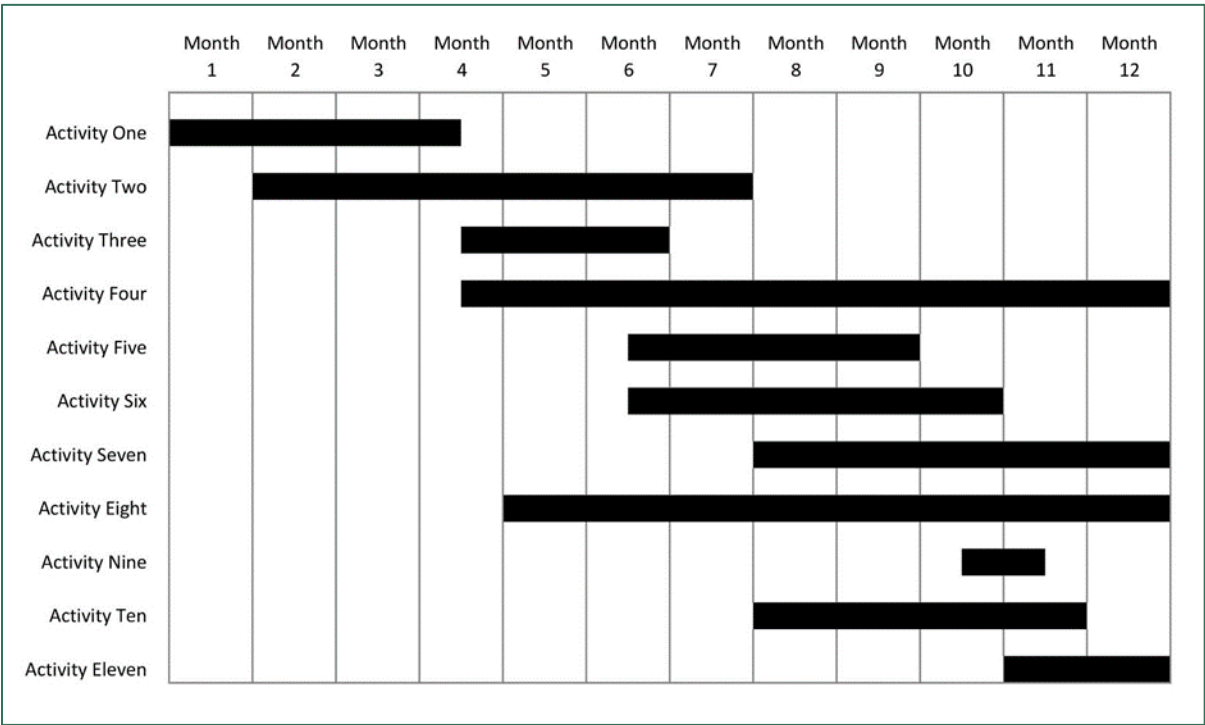
[Refer to our guidance on disclosing information in your application.](#)

Reviewers may also visit your organization's website, as listed on the SF-424S form provided with your application.

Schedule of Completion

The Schedule of Completion should reflect each major activity identified in your application Narrative and the project dates identified on the SF-424S and the IMLS Budget Form. It should show when each major project activity will start and end. We recommend that the schedule should not exceed one page per project year.

See the sample Schedule of Completion below. Save this document as a PDF.



IMLS Budget Form

Download and complete the current [IMLS Budget Form \(PDF, 1.67 MB\)](#).

Budget Justification

Write a Budget Justification to identify how each expense supports your proposed activities, detail how you calculated all costs, and provide supporting documentation, including any dollar amounts that you may have consolidated and summarized on the IMLS Budget Form. We recommend that your Budget Justification has a section for each heading on the IMLS Budget Form. Save this document as a PDF.



Find detailed instructions to help you complete an IMLS Budget Form and write a Budget Justification:

- [Detailed instructions for completing the IMLS Budget Form](#)
- [Detailed instructions for writing a Budget Justification](#)

Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants

Provide a resume for each person whose expertise is essential to the success of the project. We recommend limiting each resume to two pages. Use standard fonts and formatting, and save all resumes as a single PDF. You must include the resume of the [Project Director listed in Item 7 of the SF-424S](#). For research proposals, Project Directors are encouraged to include their Persistent Identifier (e.g. ORCID) near the top of their Resume.

If you cannot identify key project staff by the application deadline, then instead of a resume, provide position description(s) including the qualities, range of experience, and education necessary to successfully implement and complete all proposed project activities.

Digital Products Plan

We define digital products very broadly to include digital content (including but not limited to: software, PowerPoints, datasets, websites, white papers, and curricula). In your Digital Products Plan, address each of the following for each type of major digital output you will create during your project. We recommend limiting your plan to two pages. Save the document as a PDF.



See [Guidance for creating a Digital Products Plan](#).

- ✓ **Type:** What types of digital products will you create?
- ✓ **Availability:** How will you make your digital products openly available (as appropriate)?
- ✓ **Access:** What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will

your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?

- ✓ **Sustainability:** How will you ensure the sustainability of your digital products?

Performance Measurement Plan

Your Performance Measurement Plan should show how you will monitor and assess your performance as an award recipient and from the perspectives of **Effectiveness, Efficiency, Quality, and Timeliness** for your overall project.

For each performance measure, identify what data you will collect from what source, the method you will use to collect it, and according to what schedule. The chart below provides sample statements for each measure and a space to record your own. [A fillable version of the chart is provided.](#) (DOCX, 25KB), which you may, but are not required, to use. We recommend limiting your Performance Measurement Plan to two pages. Save your document as a PDF.

Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results	Example: At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project. Example: At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results.			
Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used while generating maximum value for the target group	Example: Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis. Example: Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system.			
Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group	Example: At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training. Example: We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user.			
Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe	Example: Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates. Example: Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.			

Conditionally Required Documents

These documents may be required for your application, depending on specific program requirements. Refer to the table below to determine which, if any, Conditionally Required Documents you need to provide.

If you fail to provide a Conditionally Required Document, we may consider your application incomplete and reject it from further consideration.

If you are:	Then you must provide:	Notes:
Applying as a private, nonprofit institution <i>(as indicated by choosing “M” or “X” as the Applicant Type code in 5d of the SF-424S form).</i>	A copy of the IRS letter indicating your eligibility for nonprofit status under the applicable provision of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.	You must submit this letter with each application even if you have previously submitted it with other applications. We will not accept a letter of State sales tax exemption as proof of nonprofit status. <u>See 2 C.F.R. § 3187.7(b).</u>
Applying as a nonprofit foundation	A letter indicating that your foundation supports the specific library or archives, has the ability to administer the project, and can ensure compliance with the terms of this NOFO and the applicable law, including the IMLS Assurances and Certifications.	You must submit this letter with each application even if you have submitted it with other applications in the current year or in previous years.
Using a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate in your budget.	A copy of your current Final Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.	If you do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate and elect to charge a <i>de minimis</i> rate of up to 15 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (<u>see 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f)</u>), you do not need to provide any documentation.

If you are:	Then you must provide:	Notes:
Submitting an Early Career Research or an Applied Research project proposal.	A Public Access Plan for Research Projects (two pages, recommended.) Explain how you will manage, share, preserve, document, and enable reuse of the research data and accompanying documentation you will create during the project.	Refer to our guidance for creating a Public Access Plan for Research Projects .
Submitting an Early Career Research project proposal.	A letter of departmental endorsement, verifying that the Project Director meets the Early Career Research project criteria .	The Project Director must: - hold a doctoral degree; - be untenured, tenure-track, library and information science faculty; - have both teaching and research responsibilities; and - have not previously received funding support under any federal early career program.

([Back to Table of Application Components](#))

Supporting Documents

You may submit optional Supporting Documents that supplement the Narrative in support of the project description. Optional Supporting Documents should help IMLS staff and reviewers envision the project in greater detail, but they should not be used to introduce new topics or to continue answers to the Narrative questions. Give each document a clear, descriptive title at the top of the first page. You may consider the following:

- Bibliography or references relevant to your proposed project design or evaluation strategy
- Letters of participation from partners, consultants, or others who will work closely with you on your project (avoid solely boiler-plate commitment letters)
- Letters of support from experts, stakeholders, or potential beneficiaries

- Brief explanation of the applicant institution's history, mission, governance structure, and community served
- Reports from planning activities
- Contractor quotes
- Equipment specifications
- Needs assessments or asset maps developed specifically for this project or community
- Example survey or interview questions

[\(Back to Table of Application Components\)](#)

Application Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you have everything required to submit a complete application.

General Readiness

- ☐ Review the [Readiness Checklist](#) and make sure your organization has a UEI, and that your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations are current and active.

Forms (follow form and Grants.gov instructions)

- ☐ [SF-424S](#)
- ☐ [IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form](#)

Files

- ☐ [Narrative](#)
- ☐ [Schedule of Completion](#)
- ☐ [IMLS Budget Form](#)
- ☐ [Budget Justification](#)
- ☐ [Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants](#)
- ☐ [Digital Products Plan](#)
- ☐ [Performance Measurement Plan](#)
- ☐ Any [Conditionally Required Documents](#), if applicable
- ☐ [Supporting Documents](#), if any
- ☐ Double-check [format, file names, page limits, and attachment order](#) for all your PDF documents.

Disclosure of Information in Applications

We may share grant applications, products, and reports to further the agency's mission and the development of museum, library, archival, and information services. As a general practice, and except for information that is privacy-protected, information contained in IMLS applications that receive funding may be made public. Please identify any information in your application that you consider to be confidential and/or proprietary and seek to have protected.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Submission Instructions

You must submit your applications for funding using [Grants.gov Workspace](#). Do not submit your application to IMLS via email, U.S. postal mail, or a delivery service; IMLS will reject applications not submitted via the Grants.gov Workspace.

[Review the Registration Requirements and time frames](#). We strongly recommend that you obtain a UEI number, register with SAM.gov and Grants.gov, and complete and submit your application early. Leave plenty of time and use the contact information below to reach out to IMLS, the Federal Service Desk, or Grants.gov for questions and technical difficulties.

Programmatic, Administrative, and Technical Support Contacts

IMLS

[IMLS staff are available by phone and email](#) to answer programmatic and administrative questions relating to this grant program. Also, we also offer pre-recorded webinars to introduce potential applicants to funding opportunities. For more information, see the [LB21 program page on the IMLS website](#)..

Federal Service Desk

Visit the [Federal Service Desk](#) for questions about registering or renewing your registration with Login.gov or SAM.gov.

Grants.gov

Visit [Grants.gov Support](#), email support@grants.gov, or call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726 for assistance with software issues, registration issues, and technical problems.

Be sure to obtain a case number when contacting the Federal Service Desk or Grants.gov for support.

Submission Dates and Times

For the LB21 Program, Grants.gov will accept applications through **11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on November 13, 2026**.

Grants.gov will create a date and time record when it receives the application. IMLS uses this timestamp to verify on-time application submission. The system will also generate a series of emails confirming the status of each application. For further details, visit [Track My Application](#) at Grants.gov.

Emergency Extensions

Under certain rare circumstances, we allow an extension of grant application deadlines for adversely affected applicant organizations located in counties listed in Emergency Declarations and/or Major Disaster Declarations. See [Application Deadlines](#) for further information.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to intergovernmental review per Executive Order No. 12372.



Learn About Application Review

In this step:

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6. Application Review Information

Eligibility and Completeness Checks

We assess every application to make sure it meets basic requirements for eligibility and completeness. IMLS generally will reject applications from:

- institutions that are determined to be ineligible, and
- applications that are determined to be incomplete or ineligible. For example, an application that:
 - is missing [required or conditionally required application components](#);
 - is submitted after the [deadline](#);
 - requests funding outside of the [applicable range](#), or
 - does not adhere to the program's [funding restrictions](#) and [guidelines](#).

At its discretion and in rare circumstances, IMLS may consider an ineligible or incomplete application. IMLS retains sole discretion to determine whether to accept these applications, and such determinations are final.

If your application is rejected during initial eligibility and completeness checks, we will notify you by email. If you believe the rejection was in error, you can appeal the decision via email within ten business days of the date we sent the rejection notice.

Review and Selection Process

We use a peer review process to evaluate all complete applications from eligible institutions. Reviewers are professionals in their field with relevant knowledge and expertise in the types of project activities identified in the applications.

We instruct reviewers to evaluate applications according to the peer review criteria detailed in the next section. Peer reviewers must comply with ethics, conflicts of interest, and non-disclosure requirements.

The Director considers the input from the review process and makes final funding decisions consistent with the criteria set forth in this NOFO.



Learn more about [our peer review process](#).

Peer Review Criteria

We instruct reviewers to evaluate applications according to the review criteria listed in this section and to consider all Required, Conditionally Required, and Supporting Documents.

Cost share is an eligibility criterion and is not considered in the merit review of applications. Learn more about [cost share requirements for LB21](#).

Review Criteria

Project Justification



- Is the need, challenge, or opportunity identified by the applicant clearly described and supported by relevant data, research, and current practice?
 - Does the applicant clearly articulate how the proposed work or research differs from, complements, builds upon, or adapts existing model(s), standard(s), theorie(s), scholarship, or practice?
 - Has the applicant appropriately described and justified who will benefit from the project and its results?
 - **For Community-Centered Implementation proposals:** Does the proposal identify an existing model (standard, practice, toolkit, open-source software, or research finding) that they will adapt to their local context?
 - **For Early Career Research proposals:** How well does the Project Director describe their long-term research agenda, and does the proposed research fit within that agenda?
-

Review Criteria

Project Work Plan



- Will the work plan lead to the promised results? Are the resources identified appropriate for the scope and scale of the project? How could they be improved? See also [Schedule of Completion](#) and [Budget](#) documents.
- How has the work plan incorporated the perspectives and contributions of stakeholders through external input, validation, and/or consensus building activities?
- Has evaluation been included, where appropriate?
- Do the identified staff, partners, and consultants possess the experience and skills necessary to complete the work? See [Resumes of Key Project Staff and Consultants](#).
- **For Community-Centered Implementation projects:** Does the work plan demonstrate how the identified model will be used or adapted to a local context?

For Applied Research and Early Career Research projects:

- Will the proposed research questions and theoretical framing address the identified need, challenge, or opportunity? How could they be improved?
 - Are the selected methods for data identification, collection, and analysis appropriate for the project? How could they be improved?
 - Is the approach to securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval appropriate?
-

Review Criteria

Project Results



- How well will the project results address the identified need, challenge, or opportunity?
- Are project deliverables readily adaptable, generalizable, and usable by other institutions and communities?
- How well does the dissemination and communication plan demonstrate outreach, including but not limited to intended beneficiaries?
- Is the plan to sustain the benefits of the project reasonable and practical?
- Does the [Digital Products Plan](#) reflect an adequate understanding of appropriate practices and standards for creating and managing the types of digital products proposed?
- **For Applied Research and Early Career Research projects:** Does the [Public Access Plan for Research Projects](#) reflect an adequate understanding of managing, sharing, preserving, documenting, and enabling reuse of the information and research products created during this project?
- **For Planning and Forum projects:** Is it clear how the project results will lead to future work with far-reaching impact?

Risk Assessment

For federal awards with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000 but is periodically adjusted), we are required to review and consider applicant information in the designated integrity and performance system, which is accessible through SAM.gov.

You may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems and comment on any information about your organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered.

We will consider any applicant comments, in addition to other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in reviewing the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants.



Learn more about the laws and regulations related to suspension and debarment systems, the simplified acquisition threshold, and applicant risk review:

→ [41 U.S.C. § 2313](#)

→ [41 U.S.C. § 134](#)

→ [20 C.F.R. § 200.206](#)

→ [2 C.F.R. § 3185](#)

7. Award Notices

We will not release information about the status of an application until we have completed the peer review process and all deliberations.

We expect to notify successful and unsuccessful applicants of final funding decisions by email in July 2027.

Funded Applications

If your application is funded, we will send your Authorizing Official, Project Director, and Grant Administrator an email notification with congratulations and instructions for accessing the agency's electronic grants management system, eGMS Reach. Once you activate your eGMS Reach account, you'll have access to your Official Award Notification, award letter, reporting schedule, IMLS-approved budget document, and anonymized reviewer feedback from your application's peer review.



The signed Official Award Notification is the only document obligating funds and authorizing you to begin performance on the specified date. Unless you've confirmed and received prior written approval from us that pre-award costs are allowed, incurring those costs before the period of performance begins is entirely at your own risk.

Unfunded Applications

If your application is not selected for funding, we will send your Authorizing Official, Project Director, and Grant Administrator an email notification. We will share the number of applications and the total of requested funding we received in response to this NOFO. We will also provide anonymized reviewer comments and scores for your application to help you understand the decision and decide whether to revise the proposal and re-submit it to IMLS or another funding agency in the future.



Find Post-Award Information

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8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

There are important regulations and policies you will need to understand and comply with if you receive an award. Awardees are subject to:

- [2 C.F.R. § 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)(Uniform Guidance) (Governmentwide grant regulations);
- [2 C.F.R. § 3187](#) (IMLS-specific grant regulations);
- [IMLS General Terms and Conditions for IMLS Discretionary Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards](#) (IMLS may update the General Terms and Conditions before making awards for this program)); and
- [IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#).

*Please note: OMB is in the process of updating the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR § 200 ([Uniform Guidance Revisions](#)). For IMLS grant awards made on or after October 1, 2026, the Uniform Guidance Revisions will apply.

The IMLS-specific grant regulations at [2 C.F.R. § 3187](#) formally adopt the Uniform Guidance.

Reporting

Awardees must comply with the following reporting requirements.

Interim and final financial and performance reports are due according to the reporting schedule in your official award documents. You must submit your performance and financial reports in eGMS Reach. We may publish interim and final performance report content on the IMLS website (imls.gov).

You must also comply with [2 C.F.R. § 180](#) and [2 C.F.R. § 3185](#); these rules pertain to providing information regarding all debarment, suspension, and related offenses, as applicable.

If the total value of your active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 at any time during the performance period for an award issued under this NOFO, [you should refer to the reporting requirements set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200, Appendix XII – Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.](#)

See also: [2 C.F.R. § 200.113 \(Mandatory disclosures\)](#) and [2 C.F.R. § 200.211\(c\)\(1\)\(iii\) \(Information contained in a federal award\).](#)



Visit our [Manage Your Award – Grant Administration page](#) to learn more about reporting requirements



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9. Other Important Information

IMLS Assurances and Certifications

Applicants for federal funds must certify that they will comply with certain nondiscrimination, debarment and suspension, drug-free workplace, and lobbying statutes and regulations. These are set forth in more detail, along with other requirements, in the [IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#).

By submitting an application, which includes the [IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#), you certify that you comply with these requirements and that you will maintain records and submit any reports that are necessary to ensure such compliance. Failure to comply with these statutory and regulatory requirements may result in the suspension or termination of the award and require that the recipient return funds to the government.

For information about award termination, please see the [IMLS General Terms and Conditions for IMLS Discretionary Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards](#) and [2 C.F.R. § 200.340 Termination](#). IMLS may update the General Terms and Conditions before making awards for this program.

Acknowledging IMLS Support

Award recipients must include acknowledgement of IMLS support in all grant products, publications, websites, and presentations developed with IMLS funding.

All work products must reference IMLS and include the associated award number(s). [The IMLS Grantee Communications Kit](#) provides guidance for fulfilling these requirements.

Conflict of Interest Requirements

Recipients must follow IMLS conflict of interest policies for federal awards. You must disclose in writing any potential or actual conflict of interest to an IMLS Program Officer, or to the pass-through entity if you are a subrecipient or contractor. This disclosure must take place immediately whether you are an applicant or have an active IMLS award.

The IMLS conflict of interest policies apply to subawards as well as contracts, and are as follows:

- You must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and the performance of your employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of subawards and contracts.
- None of your employees may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a subaward or contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest may arise if the employee, officer, agent, board member, or any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an organization being considered for or that has received a subaward or contract. Also, the officers, employees, agents, and board members of your organization must not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from subrecipients or contractors or parties to subawards or contracts.
- If you have a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local, or tribal government, you must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest occurs if, because of relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, you are unable or appear to be unable to be impartial in conducting a subaward or procurement action involving a related organization.

Additional Information about IMLS

Visit the [IMLS website](#) for additional information on IMLS and its activities.

IMLS Obligations to Make Awards

This NOFO does not obligate IMLS to make any federal award or commitment.

Peer Review

Any individual who is interested in serving as a peer reviewer should enter their contact information and identify their experience and expertise through the IMLS [online reviewer application portal](#). IMLS staff will notify individuals who are identified as potential reviewers by email prior to the next review period to confirm their availability.

Copyright Information

Award recipients may obtain copyright protection for any work developed under a federal award or for any copyrighted work whose ownership was acquired under a federal award. IMLS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes and to authorize others to do so. For additional information, [see 2 C.F.R. § 200.315 \(Intangible property\)](#).

Application Completion Time

Complete applications include the elements listed in the [Table of Application Components for applications](#). We estimate the average amount of time needed for one applicant to complete this application to be 45 hours. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and writing and reviewing the answers.

We estimate that it will take an average of 30 minutes per response for the IMLS Library Discretionary Program Information Form and three hours per response for the IMLS Budget Form.

We welcome your suggestions for improving this collection of information and for making it as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [the IMLS Office of Grants Management](#). Please note that applicants are not required to respond to any collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

PRA Clearance Number

OMB Control No.: 3137-0091, Expiration date: 7/31/2027



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10.Guidance for Required Registrations

Obtaining a Unique Entity Identifier

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number is a non-proprietary alphanumeric identifier assigned to all entities (public and private companies, individuals, institutions, or organizations) who register to do business with the federal government. The UEI is requested in, and assigned by, the System for Award Management (SAM).

Award recipients must inform any first-tier subrecipients that the award recipient cannot make a subaward unless the subrecipient also has obtained a UEI. First tier subrecipients, but not second-tier subrecipients or contractors, are required to obtain a UEI. However, subrecipients are not required to complete a full registration in SAM.gov in order to obtain a UEI.

If your organization has an active SAM registration, you can find your assigned UEI in your SAM record. Your organization's UEI must be active on both the date that your application is submitted and on the award date. If you don't yet have an active SAM registration, you will receive a UEI when you register in SAM.

[Learn more about the UEI.](#)

Registering with SAM

The System for Award Management (SAM) is a federal repository that centralizes information about grant applicants and awardees. It is always free to all users. You must register with SAM at SAM.gov before registering with Grants.gov. [Learn how to check an organization's registration status in SAM.](#)

If you're registering with SAM for the first time, you must begin by creating a SAM user account through [Login.gov](#). [Click here to learn how to create a secure Login.gov account.](#) Then [proceed to the SAM registration process.](#)

We recommend that you allow several weeks to complete the SAM registration process.

You must always maintain an active SAM registration with current information while you have a current federal award or an application under consideration. We are not able to make an award to an entity until it has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM registration requirements. If you have not fully complied with the requirements by the date we are making awards, the agency will not be able to make an award to your entity.

You must renew your organization's registration in SAM at least every 12 months or whenever your organization's information changes. An expired registration will prevent your entity from submitting applications via Grants.gov and receiving awards or payments. Award payments will be deposited in the bank account associated with your organization's SAM registration.

Registering with Grants.gov

[Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is the centralized website for grant seekers to find and apply for federal funding opportunities. Grants.gov is owned and operated by the federal government and is always free to all users.

You must [register with Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) prior to applying to this opportunity. The multistep registration process cannot be completed in a single day. You should make sure your institution's SAM registration is current and active before registering with Grants.gov. If your organization is not already registered, allow several weeks before the application deadline to complete this one-time process. **Do not wait until the application deadline to register.**

The Grants.gov user ID and password you obtain when you register are required to submit your application.

After your organization registers with Grants.gov and creates an Organizational Applicant Profile, the request for the organization's Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the eBiz POC. The eBiz POC will then log into Grants.gov and assign the appropriate roles to individuals within the organization. This will include the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who is able to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization.



TIP: Designating more than one Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) when you register in Grants.gov will help avoid last-minute crises if a single AOR is unavailable when you submit your application. It is also important to update the contact information and password in Grants.gov whenever there are changes with your AOR.

Visit [Grants.gov/Support](https://www.grants.gov/Support), email support@grants.gov, or call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726 for assistance with software issues, registration issues, and technical problems. The Hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except for federal holidays.

11. Guidance for Completing Forms and Other Application Components

Grants.gov Forms

SF-424S Form

The SF-424S Form, or the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form, is part of the application package in Grants.gov.

SF-424S Item	Instructions
Items 1 - 4	Grants.gov automatically populates items 1-4.

Item 5. Applicant Information

- a **Legal Name:** Enter your organization's legal name as it appears in your SAM registration. This is the organization with the authority to apply directly for funding for this program. If there is an organizational unit that will be carrying out the project, be sure to specify it as such on the [IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form](#).
- b **Address:** Enter your legal applicant's address as it appears in your SAM registration.
- c **Web Address:** Enter the URL of your organization's website.
- d **Type of Applicant:** Select the code that best characterizes your organization from the menu in the first dropdown box. Leave the other boxes blank.
- e **Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):** Enter the EIN or TIN assigned to your organization by the Internal Revenue Service.
- f **Organizational UEI:** Enter your organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). If your organization's SAM registration is active, you can find your assigned UEI in your SAM record. If you cannot locate your UEI, contact the Federal Service Desk at www.fsd.gov.
- g **Congressional District:** Enter your organization's congressional district.

Use the following format: two-letter state abbreviation, followed by a hyphen, followed by a zero, followed by the two-digit district number. For example, if the organization is located in the 5th Congressional District of California, enter "CA-005." For the 12th Congressional District of North Carolina, enter "NC-012."

For states and territories with "At Large" Congressional Districts—that is, one representative or delegate represents the entire state or territory—use "001," e.g., "VT-001. If your organization does not have a congressional district (e.g., it is located in a U.S. territory that does not have districts), enter "00-000." To determine your organization's district, [visit the House of Representatives website](#) and use the "Find Your Representative" tool.

SF-424S Item

Instructions

Item 6. Project Information

- a **Project Title:** Enter a brief descriptive title for your project, using no more than 200 characters, including spaces. IMLS may use this title for public information purposes.
- b **Project Description:** Enter a brief description (about 120 words) for your project. Tell us about the purpose of the project, the activities to be performed, the deliverables and expected outcomes, and the intended beneficiaries. Use clear language that readers who might not be familiar with the discipline or subject area can understand. IMLS may use or revise this project description for public information purposes.
- **Proposed Project Start Date/End Date:** Enter the start (08/01/2027) and end dates of the proposed period of performance in the format mm/dd/yyyy. The project period begins on the first day of the month in which project activities start and ends on the last day of the month in which these activities are completed. Refer to the Award Overview to determine when your project can begin.

NOTE: We use [Login.gov](#) for user authentication in our electronic grants management system, eGMS Reach. Login.gov helps protect user identity through stronger passwords and two-factor authentication.



Login.gov requires that the email addresses entered for the Project Director, Primary Contact/Grants Administrator, and Authorized Representatives in Items 7, 8, and 9 on the SF-424S Form be unique to those individuals. General email addresses or those used by several people in a single office are not acceptable.

Item 7. Project Director

The Project Director has the primary responsibility for carrying out your project's activities. Enter the requested information for this individual here.

We require that the Project Director be a different individual than the Authorized Representative.

SF-424S Item

Instructions

Item 8. Primary Contact/Grants Administrator

The Primary Contact/Grants Administrator has the main responsibility for administering the award. Enter the requested information for this individual here.

Please complete both items 8 and 9 if the Primary Contact/Grants Administrator is the same individual as the Authorized Representative.

In some organizations this individual may be the same as the Project Director. If this is the case, check the box and skip to Item 9.

Item 9. Authorized Representative

The Authorized Representative has the authority to legally bind your organization. Enter the requested information for this individual here. **The Authorized Representative cannot be the same individual as the Project Director.**

By checking the “**I Agree**” box at the top of Item 9, this individual certifies the applicant’s compliance with the [IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#) and any other relevant federal requirements.

Grants.gov automatically populates the “Signature of Authorized Representative” and “Date Signed” boxes upon submission of the application. This is the individual whose name is listed as your organization’s authorized representative in your Grants.gov registration.

Please note that this name might not be the same as the name and other information you entered in Item 9 above.

By submitting the electronic application, you acknowledge that your organization certifies compliance with relevant federal requirements, including but not limited to the [IMLS Assurances and Certifications](#), to the same extent as a signature does on a paper application.

IMLS Library – Discretionary Program Information Form (PIF)

The IMLS Library - Discretionary Program Information Form is part of the application package in Grants.gov. Sections of this form are dynamic, so your answers to certain questions will determine what questions you see next.

PIF Section	Instructions
Section 1. Grant Program	Select Laura Bush 21 st Century Librarian Program. Then select one project type. Refer to Project Types for more information and to help you select the right project type for your application.
Grant Program Goals and Objectives	Refer to the LB21 Program Goals and Objectives. Select the LB21 program goal that best aligns with your proposed project. Once you have selected a goal, select one associated objective.
Section 2. Applicant Information	Does this entity have an organizational unit that will carry out the activities described in your application? Refer to the entity listed in Item 5a of the Grants.gov SF-424S Form that you are submitting with your application and review the Helpful Definitions of organizational unit and legal applicant on the Program Information Form. Select YES if your organization has an organizational unit and NO if it does not. Next, make selections from the choices and provide the information requested.
Section 3. Financial Information	Provide the information requested in items a-d. If you named an organizational unit in Section 1 of this form, this information must pertain to that unit. Please complete the table with figures representing the most recently completed fiscal year in the top row, followed by those for the previous year, and concluding with those for the year before that.

PIF Section	Instructions
Section 4. Funding Request	Refer to the Grant Fund and Cost Share totals in Section 10 of the IMLS Budget Form (PDF, 1.67MB) that you are submitting with your application. Provide the amount in dollars that you are requesting from IMLS and the amount of non-federal funding you are providing as cost share/match. Enter “0” if your budget includes no cost share/match.
Section 5. Indirect Costs	Refer to the IMLS Budget Form – Indirect Costs in the Budget guidance . Select one option and provide any required information for your selection which should match the information entered on your IMLS Budget Form submitted with your application.
Section 6. Abstract	Write an Abstract of no more than 3,000 characters (including spaces) in a concise narrative format for experts as well as for a general audience. Address the following: ● Identify the lead applicant and, if applicable, any collaborators. ● Describe the need, problem, or challenge your project will address, and how it was identified. ● List the high-level activities you will carry out and identify the associated time frame. ● Identify who and/or what will benefit from your project. ● Specify your project’s intended results and how they will be disseminated. ● Describe how you will measure your success in achieving your intended results. Enter or paste your text into the form.

IMLS Budget Form

Make sure that JavaScript is enabled in your web browser. Download the [IMLS Budget Form \(PDF, 1.67 MB\)](#) to your computer and work on it outside your web browser. When you've completed the form, save it as a PDF and upload it as part of your application through Grants.gov.

The IMLS Budget Form accommodates up to three years of project activities and expenses. Project timelines, allowable costs, and other budget details vary by program. Be sure to carefully review the NOFO for the grant program/project type to which you are applying and the cost principles in 2 C.F.R. § 200 and 2 C.F.R. § 3187.

The Year 1 columns should include costs for activities that begin on the project start date (as listed on 6c of the SF-424S) and end 12 months later. If the project timeline exceeds one year, list the costs for the next 12 months in the Year 2 columns. If the project extends beyond two years, list the costs for the next 12 months in the Year 3 columns.



Learn more about the regulations and requirements related to cost principles for federal awards:

- [2 C.F.R. § 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#)
- [2 C.F.R. § 3187 Subpart C Allowable Costs](#)



Tips for completing your budget form:

- The budget should include project costs that will be charged to grant funds as well as those that will be supported by cost share, if any.
- The total federal funding requested on your IMLS Budget Form – including all direct and indirect costs – must be within the allowable funding range set forth in this NOFO.
- In-kind contributions to cost share may include the value of services (e.g., donated volunteer or consultant time) or equipment donated to the project between the authorized start and end dates of your project.
- All items listed, whether supported by grant funds or cost share, must be necessary to accomplish project objectives, allowable according to the applicable federal cost principles, auditable, and incurred during the award's period of performance.
- Charges to the project for items such as salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and contractual services must conform to the written policies and established practices of your organization.

- You must report as program income all revenue generated with project funds during the award's period of performance.
- If you need more lines for a specific section, summarize the information in the IMLS Budget Form and explain it further in the Budget Justification.
- Watch the pre-recorded webinar [Preparing a Budget and Budget Justification](#) for information on how to prepare these application components.

Budget Form Section

Instructions

1. Salaries and Wages

Include both temporary and permanent staff as well as volunteers engaged in project activities.

Document how you calculated salaries and wages in your Budget Justification by including the base salary or wages for each person and the percentage of time each person is allocated to project activities, which may be shown as a percentage of time, number or days, or number of hours.

2. Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits can be claimed as a direct cost for only those positions included in your direct cost pool and only for the portion of salaries and wages identified for this project. Indicate your organization's fringe benefit rate (in percent) and the base (in dollars) to which the rate is applied (e.g., 20% x \$175,089.00).

3. Travel

Explain how you calculated amounts for each travel cost, including subsistence, lodging, and transportation, in your Budget Justification.

You must use the lowest available commercial fares for coach or equivalent accommodations, and you must use U.S. flagged air carriers for foreign travel when such services are available, in accordance with applicable requirements.

Budget Form Section	Instructions
4. Supplies, Materials, and Equipment	List the costs of supplies, materials, and equipment purchased specifically for the proposed project. For definitions and other information, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200 . Use the Budget Justification to explain or describe these items in further detail.
5. Subawards and Contracts	List each third party that will perform project activities and their associated costs as an individual line item on your IMLS Budget Form. Designate each third party as either a subaward or a contract using the dropdown menu on each line. Itemize these third-party costs in your Budget Justification.
6. Student Support	If your project includes Student Support costs, enter them in this section. Refer to Student Support Costs in the Budget for a definition and examples.
7. Other Costs	Use this section for costs that cannot be assigned to other categories. Do not use this section to list items that do not fit in the lines allotted for another section.
8. Total Direct Costs	These amounts will total automatically.
9. Indirect Costs	Indirect costs are expenses that are incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be easily identified with a particular project. Indicate your organization's indirect cost rate (as a percentage) and the base (in dollars) to which the rate is applied (e.g., 34% x \$123,456.78). Refer to Indirect Costs in the Budget for more information.
10. Total Project Costs	These amounts will total and round up to the nearest dollar automatically. The total federal funding requested on your IMLS Budget Form – including all direct and indirect costs - must be within the allowable funding range set forth in this NOFO.

Cost Share in the Budget

Cost share is the portion of the project costs that is not paid by IMLS funds. Common examples of cost share include cash outlays; contribution of property and services; and in-kind contributions, such as staff or volunteer time that support project activities.

In this program, National Implementation project proposals requesting more than \$299,999 must include at least a 1:1 cost share from non-federal sources. To calculate the minimum required cost share, subtract Student Support costs (direct costs only) from the total requested IMLS funds (direct and indirect costs).

All expenses, including cost share, must be incurred during the award's period of performance unless otherwise specified and allowed by law. Funds from other federal awards may not be used for cost share. All federal, IMLS, and program requirements regarding the use of funds apply to both IMLS funds and to cost share funds.

See [2 C.F.R. § 200.306](#) for more information on cost share.

Indirect Costs in the Budget

Indirect costs are expenses incurred for common or joint objectives and thus cannot be readily associated with a particular project. Some examples include depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.

See [2 C.F.R. § 200.414](#) for additional guidance on indirect costs.

Options for Calculating and Including Indirect Costs in a Project Budget

In your budget, you may:

- use a rate not to exceed your current indirect cost rate already negotiated with a federal agency;
- use a rate proposed to a federal agency for negotiation, but not yet finalized. However, the rate must be finalized by the time your budget is approved before IMLS makes the award;
- use a rate not to exceed 15 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) if the organization currently does not have a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and is not subject to other requirements; or
- not include any indirect costs.

Using a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

A Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) is a document that reflects an estimate of indirect costs negotiated between the federal government and a non-federal organization. There are several types of indirect cost rates (e.g., Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, Final), and some agreements identify several locations to which a particular rate applies (e.g., on-site/campus, off-site/campus), and/or program types for which a particular rate may be used (e.g., Instruction, Organized Research, All Programs, Other Sponsored Activities).

If your organization already has a NICRA in effect, you may use one of the approved rates in the calculation of your project's indirect costs and by extension, your total project costs, if you apply the appropriate rate and include a copy of the current agreement with your grant application. In your application, you may use a rate lower than the rate in your agreement, but you may not use a higher one. We will accept only NICRAs that are current on the award date.

Carefully review your institution's negotiated indirect cost rate(s) to make sure you are using the appropriate rate for your project.



*For the LB21 Program, we will only accept the Research rate in your IMLS project budget if your selected Project Type is **Applied Research or Early Career Research**. [See Project Types for more information](#).*

Please be aware that the indirect cost rate used in your approved IMLS budget (and that will also appear on the Official Award Notification if you receive an award) will apply throughout your award's entire period of performance. Even if you negotiate a new rate with your cognizant agency after award performance has begun, you will not be permitted to use this new rate.

Using a Proposed Indirect Cost Rate

If your organization is currently negotiating a NICRA with a federal agency, you may use the indirect cost rate proposed to the federal agency to estimate indirect and total project costs. In this situation, if we issue an award, we will accept the rate only if negotiations are final by the award date and you submit a copy of the final agreement to IMLS. Agency staff will work with you to adjust your budget prior to issuing an award.

Using the 15 Percent *De Minimis* Indirect Cost Rate

You may charge a *de minimis* rate of up to 15 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC), as long as you do not have a current NICRA and you meet the applicable requirements. [See 2 C.F.R. § 200](#), including [2 C.F.R. § 200.1 \(Definitions\)](#), [200.414\(f\)](#), and [200.510\(b\)\(6\)](#) for additional guidance.

Modified Total Direct Costs include:

- all direct salaries and wages,
- applicable fringe benefits,
- materials and supplies,
- services,
- travel, and
- up to the first \$50,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award).

Modified Total Direct Costs exclude:

- equipment,
- capital expenditures,
- charges for patient care,
- rental costs,
- tuition remission,
- scholarships and fellowships,
- participant support costs, and
- the portion of each subaward in excess of \$50,000.

Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If you are using the up to 15 percent *de minimis* indirect cost rate, check the box indicated on the IMLS Budget Form. No additional documentation is required.

Applying an Indirect Cost Rate to the Cost Share Portion of a Budget

If doing so is consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200, you may apply your indirect cost rate to your total direct costs covered by cost share. However, you must account for any costs identified as cost share in the cost share column on the IMLS Budget Form. IMLS funds can be used for indirect costs, but only on the portion of direct costs supported by IMLS funding (the Grant Funds column). ([See, for example, 2 C.F.R. § 200.412-414.](#))

Restrictions on Project Costs Included in Indirect Cost Calculations

If you have a current NICRA, you must follow its conditions and requirements.

As noted above, if you do not have a current NICRA and meet applicable requirements, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of up to 15 percent of the Modified Total Direct Costs in your indirect cost calculations.

If you have a current NICRA with a rate of less than 15 percent, you must use that rate instead of the *de minimis* rate in your indirect cost calculations.

Please see the section above on the up to 15 percent *de minimis* rate as well as [2 C.F.R. § 200.414\(f\)](#) and [§ 200.1 Definitions](#).

Student Support Costs in the Budget

Students are:

- Individuals enrolled in a middle school, high school, community college, undergraduate, or graduate program of study;
- Individuals participating in post-master's or post-doctoral programs that are focused on supporting their careers or professional development; or
- Library, archives, and museum staff participating in education and training activities focused on their careers or professional development.

Examples of Student Support include:

- Tuition support for students participating in the project;
- Salaries or stipends for graduate assistant work, if their work is focused on research and teaching activities (therefore contributing to their education);
- Pay and benefits for a resident or fellow to work in a position that is intended to support their learning outcomes or professional development;
- Costs for travel and conference registration provided to support a student or participant's learning outcomes or professional development; or
- Costs of supplies and equipment provided to students to support a student's learning outcomes or professional development.

Activities not considered Student Support include:

- Students employed in roles that are primarily administrative or clerical, doing work that is not primarily focused on their career or professional development. These costs should be listed in the Salaries and Wages section of the budget, and tuition paid on behalf of these students is not considered Student Support.

See [2 C.F.R. § 200.466 \(Scholarships and student aid costs\)](#); see also [2 C.F.R. § 200.430 \(Compensation – personal services\)](#).

Budget Justification

To write your Budget Justification, follow the IMLS Budget Form's section headings to organize the document and save it as a PDF. Address both grant funds and cost share, if included. Do not use the Budget Justification to expand your narrative.

Budget Section	Instructions
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1. Salaries and Wages	
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify each person whose salary or wages will be paid with IMLS funds and/or by cost share, provide their names, and describe their role in the project.● Document how you calculated salaries and wages by including the base salary or wages for each person and the percentage of time each person is allocated to project activities, which may be shown as a percentage of time, number of days, or number of hours.● If cost share is being provided by unpaid volunteers, explain how you arrived at the dollar amount used to represent the value of their services.● For new staff positions included in this project, provide information on how the estimated salary and wages align with industry standards and prevailing wages for your local area. |
|--|--|
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2. Fringe Benefits	
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- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify your organization's fringe benefit rate (as a percentage) and the base (in dollars) to which the rate is applied for each person.● If you have consolidated several individuals' fringe benefits into a single line on the IMLS Budget Form, break out the detail here. |
|--|---|
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Budget Section

Instructions

3. Travel

- For each trip, explain the purpose of the trip and specify the points of origin and destination, the number of travelers, and break out the costs of transportation, lodging, per diem, and any other expenses associated with the travel. Explain how you arrived at these dollar amounts.
 - If the destination of a trip is not yet determined, please use a reasonable flight average (or example) destination to determine the budgeted cost of transportation.
-

4. Supplies, Materials, and Equipment

- List each type of supply, material, and equipment you propose to purchase or provide as cost share for the project.
 - Detail the number and unit cost for each item and explain how you arrived at the dollar amounts.
 - Provide vendor quotes or price lists as Supporting Documents with your application.
-

Budget Section	Instructions
5. Subawards and Contracts	• List the costs of project activities to be performed by third parties for the project (common terms for third parties include partners, consultants, subgrantees, contractors, collaborators, vendors, and service providers). • Identify each third party by name, describe their role in the project, the activities they will carry out, and the cost. • For each entry, designate the third party as either a subrecipient (who receives a subaward) or a contractor (who receives a contract)*. • Explain costs for third parties and provide relevant Supporting Documents with your application. Generally, IMLS grant funds may not be provided to other U.S. government agencies. *You are responsible for making a case-by-case determination whether an agreement you enter into with a third party should be a subaward or a contract. That determination will depend upon the nature of your relationship with the third party with respect to the activities to be carried out. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.331 (Subrecipient and contractor determinations).
6. Student Support	Explain your method for calculating the costs listed in this section. See the definition and examples of Student Support.
7. Other Costs	Use this section for costs that cannot be assigned to other categories.
8. Total Direct Costs	Indicate the total direct costs and specify the amount you are requesting from IMLS and how much you propose to provide as cost share, if any.
9. Indirect Costs	If you include indirect costs in your project budget, identify the indirect cost rate (as a percentage) and the base (in dollars) to which the rate is applied. Read about indirect costs in the Budget.

Budget Section

Instructions

10. Total Project Costs

Indicate the total project costs here and specify the amount you are requesting from IMLS and how much you propose to provide as cost share, if any.

Proof of Private, Nonprofit Status

An organization applying as a private, nonprofit institution must submit a copy of the letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating its eligibility for nonprofit status under the applicable provision of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended. ([See 2 C.F.R. § 3187.7\(b\).](#)) IMLS will not accept a letter of state sales tax exemption as proof of nonprofit status.

Digital Products Plan

We are committed to expanding public access to digital products created using federal funds. We request that each applicant create and submit a Digital Products Plan describing how you will address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products, including the use of practices and standards that are most appropriate for your specific project. IMLS staff and peer reviewers will assess your plan, which will be important in determining whether your project will be funded. Organize your plan to address all of the following:

- Type
- Availability
- Access
- Sustainability.

We participate in the Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI), a collaborative effort by federal agencies to define common standards, guidelines, methods, and best practices for creating digital collections. [Visit the FADGI website](#) for a growing list of links to relevant standards, recommendations, and other resources. While this list is not exhaustive—nor do we endorse or recommend any specific resource—applicants considering digital projects may find the information useful. This list is provided for informational and reference purposes only.

Use the guidance below to help you create and organize your Digital Products Plan.



Type

What digital products will you create?

Most projects are likely to generate digital content, resources, or assets. They may be digitized or born-digital products created by individuals, project teams, or through community gatherings. Examples include, but are not limited to, still images, audio files, moving images, microfilm, object inventories, object catalogs, artworks, books, posters, curricula, field books, maps, notebooks, scientific labels, metadata schema, charts, tables, drawings, workflows, teacher resources, and software, including source code, algorithms, applications, and digital tools, plus accompanying documentation.

In your Digital Products Plan:

- describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect,
- the quantities of each type,
- the digital file format(s),
- the accompanying metadata, and
- any relevant standards you will use.

If you are developing software, also specify the programming languages, platforms, frameworks, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you selected them.



Availability

How will you make your digital products openly available (as appropriate)?

We encourage grant recipients to make works produced with IMLS support widely available, and to share their work products (including publications, datasets, educational resources, software, and digital content) whenever possible through free and open-access journals and repositories. Your project may involve making digital products available through public or access-controlled websites, kiosks, or live or recorded programs.

We expect you to ensure that publications produced under this grant award (including but not limited to peer-reviewed manuscripts resulting from research conducted under an award) are made available in a manner that

permits the public to access, read, download, and analyze the work without charge.

In your Digital Products Plan,

- describe how you will make the digital content, resources, assets, software, and metadata available to the public;
- include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools to use the content, delivery enabled by IIIF specifications); and
- identify and explain the reasons for any limitations in your Digital Products Plan.



Access

What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use?

Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?

Award recipients may copyright any work subject to copyright that was created under the award or for which ownership was acquired under the award. However, IMLS reserves, for federal government purposes, a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work and authorize others to do the same.

We expect applicants receiving federal funds for developing or creating digital products to release these files under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. All work products resulting from IMLS funding should be distributed for free or at cost unless the agency has provided written approval for another arrangement.

In your Digital Products Plan:

- identify any licenses under which digital products will be shared (e.g., Creative Commons licenses, RightsStatements.org statements);
- describe what intellectual property rights you will assert over your digital products and explain any limitations or conditions to be placed on their use; and
- if your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, describe these issues and how you plan to address them.



Sustainability

How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?

To the maximum extent possible, digital products created with IMLS funding should be freely and readily available for use and reuse by libraries, archives, museums, and the public.

Some digital products that are generated during a project should be long-lived, requiring permanent preservation, and others (e.g., preliminary analyses, drafts of papers, plans for future work, peer-review assessments, most social media communications, and communications with colleagues) should be retained and shared in the medium- or short-term.

In your Digital Products Plan:

- describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital products during and after the award's period of performance;
- identify the appropriate length of time different digital products should be curated; and
- address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes.

Note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see [2 C.F.R. § 200.461](#)).

Public Access Plan for Research Projects

The sharing of research findings, data, and other deliverables is an essential component of research and expedites the translation of research results into new knowledge and practices.

If you are preparing a research proposal, you are required to provide a Public Access Plan to describe how you will follow the **IMLS Public Access Policy Guidance** for:

- public access to **peer-reviewed scholarly publications**, and
- public access to **permissible scientific research data** underlying peer-reviewed scholarly publications.

The Public Access Plan guides research applicants through planning how they will provide public access throughout the course of the proposed research project. If awarded a grant, the General Terms and Conditions further outline the public access expectations for awardees. Applicants are expected to read the full **IMLS Public Access Policy Guidance** page to learn more about the legal requirements and find definitions specific to Public Access prior to creating your plan.

In one to two pages, address the following bullet points as related to your proposed project:

Peer-reviewed Scholarly Publications Access:

- Identify the type(s) and estimated amount of peer-reviewed scholarly publications you intend to publish, and
- Describe your plan to submit a machine-readable copy of the most-appropriate version of a published manuscript to IMLS no later than the article's publication date. (See the IMLS Public Access Policy Guidance for definitions of key terms).

Permissible Scientific Research Data Management and Access (Be sure to address all points below):

- Identify the type(s) and estimated amount of data you plan to collect or generate.
- Will you collect any sensitive information? This may include personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information, or proprietary information (e.g., trade secrets). If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect the information while you prepare it for public release (e.g., anonymizing individual identifiers, data aggregation).
- Awardees are expected to share as much data as possible. If some of the data will not be released publicly, explain why the data cannot be shared due to the protection

of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements.

- What technical (hardware and/or software) requirements or dependencies are necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, processing, or otherwise reusing the data? How can these tools be accessed by the public?
- What documentation (e.g., consent agreements, data documentation, codebooks, metadata, and analytical and procedural information) will you capture or create along with the data? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the data it describes to enable future reuse?
- Identify the repository where you will deposit your data and describe any additional plans for managing, disseminating, and preserving data after the completion of the award's period of performance.
- When and how frequently will you review this Public Access Plan to ensure compliance?