

## Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

- **Goals:** IMLS is a newly reauthorized federal agency dedicated to providing national support for museum and library services. IMLS is focusing on enhancing the public value of libraries and museums as they create and sustain a nation of learners. We believe that this concept encompasses all that we do and is responsive to the needs of the nation, its people, and libraries and museums.
- **Top priorities:**
  - Continue to refine grant-making programs to encourage museums and libraries to demonstrate their public value as key agencies of public education, lifelong learning, and civic engagement.
  - Continue to support research, publish analyses, and convene advisory groups in order to identify and disseminate national needs, trends and best practices in museums and libraries.
  - Form strategic partnerships with other organizations in order to support and promote broad cultural, educational and civic engagement goals.

**Chapters, affiliates, members:** No chapters, affiliates, or members. However we work very closely with and distribute funds through the State Library Administrative Agencies, who have their own organization called Chief Officers of State Library Agencies. The COSLA web site is [www.cosla.org](http://www.cosla.org) It provides links to many of the State Library web pages.

- **Best route to contact:** National Organization
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  - Schroeder Cherry, Deputy Director for Museums  
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  - Marsha Semmel, Director for Strategic Partnerships  
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- **The organization's culture:**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's museums and libraries. IMLS strives to build the capacity of museums and libraries to face the new challenges of a learning society. We are faced with dramatic advances in technology, increasing diversity of our populations and great concerns about education in an information age. All of these trends result in increased public demand for museum and library service. Building the educational capacity of libraries and museums and sustaining equitable access to their resources is at the heart of the federal vision for IMLS.

IMLS supports the full range of libraries - public, academic, research, school libraries and archives and the full range of museums - aquariums, botanical gardens, art, history, natural history, anthropology and children's museums, historic houses, nature centers, planetariums, science and technology centers, and zoos.

Federal support for these powerful centers of learning is an investment in education, in families and children, in equitable access to library and museum resources, in communities and in our cultural heritage. Funding from the Institute is targeted, strategic and helps leverage funding from other sources. IMLS grants and services are a catalyst for leadership.

In its dual role as administrator of federal grants for libraries and museums, IMLS plays a unique role in the development of partnerships between these institutions and among museums and libraries and other community institutions. This intersection of learning institutions creates a powerful synergy and a new array of services for schools and lifelong learning, as well as new opportunities for partnerships with other public and private funders.

IMLS has an exceptional opportunity to champion the role libraries and museums play in our society. IMLS promotes the broadest public access to museums and libraries. It stimulates vital research, enhances training and the use of new technologies, supports community partnerships and establishes standards of excellence in all levels of institutional operations. IMLS places a priority on evaluating results and disseminating promising practices.

- **Resources:** Funding and expertise. Funding from IMLS is directed specifically to Museums and Libraries. The major portion of its funding is distributed through the state library administrative agencies. Some of IMLS's funds are distributed through the National Leadership Grants. Collaborative endeavors are seen as highly competitive.
- **Collaboration with public broadcasting:** IMLS has collaborated with public broadcasting several conferences and publications regarding the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner. Many of our grantees have participated with their local Public Broadcasting entities. For the most part these have tended to be model projects broader and new audiences.
- **Engagement program areas of interest:** Determined by the subgrantee.