

California State Library considers next steps after abrupt federal funding cuts

 [Megan Myscofski](#)

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The California State Library's Braille and Talking Book Library Monday, April 7, 2025, at 900 N St. in Sacramento.

(Gerardo Zavala/CapRadio)

California State Library employee Christopher Duran was busy at work Monday, running a sound mixing board outside a recording booth as volunteer Phil Torres voiced an audiobook.

“What we usually do is I let him get warmed up because it's kind of early in the morning. There's a lot of frogs in the voice,” Duran said.

They meet once a week to record California-based stories, usually by local authors for residents with disabilities. This week, they're working on a crime novel set in Los Angeles.



California State Library employee Christopher Duran (right) runs a sound mixing board while volunteer Phil Torres voices an audiobook Monday, April 7, 2025, in Sacramento.

(Gerardo Zavala/CapRadio)

"For the fourth day in a row, there were no messages calling her out to a new homicide. Relieved, she showered and dressed for work," Torres read into the microphone.

Duran said they cover over 20 books a year. But that could change.

The Trump administration has made big cuts in recent weeks to federal funding for state and local government — including the California State Library.

The state library lost \$3.4 million from a nearly \$16 million dollar grant last week when the federal government ended it early.

"There's a lot of things in the library world that are in jeopardy immediately," Deputy State Librarian Rebecca Wendt said.

That includes the Braille and Talking Book Library — where the audio recordings go.

"Both my grandparents were actually the patrons of it back in the 20th century," Wendt shared.



Office Assistant Johanna Goodlin does an inventory of a children's braille book Monday in Sacramento. "There's so many people that are out there that don't have these books or these books on tape, so it's really important," she said.

(Gerardo Zavala/CapRadio)

The program also mails patrons specially-designed USB drives and players and offers many books in Braille, from novels like the one Torres voiced to cookbooks and chess strategy volumes.

Wendt added that it's unclear if more cuts are ahead — but the state is preparing for the worst.

"We're very, very concerned about keeping library services going," she said. "We're looking at every possibility here, and we're quite rightly probably going to have to delay some things, but we don't know what that's going to be yet."

She says the reduction could impact jobs as well as the library's braille and audio book program.

A small portion of the funding also goes to local library branches for a wide variety of programs including story times, e-books and training for volunteers who teach adults how to read.

In mid-March, President Donald Trump signed an executive order cutting library and museum funding.

Last week, White House press aide Anna Kelly told a reporter at USA TODAY, "President Trump's executive order is cutting bureaucracy and bloat to deliver better services for the American people. Thanks to the President's refocus of the agency, the Institute of Museum and Library Services will be able to better showcase American exceptionalism with greater efficiency for the public."

California is part of a lawsuit against the Trump administration over federal cuts to libraries.

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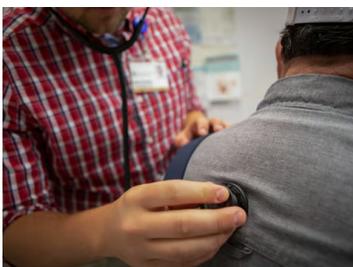
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