

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF FUNDING CUTS FOR ILLINOIS LIBRARIES



On March 14, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) “to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law.”

What does this mean for libraries in Illinois?

TO HAVE THRIVING COMMUNITIES, WE NEED THRIVING LIBRARIES.

Libraries are critical institutions for their communities. Funding cuts at any level have the potential to disrupt programs and services, including the interlibrary loan delivery service that transports over **11 million items** statewide per year.

Libraries and the Federal Budget

In 2024, the total amount awarded by IMLS to museums, libraries, and archives was \$266.7 million—or just **0.0046% of the federal budget**, and 75 cents per capita.

More Than Just Books

Libraries provide services for the most vulnerable populations, including:



Seniors



Young Children



People with disabilities



Jobseekers



People experiencing homelessness



Rural residents



Individuals with a language barrier



Individuals in low-income households



Library Funding in Illinois

The most common way that libraries are funded in Illinois is through local property taxes. Most public libraries also receive grants from the Illinois State Library (such as the Per Capita and Equalization Grants) but those are typically a relatively small portion of their budget.

ALLOCATION OF IMLS FUNDING IN ILLINOIS



Advocating for Illinois Libraries

There are many options for making your voice heard about the impact of these cuts. The following organizations are helping mobilize library advocacy efforts:

American Library Association
Illinois Library Association
EveryLibrary

OTHER TIPS

As a trustee, you are an important voice for your local public library in the community. Talking about your experience at the library helps make the public more aware of the impact that the library has. Here are some more ideas to help amplify the value of the library:



Talk to your elected representatives - federal, state, and local



Talk to your community about the benefits of a well-funded library



Share your story about why you serve as a public library trustee



Write your local newspaper about why your library is worth funding



Encourage friends and neighbors to get their library card



The **Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS)** and **Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)**

are the two multitype library systems in Illinois.

They provide:

- interlibrary loan delivery
- continuing education and consulting services
- shared catalog and cataloging support
- e-content services
- museum and attractions pass program
- group purchases and vendor discounts
- networking opportunities
- targeted grant funding

Funding for IHLS, RAILS, and Chicago Public Library System is provided through the Illinois State Library and the Secretary of State, with funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly.