

STEM programs, interlibrary loans at risk if federal library funding goes away



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PEORIA ([25News Now](#)) - Library programs across the state are at risk of being cut if the Trump Administration eliminates the [Institute of Museums and Library Services](#).

On March 31, all 70 IMLS staff members were placed on administrative leave. Last year, IMLS provided \$266 million in grant funding.

[Peoria Public Library](#) Executive Director Randall Yelverton said the library's money from IMLS helps run multiple programs and services. He said those at the library are particularly concerned about their Project Next Generation program at the Lincoln branch and the interlibrary loan system.

He said Project Next Generation has been operating for nearly 20 years, and helps around 25 students each year learn STEM skills. IMLS provides Peoria Public Library with \$13,000 to fund the program.

"It's a way for mostly kids from around the Lincoln Library to learn different new technologies, giving them a leg up in the job market when they enter that age," Yelverton said. "It's a really great program."

IMLS grants also fund the library's interlibrary loan system, allowing the public to place holds on and access collections for libraries all over.

"It's a really convenient service. It really expands the reach of our collection, what we can provide to our patrons, and that is in jeopardy of being severely undermined by these cuts," Yelverton said. "We're very concerned about that."

He said if funding were to be cut, he and others at the library would hope to create a more local interlibrary loan system.

“It won’t be nearly as efficient. You will start wondering ‘Why are my materials not coming to me sooner,’” Yelverton said. “Like a lot of government spending that is working, you aren’t necessarily seeing it, but it is working for you.”

Yelverton said another major concern is \$2.5 million in cuts for library deliveries throughout Illinois.

“The IMLS grants here in Illinois and throughout the country fund the way materials are delivered locally and throughout the state and we’re very concerned about those cuts,” Yelverton said.

He said right now libraries, especially smaller facilities, need public support.

“We had a library staff member go and represent our public libraries [and he had] the chance to talk to some of our senators and representatives,” Yelverton said. “We just ask those who are seeing this, if you care about libraries, do the same.”

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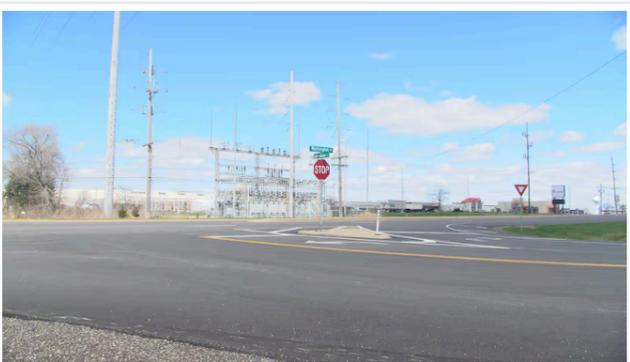
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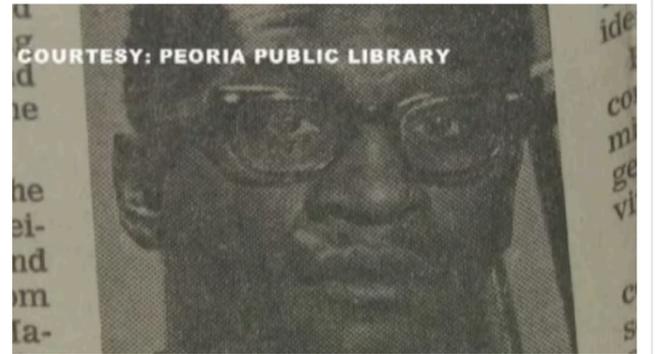
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