

**Statement of Robin L. Dale, Deputy Director for Library Services, Institute of Museum  
and Library Services  
Before the Committee on House Administration**

**Transforming GPO for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond: Part 4 – Federal Depository Library  
Program**

**October 11, 2017**

Good morning Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee. On behalf of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Director Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew, I want to thank you for this invitation to submit testimony before the House Committee on Administration as you examine the modernization of the Government Publishing Office (GPO).

I first would like to take a moment to give you a brief overview of IMLS, where I serve as Deputy Director for Library Services. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the Federal agency with primary responsibility for ensuring the availability of museum, library, and information services to meet the essential needs of the people of the United States. IMLS is an independent grant-making agency and the primary source of Federal support for the nation's approximately 120,000 libraries and 35,000 museums and related organizations. Of the \$231 million appropriated to IMLS in Fiscal Year 2017, \$215.3 million was directly awarded to eligible institutions to support museum, library, and information services. The agency carries out its mission through grant-making, research and data collection, and leveraging our investments through strategic Federal, state, and local partnerships.

IMLS was created with the passage of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 which, as amended, authorizes the agency to award financial assistance, collect data, form strategic partnerships, and advise the President, Congress, and other Federal agencies on museum, library, and information services. The agency consolidates Federal library and information services programs dating back to 1956, and Federal museum programs dating back to 1976.

IMLS ensures critical access to and development of library services throughout the United States, its territories, and Native American tribes, pursuant to the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), 20 U.S.C. 9121 *et seq.* IMLS also supports critical library services initiatives that facilitate innovation and workforce development through competitive grant programs.

**Library Grants to States**

IMLS's Library Grants to States Program, 20 U.S.C. 9121 *et seq.*, is the largest source of Federal funding support for library services in the United States. It is designed to stimulate the use of state and local funds for library improvement throughout the nation. It encourages states to implement comprehensive programs to meet the library services needs of their residents by establishing "State Library Administrative Agencies" (SLAAs) charged by law with the extension and development of library services. Fifty-nine state agencies now ensure that library services reach individuals in every state and territory.

To receive Federal support from IMLS, an SLAA must submit a plan that details library services goals for a five-year period and describes activities that will be supported with the assistance of Federal funds. Each state is then responsible for leveraging non-Federal, state and local funds to match the Federal funds it receives to increase the impact of the investment. In addition, each state must sustain a “Maintenance of Effort” level of state spending on libraries and library programs to ensure that Federal funds enhance and do not supplant state funds.

SLAAs may use the funds to support statewide initiatives and services, and they may also distribute the funds through competitive sub-awards to, or cooperative agreements with, public, academic, research, school, tribal or special libraries or consortia (for-profit and Federal libraries are not eligible). Each year, over 1,500 Grants to States projects carry out statutory purposes set out in 20 U.S.C. 9141, ensuring the availability of library services by providing access to electronic databases, computer instruction, homework centers, digitization of special collections, access to e-books and adaptive technology, and tools supporting workforce development. A priority of the program is to address the needs of underserved communities and persons having difficulty using a library. More than 10 percent of grant funds in recent years have supported library services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or have other disabilities. For example, IMLS grants fund Mississippi’s Talking Books Services and the Libraries for the Blind and Physically-Handicapped.

IMLS funds also support libraries' provision of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs designed to meet the needs of their communities. Library users receive hands on instruction in science and technology to which they would normally not have access. These program supports career development as well as robust inquiry skills essential for all citizens to lead productive and informed lives. For example, in Pennsylvania, IMLS funds have supported MAKER education.

At the end of each five-year period, SLAAs evaluate their library programs based on their original five-year plan. These plans and evaluations are the foundation for improving practice and delivering services. Each SLAA must file annual financial and programmatic reports.

## **Library Competitive Grants**

IMLS’s statutory responsibilities for grant-making in support of library service also includes a range of competitive grant programs, including:

- **Grants to Native American Tribes, including Federally-recognized tribes, as well as Alaska native villages, regional corporations, and village corporations**, and to organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians to enable access and resources to library services pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 9161;
- **National Leadership Grants** National Leadership Grants to enhance the quality of library services nationwide, which includes supporting the innovation and expertise development libraries need for digitizing, archiving, and maintaining necessary informational infrastructure pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 9162; and
- **Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Grant Program** to develop and enhance the curricula, doctoral education, and professional development to help build a diverse and qualified librarian workforce pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 9165.

One example of these types of grants is a recent award made to the Free Library of Philadelphia, in partnership with nine community agencies, which is developing a model for how public libraries can fully integrate their work with the broader systems of workforce development and adult education. The work of the partners is centered in the Paschalville neighborhood in Southwest Philadelphia, which is characterized by extreme poverty, high unemployment, and low levels of educational attainment.

### **IMLS Grants Administration**

IMLS handles all aspects of the grant administration, applying proper controls to ensure equity, fairness and fiscal management and oversight. For example, IMLS's peer-review process is central to its grant-making function. Professionals with experience and expertise in a vast array of library disciplines and practices review all proposals from eligible institutions. Peer reviewers help to ensure that the financial assistance provided for projects are appropriate to the applicant's capacity and the scale of the overall program, as well as the defined project goals. Prior to the awarding of a grant, IMLS staff also conducts cost analyses of these projects. IMLS monitors and oversees grantees, requiring that they maintain fiscal control and employ accounting procedures that ensure proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds. In terms of grants process, management, and oversight, our agency has been recognized as a model for transparency, results-based goals and priority setting, as well as for responsiveness and spending discipline. IMLS's grants programs are also informed by working with the field to understand how to best assess impact and reach; for example, through final reports and the agency's library data collections.

IMLS engages in interagency arrangements that have leveraged our grant-making authority. When establishing the National Museum of African American History and Culture through Public Law 108-184, Congress authorized IMLS to establish grant programs to build the capacity of museums of African American History and Culture in consultation with the Director of the Museum. 20 U.S.C. 80r. The Department of the Interior leverages IMLS's peer review and grant-making expertise to award and manage library and museum-related grants for collections care. 54 U.S.C. 308902. The agency is authorized to engage in interagency coordination and collaboration with agencies and offices throughout the government. 20 U.S.C. 9103.

IMLS initiatives, developed in partnership with non-profit organizations, also help the agency enable libraries to meet the needs of the public. IMLS's *Community Salute Initiative*, for example, augments the capacity of libraries to meet the unique and critical needs of the nation's more than 22 million U.S. veterans and military families. Libraries serve veterans by assisting them in building skills, offering healing resources, and by providing access to employment or training opportunities. Our work to date has examined how libraries are responding to the needs of veterans and their families and identified potential new approaches to provide better and more integrated community-based services for this important constituency. These approaches are grounded in community development and engagement practices as well as insights from community and service providers for veterans and their families.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to again thank Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and the Committee Members for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of IMLS. I look forward to your questions.