

(<https://www.wttw.com/>)

(/)

POLITICS (/POLITICS)

How Federal Funding Cuts to Libraries Could Impact Illinois Communities

[Abena Bediako \(/stories-by-author/Abena Bediako/\)](/stories-by-author/Abena Bediako/) | April 7, 2025, 7:30 pm



The Institute of Museum and Library Services, or IMLS, provides federal funding to museums and libraries across the country.

That funding is currently in limbo.

Last month, President Donald Trump signed an executive order (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/>) to dismantle the agency, resulting in the entire staff being

placed on administrative leave.

Thanks to our sponsors:

[View all sponsors \(/sponsors\)](#)

Some say this move could result in the loss of critical programs and services in every state, especially in rural areas.

Library funding draws 0.003% of the annual federal budget yet has enormous impact in communities nationwide. The IMLS said in 2024 it awarded \$266.7 million to museums, libraries and archives; that makes up just 0.003% of the federal budget, and 75 cents per capita.

“If the funding is removed from public libraries, which are open and free and accessible for everyone, it’s troubling to hear that this action is being taken, especially since just on March 14 the Senate passed and the president signed a continuing resolution for fiscal year 2025 which would provide IMLS funding through September of 2025,” said Cindy Hohl, president of the American Library Association.

The IMLS granted Illinois \$5.7 million (https://www.ims.gov/ims-dashboard?state=IL&fiscal_year=2023) last year to more than 200 libraries. A large portion of that funding went to the interconnected library delivery service, Reaching Across Illinois Libraries System, or RAILS. The system gives libraries the ability to loan items to other libraries.

“We typically borrow from other libraries through the fiscal year, somewhere around 40,000 items,” said John Fischer, director of Normal Public Library. “We would need to find another source for those items, or another source for funds to accommodate delivery of that type.”

Normal Public Library also received funding for its Project Next Generation programs. The programs reach out to underserved portions of the community, granting children access to learning technology, coding and other STEAM efforts.

Fischer said those underserved communities and rural areas will feel the impact most from the president's executive order.

"It's likely true that a rural library budget would limit the number of programs that they can offer their community, programs for seniors, programs for young children, people with disabilities, job seekers, people experiencing homelessness, any service or event that allows them to do outreach or cater or assist those populations in their communities could be limited if the funding for those programs were limited," Fischer said.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and a coalition of 21 attorneys general filed a lawsuit (<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:acd6e348-d0af-453e-b4e1-79b1ea8d38bc>) against the Trump administration to stop the dismantling of three federal agencies that provide services and funding supporting public libraries and museums, workers and minority-owned businesses nationwide.

"The Institute of Museum and Library Services helps to ensure that art, culture, history and literacy are accessible for all," Raoul said in a statement. "Illegally cutting grants jeopardizes critical library programs across the state that make library materials available to smaller communities and provide education and access to technology for underserved youth. Attempting to dismantle agencies created by Congress is a continuation of this administration's unconstitutional and unlawful overreach."

IMLS also provides funding to institutions and universities for literacy research. According to the National Literacy Institute (<https://www.thenationalliteracyinstitute.com/post/literacy-statistics-2024-2025-where-we-are-now>), on average 79% of U.S. adults nationwide were literate in 2024. 21% of adults in the U.S. are illiterate, and 54% of adults have below a sixth-grade literacy level.

Low levels of literacy cost the U.S. up to \$2.2 trillion per year.

According to the American Library Association, more than 77% of rural public libraries are the only source of free public access to computers and the internet in their communities.

“Library services and programs could absolutely be a lifeline bridging that digital divide in rural areas,” Hohl said. “Libraries are here to support literacy of all kinds, and so summer reading and learning programs are coming up every year, and that’s a way that libraries continue to provide support to students during that summer when their learning could slide.”

Hohl is currently traveling for National Library Week. The American Library Association continues to advocate for IMLS funding across the country in hopes of explaining the importance of libraries.

“This is just a smidge, but this smidge, this drop in the bucket, makes such an impact at the local level,” Fischer said. “This will all come down to the local level if federal funding is cut.”

Thanks to our sponsors:

[View all sponsors \(/sponsors\)](#)

Thanks to our sponsors:

[View all sponsors \(/sponsors\)](#)

TAGS

[AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION \(/TAGS/AMERICAN-LIBRARY-ASSOCIATION\)](#)

[LIBRARY \(/TAGS/LIBRARY\)](#)

[CINDY HOHL \(/TAGS/CINDY-HOHL\)](#)

[JOHN FISCHER \(/TAGS/JOHN-FISCHER\)](#)

[DONALD TRUMP \(/TAGS/DONALD-TRUMP\)](#)

Related Stories



(/2023/09/14/illinois-secretary-state-testifies-congress-book-bans-we-re-talking-about-freedom-speech)

Illinois Secretary of State Testifies Before Congress on Book Bans: 'We're Talking About Freedom of Speech' (/2023/09/14/illinois-secretary-state-testifies-congress-book-bans-we-re-talking-about-freedom-speech)



(/2023/09/05/conservative-book-ban-push-fuels-library-exodus-chicago-based-american-library)

Conservative Book Ban Push Fuels Library Exodus From Chicago-Based American Library Association (/2023/09/05/conservative-book-ban-push-fuels-library-exodus-chicago-based-american-library)



(/2023/06/24/chicago-conference-librarians-train-defend-intellectual-freedom-and-fight-book-bans)

At Chicago Conference, Librarians Train to Defend Intellectual Freedom and Fight Book Bans (/2023/06/24/chicago-conference-librarians-train-defend-intellectual-freedom-and-fight-book-bans)



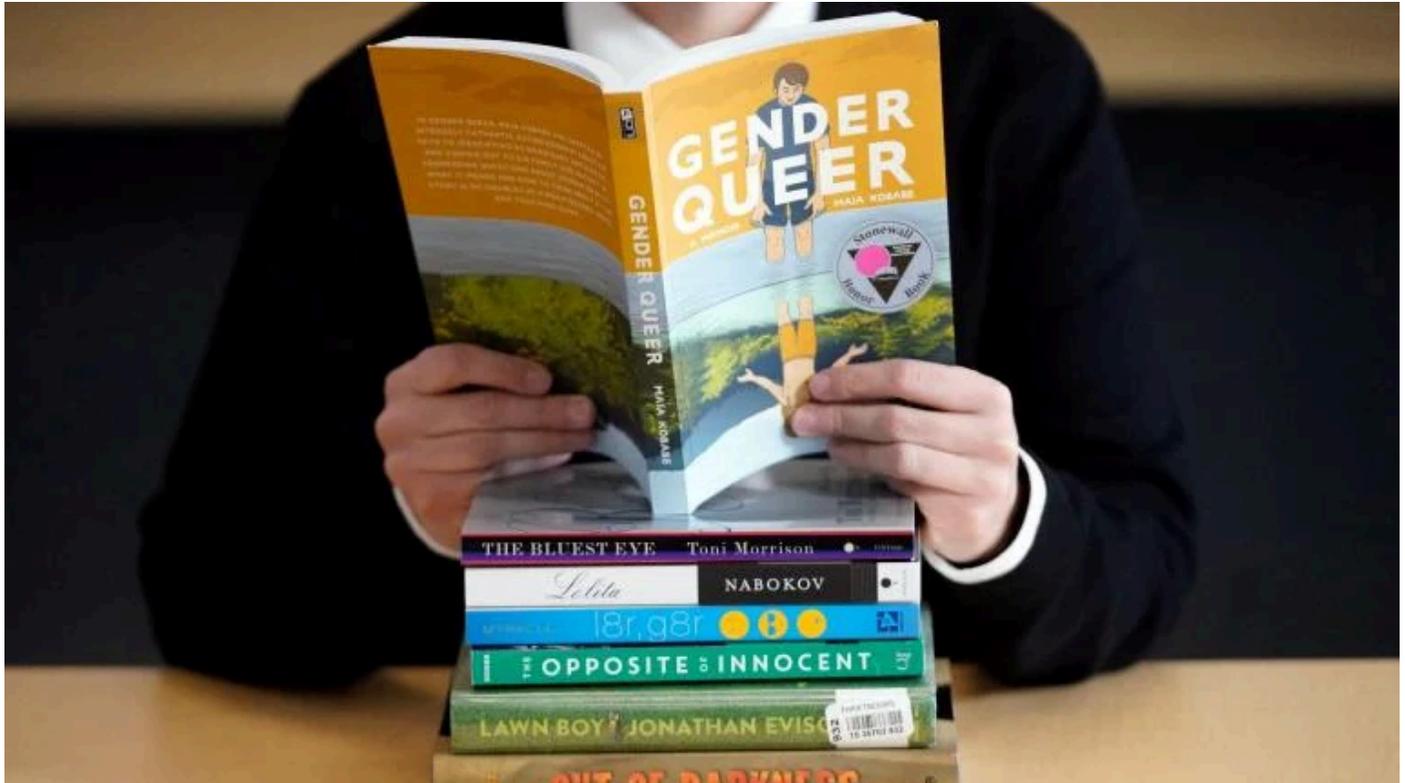
(/2023/06/12/illinois-becomes-first-state-enact-anti-book-ban-legislation-tying-library-funding-open)

Illinois Becomes First State to Enact Anti-Book Ban Legislation Tying Library Funding to Open Access Policies (/2023/06/12/illinois-becomes-first-state-enact-anti-book-ban-legislation-tying-library-funding-open)



(/2023/04/22/we-won-t-stand-it-american-library-association-s-tracie-hall-talks-book-ban-efforts)

'We Won't Stand for It': American Library Association's Tracie Hall Talks Book Ban Efforts
(/2023/04/22/we-won-t-stand-it-american-library-association-s-tracie-hall-talks-book-ban-efforts)



(/2023/03/23/attempts-ban-books-hit-record-high-2022-chicago-based-library-org-says)
Attempts to Ban Books Hit Record High in 2022, Chicago-Based Library Org Says
(/2023/03/23/attempts-ban-books-hit-record-high-2022-chicago-based-library-org-says)



Sign up for our morning newsletter to get all of our stories delivered to your mailbox each weekday.

(https://interactive.wttw.com/newsletter?wttw_newsletters=Daily%20Chicagoan)

(https://interactive.wttw.com/newsletter?wttw_newsletters=Daily%20Chicagoan)

WTTW (WWCI) Comment Policy

Got it

Please read our [Comment Policy](#) before commenting.

6 Comments

1 Login ▾

G

Join the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Name



Share

Best Newest Oldest

G

Gary Chicago

an hour ago



I wonder if I copied a excerpt from a LGBTQ book that liberal Democrat's want in school Library describing sexual acts , or would WTTW delete and ban my post .
If it is good enough for the kids to read why not post here?

1 0 Reply

W

Watchman Gary Chicago

8 minutes ago edited



I'm guessing they wouldn't allow it. Are you speaking of school libraries or public libraries?

At libraries, patrons have a choice as to what they read. If you post it on here, that choice is taken away.

In any case, what's your point?

0 0 Reply

J

jayseedub

11 hours ago



Oh no! Seventy-five cents per capita for "museums, libraries and archives!" The sky must be falling!

If libraries, museums and archives are so important (and honestly, I really do think they are), we'll now see how important they are to the 'capita.' Your library and museums will gladly accept three

or your hard-earned quarters in their donation box for each of your family members. *you* can affect real change (no pun intended!) by donating your own money (which, frankly, you were 'donating' already)—and you can give even *more* than that.

TRENDING

We're done with the days where the federal government decides how to spend YOUR money—now

- 1 As Alderpeople Blast Push to Allow CPD Officers to File Felony Gun Charges, Mayor Backs the Pilot Program (/2025/04/08/alderpeople-blast-push-allow-cpd-officers-file-felony-gun-charges-mayor-backs-pilot)**



(/2025/04/08/alderpeople-blast-push-allow-cpd-officers-file-felony-gun-charges-mayor-backs-pilot)

B Bp 21 hours ago

This is just part of his long term plan to suck the soul out of this country

1 0 Reply

- 2 Tens of Thousands of Illinoisans Take to the Streets to Protest Trump Musk Agenda (/2025/04/07/tens-thousands-illinoisans-take-streets-protest-trump-musk-agenda)**



(/2025/04/07/tens-thousands-illinoisans-take-streets-protest-trump-musk-agenda)

B Bp → Toivo 8 hours ago

This is just part of his long term plan to give himself a huge tax break.

0 0 Reply

- 3 'This Was a Predator': Man Charged in Sexual Assaults of 5 Women Over 3 Years on Chicago's North Side (/2025/04/07/was-predator-man-charged-sexual-assaults-5-women-over-3-years-chicago-s-north-side)**



(/2025/04/07/was-predator-man-charged-sexual-assaults-5-women-over-3-years-chicago-s-north-side)

yeah that too.

- 4 University of Chicago, Northwestern Ranked Among Top Grad Programs in the Nation on U.S. News List (/2025/04/08/university-chicago-northwestern-ranked-among-top-grad-programs-nation-us-news-list)**



(/2025/04/08/university-chicago-northwestern-ranked-among-top-grad-programs-nation-us-news-list)

5 Andrew Boutros Sworn in as Chicago's Interim Top Federal Prosecutor (/2025/04/07/andrew-boutros-sworn-chicago-s-interim-top-federal-prosecutor)



(/2025/04/07/andrew-boutros-sworn-chicago-s-interim-top-federal-prosecutor)

SIGN UP FOR THE WTTW NEWS NEWSLETTER

Subscribe

COMMENTS

RECURRING FEATURES

- + **A Safer City** (/recurring-segments/safer-city)
- + **Art Design Chicago** (/recurring-segments/art-design-chicago)
- + **Ask Geoffrey** (/recurring-segments/ask-geoffrey)
- + **Black Voices** (/tags/black-voices)
- + **Chicago Tonight** (https://news.wttw.com/tags/full-show)
- + **Firsthand Series** (/tags/firsthand)
- + **Hedy Weiss Reviews** (/recurring-segments/hedy-weiss-theater-reviews)
- + **Investigations** (https://news.wttw.com/recurring-segments/investigations)
- + **Latino Voices** (/tags/latino-voices)
- + **Spotlight Politics** (/tags/spotlight-politics)
- + **Week in Review** (/recurring-segments/week-in-review)
- + **WTTW News Explains** (https://news.wttw.com/recurring-segments/wttw-news-explains)

Watch & Listen to Chicago Tonight

App (<https://interactive.wttw.com/ways-to-watch#mobile>)

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/wttw11/videos>)

YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/wttwchicago>)

Podcast (<https://news.wttw.com/content/chicago-tonight-podcast>)

Sign Up for the Daily Chicagoan Newsletter

[Email address](#)

SUBSCRIBE

[wttw news\(https://news.wttw.com\)](https://news.wttw.com)

[Video \(https://news.wttw.com/video/chicago-tonight\)](https://news.wttw.com/video/chicago-tonight)

[Story Archive \(https://news.wttw.com/archive\)](https://news.wttw.com/archive)

[Arts & Entertainment \(https://news.wttw.com/art-entertainment\)](https://news.wttw.com/art-entertainment)

[Business \(https://news.wttw.com/business\)](https://news.wttw.com/business)

[Crime & Law \(https://news.wttw.com/crime-law\)](https://news.wttw.com/crime-law)

[Politics \(https://news.wttw.com/politics\)](https://news.wttw.com/politics)

[Education \(https://news.wttw.com/education\)](https://news.wttw.com/education)

[Contact Us \(https://news.wttw.com/contact\)](https://news.wttw.com/contact)

[About Us \(https://news.wttw.com/about\)](https://news.wttw.com/about)

[Internships \(https://www.wttw.com/about/employment/internship-program-information\)](https://www.wttw.com/about/employment/internship-program-information)

[Send Us a Tip \(https://news.wttw.com/contact\)](https://news.wttw.com/contact)

Advertise (<https://news.wttw.com/content/wttw-business-partners>)

Sponsors (<https://news.wttw.com/sponsors>)

[schedule\(https://schedule.wttw.com\)](https://schedule.wttw.com)

WTTW (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

WTTW Prime (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

WTTW Create (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

WTTW/PBS Kids (<https://www.wttw.com/kids>)

WTTW World (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

Program Guide

(https://www.wttw.com/sites/default/files/WTTWWFMTGuide_April_2025.pdf)

[watch\(https://video.wttw.com\)](https://video.wttw.com)

All Video (<https://video.wttw.com>)

Kids Video (<https://www.wttw.com/kids>)

Live Stream (<https://www.wttw.com/wttw-live-stream>)

[programs\(https://schedule.wttw.com/az.php\)](https://schedule.wttw.com/az.php)

Programs A-Z (<https://schedule.wttw.com/AZ.php>)

Playlist (<https://www.wttw.com/playlist>)

[events\(https://www.wttw.com/events\)](https://www.wttw.com/events)

Event Calendar (<https://www.wttw.com/events>)

[about\(https://www.wttw.com/about/mission\)](https://www.wttw.com/about/mission)

Our Mission (<https://www.wttw.com/about/mission>)

Our History (<https://www.wttw.com/about/history>)

Our Sponsors (<https://www.wttw.com/about/sponsors>)

Chicago Production Center

(<https://www.wttw.com/chicago-production-center>)

Local Productions

(<https://www.wttw.com/about/productions/wttw-local-productions>)

National Syndication

(<https://www.wttw.com/about/productions/wttw-national-productions>)

Pressroom (<https://www.wttw.com/about/pressroom>)

Management & Board

(<https://www.wttw.com/about/management-board>)

Advisory Board

(<https://www.wttw.com/about/community-advisory-board>)

Financial Information

(<https://www.wttw.com/about/financial-information>)

Employment (<https://www.wttw.com/careers>)

Volunteer (<https://www.wttw.com/support>)

Directions (<https://www.wttw.com/about/location>)

Contact Us (<https://www.wttw.com/about/contact-us>)

[support\(https://www.wttw.com/support\)](https://www.wttw.com/support)

Support WTTW (<https://www.wttw.com/support>)

Join/Renew - Pledge (<https://secure.wttw.com/>)

Offers & Contests (<https://www.wttw.com/support>)

Member Perks

(<https://www.wttw.com/support/membership/member-perks>)

Membership

(<https://www.wttw.com/support/membership>)

Family Membership

(<https://www.wttw.com/support/membership/kidsclub>)

Corporate/Foundation Gifts

(<https://www.wttw.com/support/corporate-support>)

Major/Planned Gifts (<https://wttw.giftplans.org/>)

Vehicle Donation

(<https://www.wttw.com/support/vehicle-donation>)

Volunteer (<https://www.wttw.com/support>)

Membership FAQs

(<https://www.wttw.com/support/membership>)

Contact Us (<https://www.wttw.com/about/contact-us>)

Privacy Policy (<https://www.wttw.com/wwci-privacy-policy>) |

Terms of Use (<https://www.wttw.com/terms-of-use>) | Public File (<https://publicfiles.fcc.gov/tv-profile/wttw>) |

Registered 501(c)(3), EIN: 36-2246703 | © 2025 WWCI (<https://www.wttw.com/about/mission>)

wfmt (<https://www.wfmt.com>)