

Tracking the Trump Administration's Attacks on Libraries

A roundup of the latest executive challenges and efforts to fight back

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Since President Trump retook office on January 20, libraries and librarianship have been assaulted via executive orders and other actions.

While the legality of many of these actions is still being decided by the courts, librarians, archivists, and other information professionals have been working through the confusion to preserve access to information. Below are several examples of the challenges libraries have faced over the past two months and the ways in which librarians and advocates have responded—and continue to respond.

Latest Library Links

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/links/>

3h On April 7, ALA released its *State of America's Libraries 2025* report, an annual snapshot of library trends, as part of National Library Week taking place April 6–12. As in recent years, the 2025 report documented censorship in libraries from the previous year. In 2024, ALA recorded 821 attempts to censor library books and other materials across all library types. This is a decrease from the 1,247 attempts that were recorded in 2023 but still the third-highest number since ALA began tracking library censorship in 1990.



[AL: The Scoop, Apr. 8](#)

6h Natalie Fahmy and David Rees write: "[Ohio] House Finance



AL Live



<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al-live/>



<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al-live/>

Institute of Museum and Library Services threatened

(<http://americanlibrariesbuyersguide.com/>).

On March 14, President Trump signed an [executive order](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/>), calling for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to eliminate “non-statutory components and functions.” While it is unclear which of IMLS’s functions will be determined statutory or nonstatutory, [IMLS staff jobs and funding for library programs](https://www.ala.org/faq-executive-order-targeting-impls) (<https://www.ala.org/faq-executive-order-targeting-impls>) across the country are at risk. An American Library Association (ALA) [statement and call to action](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/ala-responds-to-white-house-assault-on-impls/) (<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/ala-responds-to-white-house-assault-on-impls/>) released on March 15 opposes the order, highlights many ways that “libraries of all types translate 0.003% of the federal budget into programs and services used in more than 1.2 billion in-person patron visits every year, and many more virtual visits.”

[White House, Mar. 14;](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/>) [ALA, Mar. 18;](https://www.ala.org/faq-executive-order-targeting-impls) (<https://www.ala.org/faq-executive-order-targeting-impls>) [AL: The Scoop, Mar. 16](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/ala-responds-to-white-house-assault-on-impls/) (<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/ala-responds-to-white-house-assault-on-impls/>)

Previously available public data deleted

Starting in late January 2025, [thousands](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/upshot/trump-government-websites-missing-pages.html) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/upshot/trump-government-websites-missing-pages.html>) of federal web pages have been [altered or removed](https://www.wired.com/story/us-government-websites-are-disappearing-in-real-time/) (<https://www.wired.com/story/us-government-websites-are-disappearing-in-real-time/>), preventing public access to information on a range of topics related to science, health, equity, and foreign assistance programs, among others. In response, information professionals are [banding together](https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-data-hoarders-resisting-trumps-purge) (<https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-data-hoarders-resisting-trumps-purge>) to preserve the affected information and provide alternative access. [The Data Rescue Project](https://www.datarescueproject.org/about-data-rescue-project/) (<https://www.datarescueproject.org/about-data-rescue-project/>), maintained by a consortium of three data organizations, is the clearinghouse for these efforts, tracking who is rescuing which data and where it can be found now. The project’s website also highlights [libraries across the country](https://www.datarescueproject.org/libraries-supporting-data-rescue/) (<https://www.datarescueproject.org/libraries-supporting-data-rescue/>) providing patrons with information on how to access

federal data and help preserve it.

The New York Times, Feb. 2;

([https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/upshot/trump-](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/upshot/trump-government-websites-missing-pages.html)

[government-websites-missing-pages.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/upshot/trump-government-websites-missing-pages.html)) *Wired*, Feb. 1;

([https://www.wired.com/story/us-government-websites-are-](https://www.wired.com/story/us-government-websites-are-disappearing-in-real-time/)

[disappearing-in-real-time/](https://www.wired.com/story/us-government-websites-are-disappearing-in-real-time/)) *The New Yorker*, Mar. 14;

([https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-data-hoarders-](https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-data-hoarders-resisting-trumps-purge)

[resisting-trumps-purge](https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-data-hoarders-resisting-trumps-purge)) *The Data Rescue Project*

(<https://www.datarescueproject.org/about-data-rescue-project/>).

Employees fired from federal libraries and the National Archives

There is no official tally yet of federal library workers who have lost

jobs from Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) cuts, but

probationary federal employees—those who have been at their jobs

less than two years—have been fired at multiple federally operated

presidential libraries. At the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library

and Museum in Boston, firings [forced the library to close](https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/02/19/jfk-library-reopens-free-federal-layoff-trump)

([https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/02/19/jfk-library-reopens-free-](https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/02/19/jfk-library-reopens-free-federal-layoff-trump)

[federal-layoff-trump](https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/02/19/jfk-library-reopens-free-federal-layoff-trump)) for a day. Firings

([https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/federal-employee-cuts-](https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/federal-employee-cuts-impact-operations-at-presidential-libraries-museums)

[impact-operations-at-presidential-libraries-museums](https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/federal-employee-cuts-impact-operations-at-presidential-libraries-museums)) have also hit

the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library Museum and

Boyhood Home in Abilene, Kansas, and the Harry S. Truman

Presidential Library and Museum in Independence, Missouri.

At the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA),

Colleen Shogan, former archivist of the United States—a position

that oversees government records—was [fired on February 7](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-fires-archivist-of-the-united-states-colleen-shogan/)

([https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-fires-archivist-of-the-](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-fires-archivist-of-the-united-states-colleen-shogan/)

[united-states-colleen-shogan/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-fires-archivist-of-the-united-states-colleen-shogan/)) by President Trump. US Deputy

Archivist William “Jay” Bosanko [subsequently chose to retire](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deputy-archivist-of-the-u-s-william-bosanko-to-retire/)

([https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deputy-archivist-of-the-u-s-](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deputy-archivist-of-the-u-s-william-bosanko-to-retire/)

[william-bosanko-to-retire/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deputy-archivist-of-the-u-s-william-bosanko-to-retire/)). ALA signed a [joint letter](https://freedom.press/the-classifieds/national-archives-and-government-transparency-under-threat/)

([https://freedom.press/the-classifieds/national-archives-and-](https://freedom.press/the-classifieds/national-archives-and-government-transparency-under-threat/)

[government-transparency-under-threat/](https://freedom.press/the-classifieds/national-archives-and-government-transparency-under-threat/)) to the White House on

February 11 outlining the threats these staffing changes pose to the

collective memory of the country and Americans’ ability to access

their history. The Society of American Archivists also issued a

[statement](https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-condemns-widespread-firing-of-archivists-and-cultural-heritage-workers) ([https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-condemns-](https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-condemns-widespread-firing-of-archivists-and-cultural-heritage-workers)

[widespread-firing-of-archivists-and-cultural-heritage-workers](https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-condemns-widespread-firing-of-archivists-and-cultural-heritage-workers))

condemning the firing at NARA and employees at other cultural

institutions.

WBUR (Boston), Feb. 19;

(<https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/02/19/jfk-library-reopens-free-federal-layoff-trump>) *KSHB-TV* (Kansas City, Mo.), Feb. 18; (<https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/federal-employee-cuts-impact-operations-at-presidential-libraries-museums>) *CBS News*, Feb. 7; (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-fires-archivist-of-the-united-states-colleen-shogan/>) *CBS News*, Feb. 15; (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deputy-archivist-of-the-u-s-william-bosanko-to-retire/>) Freedom of the Press Foundation, Feb. 12; (<https://freedom.press/the-classifieds/national-archives-and-government-transparency-under-threat/>) Society of American Archivists, Feb. 25 (<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-condemns-widespread-firing-of-archivists-and-cultural-heritage-workers>)

Books removed from school libraries on military bases

As a result of executive orders aimed at removing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) materials from federal spaces, school libraries on military bases have been told to remove for review books the Department of Defense describes (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/13/pentagon-schools-closed-libraries-trump>) as “potentially related to gender ideology or discriminatory equity ideology topics.” Books flagged for review (<https://pen.org/julianne-moore-freckleface-strawberry/>) include *No Truth Without Ruth*, a biographical picture book about Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, written by Kathleen Krull and illustrated by Nancy Zhang; *Freckleface Strawberry*, a picture book by actor Julianne Moore, and *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* by Vice President J. D. Vance. On February 2, ALA and the American Association of School Librarians released a statement calling the order (<https://www.ala.org/news/2025/02/ala-aasl-decry-us-defense-department-censorship-schools-and-libraries-military>) calling the order “censorship of legitimate views and opinions that violates the First Amendment rights of those who serve our nation and their families.” On March 6, hundreds of students on Defense Department campuses in Europe and Asia staged a coordinated protest (<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2025-03-06/hundreds-protest-dodea-schools-dei-policies-17056022.html>) of the removal of library books and other materials.

The Guardian, Feb. 13; (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/13/pentagon-schools-closed-libraries-trump>) PEN America, Feb. 19 (<https://pen.org/julianne-moore-freckleface-strawberry/>); ALA, Feb. 2;

(<https://www.ala.org/news/2025/02/ala-aasl-decry-us-defense-department-censorship-schools-and-libraries-military>) *Stars and Stripes*, Mar. 6 (<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2025-03-06/hundreds-protest-dodea-schools-dei-policies-17056022.html>).

The fates of federal grants remain unclear

The Trump administration's January call for a pause to all federal grants through the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) has led to [conflicting guidance from OBM](#)

(<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/29/g-s1-45313/trump-federal-funding-freeze-reversed>) on which programs will be defunded—

although there has been a marked focus on ending DEI-related programs. Two separate injunctions have been levied against the funding pauses in federal courts in [Rhode Island](#)

(<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/31/nx-s1-5282410/trump-spending-freeze-blocked-federal-judge>) and in [Washington, D.C.](#)

(<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/28/nx-s1-5277029/trump-memo-halt-funding>). With federal funding in limbo, organizations have

come out in support of further funding for cultural institutions—including the [Authors Guild](#) (<https://authorsguild.org/news/ag-condemns-attacks-on-free-expression-creates-tracker/>),

[EveryLibrary](#) (https://www.everylibrary.org/statement_ombfreeze),

and the [American Alliance of Museums](#) (<https://www.aam-us.org/2025/01/28/impact-of-executive-orders-and-pause-on-disbursement-of-federal-funds/>).

ALA's [Show Up for Our Libraries](#) (<https://www.ala.org/news/2025/01/new-ala-initiative-show-up-for-our-libraries>) initiative calls on supporters to share stories of

how libraries have benefited their communities and provides other tools to illustrate to government officials the importance of library funding.

NPR, Jan. 29; ([https://www.npr.org/2025/01/29/g-s1-](https://www.npr.org/2025/01/29/g-s1-45313/trump-federal-funding-freeze-reversed)

[45313/trump-federal-funding-freeze-reversed](https://www.npr.org/2025/01/29/g-s1-45313/trump-federal-funding-freeze-reversed)) *NPR*, Jan. 31;

(<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/31/nx-s1-5282410/trump-spending-freeze-blocked-federal-judge>) *NPR*, Jan. 28;

(<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/28/nx-s1-5277029/trump-memo-halt-funding>) *The Authors Guild*, Mar. 5;

(<https://authorsguild.org/news/ag-condemns-attacks-on-free-expression-creates-tracker/>) *EveryLibrary*, Jan. 28;

(https://www.everylibrary.org/statement_ombfreeze) *American Alliance of Museums*, Jan. 28; (

[disbursement-of-federal-funds/](#)) ALA, Jan. 22

(<https://www.ala.org/news/2025/01/new-ala-initiative-show-up-for-our-libraries>)

Updated: March 24, 2025, to correct locations of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library Museum and Boyhood Home and the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum. ■

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Association urges advocates to reach out to elected leaders



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