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GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I. IMS PROGRAMS

Question: What is the Institute of Museum Services?

Answer: The IMS is a Federal grant-making agency that supports activities to expand and improve museum services.

Question: What types of museums does it fund?

Answer: IMS supports all types of museums: aquariums, arboretums and botanical gardens, art museums, children's and junior museums, general museums, historic houses and sites, history museums, nature centers, natural history and anthropology museums, planetariums, science and technology centers, specialized museums, and zoological parks.

Question: What types of grants are provided by IMS?

Answer: IMS currently funds three programs for which museums are eligible. (A fourth program, the Professional Services Program, is open only to museum associations. It funds projects that provide services to the museum community.)

- o The General Operating Support program provides grants that can be used for all museum operations. The maximum grant is currently \$75,000 or 10 percent of the museums operating budget, whichever is less.
- o The Conservation Project Support program provides matching grants for a variety of types of projects related to conserving museums' collections. Grants generally do not exceed \$25,000 unless they have broad applicability.
- o The Museum Assessment Program has two components: it funds an overall assessment of the museum's operations (MAP), or an assessment of the museum's collection-related policies and procedures (MAPII). The grant amount is \$1,400.

II. GRANT-MAKING PROCEDURES

Question: What is the chance that I will get a grant?

Answer: Under the Museum Assessment Program (MAP), all eligible applicants receive grants on a first-come, first-served basis.

Under the General Operating Support (GOS) and Conservation Project Support (CPS) programs, the limited funds available mean that not all high quality applications can be funded. Your application will be reviewed by museum professionals who are experienced in the fields it addresses. The results of their review determine who receives funding.

Obviously, your ability to get a GOS or CPS grant will depend on the quality of your application and the degree to which it addresses the criteria provided in the IMS guidelines. However, the competition in the GOS program is much more demanding than in the CPS program. About 1,300 GOS applications are received each year; we are able to fund only about 30 percent. Close to 450 applications are received in CPS, and 50 to 60 percent are funded.

Question: My museum is very small, how can it compete with larger museums?

Answer: The size of the museum is not a factor in awarding grants. The standards that are applied to your museum's application will be those that are appropriate for its type and size.

Question: How can I be sure my application is as good as possible?

Answer: Contact the IMS Program Office. Our staff are always happy to help you.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Question: How can I determine whether my museum is eligible for IMS grants?

Answer: To be eligible for IMS support, a museum must meet the following criteria:

- o Be organized as a public or private non-profit institution and exist on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes; and
- o Care for and own or use tangible objects, whether animate or inanimate, and exhibit these objects on a regular basis through facilities which it owns or operates; and
- o Have at least one professional staff member or the full-time equivalent, whether paid or unpaid, whose primary responsibility is the acquisition, care, or exhibition to the public of objects owned or used by the museum; and
- o Be open and providing museum services to the general public (an institution which exhibits objects to the general public for at least 120 days a year fulfills this requirement); and
- o Be located in one of the fifty States of the Union, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

More information on eligibility requirements is available in IMS regulations and application guidelines. Or you can call our Program Office staff.

IV. FURTHER INFORMATION

Question: How do I learn more?

Answer: Either call or write the IMS Program Office:

Institute of Museum Services
Room 609
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506

Phone: 202-786-0539