



## Issues at a Glance

Museums play a key role in education, job creation, tourism, economic development, historic preservation, environmental conservation, and advancing scientific literacy and global competitiveness. The museum community—which includes aquariums, art museums, children’s museums, historic sites, history museums, maritime museums, military museums, natural history museums, planetariums, presidential libraries, public gardens, science centers, and zoos—has worked together to develop this federal policy agenda.

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### **Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Office of Museum Services Funding**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary federal agency responsible for helping museums connect people to information and ideas. Its Office of Museum Services (OMS) awards grants to museums to support educating students, preserving and digitizing collections, and engaging communities. Grants are awarded in every state, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly-rated grant applications it receives. IMLS has been regularly reauthorized by Congress with broad support, most recently in 2010 with a funding authorization of \$38.6 million for the Office of Museum Services. IMLS received \$231 million in FY 2017 appropriations, of which just \$31.7 million went to the Office of Museum Services.

- We support funding of \$38.6 million in FY 2019 for the IMLS Office of Museum Services and urge members of Congress to sign the Gillibrand and Tonko/Lance/Slaughter/McKinley letters in support of robust funding for OMS.

### **Institute of Museum and Library Services Reauthorization**

IMLS has been regularly reauthorized by Congress with broad support. In December 2017, Senators Reed (D-RI), Cochran (R-MS), Collins (R-ME), Murkowski (R-AK), and Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced S. 2271, The Museum and Library Services Act of 2017. The legislation contains a number of provisions specifically supported by the museum field: bolstering the agency’s research and data collection, maintaining an emphasis on state and regional collaboration, expanding interagency partnerships, and highlighting the importance of access to high-quality museum services for every American. It also authorizes a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum Professional Program, for the training of museum professionals, especially those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.

- We urge Congress to enact S. 2271, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2017, which would reauthorize the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

### **Charitable Giving**

Charitable giving is the lifeblood of museums of all sizes and disciplines; it accounts for more than one-third of their operating funds. We support efforts to extend and expand incentives for charitable giving. Limitations on these incentives could have a chilling effect on the ability of museums to attract donations needed to serve their communities and protect their collections.



- We urge Congress to enact a universal charitable deduction so that all Americans can deduct their donations to charity, regardless of whether or not they itemize their taxes. We oppose proposals to restrict the deductibility of gifts of property, as well as proposals to weaken current tax law provisions protecting nonprofit nonpartisanship. We support allowing artists to deduct the fair market value of donated works, as specified in the Artist-Museum Partnership Act.

## **Economy and Jobs**

Museums contribute \$50 billion to the national economy per year, support more than 726,000 jobs, and bolster a large tourism industry in local communities. This economic activity generates \$12 billion in tax revenue for every level of government. Unfortunately, in 2009, Congress excluded zoos and aquariums from competing for any funds made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and considered excluding all museums and other cultural institutions as well. In 2013, the federal government shutdown forced federally operated museums to close their doors for 16 days. These actions by Congress ignore the economic impact of museums in communities nationwide.

- We urge Congress to amend the Anti-Deficiency Act to allow for the continuity of public access to our nation's public lands and federally operated museums in the event of a funding gap.
- We oppose any effort to restrict the ability of zoos, aquariums or any other type of museum to compete for federal funding.
- We urge Congress to enact the CREATE Act (S. 661 and H.R. 1649) to support artists and entrepreneurs while bolstering the creative economy.

## **Elementary and Secondary Education**

Museums are key education providers, educating students, providing professional development to teachers, and helping teach the local curriculum. Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the "Every Student Succeeds Act") provides states with significantly more flexibility in setting and meeting performance targets, which could make it easier for schools to work with museums.

- We support efforts to promote school-museum partnerships (including museum schools), require greater collaboration between the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, fully fund federal education programs in which museums participate, and fully implement the "well-rounded education" provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act, which include the many subject areas in which museums help teach the curriculum.

## **Higher Education**

Median earnings for adults with a bachelor's degree are approximately 64 percent higher than those with just a high school diploma, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Yet, student loan balances constitute the largest source of debt for American households. While many museum jobs require bachelor's or even advanced degrees, nonprofit museum professionals often do not earn as much as they might in the private sector. Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) is a vital tool in allowing talented and highly trained employees from all socioeconomic backgrounds to work at organizations that make an impact in their community.



- We support efforts to improve the affordability and accessibility of higher education for all students. We urge Congress to preserve Public Service Loan Forgiveness and sufficient income-driven repayment options for federal student loans.

### **National Endowment for the Humanities**

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provides direct grants to museums, universities, archives, and libraries in support of research, education, and preservation. Due to high demand and extremely limited funding, NEH was only able to fund 16 percent of the proposals it received in 2016. It also provides annual grants to state humanities councils in every state and U.S. territory. NEH received \$149.8 million in FY 2017 appropriations.

- We urge Congress to provide at least \$155 million for NEH in FY 2019.

### **National Endowment for the Arts**

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) works to bring the arts to every community in America, including rural areas, military bases, and urban centers. It provides grants to all types of arts organizations—including museums—to exhibit, preserve, and interpret visual materials. The agency's federal role is uniquely valuable: no other funder, public or private, funds the arts in every state and the U.S. territories. NEA also distributes roughly forty percent of its grant funds to state arts agencies for re-granting. NEA received \$149.8 million in FY 2017 appropriations.

- We urge Congress to provide at least \$155 million for NEA in FY 2019.

### **STEM Education**

Millions of Americans of all ages and backgrounds learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) each year by visiting museums, science centers, public gardens, zoos, and aquariums. The National Science Foundation (NSF) supports these efforts through numerous grants and directorates, including the Directorate for Education and Human Resources' Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) program. AISL supports research, development, infrastructure, and capacity building for STEM learning outside formal school settings. Programs at other science-related agencies—including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and National Institutes of Health (NIH)—are also critical to helping museums attract, inspire, and educate the current and future STEM workforce. The FY 2017 appropriations legislation provided \$62.5 million for AISL and continued funding for the NOAA and NIH programs in which museums participate, but did not explicitly include funding for NASA's Competitive Program for Science Museums, Planetariums, and NASA Visitor Centers (CP4SMPVC).

- We urge Congress to fully restore funding for the AISL program to \$65 million—the FY 2010 funding level—and to continue to support informal STEM programs at NASA, NOAA, and NIH.



## **Historic Preservation**

In addition to preserving and protecting more than 1 billion objects, many museums are historic themselves, and their collections are critical to telling our collective national story. Historic sites and historic preservation efforts not only protect our national heritage, they are also economic engines and job creators in the thousands of communities they serve. Minimal government funding helps to leverage significant private support, often through the Historic Tax Credit. The FY 2017 appropriations provided \$47.9 million to State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), \$10.5 million to Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and \$500,000 for grants to underserved communities—all through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). It also provided an additional \$13 million from the HPF to document, interpret, and preserve the stories and sites associated with the Civil Rights movement. Save America's Treasures (SAT) received \$5 million in FY 2017 through the HPF, the first funding it has received since FY 2010. Preserve America has not been funded since FY 2010.

- We urge Congress to support FY 2019 funding of at least \$55 million for SHPOs, \$15 million for THPOs, \$25 million for civil rights sites, to restore funding of \$30 million for Save America's Treasures and \$4.6 million for Preserve America, and to continue to support the Historic Tax Credit.

## **Public Diplomacy and the Protection of Cultural Property**

As welcoming and trusted community anchors, museums are perfectly positioned to help build cross-cultural relationships, which are enhanced by collections that span the world across centuries. In recent years, irreplaceable cultural property has been lost in places like Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Mali, and Afghanistan. Protecting this property—both directly and by working through international organizations—is a vital part of United States diplomacy, showing the respect of the United States for other cultures and the common heritage of humanity. American museums and the conservation professionals who work with them are some of the world's best at protecting and caring for cultural property.

- We urge Congress to pursue measures that protect cultural property around the world, and to consider museums and conservation professionals as part of the solution to these issues.

## **The Multinational Species Conservation Funds and Wildlife Conservation**

In addition to educating the public about wildlife, accredited zoos and aquariums also protect endangered species in their collections and across their natural habitat. The Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF) are targeted investments in global priority species, such as African and Asian elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, great apes, and sea turtles. The MSCF program has helped to sustain wildlife populations by controlling poaching, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and protecting essential habitat globally. Despite its modest funding level, this program has a significant impact because it consistently leverages three or four times its federal investment in matching funds from corporations, conservation groups, and national governments.

- We urge Congress to support funding for the Multinational Species Conservation Funds and to pass H.R. 227, which would reauthorize the MSCF programs through FY 2022.
- The museum community, including botanical gardens, strongly supports efforts to protect native wildlife, including declining pollinator populations.