

MUSEUM ISSUES AT-A-GLANCE

Museums play a key role in education, job creation, tourism, economic development, historic preservation, environmental conservation, global competitiveness, and more. The museum community - which includes aquariums, art museums, children's museums, historic sites, history museums, maritime museums, military museums, natural history museums, planetariums, presidential libraries, public gardens, science centers, zoos, and more – has worked together to develop positions on the vital federal issues affecting museums.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Office of Museum Services

IMLS is the primary federal agency responsible for helping museums connect people to information and ideas. Its Office of Museum Services (OMS) awards grants to museums to support educating students, preserving collections, coordinating resources, and digitalizing collections. Grants are awarded in every state, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly-rated grant applications it receives. In late 2010, a bill to reauthorize IMLS for five years was unanimously passed by both the House and Senate. The bill (now Public Law 111-340) called for (or "authorized") \$38.6 million for OMS, a \$3.4 million increase over the FY10 funding level, to meet the growing demand for museum programs and services. However, President Obama proposed just \$32.3 million for OMS – an 8.2% reduction from the FY10 funding level – in his FY12 budget. *We support increased funding in FY12 – or, at a minimum, to restore funding to the FY10 level of \$35.2 million – for the Office of Museum Services, and urged Members of Congress to support the funding requests included in the Dear Colleague letters circulated in the House and Senate by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY), Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Leonard Lance (R-NJ) supporting the Office of Museum Services.*

[Issue Brief: The Institute of Museum and Library Services
Additional Information](#)

Economic Impact

Each year, museums directly contribute at least \$21 billion to the national economy, employ 400,000 people, and attract tourists from around the world, bolstering a large tourism industry in local communities. Unfortunately, in 2009, Congress specifically excluded zoos and aquariums from being eligible to compete for economic stimulus funds, despite the significant economic impact they have in every community. Zoos and aquariums contain important living collections and are an essential part of the museum community. Investments in zoos and aquariums not only serve to educate the public about science and conservation but also save and create jobs – and, in particular, "green jobs," (jobs that invest in environmental protection or energy efficiency) – that support local communities and the environment. In 2009 there were also several attempts to prevent museums from receiving funds for refurbishment of historic transportation facilities, interpretation of historic trails and improved access to museums by pedestrians or public transit – projects which also create jobs and help revitalize communities. *We oppose any effort to restrict the ability of zoos, aquariums, or other types of museums to compete for funds made available by the federal government.*

[Issue Brief: Charitable Giving
Additional Information](#)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Museums partner with schools every day to educate students, provide professional development to teachers and to help teach the local curriculum. However, the last reauthorization of ESEA (which governs federal K-12 education policy and was renamed the "No Child Left Behind Act") resulted in reduced opportunities for students to visit museums and benefit from the kind of comprehensive learning environment they provide. *We support efforts to promote school-museum partnerships, recognize holders of advanced degrees in museum education as qualified to work directly with students, require greater collaboration between the Department of Education and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and to retain a set of core academic subjects that includes the many subject areas in which museums help teach the curriculum – including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.*

[Issue Brief: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act
Additional Information](#)

Historic Preservation

In addition to preserving and protecting more than one billion objects, many museums are historic themselves – and their collections are critical to telling our national story. Historic sites and historic preservation efforts not only protect our national heritage, but they are economic engines and job creators in the thousands of communities they serve. Both the president's FY12 budget and the America's Great Outdoors report, which aims to connect people with the nation's natural and historic cultural assets, propose \$6.5 million in additional support for State Historic Preservation Offices (a 9% increase) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (a 37% increase), which we support. However, we are very concerned that the President's budget also proposes eliminating funding for Save America's Treasures (\$25 million) and Preserve America (\$4.6 million). Both programs have been instrumental in preserving some of our nation's most important artifacts and structures, increasing the economic independence of historic museums and sites, and making them more accessible to the public. *We urge Congress to recognize the significant economic impact of museums in all communities and to oppose the president's FY12 budget proposal to eliminate Save America's Treasures and Preserve America.*

[Issue Brief: Historic Preservation](#)

National Endowment for the Humanities

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provides grants to museums, universities, archives, scholars, and libraries in support of research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities. *We are highly concerned about the president's FY12 budget proposal to reduce funding for this agency to \$146 million and support restoring funding to the FY10 enacted level of \$167.5 million, which will allow the agency to preserve historically-significant collections and their use as educational tools.*

[Issue Brief: National Endowment for the Humanities](#)
[Additional Information](#)

National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) works to bring the arts to every community in America, including rural areas, military bases, and inner cities. It provides grants to all types of arts organizations—including museums—to exhibit, preserve, and interpret visual materials. *We are deeply concerned about the president's FY12 budget proposal to reduce funding for this agency to \$146 million. This reduction will lessen the agency's ability to bring the arts to every corner of America as an opportunity to promote creativity and innovation as critical building blocks to education and global competitiveness. We support \$167.5 million (level funding from FY10) for the NEA.*

[Issue Brief: National Endowment for the Arts](#)
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National Science Foundation

Millions of Americans of all ages and backgrounds learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) each year by visiting museums, science centers, public gardens, zoos, and aquariums. The National Science Foundation (NSF) supports these efforts through numerous grants and directorates, including the Directorate for Education and Human Resources' Informal Science Education (ISE) program, which supports innovation in anywhere, anytime, lifelong learning, through investments in research, development, infrastructure, and capacity-building for STEM learning outside formal school settings. The ISE program was funded at \$64.4 million in FY11 and the president's budget proposal includes \$68.14 million for FY12. Museums are conducting critical research related to invasive species, biodiversity, climate change, landscape history as well as developing important scientific databases, and NSF is an important source of funds for competitive research grants. *We support NSF programs across all directorates which will help further public understanding of science and advance STEM literacy, enrich STEM professional development, and prepare America's youth to become the innovative and creative thinkers needed for the 21st century workforce.*

[Issue Brief: National Science Foundation](#)

Charitable Giving

Museums depend on charitable gifts for more than one-third of their operating funds, and especially in this economy have seen a decline in charitable gifts. We support efforts to extend and expand incentives for charitable giving. *We therefore oppose President Obama's FY12 budget proposal – which calls for limiting the deductibility of charitable gifts – because it would have a chilling effect on the ability of museums to attract donations and therefore serve their communities. We also support allowing artists to deduct the fair market value of donated works, and support a permanent extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover.*

[Issue Brief: Charitable Giving](#)

Nonprofit Oversight

Nearly all museums are nonprofit institutions, and many have been hard hit by the economic downturn. A new tax-reporting requirement in the health care reform law requires that, starting in 2012, businesses and nonprofits must fill out a 1099 form for every for-profit organization to which they pay at least \$600 for goods or services in a given year. This reporting requirement would be a tremendous burden to museums and other nonprofits. President Obama even cited this “unnecessary bookkeeping burden” in his 2011 State of the Union address. *We support the repeal of this onerous “1099” provision.*

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Enacted in 1990, NAGPRA provides a process for museums and federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items to lineal descendants, culturally affiliated Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. Museums have invested significant resources to work in close collaboration with federally-recognized tribes in this area, but the new Final Rule on Culturally Unidentifiable Human Remains (issued in May 2010) is unclear and has created a host of potential legal obstacles and other concerns for museums. In 2010, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report to Congress that raised several concerns about the operation of the National Park Service's NAGPRA program. *We urge Congress to conduct more careful oversight of this program.*

[Issue Brief: Native American Graves Repatriation Act](#)
[Additional Information](#)

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