



IMLS Funding Cuts

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-EXTERNAL EMAIL-

Dear Library Colleagues:

On March 14, President Trump issued an executive order mandating the elimination of seven agencies, including one that funds libraries around the country – the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The executive order, which we believe violates the law, will have detrimental consequences for libraries and the services they offer to Illinoisans across the state. IMLS provides vital grants, resources and initiatives that help our libraries better serve young people, families and communities.

Scores of organizations, including the American Library Association (ALA), the Illinois Library Association (ILA) and other state and local libraries nationwide have spoken out against the executive order, which jeopardizes free educational, reading and literacy programs, internet for those without home access, homework and tutoring assistance and other resources for children, students and adults.

In 2024, the total amount awarded by IMLS to museums, libraries, and archives was \$266.7 million — or just 0.003 percent of the federal budget, and 75 cents per capita.

This executive order runs counter to our values as a society and democracy and will come at a high cost to Illinois families living in underserved and rural areas who don't have access to books and rely on interlibrary sharing agreements as a lifeline for learning.

Impact on Illinois:

Of the \$180 million that the IMLS's Grants to States Program provides to state libraries, the Illinois State Library received \$5.7 million in the fiscal year 2025 – the sixth highest amount of any state. These funds help sustain the operations of all public, school, academic and special libraries and provide essential program funding in targeted areas, particularly underserved areas of the state.

Allocation of Funding:

Statewide Services:

\$2.5 million is allocated to the Illinois Heartland and Reaching Across Illinois Library Systems (RAILS) under the System Area & Per Capita Grant Program. This funding is specifically targeted to facilitate the delivery of books and library materials to support interlibrary loan services. Last fiscal year, 11

million items were transferred among more than 1,700 public, school, academic, and special libraries in Illinois, which has one of the largest interlibrary sharing programs in the nation. This program is critical to supporting libraries that are dependent on borrowing materials from districts with larger collections and more financial resources.

\$1.8 million for a subscription to OCLC's WorldCat Discovery/FirstSearch services. More than 1,000 libraries in Illinois use OCLC services to support their cataloging, inter-library loan program, and information needs. During fiscal year 2024, Illinois libraries conducted nearly 1 million citation searches to serve their library patrons and support their library operations.

\$166,000 is used by the Illinois Heartland Library System to support the iLEAD online training and leadership portal for all public library trustees in the State.

\$100,000 for the "Illinois Libraries Present" initiative, which allows over 200 public libraries to afford high-quality online programming for their patrons that would be cost-prohibitive for single libraries to provide on their own.

Individual Library Grants:

\$526,000 for Project Next Generation, which educates at-risk students and bridges the digital divide, providing access to computers, software, and technologies.

\$420,000 awarded to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) for the purchase of library materials and services at 28 state corrections facilities in the state aimed at reducing recidivism.

Library Workforce Development:

\$111,000 to support continuing education and professional development through grants to the Illinois Library Association that provides library leadership training for public library directors.

State Library Operations & Programs:

\$80,000 for the State Library's print subscriptions to support reference services and facilitate interlibrary loan/article requests received from other libraries throughout the state.

Additional Impacts:

The IMLS budget also supports funding for the National Leadership Grants for Libraries and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, named after the former First Lady. In its most recent allocations for these purposes, IMLS granted **\$2.4 million** to individual libraries, academic institutions, and library consortia in Illinois. These include:

- The American Library Association's collaboration with the Chicago Public Library, the Delaware Association, and the Charleston County Public Library to develop resources that will support literacy services in libraries.
- The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the Public Library Association's effort to train libraries to better illustrate their impact and value through data-driven tools.

Call to Action:

Raise Awareness: Librarians and library administrators must make their governing bodies aware of this situation. Public library trustees, school board members, academic trustees, and even corporate

officers of our special libraries must fully understand the potential impact on IMLS services to libraries, their patrons and their communities. Library leadership must work to ensure these essential services are sustained for the communities they serve.

Make Your Voices Heard: Congressional members must hear the many voices of the library community, including the influential voices in our libraries' governing bodies. Joining with the efforts of the American Library Association and the Illinois Library Association, we urge everyone to reach out and urge lawmakers to restore this critical funding.

Congressional contact information can be found here – [Find Your Members in the U.S. Congress | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

Closing:

Make no mistake, stripping these vital resources threatens the sustainability of libraries and amounts to a disinvestment in an educated and informed society.

As State Librarian, my administration is committed in doing everything possible to protect these essential agencies and prevent any efforts to dismantle and defund them.

The importance of our libraries, librarians and library workers extends far beyond the bookshelf. You play an indispensable role in the communities you serve, fostering lifelong learning and offering invaluable resources, despite these challenging times. You will always have my support.

If you have any questions, please email our State Library Director Greg McCormick at ISLServices@ilsos.gov.

Sincerely,

Alexi Giannoulas
Secretary of State & State Librarian

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.