

**Letitia James**

New York State Attorney General

Attorney General James Sues Trump Administration to Protect Libraries and Museums

AG James Co-Leads Coalition Suing to Stop Dismantling of Federal Agencies That Support Libraries, Museums, Minority-Owned Businesses, and Workers

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NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James today co-led a coalition of 20 other attorneys general in [suing 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](#). In March, the Trump administration issued an Executive Order that would dismantle federal agencies created by Congress that collectively provide hundreds of millions of dollars for programs in every state. As a result of this Executive Order, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) – one of the targeted agencies – has placed almost its entire staff on administrative leave and will cut hundreds of grants for state libraries and museums. The lawsuit filed by Attorney General James and the coalition seeks to stop the targeted destruction of the IMLS and two other agencies targeted in the administration’s EO that millions of Americans rely on, especially those in underserved communities.

“The Trump administration is launching another attack on vulnerable communities, small businesses, and our children’s education,” said **Attorney General James**. “The agencies they are attempting to dismantle support workers nationwide, provide funding to help minority-owned businesses, and make sure our libraries and museums stay open so children can engage in lifelong learning. My office will continue to stand up to this administration’s chaos and destruction, and defend critical services that communities throughout New York and the nation depend upon.”

This Executive Order is the administration’s latest attempt to dismantle federal agencies in defiance of Congress. Attorney General James and the coalition are seeking to stop the

dismantling of three agencies targeted in the administration's Executive Order:

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which supports museums and libraries nationwide through grantmaking, research, and policy development;
- The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), which promotes the growth and inclusion of minority-owned businesses through federal financial assistance programs; and
- The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), which promotes the peaceful resolution of labor disputes.

As Attorney General James and the coalition assert in the lawsuit, dismantling these agencies will have devastating effects on communities throughout New York and the nation that rely on them to provide important services to the public, including funding their libraries, promoting minority-owned businesses, and protecting workers' rights.

In 2024, IMLS invested \$180 million in libraries nationwide under its Grants to States Program. New York received over \$8 million, which helped to fund literacy programs for children and adults, provided training for over 200,000 library staff across New York's 7,000 libraries, improved internet access in libraries, and paid the salaries of two-thirds of New York State Library employees. The administration's action will threaten hundreds of library staff across the country who provide essential services to their communities.

In addition, the Trump administration has cut the staff of MBDA from 40 to just five individuals and has effectively stopped issuing new grants, hurting vulnerable small businesses across the country. The FMCS has slashed its staff from roughly 200 to fewer than 15 individuals and announced the termination of several of its core programs, making it harder for unionized workers to secure their rights.

Attorney General James and the coalition argue that the Executive Order violates the Constitution and the Administrative Procedure Act by eliminating the programs of agencies without any regard for the laws and regulations that govern each source of federal funding. The coalition argues that the president cannot decide to unilaterally override laws governing federal spending, and that this Executive Order unconstitutionally overrides Congress's power to decide how federal funds are spent.

"The White House's Executive Order eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services has a direct impact on all New Yorkers," said **New York State Librarian Lauren**

Moore. “This institute provides \$8 million in federal support, sustaining 55 state library staff members – two-thirds of our state library workforce – and essential programs that directly serve local library communities and residents across the state. Our libraries are more than just buildings; they are vibrant hubs of knowledge, culture, and community connection that empower individuals and strengthen society. We stand firm in our mission to ensure all New Yorkers continue to have equitable access to the library resources they need. As the New York State Librarian, I firmly support the merits of this lawsuit and am thankful for the leadership of Attorney General James on this matter.”

This lawsuit is led by Attorney General James and the attorneys general of Rhode Island and Hawaii. Joining the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

For New York, this matter is being handled by Assistant Attorneys General Abigail Katowitz-Liu and Sean Bunny, and Special Counsel for Federal Initiatives Rabia Muqaddam under the supervision of First Deputy Attorney General Jennifer Levy.

This is the latest action Attorney General James has taken to protect New Yorkers and the services they rely on from the Trump administration’s illegal attacks. On April 3, Attorney General James [condemned the Trump administration’s cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services that jeopardized health care for survivors of 9/11](#). Also on April 3, Attorney General James [won a court order temporarily blocking the Trump administration from slashing \\$11 billion in vital health funding for state and local governments](#). On March 24, Attorney General James and a coalition of attorneys general [filed a motion for a preliminary injunction as part of their lawsuit to stop the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education](#). On March 6, Attorney General James and a coalition of attorneys general [sued the Trump administration for illegal mass firings of federal employees](#) and [sued the Trump administration for cutting critical grant programs for teachers](#) through the U.S. Department of Education. Also on March 6, Attorney General James led a coalition of attorneys general in securing [a court order blocking the Trump administration’s freeze of essential federal funds to states](#). On March 5, Attorney General James and a coalition of attorneys general [secured a court order stopping the Trump administration from withholding vital funding to the National Institutes of Health](#).