The Heritage Health Index is the first comprehensive survey ever conducted of the condition and preservation needs of our nation’s collections. The project was conceived and implemented by the national nonprofit organization Heritage Preservation in partnership with the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Over 100 leading collections professionals helped develop the survey, which was completed by the staffs of archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and scientific research organizations, large and small, from every U.S. state and territory.

Over 4.8 Billion Artifacts are held in public trust by more than 30,000 libraries, museums, and scientific research collections, large and small, from every U.S. state and territory. These artifacts embody the richness and diversity of our heritage and include rare books and manuscripts, photographs, documents, sound recordings, moving images, digital materials, art, historic and ethnographic objects, archaeological artifacts, and natural science specimens.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. IMLS fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning by supporting the nation’s 15,000 museums and 122,000 libraries. IMLS also encourages partnerships to expand the educational benefit of libraries and museums.

Heritage Preservation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our nation’s heritage. Since its founding in 1973, its members have included libraries, museums, archives, historic preservation organizations, historic societies, conservation organizations, and other professional groups concerned with saving the past for the future. Programs include the Conservation Assessment Program, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, and Save Outdoor Sculpture! For information, write Heritage Preservation at 1012 14th Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005, call 202-335-0600 or visit www.heritagepreservation.org.
American museums, libraries, archives, historical societies, and scientific research organizations are visited 2.5 billion times a year.

Their collections teach and inspire and are vital to sustaining a well-educated and connected citizenry, a thriving tourist industry, and a wealth of knowledge to enrich and enlighten our civilization. They are a public trust that must be protected for future generations.

The Heritage Health Index found that artifacts in America’s collections are at risk and require immediate attention and care, including:

- **4.7 million** works of art
- **13.5 million** historic objects—from flags and quilts to Presidential china and Pueblo pottery
- **153 million** photographs
- **189 million** natural science specimens
- **270 million** rare and unique books, periodicals, and scrapbooks.

Providing a safe environment and proper care for collections is a fundamental responsibility of all institutions and individuals who care about our heritage.

These collections can survive the twenty-first century and continue to enrich the lives of Americans if action is taken now:

- Institutions must give priority to providing **safe conditions** for the collections they hold in trust.
- Every collecting institution must develop an **emergency plan** to protect its collections.
- Every institution must assign **responsibility** for caring for collections to members of its staff.
- Individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector must assume responsibility for providing the support that will allow these collections to survive.
U.S. Collections Are Exposed to Hazards

The Heritage Health Index found that collections are at risk of damage because of improper environmental conditions and storage. An improper environment can cause irreparable damage.

- 26% of collecting institutions have no environmental controls to protect their collections from damaging effects of temperature, humidity, and light.
- 59% of collecting institutions have had their collections damaged by light.
- 53% of collecting institutions have had their collections damaged by moisture.

High humidity promotes mold growth, corrosion, and degradation, while lack of humidity can cause drying and cracking. Fluctuations between extremes can cause warping, buckling, and flaking.

All kinds of light, especially ultraviolet rays from natural and artificial sources, can cause fading and disintegration.

High temperatures can accelerate deterioration.

Pollutants and dust are abrasive and can accelerate harmful chemical reactions.

Pests can infest and destroy many objects.

The Heritage Health Index found that the most urgent preservation need at U.S. collecting institutions is environmental control.

---

Could city life cause the demise of mighty elephants?

At the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, an uncontrolled environment has damaged the hides of the museum's famous elephants. The museum hopes to raise funds to create a stable environment that will protect these impressive but fragile creatures from the harm of polluted air, dust, and fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity.
In the mid-twentieth century in Vermillion, South Dakota, photographers from the University of South Dakota recorded important events and daily life, such as these images of jazz legend Chet Baker’s visit to Sioux Falls and of the editor of the school newspaper at work.

This treasure trove of over 300,000 negatives, slides, and prints was forgotten and sat for years in proximity to photographic chemicals, leaving it in an advanced state of deterioration and creating a fire hazard. The University’s I. D. Weeks Library, with a team of student workers, is placing the collection in proper storage, keeping this irreplaceable record of Great Plains history accessible for future generations.
As safe as it seems to pack collections away, storage facilities can present unanticipated hazards. Many materials are stored in basements, attics, or warehouses that do not have proper environmental controls or are at risk for flooding or overheating. Fragile items are often crammed into drawers or crowded onto shelves where condition problems go undetected and retrieval is risky. Improper containers leach acids and chemicals into their contents, slowly destroying them.

Collections must be kept in a proper environment, whether they are exhibited in a gallery, available to researchers in a reading room, or held in storage. Providing a safe environment for these fragile objects is a fundamental responsibility of every institution. Capital projects should give priority to protecting collections.

Outbreaks of silverfish and book lice confronted the University of Connecticut’s Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, which houses internationally significant collections of preserved plants, insects, birds, fish, mammals, and parasites. Buildings lacked adequate climate control, appropriate storage space, and sufficient security, and a major steam leak threatened to destroy collections. A recently completed state-of-the-art facility features sealed cases, temperature and humidity control, and space for new specimens as the collection grows.

The Heritage Health Index found that only 44% of institutions have sufficient security measures in place for their collections and that 26% report having no or inadequate protection.

A unique object lost through theft or vandalism represents a loss of knowledge for future generations. Appropriate security methods vary with an institution’s size and type, ranging from an advanced system of intrusion detection and cameras to staffing a gallery with security personnel to placing magnetic strips in library books.

Perilous Conditions Plague Storage Spaces

59% of institutions have the majority of their collections stored in areas too small to accommodate them safely and appropriately.

65% of our nation’s collecting institutions have experienced damage to collections due to improper storage.

As safe as it seems to pack collections away, storage facilities can present unanticipated hazards. Many materials are stored in basements, attics, or warehouses that do not have proper environmental controls or are at risk for flooding or overheating. Fragile items are often crammed into drawers or crowded onto shelves where condition problems go undetected and retrieval is risky. Improper containers leach acids and chemicals into their contents, slowly destroying them.

Collections must be kept in a proper environment, whether they are exhibited in a gallery, available to researchers in a reading room, or held in storage. Providing a safe environment for these fragile objects is a fundamental responsibility of every institution. Capital projects should give priority to protecting collections.

The last will and testament of Frederick Douglass is among the original documents held in the District of Columbia Office of Public Records. If the collection is to survive, conditions must improve; the archive is understaffed, has an inadequate budget, and is in a cramped facility lacking environmental controls.

Security
Film, video, and sound recordings can transport us back in time to experience stirring performances, historic events, or even the bird call of a now endangered species. These materials are susceptible to chemical and physical decay, and lack of working machinery to play them can render them obsolete. The condition of almost half the 86 million film reels, videos, DVDs, records, cassettes, CDs, and MP3s in public collections is unknown, leaving them in probable jeopardy.

Digital collections on disks, tapes, CDs, and DVDs contain such materials as online publications, government records, interactive art, and photographs. Institutions have taken responsibility for preserving more than 9 million such physical objects, and the number is growing daily. Extremes of temperature and humidity, magnetic fields, and electrical currents could cause a total loss of data on these media. Digital materials present unique challenges, since content created even a few years ago may become unusable if the correct hardware or software is not available. Moving these materials to formats that can be read by current technology is today’s solution, but the field is changing rapidly. The condition of over half the digital materials in U.S. collections is unknown.
Collections Are Vulnerable to Swift and Catastrophic Loss

80% of collecting institutions do not have an emergency plan that includes collections, with staff trained to carry it out.

2.6 billion items of historic, cultural, and scientific significance are not protected by an emergency plan and are at risk should a disaster strike their institutions.

All collections are at risk for catastrophic loss due to disasters ranging from hurricanes and tornadoes to floods from broken water pipes. Institutions that prepare for emergencies dramatically improve the chances that their collections will survive.

Every collecting institution should have an emergency preparedness plan that includes its collections, and staff should be trained to implement the plan.

Numerous resources are available to help institutions prepare written disaster plans that outline who to contact, what to save, and how to train staff to coordinate response and recovery in an emergency. Institutions must use these guidelines or secure professional services to cover the basics of emergency planning NOW. Modest commitments of time and resources devoted to preparedness will prove to be enormously cost effective in the event of a disaster.

A broken hot water pipe flowed unchecked for almost 24 hours in March 2004 at an off-site storage facility housing archaeological materials from 9,500 BCE through the twentieth century. The collection is held by The Archaeological Research Collections of the New Mexico Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Everything stored on the lowest shelves, approximately 1,400 boxes of collections, was immersed in water.

When today’s archaeologists explore the museum and university collections so devotedly assembled by their predecessors, they find hundreds of millions of objects and fragments spanning the millennia. Yet 20% of these remnants of past lives need additional care if they are to survive the century.
Three nitrate motion picture films ignited a fire in a storage unit at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture in Spokane, Washington, in June 2005. These flammable materials were correctly housed in cold storage, but a malfunction caused the temperature to rise to more than 100°F. Two boxes containing about 300 nitrate-based photographs depicting life in eastern Washington over the last century were destroyed. Response to the fire was hampered by the lack of an updated disaster plan for collections in the museum’s new building.

Institutions with NO EMERGENCY PLAN with Staff Trained to Carry It Out

- Archives: 70%
- Libraries: 78%
- Historical Societies: 92%
- Museums: 78%
- Archaeological Repositories/Scientific Collections: 86%

When Hurricane Katrina roared ashore in August 2005, the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi, sustained serious damage.

Because of an emergency plan, the museum’s collection of pottery by artist George Ohr weathered the storm safely in a secure building and was then evacuated to Mobile, Alabama. The museum’s nineteenth-century historic frame house, Pleasant Reed, used to interpret African-American life in the early twentieth century, was washed away by the storm surge—only its chimney remains. Work is now underway to salvage library materials, including African-American history texts, hymnals, and photographs that have sustained water and mold damage.
Collections Require Attention and Expertise

80% of institutions do not have paid staff dedicated to collections care.

71% of institutions need additional training and expertise for staff caring for their collections.

Trained professionals are essential to the survival of our collected heritage. An experienced conservator can provide expertise on preventing deterioration and knows the proper way to repair a damaged object.

Not every institution has the size or resources to have a professional conservator on staff, but other solutions are available.

Staff and volunteers can avail themselves of opportunities that exist for training, although there is a need for more of these programs. Institutions can also utilize the knowledge and experience of conservators in private practice and at regional conservation centers.

Every institution must have staff assigned to such basics of collections care as monitoring conditions and ensuring safe storage, transport, and display.

39% of institutions have a significant backlog in cataloging their collections.

70% of institutions do not have a current assessment of the condition of their collections.

Due in part to inadequate staffing levels, basic information about the content and condition of collections is missing in many museums, libraries, and archives.

If no one knows what is in a collection, there is a good chance that at least some of the collection will suffer from neglect. Decision-makers must make cataloging and condition surveys a high priority.

Twelve thousand pages of Dutch Colonial records, dated from 1638 to 1670, were among the few documents to escape the disastrous New York State Capitol fire of 1911. In 2000, highly trained paper conservators reinforced the charred edges, ensuring that the documents are stable for use by researchers at the New York State Archives.

This flag was presented to Abraham Lincoln on April 11, 1865, three days before his assassination. At the request of the American Textile History Museum, conservators cleaned the flag and documented areas of damage and weakness. Previous repairs that had disfigured the flag were replaced by unobtrusive state-of-the-art conservation techniques.
A flash flood carrying mud and debris sent a seven-foot wall of water and mud through the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, in Honolulu in October 2004. The force of the flood knocked out walls, broke windows, moved fully loaded map cases, and toppled library stacks. Approximately 110,000 maps were destroyed and 90,000 aerial photographs were severely damaged. Because the library had a disaster plan that included its collections, such rarities as this prized 1589 map, Maris Pacifici by Abraham Ortelius, were saved.

If stacked together, the nation’s archival records, manuscripts, and maps alone would extend from the Mississippi to Maui and back. One quarter of these fragile paper items need preservation attention.
In 1999, the Missouri State Archives entered into a partnership with the St. Louis Circuit Court to organize, conserve, and microfilm more than 1.3 million important court documents. The papers include records relating to Dred Scott, whose petition for freedom from slavery became a landmark Supreme Court decision. They have now been preserved and can be displayed to visitors, such as U.S. Representative Maxine Waters and her grandson.

- The nation’s historic collections are of seemingly infinite variety: sets of Presidential china and Pueblo earthenware; George Washington’s dentures and a plastic toothbrush sent on an Apollo mission; Civil War regimental flags and toy tin soldiers. The Heritage Health Index found 13.5 million of the 48 million historic objects in public collections to be in danger.

- Of the more than 700 million photographs being cared for in the U.S., nearly 153 million photographs, from daguerreotypes to Polaroids, need improved care.

- There are 1.7 billion rare and unique books, periodicals, and scrapbooks in U.S. collections; 16% need improved care and conditions.

- Fifty-two million paper items including stamps, currency, and printed ephemera, such as postcards and baseball cards, are at risk.

- Nearly a quarter of all the 21 million paintings, sculptures, and works of decorative art in U.S. collections need preservation.

- Americans have always collected plant, animal, and geological life in all its incredible diversity. Today, more than 800 million specimens reside in government agencies, university departments, and museums. Nearly a quarter are in need of care.

Did You Know?

- Most Institutions Care for Multiple Types of Collections:
  - Books and bound volumes
  - Unbound sheets
  - Photographic collections
  - Moving image collections
  - Recorded sound collections
  - Digital material collections
  - Art objects
  - Historic and ethnographic objects
  - Archaeological collections
  - Natural science specimens
Millions of objects are in urgent need of treatment or attention by a skilled, professional conservator if they are to remain available for exhibition and research. Some may not survive without help:

- **12.6 million** black and white photographic prints
- **2.5 million** scrapbooks, albums, and pamphlets
- **2.4 million** botanical specimens
- **500,000** works of art on paper
- **475,000** textiles
- **95,000** pieces of historic furniture

The Library at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign preserves manuscripts, letters, books, and photographs that belonged to American writer Carl Sandburg. Within this extensive collection are materials on acidic paper that have been saved from rapid deterioration by conservation treatment.

The artifacts at the Marion County Historical Society in Fairmont, West Virginia, represent the town’s long and varied history: a compass used to survey colonial territory, Civil War artifacts, and postcards depicting the 1907 Fairmont Coal Company mining disaster, the worst in U.S. history. Like many small museums and historical societies across the nation, the museum struggles with imperfect environmental conditions and has never fully cataloged or assessed its collection. Many items were damaged before they entered the collection. Even with limited funding, the museum’s staff and volunteers are tackling these projects so their hometown heritage will be preserved.
Preservation Lacks Stable Funding

Fluctuating budgets can be as dangerous to artifacts as fluctuating humidity.

**77%** of institutions **do not specifically allocate funds for preservation** in their budgets.

Only **13%** of institutions **have access to endowed funds for preservation**.

Preservation requires persistence and consistency. Preventive measures keep small problems from becoming expensive ones. Every dollar spent on a safe environment will be repaid many times over as an institution avoids the need for costly treatments. Unfortunately, when funds are scarce, too many institutions defer collections maintenance and leave future generations to suffer the consequences.

Private donors and public officials at all levels must realize that ensuring a future for the nation’s collected heritage is a responsibility they share with those who oversee our museums, libraries, and archives. Stable funding must be provided for both the staffing and capital improvements that proper collections care requires.

Care of collections need not be a drain on resources. Exposure to conservation can engage the public, encourage participation in an institution, and attract financial support.

Decaying fabric threatens the survival of flags from Civil War regiments and North Vietnam and banners from the Nuremberg rallies at the Soldiers and Sailors National Military Museum and Memorial in Pittsburgh. The collection suffered from an improper environment, inadequate storage, and lack of attention by trained professionals. Since the museum’s incorporation as a nonprofit in 2000, it has taken steps to address past neglect. While storage has been improved and professional staff has been hired, the museum still lacks funds for conservation treatment and proper housing, which cost from $5,000 to $15,000 per flag. Time is of the essence—this silk Civil War regiment flag, intact only 20 years ago, has now disintegrated.

Annual Budgets for Conservation/Preservation - most recently completed fiscal year -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than $50,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000 - $50,000</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $3,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Includes funds for staffing, supplies, equipment, surveys, treatment, preservation reformatting, commercial binding, consultants, contractors, and other preservation costs.

Use of Income from Endowed Funds for Conservation/Preservation - last three years -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use endowment income</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not use endowment income/ do not have endowment income</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conservation projects have been conducted in the galleries of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts so the public can learn what is involved in conservation. When Giovanni Francesco Barbieri Guercino’s *Erminia and the Shepherds*, a massive seventeenth-century masterwork, needed treatment, the gallery became the laboratory. For eight weeks conservators engaged and educated museum visitors about treatment decisions and process, broadcasting their progress with a live Webcam and daily diary entries on the museum’s Web site.

The City of Boston’s archives, dating from 1630 to the present, do not have the consistent preservation and management essential for collections of such historic value. A small number of professional staff working in temporary facilities have cared for some of the most important segments of the archives. However, much remains in City departments, some in inappropriate storage in attics, closets, basements, and garages. Planning for a permanent repository is soon to begin, but tight City budgets mean that adequate human and environmental resources at the new archives building are still not assured.

When people go behind the scenes, they gain a better appreciation of what collecting institutions do.

The Brooklyn Museum’s Luce Visible Storage Study Center and the Logan Museum of Anthropology at Beloit College are examples of places where storage facilities are visible to visitors. When the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery reopen in 2006 after an extensive renovation, visitors will be able to view the Lunder Conservation Center, offering a behind-the-scenes look at how art is restored. When the museum conducted a survey and focus groups to gauge the interests of the public, a visit to a conservation laboratory was the highest-rated attraction.
In St. Louis, Washington University Libraries’ Legacy of Books program encourages donations for the preservation of its collection of nearly 4 million books and other materials. For a gift of as little as $50, the library pledges to preserve a book, and donors are thanked with a special bookplate.

Apollo-era space suits withstood the rigors of travel in space but were disintegrating after several decades on earth. In 2000, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum embarked on a project to preserve its large collection of space suits. Smithsonian staff, museum specialists, industry experts, scientists, and volunteers worked together to learn how to stabilize, exhibit, and store the suits without causing damage. The guidelines developed by this project will be shared with museums that hold similar artifacts.

A public trust is at risk...

Support to improve care of collections must come from individuals, foundations, and businesses, as well as public sources. The types of support can vary widely and could include a bond issue for a new storage facility, membership in a Friends of Conservation group, a major gift to endow a conservator’s position, or a line item in a town budget. New funding programs that give priority to basic collections issues will provide institutions with the support they need to take action.

Federal agencies such as the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the National Science Foundation, and Save America’s Treasures at the National Park Service funded many of the projects featured in this publication. These agencies have focused national attention on the need to care for collections. With their assistance, new approaches to conservation have been tested and proven effective.

Everyone who cares about the future of our heritage has a role to play in ensuring that adequate resources are available. Present and future generations depend on what we do now.
What next? Make collections a priority

If you are alarmed at the condition of America's collections, there are ways you can make a difference:

Learn what institutions important to you are doing to care for their collections.

Designate your funding for collections care. Whether you are an individual donating your own funds, a foundation executive initiating new programs, or a government official developing a budget, give institutions the resources required to save collections.

Plan for emergencies. Insist that any institution you support or work for have an emergency preparedness plan that includes collections and staff trained to implement it.

Spread the word. Most people assume that collections are safe. Tell your colleagues and other decision-makers about the dangers collections face. Share this report with people whose decisions affect collections. You can request extra copies by e-mailing survey@heritagepreservation.org.

Visit www.heritagehealthindex.org where you will find:

- The full Heritage Health Index report, with more data from the survey and a review of methodology
- More information about the projects described in this publication
- Information about resources for staff training and emergency planning
- A list of participating institutions.
The Heritage Health Index is the first comprehensive survey ever conducted of the condition and preservation needs of our nation’s collections. The project was conceived and implemented by the nonprofit Heritage Preservation in partnership with the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. Over 100 leading collections professionals helped develop the survey, which was completed by the staffs of archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and scientific research organizations, large and small, from every U.S. state and territory.

Over 4.8 Billion Artifacts are held in public trust by more than 30,000 libraries, museums, and scientific research collections, and archaeological repositories in the United States. These artifacts embody the richness and diversity of our heritage and include rare books and manuscripts, photographs, documents, sound recordings, moving images, digital materials, art, historic and ethnographic objects, archaeological artifacts, and natural science specimens.

These artifacts are held in public trust by more than 30,000 libraries, museums, and scientific research organizations, large and small, from every U.S. state and territory. This publication presents a summary of the survey results. To read the full report, learn more about the survey methodology, and view the list of institutions that participated in the survey, visit www.heritagehealthindex.org.

Heritage Preservation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our nation’s heritage. Since its founding in 1973, its mission has included libraries, museums, archives, historic preservation organizations, historic and ethnographic organizations, and other professional groups concerned with saving the past for the future. Programs include the Conservation Assessment Program, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, and Save Outdoor Sculpture! For information, write Heritage Preservation at 1024 14th Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005; call 202-335-0800 or visit www.heritagepreservation.org.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. IMLS fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning by supporting the nation’s 15,000 museums and 122,000 libraries. IMLS also encourages partnerships to expand the educational benefit of libraries and museums.

Over the last two decades, IMLS has made 54,098 grants for conservation totaling $73,735,807 through its Conservation Project Support grants and Conservation Assessment Program. For more information, including grant applications, contact IMLS at 1024 14th Street NW, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20005; 202-653-5100; or visit www.imls.gov.

Heritage Preservation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our nation’s heritage. Since its founding in 1973, its mission has included libraries, museums, archives, historic preservation organizations, historic and ethnographic organizations, and other professional groups concerned with saving the past for the future. Programs include the Conservation Assessment Program, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, and Save Outdoor Sculpture! For information, write Heritage Preservation at 1024 14th Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005; call 202-335-0800 or visit www.heritagepreservation.org.

Over 4.8 Billion Artifacts are held in public trust by more than 30,000 libraries, museums, and scientific research organizations, large and small, from every U.S. state and territory. This publication presents a summary of the survey results. To read the full report, learn more about the survey methodology, and view the list of institutions that participated in the survey, visit www.heritagehealthindex.org.

Heritage Preservation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our nation’s heritage. Since its founding in 1973, its mission has included libraries, museums, archives, historic preservation organizations, historic and ethnographic organizations, and other professional groups concerned with saving the past for the future. Programs include the Conservation Assessment Program, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, and Save Outdoor Sculpture! For information, write Heritage Preservation at 1024 14th Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005; call 202-335-0800 or visit www.heritagepreservation.org.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. IMLS fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning by supporting the nation’s 15,000 museums and 122,000 libraries. IMLS also encourages partnerships to expand the educational benefit of libraries and museums.

Over the last two decades, IMLS has made 54,098 grants for conservation totaling $73,735,807 through its Conservation Project Support grants and Conservation Assessment Program. For more information, including grant applications, contact IMLS at 1024 14th Street NW, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20005; 202-653-5100; or visit www.imls.gov.