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# Trump urged to rethink order gutting agency that funds museum, library grants

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - MARCH 20, 2025 3:48 AM



President Donald Trump signed an executive order March 14, 2025, imposing dramatic cuts on seven federal agencies, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services. (Catherine McQueen/Getty Images)

## The Maryland context

FROM MARYLAND MATTERS

*Maryland received \$6.1 million from the fund in 2024 for libraries and museums, according to data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which was targeted by the White House order. Recent funding for the state has ranged from \$3.6 million in 2018, during the last Trump administration, to \$7.8 million in 2021.*

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump’s move late Friday to dismantle the agency that serves as the primary federal funding source for libraries and museums nationwide prompted questions over the weekend about how the agency can continue to carry out its core work.

After Trump signed [an executive order Friday](#) that called for severe reductions in seven federal agencies, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services that provided [\\$266.7 million](#) in grants and other awards last year, groups representing museums and libraries across the country called on Trump to reconsider the move and asked Congress to intervene on their behalf.

“By eliminating the only federal agency dedicated to funding library services, the Trump administration’s executive order is cutting off at the knees the most beloved and trusted of American institutions and the staff and services they offer,” the American Library Association, the oldest and largest library association in the country, said in a [statement](#) over the weekend.

The Friday order, titled “continuing the reduction of the federal bureaucracy,” called for eliminating “to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law” listed agencies’ functions that aren’t statutorily mandated. It also called for reducing the “performance” of agencies’ mandated functions and “associated personnel” to the legal minimum.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services, which Congress established in 1996, has a [mission](#) to “advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development.”

The states that received the highest total awards from the agency in 2024 were California at \$26.4 million, New York at nearly \$20 million, Texas at \$15.7 million, Florida at \$11.4 million and Illinois at \$11.3 million, according to data from the [agency](#).

The order to downsize the agency is part of Trump and billionaire White House adviser Elon Musk’s U.S. DOGE Service’s initiative to slash federal government spending and go after what they deem unnecessary.

“The American people elected President Trump to drain the swamp and end ineffective government programs that empower government without achieving measurable results,” a [White House fact sheet](#) accompanying the order read.

The other agencies affected are the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the U.S. Agency for Global Media, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund and the Minority Business Development Agency.

### **Library, museum organizations react**

The American Library Association said the order would decimate services such as early literacy development and reading programs, high-speed internet access, employment assistance, homework and research resources and accessible reading materials.

The organization called on Trump to reconsider his “short-sighted” decision and encouraged lawmakers to “visit the libraries that serve their constituents and urge the White House to spare the modest federal funding for America’s libraries.”

EveryLibrary, an organization dedicated to building support for libraries, said in a Saturday [statement](#) the group is “extremely concerned” the wording in Trump’s executive order “could result in cuts to the core functions” of the agency.

The organization said the agency’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” and that “this core work cannot be disrupted or dismantled by DOGE.”

In a statement shared with States Newsroom on Monday, the American Alliance of Museums, which includes 35,000 museums and museum professionals, said Trump’s effort “threatens the critical roles museums and museum workers play in American society, and puts jobs, education, conservation, and vital community programs at risk.”

“Museums are vital community anchors, serving all Americans including youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans,” the statement read. “Museums are not only centers for education and inspiration but also economic engines – creating jobs, driving tourism, and strengthening local economies.”

Neither the Institute of Museum and Library Services nor the White House responded to a request for comment Monday.

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