

New executive order aims to cut funding of Institute of Museum and Library Services, possibly impacting UT programs

Daniela Capistran, Senior News Reporter

The Trump administration signed an executive order on March 14 reducing the functions of various governmental entities, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which funds programs across UT.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is a federal agency that places grants for libraries and museums nationally. Following the order, the entire institute's union published a statement notifying that awarded grants would likely "be terminated." The order did not entirely eliminate the institute because that would require congressional approval, but reduced it to only the essential services and personnel to perform functions required by the law, according to the American Library Association. The order could cut funding from areas of UT partially funded by the institute.

This follows a series of staff and funding cuts that are part of the Trump Administration's plan to reduce the size of the federal government and bureaucracy to "minimize government waste and abuse, reduce inflation, and promote American freedom and innovation," according to a White House February press release.

The Institute of Museums and Libraries funded the University directly with about \$414,119 last year in different areas including the School of Information, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, according to the institute's funding dashboard.

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health declined to comment. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center said in a statement it was uncertain how the reduction of the institution will affect the center.

"We don't yet know (how the order will affect us) and are not able to speculate," said a spokesperson for the Wildflower Center. "We're focused on our mission of inspiring the conservation of native plants and will remain focused on that work."

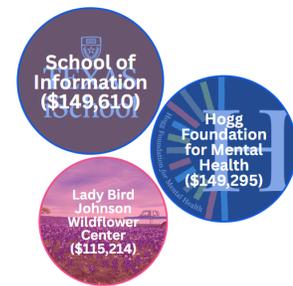
Aaron Choate, director of research and strategy for UT Libraries, said the University also receives funding from the institute indirectly through block grants that go through the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Texas receives \$12.5 million to distribute throughout the state annually. This funding is used to support UT Library resources and book requests.

Federal funding for UT affiliates from the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Bubble size corresponds to grant amount from Fiscal Year 2024

- National Leadership Grants - Libraries
- Museums for America

Sources: IMLS.gov, Hogg Foundation, Southern Living, UT ISchool • Chart: Yash Gupta, Neena Varanasi



Yash Gupta, Neena Varanasi

“We don’t have a lot of extraneous funding in our budget in order to take risks and spend time doing things that are outside of the scope of our day-to-day operations,” Choate said. “It’s a fairly impactful situation where IMLS used to and hopefully will again, provide some of that funding to allow us to work outside of the day to day and prepare for that future.”