

[News](#) [Donald Trump](#)

Trump Moves to Dismantle Institute of Museum and Library Services

An executive order demands workforce and operation reductions “that the President has determined are unnecessary” at the IMLS and several agencies.



Rhea Nayyar March 17, 2025



A view of the Museum Of Glass in Tacoma, Washington, which recently received funding from the IMLS to preserve the work and legacy of glass artists (photo via Getty Images)

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is among several federal agencies whose functions and workforce were effectively dismantled on Friday, March 14, through **President Trump’s latest executive order**. Providing crucial financial support to the country’s arts and culture, humanities and sciences, and literacy and education sectors, the agency administered

\$266.7 million in grants to museums and libraries across the United States and Puerto Rico in Fiscal Year 2024.

The executive order, titled “Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy,” ordered the IMLS and other agencies — including the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian Institution — to eliminate all non-statutory functions and components entirely, and reduce statutory functions and associated workforce numbers to a minimum.

It also requires all affected agencies to submit a report to the director of the Office of Management and Budget — a position currently held by Project 2025 architect [Russell Vought](#) — indicating their compliance and explaining any statutory components and functions.

The IMLS did not immediately respond to *Hyperallergic*’s inquiries.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the IMLS was afforded just \$294.8 million — about 0.0043% of the federal budget — for administrative operations to support around 75 personnel and grant spending between its Office of Library Services and the Office of Museum Services, according to the agency’s publicly available [budget information](#).

While grants for state libraries make up a majority of the IMLS’s annual financial support, over \$64 million in funding was administered through 326 grants to museums and cultural institutions across the nation in the last fiscal year, and the Office of Library Services granted over \$30 million to collegiate and school district-based library systems as well as dozens of Native American tribal libraries and archives across 269 grants.

In [2024](#), the IMLS funded institutions including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, the Museum of the City of New York, and the New York Historical. It also supported local organizations like the Martha’s Vineyard Preservation Trust and the Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, New York, which received a \$250,000 grant from IMLS last year to support the forthcoming exhibition [All of Me with All of You](#), contextualizing LGBTQ+ artists in the American art history canon in conversation with a curated photography show including work by local LGBTQ+ youth.

Heather Arnet, executive director and CEO of the Heckscher Museum, told *Hyperallergic* that smaller, community-oriented museums will likely suffer the most from the IMLS cuts.

“Compared to larger institutions, smaller organizations do not have billion-dollar endowments and look to federal agencies to provide necessary resources to improve conservation efforts, professional development, and enhance community programming,” Arnet said.



PaJaMa (Paul Cadmus, Jared French, Margaret French), “*Jared French, Fire Island*” (1949) (image courtesy Heckscher Museum of Art)

The slashes to the IMLS came on the same day as a separate executive order rescinding the **Biden-era order** “Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination,” which gave Native American tribes more control over how they used federal funding.

In recent weeks, Trump has also **disbanded the President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities**, **dissolved the fine arts and preservation divisions** of the General Services Administration, and directed the National Endowment for the Humanities’s first Native American Chairperson **Shelly C. Lowe (Diné) to step down**, roiling the arts and culture sector while continuing **his crackdown on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives** on a federal level.

In a public statement, the American Library Association (ALA) characterized Trump’s recent executive order as a “**White House assault**” on the IMLS, imploring the president to “reconsider this short-sighted decision” while calling on US congressional members and senators to visit the constituents’ libraries and advocate for their modest federal funding.

After **urging Congress to allot IMLS a budget** consistent with that of recent years and advocating against indiscriminate staff cuts amid the flurry of executive orders, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) also called on citizens to show their support for art and cultural institutions.

The [AAM has provided email templates, phone call scripts, and contact information](#) for local officials and members of Congress, encouraging people to share their personal accounts of how museums and libraries have impacted their lives.

“Museums are vital community anchors, serving all Americans, including youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans,” AAM said in a [March 17 statement](#) in response to the cuts to the IMLS. “Museums are not only centers for education and inspiration but also economic engines — creating jobs, driving tourism, and strengthening local economies.”

The AAM noted that the full impact of the executive order has yet to be fully understood, but it will provide updates as more information becomes available.