

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 21, 2025

The Honorable Keith Sonderling
Acting Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services
955 L'Enfant Plaza, North, SW, Suite 4000
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Mr. Sonderling,

We write to express our serious concerns regarding President Trump's call to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the only federal agency dedicated to supporting the nation's libraries and museums. On March 14, 2025 President Trump issued the Executive Order "Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy" which includes IMLS to be eliminated "to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law" and for IMLS to submit a report to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to confirm compliance.¹ We are reminding the Administration of its obligation to fully execute the law as authorized by Congress under the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) of 2018 (PL 115-40), as signed by President Trump. Beginning on April 3, 2025, several grantees—including the states of California, Connecticut and Washington—received written notice from IMLS that their federal Fiscal Year 2024–25 grants under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) had been terminated.² We strongly urge the Administration to reverse these terminations and ensure continued funding in accordance with federal law.

For Fiscal Year 2024, Congress appropriated \$294.8 million for IMLS, specifying funding should be allotted across the programs in the following manner:

Library Services Technology Act

Grants to States	\$180,000,000
Native American Library Services	\$5,763,000
National Leadership: Libraries	\$15,287,000
Laura Bush 21 st Century Librarian	\$10,000,000

Museum Services Act

Museums for America	\$30,330,000
Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services	\$3,772,000
National Leadership: Museums	\$9,348,000

African American History and Culture Act \$6,000,000

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/>

² [ALA responds to the termination of IMLS grants in several states | ALA](#)

National Museum of the American Latino Act	\$6,000,000
Research, Analysis, and Data Collection	\$5,650,000
Program Administration	\$22,650,000

We expect the Administration to fully implement the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act of 2025 consistent with the Fiscal Year 2024 allocations. We also urge the Administration to allow IMLS to continue to engage with and support libraries and museums as Congress intended and as authorized in the MLSA, including maintaining the expertise of the IMLS staff to carry out the functions of the agency.

Libraries and museums are deeply embedded in local communities across the country and millions of Americans rely on their services and programs, particularly the most rural and underserved areas. In 2024, IMLS funding reached 140,000 libraries and museums across all 50 states and U.S. territories. Public, school, academic, and specialty libraries provide a wide range of local services such as summer reading programs for youth, high-speed internet, workforce training, and support for small businesses.³ Libraries are especially vital for low-income families, students, and workers who depend on them for free access to technology, educational resources, and job search support. In California, local libraries serve as critical lifelines for families experiencing homelessness and those displaced by natural disasters, offering space for community gathering and access to emergency information. Every year, more than 1.2 billion people visit libraries in-person—and they are deeply valued by the American public.⁴

Museums serve as crucial sources of information for history, art, science, and culture and have broad public support. In fact, 96 percent of surveyed Americans believe lawmakers should support museums.⁵ Museums support more than 726,000 American jobs and contribute \$50 billion to the U.S. economy every year.⁶ Beyond their cultural significance, museums play a vital role in education, offering hands-on learning opportunities for students of all ages and providing resources that supplement school curricula, especially in underserved communities. For states like California, Connecticut, and Washington, museums are essential pillars of local identity, tourism, and community development.

The consequences of eliminating IMLS will be devastating for states, local communities, and the millions of Americans who rely on these institutions every day. These institutions are critical pillars of educational opportunity, cultural preservation, civic engagement, and economic development in our communities.

As such, please provide us with a written response to the questions below no later than May 1, 2025.

³ <https://www.ala.org/news/2025/03/ala-statement-white-house-assault-institute-museum-and-library-services>

⁴ <https://www.ala.org/news/2025/03/ala-statement-white-house-assault-institute-museum-and-library-services#:~:text=Libraries%20of%20all%20types%20translate.and%20many%20more%20virtual%20visits.>


⁵ <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-museums/museum-facts-data/>

⁶ <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/The-Carter-2023-Economic-and-Educational-Impact-Statements.pdf>


1. How many IMLS employees have been fired, put on administrative leave, accepted the deferred resignation program offer, or accepted the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority or Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment offer since January 20, 2025? Please provide the number of employees in each category.
 - a. How many individuals are currently employed at the agency? Please provide their titles and duties.
 - b. How many of these employees were responsible for, or assisted in, administering grants?
2. Which officials at IMLS were involved in the staffing reduction decisions and what planning, if any, was undertaken prior to these reductions?
3. What factors are being used to determine the cancellation of grants, including the Grants to States funding?
 - a. Please provide a full list of cancelled grants, including the date of cancellation, type of grant, and dollar amount.
 - b. Please share what the agency's "updated priorities" are and how grants are being assessed for alignment and plans for grant competitions in Fiscal Year 25.
4. Which officials at IMLS are involved in developing the report to the Director of OMB?
 - a. What are such officials' expertise in IMLS administration and the Museum and Library Services Act statute?
 - b. Please share with Congress the report detailing the functions of IMLS and what is statutorily required and to what extent.

Museums and libraries are the cornerstone of our society that serve as protected spaces for people to learn, engage with their community, and build curiosity. We urge you to uphold the law, immediately disburse all awarded LSTA grant funding to our states, including California, Connecticut and Washington, and reverse any actions that jeopardize the future of the libraries and museums our communities rely on.

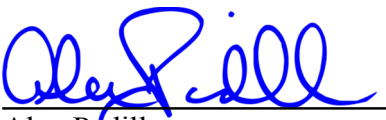
Sincerely,



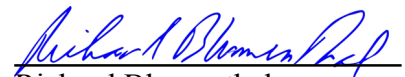
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator




Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



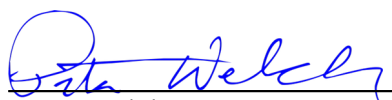
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



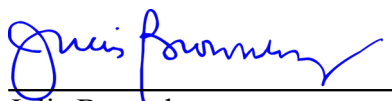
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



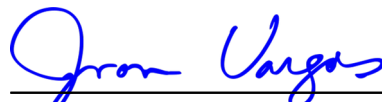
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



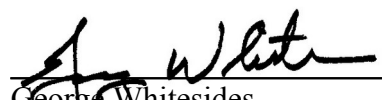
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



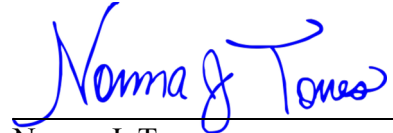
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



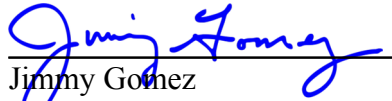
George Whitesides
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



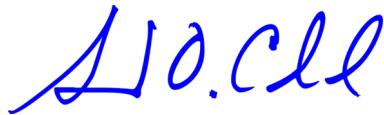
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



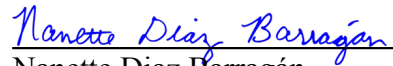
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress




Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress