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# Local libraries brace for impact as \$8 million in federal funding slashed

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Local libraries brace for impact after \$8 million is cut from the NYS Library System

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Libraries are now feeling the impact of major cuts at the federal level. [Last week, the Institute of Museum and Library Services was essentially shut down](#) and almost all of its employees placed on administrative leave. Millions of dollars in grants that the agency normally passes out were cancelled.

New York received \$8.1 million in IMLS funding in 2024 which helped to fund literacy programs for children and adults, provided training for library staff and improved internet access in libraries.

The Rochester Public Library and the Monroe County Library System rely on the state for some of that programming. “Coordination of the summer reading program that everyone loves for the kids and the adults, they provide a lot of the electronic resources that we depend on both databases and digital content that we get, they help us with WiFi access and broadband access, that is especially in rural communities,” says Emily Claspe, director of the Rochester Public Library & Monroe County Library System.

Only 40% of school-aged children in Monroe County are considered proficient readers. “In a city and a county where there is a literacy issue, we really can’t be pulling back from that,” Claspe says.

At the moment, our local library systems are waiting and bracing for more details. “We’re honestly at a point where we’re not sure what happens from here, do we not have those services anymore, is there an opportunity for those to get funded by another source, we’re honestly not sure, we are trying not to panic because these are really important things that impact people’s everyday lives,” says Claspe.

But finding other funding sources won’t be easy when federal cuts are hitting food banks, museums, higher education and addiction treatment programs too. “There’s just so many people who can hold their hand out to their local community and say, “hey can you help us with this particular thing?” before the local community is like yea, but we’re helping all these other things,” Claspe says.

While a number of attorneys general, including New York's, have filed lawsuits to stop these cuts, all of the employees at IMLS have been placed on administrative leave so, there is no one to process the cash if a judge decides it is still legally required to be paid out.

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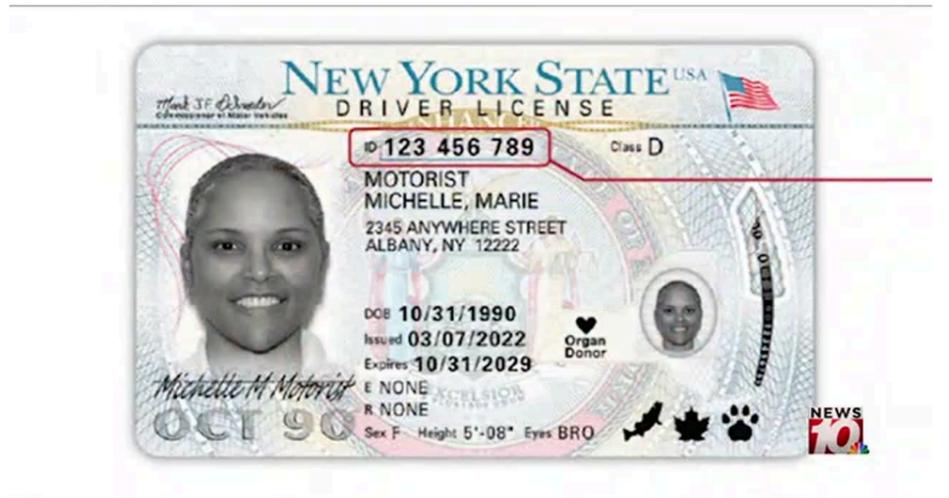
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