

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES (IMLS): REAUTHORIZATION

Request:

- **Reauthorize the Office of Museum Services (OMS) within IMLS at \$95 million** incrementally over the 5-year reauthorization period by strengthening existing national programs, initiating state needs assessments; devoting new funding to conservation endowment grants, traveling exhibitions and a new program to help smaller museums compete more effectively for federal grants; and establishing a federal-state partnership that dedicates funding to a state grant program for museums.

Introduction:

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is scheduled to be reauthorized by September 2009. Funding for museum grants within IMLS' Office of Museum Services (OMS) – which is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 17,500 museums – has been essentially flat for the past three fiscal years. Despite this funding shortfall, museum attendance has increased, collections are subject to increasing risk, and museum staff members need professional development in conservation, education, and technology. The educational services museums provide to schools and communities are in greater demand than ever.

As a result, museums need and deserve more federal support – both to strengthen existing national programs at IMLS and to pursue a new strategy to support museums directly at the state level. Representatives from across the museum field united to develop a consensus reauthorization package that would accommodate the needs of the entire museum field. The package request would provide grant money to the states without detracting from existing national programs at IMLS.

Talking Points:

The IMLS package request supported by the museum community links newly authorized mechanisms with increases through the annual appropriations process. The following elements will be essential to an effective reauthorization:

- **Increased Funding:** Reauthorize the Office of Museum Services (OMS) within IMLS at \$95 million (increase from current appropriations level of \$35 million). This large increase would happen incrementally over the 5 years, with the goal of reaching a \$95 million annual appropriation by the end of the 5-year authorization.
- **Strengthen Existing National Programs:** This provides a significant increase for current national programs that have repeatedly been insufficiently funded. This large

increase would allow for enhanced investments in areas such as technology upgrades, lifelong community learning, capacity building, collection management, community engagement, and developing the next generation of museum professionals, among others important efforts.

- **State Needs Assessments:** Once the appropriations level exceeds \$45 million, up to \$2 million would be appropriated for states to conduct needs assessments. The needs assessments are an important step toward establishing a program to provide grants directly to each state.
- **Conservation, Traveling Exhibits, and Helping Smaller Museums:** As the appropriations level rises from \$45 million to \$72 million, IMLS would establish new grants for conservation and traveling exhibitions, as well as a program to help small museums more effectively compete for federal grants.
- **Grants to States:** Once the appropriations level exceeds \$72 million, the IMLS Director would have discretion to provide up to \$20 million of any annual appropriation in excess of \$72 million toward a states grant program. Such a program would include states that have both completed their needs assessments and have an approved five-year plan on how the funds would be used. Once the appropriations level exceeds \$92 million, the IMLS Director would have discretion to provide up to 50% of the excess toward the state grant program, with at least 50% going toward enhancing national programs.
- **Evaluation:** After the state grant program has been in existence for two years (not including the state needs assessments), a study would be conducted to evaluate the progress and viability of the program.
 - **STATUS:** No legislation has yet been introduced on this topic. In December, 2008, the museum field sent a letter endorsing this proposal to the Obama Presidential Transition Team. The letter was signed by the following national, regional, and state organizations:
 - **National museum service organizations:** American Association of Museums, American Association of Museum Volunteers, American Association for State and Local History, American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, American Public Gardens Association, Association of African American Museums, Association of Art Museum Directors, Association of Children's Museums, Association of College and University Museums and Galleries, Association of Railway Museums, Association of Science Museum Directors, Association of Science-Technology Centers, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, College Art Association, Council of American Jewish Museums, Council of American Maritime Museums, Heritage Preservation, International Museum Theater Alliance, Museum Store Association, Museum Trustee Association, National Council on Public History, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Natural Science Collections Alliance, Small Museum Association, Society for American Archaeology, Society for the Preservation of Natural Collections, United States Committee of the International Council of Museums

- Regional museum associations: Association of Midwest Museums, Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, Mountain-Plains Museums Association, New England Museum Association, Southeastern Museums Conference, Western Museums Association, Mid-America Arts Alliance
- State museum associations: Alabama Museums Association, Museums Alaska, Museum Association of Arizona, Arkansas Museums Association, California Association of Museums, Colorado-Wyoming Association of Museums, Connecticut League of History Organizations, Delaware Museum Association, Florida Association of Museums, Hawaii Museums Association, Idaho Association of Museums, Illinois Association of Museums, Illinois Heritage Association, Association of Indiana Museums, Iowa Museum Association, Kansas Museums Association, Kansas Humanities Council, Kentucky Museum and Heritage Alliance, Louisiana Association of Museums, Historical Society of Michigan, Minnesota Association of Museums, Mississippi Museums Association, Missouri Museums Association, Museums Association of Montana, Montana Historical Society, Nevada Museums Association, Advocates for New Jersey History, New Mexico Association of Museums, Museum Association of New York, North Carolina Museums Council, Museums in North Dakota, Ohio Museums Association, Oklahoma Museums Association, Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, South Carolina Federation of Museums, Tennessee Association of Museums, Texas Association of Museums, Utah Museums Association, Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, Virginia Association of Museums, Washington Museum Association, West Virginia Association of Museums, Wisconsin Federation of Museums