

OFFICE OF MUSEUM SERVICES (OMS)

PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING AND PROTECTING OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Support increased funding—or, at a minimum, level funding—for the Office of Museum Services (OMS) within the Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Support Dear Colleague letters being circulated in the House and Senate by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) in support of the Office of Museum Services.

Office of Museum Services Appropriations, FY 2005 to present (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11
Appropriation	30.3	31.8	31.8	31.4	35.0	35.0	TBD

Notes: Figures above are not adjusted for inflation and do not include program administration. Source: IMLS.

BACKGROUND

Dedicated to sustaining a nation of learners, the Office of Museum Services (OMS) awards grants to museums to carry out their public service role. OMS supports all types of museums, including art, history, science, children's, specialized institutions, and living collections such as zoos and aquariums.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) encourages leadership, innovation, and applications of the most current technologies and practices to enhance museum services and supports museums as core providers of learning and in conjunction with schools, families, and communities.

IMLS was reauthorized in 2010, with approval by voice vote in the House and unanimous consent in the Senate. The reauthorization legislation was co-introduced by Sens. Richard Burr (R-NC), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Jack Reed (D-RI). The text can be found in Public Law 111-340.

In the past several years, the demand for museum educational services has grown; collections are at even more risk; and museum staff are in increasing need of professional development in education and technology. More recently, many museums report increased visitation during the economic downturn as families seek activities that are close to home, free or reasonably priced, educational, and safe.

TALKING POINTS

OMS advances the role of museums in lifelong learning and as key partners in education.

- The educational role of museums is at the core of their service to the public.
- Museums provide more than 18 million instructional hours for educational programs and spend more than \$2.2 billion on education each year.
- In museums, children find the spark that inspires them to become scientists, artists, political leaders, historians, and entrepreneurs.
- Visitors of all ages engage with art, history, science, and the natural world regardless of the size of their communities or their socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.
- Museums often tailor educational programs in coordination with state and local curriculum standards in subjects including math, science, art, literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, geography, and social studies.

OMS provides assistance for care of collections.

- IMLS grants are awarded for collections care, management, and security.
- The 2005 *Heritage Health Index* published by Heritage Preservation in partnership with IMLS, concluded that immediate action is needed to prevent the loss of millions of artifacts that are in need of conservation treatment.

ABOUT MUSEUMS

America's more than 17,500 museums attract more than one billion visitors annually. Their collections consist of hundreds of millions of objects, artifacts, and living specimens in the fields of art, history, science, and specialized disciplines, needing constant care and protection. They hold these collections on behalf of the public. More than one-third (35 percent) of U.S. museums are always free to the public, and more than 97 percent of the rest offer discounts, special fee schedules, or free admission days, according to American Association of Museums' 2009 Museum Financial Information Survey.

Museums provide trustworthy information on complex artistic, historical, and scientific issues in an era in which faulty, incomplete, or biased information is rampant. The credibility of museums stems, in part, from the solid foundation research and collections provide for exhibitions and educational programs. Teachers, students, and researchers participate in formal programs through online collections and exhibitions, and increasingly through social networking.

Museums foster discussion and engagement around complex issues in contemporary society. Increasingly they provide a venue both for scholarly research and interpretation as well as for interactive activities connecting members both of the general public and specific audiences. They are offering a host of activities including lectures; performances; discussions; art-making; scientific experiments; and web-based exhibitions, conversations, and blogs.

Museums provide extensive services to America's teachers and students. Their programs nearly always include professional development workshops and courses for teachers and curriculum-based educational visits; in some cases, museums develop intensive partnerships with individual schools in which students undertake multiple visits, museum staff co-writes curriculum and lesson plans with teachers; and, in some cases, museums actually take responsibility for running charter schools. Art museums alone reach approximately 35,000 public, private, charter, parochial, magnet, and home schools in nearly every congressional district.