

Welcome to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. IMLS is charged by law with an important mission. As Congress wrote in our authorizing legislation, “Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens,” and an important role of the Federal government is to promote education and access to information for people of all backgrounds, wherever located. By supporting museums and libraries throughout the nation, IMLS enables these organizations to carry out their public service role of connecting the whole of society with the cultural, artistic, historical, natural, and scientific understandings that constitute our heritage – in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.

In addition to the responsibility of carrying out an important mission, members of the IMLS staff are subject to special ethical duties and responsibilities because of their *service as employees of the Executive Branch of the United States Government*. Executive Order 12674, as modified by Executive Order 12731, sets forth a list of general principles that broadly define the obligations of public service. These principles are codified in the ethics laws and regulations, including the “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Executive Branch Employees,” promulgated by the Office of Government Ethics, and IMLS’s supplemental standards regarding outside employment, found at 5 C.F.R. 7701.101-102, with which all IMLS employees must comply. The principles are as follows:

- Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.
- Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
- Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
- An employee shall not, except pursuant to such reasonable exceptions as are provided by regulation, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.
- Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
- Employees shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
- Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

- Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
- Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
- Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
- Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those -- such as Federal, State, or local taxes - - that are imposed by law.
- Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.
- Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards promulgated pursuant to this order.

Copies of the Ethical Standards of Conduct for Executive Branch Employees and IMLS's Supplement Standards, along with a copy of the most recent Annual Ethics Briefing from the Office of General Counsel, will be provided to you by the Office of Human Resources. Please review these materials and become familiar with your responsibilities under these regulations and Federal conflict of interest laws.

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as implemented by IMLS's Administrative Directive "Ethics Program – Financial Disclosure System," certain IMLS employees will be required to file financial disclosure forms with the Office of General Counsel, both as a new entrant and annually. The government uses these forms to help the designated employees comply with their ethics responsibilities. The Office of Human Resources in consultation with the Office of General Counsel will inform you if you are required to file financial disclosure forms.

If you have any questions regarding how the ethics standards, regulations, and laws apply to you or to a particular situation, please contact one of IMLS's ethics officers for assistance: Nancy Weiss, General Counsel and Designated Agency Ethics Official -- (202) 653-4640; Cam Trowbridge, Deputy General Counsel and Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official -- (202) 653-4675; Andrew Christopher, Assistant General Counsel and Ethics Official -- (202) 653-4712; and Mae Ridges, Ethics Official -- (202) 653-4642.

Additional information on specific ethics issues also is available on the United States Office of Government Ethics web site at www.usoge.gov and on the [IMLS intranet](#). Please remember that it is much easier to get advice before you act, than it is to try to undo the damage after a rule has been broken, and we encourage you to consult with us early and often.

Again, welcome, and congratulations on your new position.

Nancy E. Weiss, General Counsel
Designated Agency Ethics Official

September 10, 2012