

## **Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth: survey, analysis, and report on grants for youth development programs -1997-2003**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services invites proposals for an analysis of its grants in the area of youth development services that will include undertaking a survey of grants focusing on youth development, and developing case studies of approximately 15 selected grants. The year-long study includes data gathering from IMLS grantees, but does not entail original research. The study should synthesize research on youth development programs at museums and libraries through a literature review and by placing the findings in the context of existing nationwide research, making recommendations, and identifying criteria for best practices. The successful recipient of the contract resulting from this solicitation (Contractor) will work closely with a planning committee that will include researchers, educators, funders, policy makers, and practitioners. It is expected that the planning committee will meet as a group near the beginning of the contract period, that members of the committee will also meet twice together with the grantees selected for the case studies, and that the planning committee will review and comment on the final report.

For the purposes of this solicitation, IMLS defines “youth development” projects as: projects undertaken by a museum or library, or group of museums or libraries partnering with each other, with schools, or with community or youth-serving organizations to provide services that engage youth (aged 9-19) in socially and civically productive activities, increase their independence and responsibility, improve their skills, and strengthen their well-being. Projects may be based in-school or out-of-school, may focus on particular disciplines (e.g., art, history, nature, science), or skills (e.g., literacy, character development, technology), may provide services to under-served or disadvantaged (e.g., rural, tribal, low-literacy) youth, and may engage youth in cross-cultural or inter-generational activities.

### **Work plan and Schedule**

**The study is projected to take up to one year to complete. The following outlines the key activities and deliverable time frames expected of the contractor.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Contractor activities</b>	<b>IMLS</b>
January 2006	award begins initial meeting with IMLS comments and suggestions on the questionnaire work plan and schedule set survey protocol	identifies grants to include in survey provides data on grants provides draft questionnaire to contractor receives OMB clearance approves survey format comments on work plan and schedule
January 2006	invitations to planning committee members	selects planning committee members
February 2006	conduct survey preliminary survey analysis review grant reports conduct interviews with grantees selection of grantees for case studies invitations to grantees	approves list of grantees for case studies
March 2006	prepare and send briefing materials to	approves format of case studies

	committee continue survey analysis literature review	approves organization and agenda for planning meetings
April 2006	conduct case studies planning committee meets as a group prior to meeting with grantees planning meeting 1 (grantees and committee)	
May 2006	conduct case studies planning meeting 2 (grantees and committee)	
March-August 2006	survey analysis analysis of case studies	
September 2006	draft final report circulate draft to committee	provides comments and recommendations on draft report
October 2006	incorporate comments into final report submit final report to IMLS contractor provides all other data files	approves final report
November 2006	IMLS issues final report	IMLS designs, prints, and disseminates hard and electronic copies of publication

IMLS plans to publish the final study report in November 2006.

**Background:** The goal of the Institute of Museum and Library Services is to create and sustain a nation of learners, build the capacity of museums and libraries to serve their communities, and foster leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning in our society. Since 1997, IMLS has provided support to a wide range of museum and library programs that serve the nation’s youth. IMLS has, since its inception, focused on education, learning, and literacy programs, and has encouraged programs that build stronger families and communities, that connect children to their cultural, historic, scientific, natural and artistic heritage, and that help develop the information and communication technology skills that our youth need to sustain a strong democracy into the future.

IMLS has a long-standing commitment to funding grants and to sponsoring research on the subject of how pre-school and school-age children learn, and how museums and libraries provide positive environments for learning. Through its regular grant programs, IMLS has funded an estimated 500 grants that engage youth in productive, educational activities and that improve their skills and relationships. IMLS has also sponsored a number of special research projects: in 1998 and 2002, IMLS undertook surveys on museum-school collaborations, published as “True Needs, True Partners: Museums Serving Schools,”; in 2000, the agency funded research on “Learning in Museums”; in 2003, with the Association of Children’s Museums and other organizations, IMLS co-hosted the symposium “The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner: The Continuum Begins with Early Learning”; and in 2004, it sponsored the conference, “Charting the Landscape, Mapping New Paths: Museum, Libraries and K-12 Learning,” the proceedings of which were published in 2005.

The Institute’s 2003 reauthorizing legislation grants authority to the agency to identify needs and trends, report on the impact and effectiveness, and to identify and disseminate information on the best practices of museum and library services provided with IMLS support. Our “Nation of

Learners” initiative will survey and analyze museum and library services to the public, and will issue a report focusing on a topic of national concern. IMLS intends that the first of these initiatives, “Museums and Libraries Engaging America’s Youth,” will produce a template and lay the groundwork for future analyses devoted to other social and civic issues, such as productive aging and early childhood education.

A strong democracy tomorrow depends upon the quality of education that our children receive today. Funders of community and educational programs recognize this and are supporting programs and research aimed at improving the social, civic, and educational benefits of learning - both in-school and out-of-school. Researchers and evaluators are looking at the whole spectrum of learning: the creation of positive learning environments; the role of teachers, parents, and community leaders; and the benefits that a society derives from high-quality educational programs. Tied to these efforts is the need to demonstrate the public value of such programs and to produce outcomes that work. IMLS encourages collaborative programs and believes that the most valuable programs are those that pool assets and involve whole communities.

For general information about IMLS and its programs, see [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov).

**Special Approvals and Clearances:** The contractor is prohibited from publishing or disseminating information from work performed under this contract without prior written approval from the IMLS Contracting Officer or his/her designated Contracting Official Technical Representative (COTR). The contractor is prohibited from using participant mailing lists or information for the purpose of soliciting business or marketing services.

### **Scope of Work:**

This program solicitation requests proposals to carry out a contract that will undertake an analysis of IMLS grants (1997-2003) in the area of youth development services. The study will include a general survey of approximately 500 IMLS grants dealing with youth programs, case studies of select IMLS grants, and the convening of two meetings, in which select grantees will present their projects with the planning committee serving as discussants. The study will result in a final report.

The purpose of the study is to expand research and analysis of youth development services offered by museums and libraries and to inform the museum and library communities and the formal and informal education fields about the needs, trends, goals, and results of programs in youth development services, with a focus on IMLS grants. It is intended that the study will: 1) provide a better understanding of the goals and achievements of IMLS youth development grants; 2) assist practitioners, prospective applicants, and others planning youth development programs to improve project design and become community partners; 3) present successful models and provide practical guidelines to the public, practitioners, policy makers, and other funders about what works; 4) identify characteristics common to excellent programs; and 5) place IMLS grants in a national context in regards to goals, funding, impact, and evaluation efforts. Additionally, the study will provide IMLS with quantifiable data about youth development grants that it has awarded and the impact, effectiveness, and best practices of those grants. More generally, the study should bring the issue of museums and libraries engaging America’s youth into the public policy forum. IMLS expects that the findings of the study will be disseminated at an IMLS-sponsored conference in the fall of 2006.

As a Federal agency, IMLS must acquire approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for collections of information from the public. Because IMLS has already determined the

type of information to be collected from past grantees, the agency is currently in the process of obtaining OMB approval. The contractor will have an opportunity to comment on and make suggestions for changes to the survey questionnaire. The purpose of the survey is to gather information about youth development programs funded by IMLS, including type, audience, needs, planning, outcomes, goals, strategies, collaboration, evaluation, sustainability, community impact, and dissemination. Such data may be contained in project final reports, but are not in a format that can be easily aggregated, quantified, or compared. It is anticipated that this simple survey (not more than 25 questions) will be undertaken immediately upon awarding of the contract and that the results will be used to select the 15 case studies.

The offeror should prepare a tentative plan for conducting the survey of past grantees, selecting the case studies from among the grants surveyed (including sample criteria), analysis of data, writing up the case studies (with sample format), and for working collaboratively with the planning committee, grantees, and IMLS. The plan should include organization, agenda, and discussion topics for the planning meetings. Administrative data on youth development grants funded by IMLS between 1997 and 2003 will be drawn from databases maintained by IMLS. The survey process should conform to standard surveying protocols. The type of statistical analysis will be determined in consultation with IMLS once the survey instrument has been finalized. The offeror should describe how they would ensure that the response rate would provide statistically valid and reliable information. The offeror should include a detailed cost proposal.

The final report will include executive summary, literature review, analysis of IMLS grants, as well as sections on best practices and lessons learned, and recommendations. In addition to the final narrative report, the contractor will provide a complete technical report that includes all of the data and a full description of the survey methodologies used.

### **Qualifications of personnel**

IMLS seeks a contractor who has at least ten years experience as a researcher, practitioner, or policy analyst working in the formal or informal learning sector as it pertains to museums and libraries. IMLS is interested in candidates that can demonstrate the following:

- experience managing a research project related to youth development programs
- knowledge of and experience working directly with youth development initiatives
- experience working with the evaluation of youth development programs at museums and libraries
- ability to work collaboratively with IMLS, planning committee, and grantees
- experience planning conferences and facilitating discussion with representatives of diverse groups
- strong oral communication, writing, and analytical skills

Offerors should submit no more than three examples of written reports that represent the quality of report writing that will be produced for this project as well as resumes of staff and subcontractors, if applicable.

A single contractor will be selected for this firm, fixed-price contract.

The contractor will file deliverables within the designated time frames, unless alternative arrangements are negotiated with IMLS. Draft documents will be filed in MS Word format and may be submitted electronically. The final narrative report should be delivered in Word, PDF,

and paper formats. The survey data and final technical report will be delivered in appropriate formats to be determined.

## **NATURE OF REQUIRED WORK**

**Task 1.** Meet with key IMLS staff to shape work plan.

**Task 1 Requirement.** Within two weeks of being awarded the contract for this project, the contractor will meet with key IMLS staff. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the goals, activities, and staging of the work, and to provide additional materials and information. The meeting will include discussion of the survey protocol and questionnaire. Within two weeks of the meeting, the contractor will prepare and submit a detailed draft plan and schedule for the work to be accomplished. The plan will set out specific plans for all phases of project implementation, including descriptions of all of the tasks and sub-tasks, target dates, activities, and estimated time frames. The schedule should identify deadlines for completion of each task and deadlines for deliverable to IMLS. The plan will also include understandings about assignment of responsibility, as well as IMLS staff and stakeholders to be involved. A tentative payment schedule may be included in the plan of work. IMLS will provide feedback and recommendations about the draft report outline, work plan, and schedule within one week of receipt.

**Task 2.** Review the draft questionnaire prepared by IMLS and make suggestions for changes and additions.

**Task 2 Requirement.** Contractor will prepare comments on the questionnaire for discussion at the initial meeting with IMLS staff. The questionnaire and survey protocol should be finalized at the initial meeting. The type of statistical analysis to be used should be determined in consultation with IMLS once the survey instrument has been finalized. The contractor will ensure that the survey conforms to standard surveying protocols.

**Task 3.** Conduct survey of approximately 550 IMLS grants (awarded between 1997 and 2003) in youth development.

**Task 3 Requirement.** IMLS will identify grants to include in the survey, will develop a draft of a survey instrument, and will obtain OMB clearance. The contractor will contribute to the final survey instrument, conduct the survey, analyze the results, and report the findings. The contractor will determine the appropriate methods for conducting the survey, the appropriate software for data management, and the type of statistical analysis to be used in consultation with IMLS once the survey instrument has been finalized.

The following grant programs will be included: National Leadership Grants, Learning Opportunities Grants, Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants, and Grants to State Library agencies (for an estimate of the number of grants per program to be included in the survey and additional information on Grants to State Library agencies, see **Appendix A**).

The main purpose of the survey is to gather information about type, audience, needs, planning, outcomes, goals, strategies, collaboration, evaluation, sustainability, community impact, and dissemination. Some of this information is contained in IMLS databases and in final reports, though IMLS may not have information about project activities subsequent to the close of the grant period. IMLS believes that consistent data can be gathered most quickly through a survey.

IMLS will facilitate access to administrative data (e.g., institution, grant program, amount of grant, contact information) in IMLS databases, as well as to final reports. Conducting of survey, data management, and analysis is responsibility of the contractor. Because the selection of case studies depends upon the results of the survey, the survey will have to be undertaken as quickly upon awarding of the contract as possible, be simple, and have a short turnaround time.

**Task 4.** Select 15 exemplary and representative IMLS projects from among the surveyed grants for case studies, review select final grant reports, and conduct phone/e-mail interviews as appropriate.

**Task 4 Requirement.** In consultation with IMLS staff, and subject to IMLS approval, the contractor will select 15 representative and exemplary projects that will make up the case studies. The selection will be made from the preliminary results of the survey, a review of final grant reports, and from interviews with grantees to gather more in-depth information about the grant and its results. The contractor should begin the selection of case studies as soon as the preliminary results of the survey are available.

The criteria for selection of the case studies will include: the program is ongoing; conducted planning and evaluation; can demonstrate broad community impact and measurable outcomes; and engaged in partnership. The grants selected to be included as case studies should be representative: they should include both museums and libraries, and cover a wide spectrum of types, demographics, and geographic representation of youth development projects.

**Task 5.** Conduct a selective literature review on youth development programs at museums and libraries.

**Task 5 Requirement.** The purpose of the literature review is to examine and report on the main trends and issues in the youth services field as it pertains to museums and libraries, with a particular emphasis on evaluation, outcomes, and measures. IMLS is interested in seeing what the status of youth development programs is vis-à-vis social, civic, and educational benefit, evaluation efforts, and partnerships and capacity building.

**Task 6.** Conduct case studies of selected grants.

**Task 6 Requirement.** Case studies of selected grants should include sections on needs assessment, planning and implementation, collaboration, evaluation, impact, outcomes, and lessons learned. The qualitative data for the case studies should derive from the results of the survey, a review of grant reports, from interviews with grantees, and from information shared at the planning meetings. IMLS will approve the format of the case studies. See **Resources** (below) for examples of case studies conducted by other organizations.

**Task 7.** Organize and convene two planning meetings at IMLS offices. Each meeting should be held for a period of 2 days and should allow time for the committee to meet as a group, and for sessions in which from the grantee presentations.

**Task 7 Requirement.** The meetings should be scheduled early enough in the contract period so that the presentations by the grantees can be incorporated into the case studies and that discussion with the planning committee can assist in shaping the content and direction of the report.

The contractor shall organize the meetings both in terms of logistics and content. Logistical planning of the meetings may be sub-contracted. The contractor is responsible for development

of the meeting program and agenda, establishment of discussion issues, facilitation, and for summarizing and providing next steps to complete the case studies and the final report.

The planning committee shall be selected by IMLS and shall be made up of 20 experts in the learning and informal education fields, funders, practitioners, and policy makers. The committee should also include individuals representing state library administrative agencies; state, regional and national library and museum associations, and other relevant agencies and organizations, and a tribal museum/library representative.

The planning meetings shall include two representatives of the grant projects selected for the case studies and members of the planning committee. Grantees shall have the choice of meeting dates, depending on which suits their schedule, with a roughly equal number of grantees attending each meeting. The purpose of the planning meetings is for the selected grantees to present their projects and for the planning committee to listen to the individual experiences and to discuss. The planning committee members should receive briefing materials prior to the meetings.

The role of the planning committee is to provide input to the contractor and assist in determining the content and organization of the report; to provide expertise and commentary from the particular community that each individual represents; identify the main issues in youth development services; provide a broader, national context for the discussion of IMLS grants; and help develop a strategy for the dissemination of results.

**Task 8.** Organize, set format and agenda, and facilitate discussion at planning meetings.

**Task 8 Requirement.** The meetings should be organized to allow time for presentations of grantees, and for ample discussion and question-and-answer between planning committee members and individual grantees, as well as for substantive discussion of best practices, findings, recommendations and policy implications.

The contractor shall facilitate discussion on best practices, findings, recommendations, and policy implications. The contractor and planning committee shall work together to identify operable criteria for best practices in youth development services, allowing that there may be one set of criteria for youth development programs in general, and multiple specific sets of criteria for programs in that focus on particular skills, settings, or demographic groups. The criteria will build on some standard criteria already established (see **Resources**, below). The criteria will be of assistance to the field in general, to IMLS, as well as to prospective grant applicants.

**Task 9.** The study shall result in a final report of approximately 150 pages.

**Task 9 Requirement.** The study shall have the following components: Executive Summary, Literature Review, Methodology, Survey Overview, Case Studies, Best Practices, Summary (summary of issues discussed at planning meetings and placing of findings in national context), and Recommendations (to IMLS, as well as to the broader policy sphere). The contractor shall submit the report in Word and PDF format, and all other data files in the appropriate format. IMLS will design, print, and disseminate hard and electronic copies of the publication.

### **Selection Criteria**

The contract resulting from this solicitation will be awarded to that responsible offeror whose offer, conforming to the solicitation, is determined to be best value and most advantageous to the Government. In order to make this determination, a technical and business evaluation of the

offeror's proposal will be conducted. The offerors' cost proposal will be evaluated separately from the technical and business evaluation to determine cost realism and reasonableness. Costs that are excessively high or low may be considered unrealistic and unreasonable, and may receive no further consideration. The following factors will be evaluated:

### **Past Performance**

The offeror has been responsible for professionally conducted surveys, including data analysis and the development of reports. Some of that past performance experience has been with government programs, library or museum service delivery programs or equivalent. The proposal should include examples of products from similar projects.

### **Personnel**

The staff is competent and experienced in the skills required in this SOW. Resumes of staff and sub-contractors (if any) reflect not only academic qualifications but length and variety of experience in similar tasks and clearly demonstrate relevant training and experience. If subcontractors are proposed, the offeror should provide information to support the qualifications of the subcontractors.

Key personnel demonstrate their role in the project and how they mitigate risk. Key personnel demonstrate that they are available for a successful implementation. The management plan should demonstrate the extent to which outside consultants or specialists will be used and evidence of their availability.

### **Soundness of Approach**

The offeror describes the proposed approach to comply with each of the requirements specified in the SOW. The proposal is consistent with the stated goals and objectives. The proposed approach has a high likelihood of achieving a timely and acceptable performance and is sound. Milestones and/or phasing charts illustrate a logical sequence of proposed events.

### **Completeness of Proposal**

The offeror's proposal is complete, organized, and demonstrates an understanding of the SOW and the requirements, including the requirement for clear, correct, readily understood writing and presentation. This includes demonstrated awareness of objectives and the tasks required to produce the desired product. The offeror is of sufficient size and has adequate resources to support the implementation of the project.

Award will be made to that responsible offeror who can best perform the required work in a manner most advantageous to the Government, considering cost and all of the above factors. In the relationship of technical merit to cost, technical merit is of greater importance.

### **Resources**

S. Bodilly and M.K. Beckett. *Making out-of-school time matter: Evidence for an action agenda*. Santa Monica: RAND, 2005.

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND\\_MG242.sum.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG242.sum.pdf)



C.S. Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice. *Moving Towards Success: Framework for After-School Programs*. Washington, DC: Collaborative Communications Group, 2005.  
<http://www.publicengagement.com/Framework/>

J.S. Eccles and J.A. Gootman, (eds.). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2002.  
<http://www.nap.edu/books/0309072751/html/>

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005*. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.  
<http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/>

Rob Hollister, “The Growth in After-School programs and their impact,” Brookings Institute, Washington, DC, 2003.  
<http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/views/papers/sawhill/20030225.pdf>

James Irvine Foundation, *Museums After School, How Museums are reaching Kids, Partnering with Schools, and Making a Difference*. James Irvine Foundation, San Francisco and Los Angeles, 2005  
[http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/former/Museums\\_After\\_School.pdf](http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/former/Museums_After_School.pdf)

M.W. McLaughlin, *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development*. Washington, DC: Public Education Network, 2000.  
[http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/Publications/support\\_services/communitycounts.pdf](http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/Publications/support_services/communitycounts.pdf)

Search Institute. 40 Developmental Assets.  
<http://www.search-institute.org/>

P.A. Witt and J.L. Crompton, “Best Practices in Youth Development in Public Park and Recreation Settings,” Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 2002.

**Schedule of Activities for this solicitation are as follows:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b># of days</b>
Pre-solicitation opens	Oct. 13	
Solicitation opens	Oct. 29	15
Deadline for questions	Nov. 18	20
Evaluator’s response to questions	Nov. 30	12
Deadline – solicitation closes	Dec. 13	12
Contractor selected by	Jan. 4	20

## Appendix A

### Number of grants in grant programs (1997-2003) to be included in survey:

Grant Program	total # of grants	estimated # of youth programs
National Leadership Grants	459	150
Learning Opportunities Grants	169	60
Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants	74	35
Grants to States*	331 grants to states (x average of 4 exemplary projects/state/year) = 1324	300 exemplary projects

\* Grants to States promote access to learning and information resources for all types of libraries for individuals of all ages. Grants are awarded using a population-based formula. The program priorities are using technology for information sharing between libraries and between libraries and other community services, and making library resources more accessible to urban, rural, or low-income residents, and others who have difficulty using library services. State Libraries use funds to support statewide initiatives and services; they may also distribute funds through competitive competitions or cooperative agreements to public, academic, research, school, and special libraries in their states.

Grants to States differ from discretionary grants in a number of ways that will affect how data is collected. The State Grant program is a formula-driven program based primarily on population and each state library determines how the funds are spent. Some states retain all the funds and use them for state-wide programs, while others disperse the funds to sub-grantees on a competitive basis; grants can range from a few hundred dollars to more than \$100,000. Many projects are related to automation, technology, and basic services that may not be specific to youth. Most states select a number of statewide projects and grants that they consider "exemplary." This group is probably the most likely to yield youth projects with significant results and is probably the group that should be included in the survey.