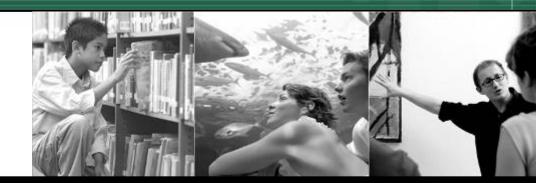
Public Trust, Public Value, Tough Issues: IMLS and **Contemporary Museum Practice**

Creating a Nation of Learners





Marsha Semmel, Acting Director, IMLS **INTERCOM 2010** November 2010

What Is IMLS?

- Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is a U.S. federal government agency.
- The Institute's mission is to help build the capacity of libraries and museums:

To connect people to information and ideas

• The Institute is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums.



Federal Support for Culture

- "Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens. It must therefore foster and support a form of education, and access to the arts and the humanities, designed to make people of all backgrounds and wherever located masters of their technology and not its unthinking servants."
- "The arts and the humanities reflect the high place accorded by the American people to the nation's rich cultural heritage and to the fostering of mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups."



U.S. Museums and Libraries

- 17,500+ Museums
 - Art
 - History
 - Science
 - Youth
 - Aquaria
 - Planetaria
 - Arboreta
 - Zoos
 - Botanical Gardens

- 123,000 Libraries
 - -Public
 - -Academic
 - -School
 - -Research
 - -Archives





IMLS

- Grants to eligible organizations, principally museums, libraries, universities
- Initiatives: Connecting to Collections; Museums,
 Libraries, & 21st Century Skills
- Publications
- Research
- Data collection



Goals

- IMLS has three key goals:
 - Sustain cultural heritage and knowledge;
 - Enhance learning and spur innovation; and
 - Support professional development of library and museum paid and unpaid staff



Decision-Making Process

- Peer Review
- Staff analysis and recommendation
- Director with final decision-making authority

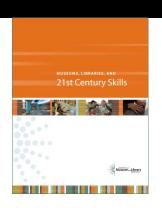


Criteria for support

- Needs assessment: why important to museum's strategic plan and mission?
- What institutional and community needs will the project fulfill?
- Project design, schedule, team, budget
- Evaluation: what will success look like?
- Sustainability



Museums, Libraries & 21st Century Skills



Museums, Libraries, and 21st
 Century Skills Report



Self-Assessment Tool



 Online Self-Assessment Tool: www.imls21stcenturyskills.org

The 21st Century Museum/Library Shift

| 20 th Century Museum/Library | 21 st Century Museum/Library |
|---|--|
| Primarily content driven | Combination of audience and content driven |
| Mostly tangible objects | Tangible and digital objects |
| One-way | Multi-directional |
| Focus on presentation and display | Focus on audience engagement, experiences |
| Acts independently | Acts in highly collaborative partnerships |
| Located in community | Embedded in community |
| Learning outcomes assumed, implied | Learning outcomes purposeful |



John Cotton Dana, 1920

 "All public institutions [and museums are not exceptions to this rule] should give returns for their cost; and those returns should be in good degree positive, definite, visible, measurable....A museum is good only insofar as it is of use...."

-- From *The New Museum: Selected Writings by John Cotton Dana*, edited by Stephen E. Weil (Newark, NJ: The Newark Museum Association and the American Association of Museums, 1999).



Museums in Today's World

- Three examples:
 - Race
 - Climate Change
 - Immigration



Understanding Race and Human Variation

Science Museum of Minnesota

- RACE: Are We So Different?: National traveling exhibit
- Theatre production: Voices
- Talking Circle Room, forums, community
 - conversations
- Educators Guide
- New partnerships
- Teacher workshop





Immigration

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

- Build the capacity of 12 immigration history museums to facilitate dialogue around community immigration issues
- Professional development for museum staff



-- Photo courtesy of www.sitesofco nscience.org



Immigration

- Angel Island Immigration
 Station
- Arab American National Museum
- Chicago Cultural Alliance
- Ellis Island Immigration
 Station
- Jane Addams Hull-House Museum
- Japanese American
 National Museum

- Levine Museum of the New South
- Lowell National Historical Park
- Lower East Side Tenement
 Museum
- New Americans Museum
- University of Texas El Paso
- Wing Luke Asian Museum



Educating About Climate Change

New England Aquarium

- National Aquarium in Baltimore, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Aquarium of the Pacific, Birch Aquarium at Scripps, and the Vancouver Aquarium
- Goals
 - Expand capacity to to address ocean change
 - Enable the interpreters to increase public awareness





-- Photo courtesy of www.neaq.org

Stephen E. Weil: "A Success/Failure Matrix for Museums"

- "If [a museum] fails to provide a social benefit, it wastes society's resources. To produce a social outcome—to provide a positive benefit to its targeted audiences—must be such an organization's first responsibility."
- Museums must "not merely do things right." They must "do the right things."



IMLS E-communications



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- > IMLS on the Road

briefs

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Services
Tribe
Tribe Institute of Museum and
Library Services is an
Independent Federal grantmaking agency dedicated to
creating strong libraries and
museums that connect people
to information and ideas. Learn
more about the Institute.

Grants.gov

Applicants for all programs are required to use Grants.gov.

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Primary Source

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Featured Project Profile

Speaking Our Language: Preserving the Saginaw Chippewa Dialect

Only a handful of people speak the Ojibway dialect of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. To preserve the language, the tribal museum embarked on a project to digitally record fluent speakers, teach children to speak the language, and produce quarterly community immersion events. The efforts are bearing fruit, as the tribal government is now



taking aggressive steps to promote and preserve its native tongue Read more.

Director's Message



There's a lot for libraries and IMLS to love in the Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan, released March 16th by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Threaded through the hefty document is the FCC's recognition of libraries as community anchor

institutions that can help provide high-capacity broadband connections and build digital literacy skills of people in communities across the nation.

The broadband plan, which sets an ambitious agenda for connecting all parts of the nation, is "our generation's infrastructure challenge," said FCC chairman Julius Genachovski. "It is as important as electricity and highways were for past generations." Libraries, which have already traveled a long way down the road to meet these challenges, stand ready to do more.

According to the broadband plan, the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) – which spells out how state libraries spend federal funding –

www.imls.gov

 Primary Source: Free monthly e-mail update, sent to over 9,000 subscribers.

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