**Tips on Writing Letters to Congress**

Communicating with your elected officials about your museum’s programs and activities is an important way to build long-term relationships with your legislators. Whenever you receive federal funds (or participate in a federally supported program such as the Museum Assessment Program), it is important to send a thank you note-as you do for other grants and donations-so that elected officials are aware that their constituents are benefiting from federal programs for museums.

 **Writing the Letter**

* Check out our [sample letter here](http://aamcommunity.org/map/resources/promotion-toolkit/sample-Congress-letter/) or use the special template letter available electronically on our [Contact Congress](http://www.congressweb.com/aam) page.
* Your purpose for writing should be stated in the **first paragraph**. Start the letter off by stating your acceptance into the MAP program and with a thank you for MAP being made available through IMLS support.
* The most effective letters are those that have a personal touch and tell the story of your museum and its impact in the community.
* If you’ve participated in MAP before, show how MAP benefited your community and museum and why the new MAP is needed (if this is a ReMAP, excerpt ReMAP answers from your application).
* Consider sending a second [letter](http://www.congressweb.com/AAM/32) about the impact of MAP after completing the MAP program.
* [Identify](http://www.congressweb.com/aam/legislators) your federal and state elected officials.
* Address letters this way:
	+ For letters to **U.S. Senators:** The Honorable (full name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, Dear Senator (last name)
	+ For letters to **U.S. Representatives:** The Honorable (full name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, Dear Representative (last name)
* We’ve simplified all of this by providing a special template [letter](http://www.congressweb.com/AAM/18) for Museum Assessment Program Participants and a [letter](http://www.congressweb.com/AAM/32) for sharing the impact of MAP.

For help advocating for your museum, or to receive AAM’s alerts and updates, please contact Ember Farber, Director, Advocacy 202-218-7703 or efarber@aam-us.org.