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Statement on Trump's Attack on Federal Funding for Libraries

MARCH 15, 2025

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In a new executive order, President Trump has targeted the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the federal agency charged with distributing Congressionally approved funds to state libraries and to library, museum, and archives programs and services.

Building Voter Support for Libraries in the United States

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The [Executive Order](#) states that IMLS must be reduced to its "statutory functions." It also requires that "non-statutory components and functions ...shall be eliminated to the maximum extent..."

We are extremely concerned that the wording of this E.O. could result in cuts to the core functions of IMLS. The Administration and Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have used similar E.O.s to dismantle the other federal agencies.

IMLS's statutory obligations to state libraries include federal funding through the Grants to States program, the National Leadership Grant program, and all current contracts, grants, and awards. This core work cannot be disrupted or dismantled by DOGE.

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Congress was clear in the 2018 [Museum and Library Services Act](#) that IMLS is statutorily required by Sec 9133 to send federal funding to state libraries under the Grants to States program (Sec. 9141).

Congress created this federal block grant program to support and extend library services in all the states through the state libraries. While other grant programs within IMLS are discretionary, the Grants to States program is written as a "shall".

This means that Congress enacted the Museum and Library Services Act to strengthen and support state libraries, including their vital work supporting interlibrary loans, statewide databases and collections, and systems of support to individual public, school, and academic libraries.

We are [calling on Congress](#) to help safeguard every one of their home district libraries by telling the administration to continue IMLS's Section 9141 guarantees to state libraries.

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The states have consistently fulfilled their obligations under the law, and IMLS must continue its work as well. Likewise, [other statutorily obliged programs](#), including the National Leadership Grants (Sec. 9162) and the Services for Native Americans Program (Sec. 9161), the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities (§9102), and IMLS's critical data collection and reporting role (Sec 9108) must continue. IMLS obligations include funding any and all current-year and multi-year contracts, grants, awards, and agreements obligated by Congress within the federal budget, including the FY 2025 CR funded enacted on March 14. We believe that the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (Sec. 9165), the Museum Services Program (Sec. 9173), and the 21st Century Museum Professional Program (Sec 9175) should remain in place as Congress intended.

Taken together, this federal and state ecosystem has served Americans for generations.

We need all Americans to join us in [telling Congress](#) to hold the line with the Administration and DOGE and keep these core programs, especially the Grants to States funding, intact.

DONATE

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Without this core federal funding for state libraries, museums, and archives, we risk losing critical programs and services in every state. This is the time to make your voice heard.



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