



Cleveland Museum of Natural History Receives IMLS Grant for Rare Books & Fine Art Collections

CLEVELAND—October 15, 2025—The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded the Cleveland Museum of Natural History a \$160,880 grant for its Rare Book and Fine Arts rehousing project. The Museum will use the funds to support the second phase of a multi-year initiative to improve the conservation and accessibility of its Rare Books and Fine Art collections.

Once complete, this project will contribute to the Museum's ultimate goal of increasing public access to these valuable collections, which document natural diversity over time and illustrate the intrinsic connections between nature, art, and human culture. The project will allow collections management staff to improve stewardship of these collections by undertaking a wall-to-wall inventory—cataloging items in a new collections management system, replacing aging art racking, and rehousing rare books. A portion of the [Rare Books Collection](#) will be rehoused in new, climate-controlled shelving in the Museum's Library, where they will be more readily accessible for public exhibits and programming.

"This project is an important step in revitalizing our Rare Book and Fine Arts collections," said Sonia Winner, President & CEO of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. "By enhancing care and visibility for these remarkable works, we're not only preserving history—we're creating new opportunities for learning, inspiration, and connection. We're grateful to IMLS for supporting this work."

The Museum's [Fine Arts Collection](#) consists of over 7,000 objects including paintings, sculptures, prints, textiles, and photographs spanning the 15th through the late 20th century. The Rare Books Collection, comprised of 1,829 volumes, includes illustrated works valued for their historic and aesthetic value, including first edition natural history plates from the *Description de l'Égypte* commissioned by Napoleon Bonaparte and a bound first edition set of John James Audubon's [Birds of America](#).

"Rehousing and cataloging our Rare Books and Fine Arts collection is a key component in increasing access to and use of our collection overall," said Dr. Meghan Strong, the Museum's Director of



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Collections. “This builds on the Museum’s investment in a new on-site storage facility, upgraded HVAC system, and emphasis on the highest standards of care.”

The IMLS Museums for America grants support projects that strengthen the ability of individual museums to benefit the public by providing high-quality, inclusive learning experiences, maximizing resources to address community needs through partnerships and collaborations, and preserving and providing access to the collections entrusted to their care. This marks the fourth IMLS grant the Museum has received in just four years, with previous grants supporting the Museum’s [Hamann-Todd Non-Human Primate Collection](#), We Are All Connected Exhibit, and [SLAM Dunk initiative](#) with East Cleveland City Schools.

About the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History illuminates the world around us and inspires visitors to engage with the natural forces that shape their lives. Since its founding in 1920, the Museum has pioneered scientific research to advance knowledge across diverse fields of study and used its outstanding collections, which encompass millions of artifacts and specimens, to deepen the public’s understanding of the dynamic connections between humans and nature. Through its Natural Areas Program, the Museum stewards more than 12,500 acres of protected ecosystems across northern Ohio. A community gathering place, educational center, and research institution, the Museum is a vital resource that serves Cleveland and the nation. For more information, visit CMNH.org.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

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