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Museum Services Act (1984): Report 06

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INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM SERVICES POLICY
Statement of Purpose (From P.L. 94-462)

"It is the purpose of this title to encourage and assist museums in their educational role, in conjunction with formal systems of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education and with programs of nonformal education for all age groups; to assist museums in modernizing their methods and facilities so that they may be better able to conserve our cultural, historic, and scientific heritage; and to ease the financial burden borne by museums as a result of their increasing use by the public."

Policy

It shall be the policy of the Institute of Museum Services (IMS) to:

- (1) Provide institutional support to museums to help maintain or improve their services to the public.
- (2) Promote the opportunities for all Americans to enjoy the treasures and educational experiences of museums, regardless of race, sex, religion, income, education, age, or handicap.
- (3) Foster the conservation of our heritage in history, the arts and science as represented by the collections and materials entrusted to our nation's museums.
- (4) Encourage efficient management, improvement of income, high conservation standards, and excellence in the quality of educational programs, exhibitions, scholarship, and curatorial activities by museums.

Policy Implementation

The Institute will implement its policies in the following manner:

- (1) The Institute will provide funds for operational and special project support and services to museums. The major portion of funds will be for general operating support. Funds also will be provided for exemplary, exploratory, and innovative projects.*

* The Institute is empowered by law to make grants to museums to defray operating expenses, and to modernize their methods and facilities. The National Museum Services Board voted against capital improvement grants and construction costs until substantially more funding is available.

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- (2) The Institute will provide support for museums of all types, including aquariums, art museums, botanical gardens, children's museums, historic houses, history museums, natural history museums, nature centers, planetariums, science-technology centers, zoos, and specialized museums.
- (3) The Institute will maintain discretionary rather than formula or entitlement funding.
- (4) The Institute will stress the quality of an applicant institution and its programs when awarding grants. Specific criteria will be used to evaluate applications.
- (5) The Institute will develop and maintain a uniform nationwide museum data base for use by grantees and the field. The system should be compatible with other Federal agencies to the extent possible.
- (6) The Institute will actively seek coordination and cooperation with other Federal agencies now involved in museum support programs. The Institute will seek to avoid duplication of functions and programs available through other Federal agencies.
- (7) The Institute will maintain liaison with other Federal agencies that affect museums.

The following two items could be combined.

- (8) The Institute will encourage maintenance or improvement in developing institutions with one-year grants.
- (9) The Institute will provide multi-year funding to encourage responsible fiscal management.