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Museum Services Act (1984): Speech 02

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Institute of Museum Services

News Release

A Federal agency serving the nation's museums

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20506
(202) 786-0536

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Contact: Mamie Bittner
(202) 786-0536

IMS Requests Comments on Proposed Change to the General Operating Support Program

The National Museum Services Board has decided to consider changing the way General Operating Support (GOS) grants are distributed. This proposed change was developed after reviewing the results of an independent evaluation of the General Operating Support program that analyzed the responses of hundreds of museum professionals which were collected through a survey and invitation for comments. **This proposed change would not affect museums that submitted GOS applications for the fiscal year 1992 competition last November, 1991.**

The General Operating Support program makes grants totalling over \$20 million each year to all types and sizes of museums that are judged by their peers to provide high quality museum services. Currently the award amount is equal to 10% of the museum's prior year operating budget to a maximum of \$75,000. The proposed change would extend the grant-cycle from one to two years and increase the amount of the award to 15% of the museum's budget to a maximum of \$112,500. All awards would be for a two year period. IMS would continue to offer a competition annually, but a museum that received a grant in one year could not compete in the following year.

The proposal would:

- increase, over time, the number of museums that will receive GOS awards,
- allow museums to spend funds over a two-year period,
- allow grantees to forego completing a grant application form each year.

The General Operating Support program has received annual funding increases; however, because the average grant size also increases each year,

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only about 30% of the applicants are awarded grants in each competition. Many high quality museums do not receive grants in fact, museum professionals who review GOS applications report that 90% of the applicants deserve grants. With a group of successful museums not applying each year, other museums of high quality may be able to move up in the competition.

Also, museum professionals who responded to the evaluation reported dissatisfaction because they are unable to predict from one year to the next whether they will receive GOS funds. Receiving grants for a two-year period would enable them to better manage the museum's operating budget.

Finally, museums that receive a grant in one year would not have to spend the time and effort to complete the comprehensive GOS application in the following year.

The federal regulatory process requires that IMS invite and consider all comments before deciding whether to implement this change. If you would like to comment on this proposed change please contact Susannah Simpson Kent, Director of the Institute of Museum Services, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20506, before April 10, 1992.

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