

LOCAL NEWS

Michigan AG Dana Nessel joins lawsuit against Trump administration to protect funding for libraries

Coalition aims to protect 3 federal agencies

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Public library bookshelf seen from inside (Adobe Stock)



Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has joined a coalition of 20 other attorneys general **in a lawsuit against the Trump administration** to stop three federal agencies from being dismantled.

This comes after the administration issued an executive order in March to dismantle federal agencies that provide hundreds of millions of dollars to programs across the country, according to a release from Nessel's office.

One of the agencies targeted in this move is the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

This has resulted in almost every employee within the IMLS being put on administrative leave, according to Nessel's office. The agency will also eliminate hundreds of grants that have been available for state libraries and museums.

"Once again, the President has signed an executive order that clearly oversteps the powers of his office, tramples the role of Congress in establishing and funding agencies, and commits unnecessary and potentially irreparable harms to Michiganders," said Nessel. "These agencies serve important roles and their destruction could reshape whole communities. The absolute vitality of local public and school libraries to our children's education and development just cannot be overstated, in addition to the countless other benefits a local library provides."

In 2024, Michigan received \$4,788,124 in grants from the IMLS, which accounted for 75% of all funding that went to libraries across the state.

"Per the State Librarian for the Library of Michigan, this Executive Order and consequent reduction in IMLS staff will result in their inability to administer financial awards and programs, causing considerable harm to Michigan and the Library of Michigan, and significant harm upon tribal libraries, academic libraries, public libraries, and non-profits serving libraries throughout Michigan that receive support and competitive grants through IMLS," according to Nessel's office. "Training resources for library staff offered by the State Library of Michigan will be greatly reduced, and as a result of this Executive Order, the Library of Michigan has already been forced to cancel a summer grant program primarily used to support small and rural libraries. The program typically provides approximately 130-150 grants each year."

The order will also affect the state's **MeL and MeLCat programs**, which allow residents to request materials and get them delivered from 368 out of 397 public libraries, and 52 out of 79 academic libraries in Michigan.

Here's a list of other library resources that federal funds go toward, according to Nessel's office:

- High-quality, resource-filled summer reading manuals from the Collaborative Summer Library Program, provided by the Library of Michigan to public libraries for early literacy support. Also support for the Ready to Read early literacy program that helps provide quality early literacy programming and training to children's librarians as they work with families in their communities;
- A collection of thousands of non-fiction and reference eBooks for K-12 students and teachers, college-level academics, and professionals;
- A comprehensive, interactive tests, tutorials, and workforce development website with occupational, licensing, and academic practice tests and tutorials for K-16 and job seekers, from the GED to the GRE;
- Digitization support from The Library of Michigan, via participation in statewide digitization efforts such as the Michigan Digital Preservation Network, Michigan newspaper digitization work at CMU, and grants funding local history and special collections work; and
- Various grants through the Library of Michigan, such as Public Library Services grants for public libraries in the areas of technology, children & seven teen programs, and literacy, and Improving Access to Information grants for public and academic libraries to increase capacity to provide access to library collections and information.

The lawsuit against Trump also seeks to protect two other agencies, including:

- 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 peaceful resolution of labor disputes.

To read the full lawsuit filed by the attorneys general, [visit here](#).

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Sara Powers joined WDIV as a digital content producer in Oct. 2024 and has been covering Metro Detroit news since 2021.

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