

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM & LIBRARY SERVICES: OFFICE OF MUSEUM SERVICES

Funding Request

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Provide robust funding of at least \$52 million in fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the IMLS Office of Museum Services, a much needed increase of \$14 million.
- Include funding for the agency to explore establishing a roadmap to strengthen the structural support for a museum Grants to States program administered by OMS, as authorized by the Museum and Library Services Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 9173(a)(4), in addition to the agency's current direct grants to museums.

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.
- By leveraging significant private, state, and local funding, OMS grants amplify a small federal investment for maximum impact in the community.
- There is high demand for funding from the IMLS Office of Museum Services. In FY 2021 OMS received 943 applications requesting more than \$154 million, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly rated grant applications it receives.

BACKGROUND

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 and digitizing collections, and engaging communities. 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.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through its CARES Act and American Rescue Plan grants, and the agency has been providing science-based information and recommended practices to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to staff and visitors engaging in the delivery of museum services.

Congress has regularly reauthorized IMLS with broad bipartisan support, most recently in 2018. OMS has set a strong record of congressional support during the appropriations submission process in each of the last several years, with 151 Representatives and 42 Senators signing the FY 2021 appropriations letters on its behalf.

In FY 2022, Congress provided \$268 million to IMLS, of which about \$47.5 million was directed to the Office of Museum Services. With this funding, OMS provided 275 grants totaling \$40.5 million to museums and related organizations in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

The FY 2023 Administration budget request for OMS is \$52 million.

Issue brief prepared by the Cultural Advocacy Group, a collaboration of arts and culture stakeholders working collectively to advance federal policy. Updated 2022.