Fact Sheet: The National Medal for Museum and Library Service

- The National Medal is now in its 25th year.
- The National Medal for Museum and Library Service, presented annually by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), is the United States’ highest honor for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities.
- Recipient institutions receive the National Medal at a ceremony held in Washington, D.C., and a $5,000 award in recognition of their extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions. This year’s ceremony will be held on June 12.
- After the ceremony, StoryCorps—a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans—visits each institution to provide an opportunity for community members to share stories of ways the winning institutions have affected their lives. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.
- IMLS highlights each finalist in the Share Your Story campaign over the six weeks leading up to the announcement of the winners with photos and stories from their communities on their Facebook and Twitter pages.

National Medal Selection Process

- IMLS recognizes up to 30 National Medal for Museum and Library Service finalists and typically selects 10 institutions as winners.
- Members of the National Museum and Library Services Board, the presidentially-appointed policy advisory board for IMLS, review the nominations and make recommendations to the Institute Director who selects the winners.
- All types of museums, from anthropological to zoological, fine art to folk art, urban and rural, large and small, are eligible for this award.
- Public or private nonprofit libraries of all sizes and types are eligible to receive this award.
- Any individual may nominate a museum and/or library in the United States and its territories for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service.
- To learn more about nominating, please visit the IMLS website.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

- IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the museums and libraries of America.
- IMLS advances, supports, and empowers America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development.
- IMLS’s vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.
- Through grants and information resources, IMLS annually reaches thousands of museums and libraries in various ways, from providing technical assistance for small institutions to establishing national and replicable models, from strengthening state networks to supporting professional development.