

IMLS Office of Museum Services

Request:

- We urge Congress to support at least \$35 million for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2013.
- We urge Members of Congress to “sign on” in support of the “Dear Colleague” letters circulated in the Senate and House by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY) in support of the IMLS Office of Museum Services.

Introduction:

IMLS is the primary federal agency responsible for helping museums connect people to information and ideas. Its Office of Museum Services (OMS) supports all types of museums – including aquariums, arboretums, art museums, botanical gardens, children’s museums, historic sites, history museums, military museums, natural history museums, nature centers, planetariums, science & technology centers, zoos, and more – in their work to educate students, preserve collections, coordinate resources, and digitize collections. The IMLS strategic plan for 2012-2016 aims to help museums place the learner at the center of the museum experience, promote museums as strong community anchors, support museum stewardship of their collections, advise the President and Congress on how to sustain and increase public access to information and ideas, and to be a model independent federal agency maximizing value for the American public.

Reauthorization:

In late 2010, a bill to reauthorize IMLS for five years was passed – unanimously – by both the House and Senate. The bipartisan reauthorization included several provisions proposed by the museum field, including enhanced support for conservation and preservation, emergency preparedness and response, and statewide capacity building. The reauthorization also specifically supports efforts at the State level to leverage museum resources, including statewide needs assessments and the development of State plans to improve and maximize museum services throughout the State. The bill (now Public Law 111-340) called for (or “authorized”) \$38.6 million for the Office of Museum Services to meet the growing demand for museum programs and services.

Funding:

Funding for the Office of Museum Services, within the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is provided by the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. FY12 funding for IMLS was \$231.9 million of which just \$30.8 million went to the Office of Museum Services. President Obama has called for the same funding level for OMS in his FY13 budget request. This represents a

12% decrease from the FY10 funding level and a 20% (\$7.8 million) shortfall from the authorized funding level Congress unanimously endorsed in 2010.

IMLS Office of Museum Services Funding History

	FY09 enacted	FY10 enacted	FY11 enacted	FY12 enacted	FY13 president's request
Appropriation <i>(in millions)</i>	\$35.0	\$35.2	\$31.583	\$30.859	\$30.859

Talking Points:

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services has strong bipartisan support, and has been lauded for its peer-reviewed, highly competitive grant programs.
- The 2010 reauthorization – unanimously passed by Congress – called for an increase in federal support, both to strengthen existing national programs at IMLS and to pursue a new strategy to support museums directly at the state level.
- Grants are awarded in every state and Congressional district, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly-rated grant applications it receives.
- 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.
- To learn more about grants awarded to museums in your state/district, visit: <http://www.ims.gov/recipients/grantsearch.aspx>.

Additional Talking Points About Museums:

- Museums support jobs and the economy. They spend \$20 billion annually, employ more than 400,000 Americans, and spur tourism from around the world.
- Museums are an essential part of the nation's educational infrastructure spending more than \$2 billion a year on education.
- Museums tailor educational programs in coordination with state and local curriculum standards in math, science, art, literacy, economics and financial literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, geography, and social studies.
- Museums receive more than 90 million visits each year from student groups.
- Museums are valuable educational resources for individuals of all ages and backgrounds, stimulating and promoting lifelong learning.
- Museums of all types are seeing their budgets stretched thin. The economy has led to a decline in charitable gifts and to reductions in state and local support.
- Museums are nearly all nonprofits, and many have developed innovative programs to meet the growing needs of their communities. For example, some have programs designed specifically for children with special needs and their families, some are teaching English as a Second Language, and some are serving as locations for supervised family visits through the family court system.