

ALA says White House “cutting off opportunity” for Americans as administration cuts IMLS staff

Washington, DC — Today, the American Library Association (ALA) issued the following statement upon news that all staff at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) were placed on administrative leave for an unknown length of time and, thus, all grants and contracts suspended and, ultimately likely to be cancelled.

ALA President Cindy Hohl said, “Within months, if not weeks, local libraries will experience the impact of IMLS grant cancellations. Even now, state libraries are making hard choices about what their communities may have to do without: library loans that give rural residents more choices, or talking books for people with print disabilities, including many seniors? Or do they cut summer reading programs for kids? Discontinue programs for veterans or end services to small businesses?

“Whether on a campus, in the neighborhood, on a military base or elsewhere, libraries mean opportunity for everyone in our communities. By cutting off federal support from libraries, the Trump administration is cutting off opportunity for the American people – economically, culturally, professionally and socially.

“Congress created IMLS by law, with bipartisan support. Republican and Democratic Presidents signed those laws, including President Trump in 2018. Any significant reductions to the IMLS’ small and talented workforce would undermine the agency’s ability to carry out that law.

“To the dedicated staff of IMLS, you have the full support of ALA. We thank you for your service to America’s libraries. We are exploring all possible policy and legal responses to this order, and we promise to mobilize library supporters nationwide to return you to the vital work entrusted to you.

“ALA calls on IMLS Acting Director Keith E. Sonderling to continue funding for IMLS grants and return the staff needed to manage those funds to benefit the American people as mandated by Congress.

“ALA calls on all Congressmembers to support more opportunity for their communities by safeguarding IMLS funding and, with it, opportunity for their constituents. And, because Congress listens when library supporters speak up, we call on library users everywhere to demand their elected leaders protect the services they rely on. You can Show Up For Our Libraries with support from ALA. Visit ala.org/showup.”

About the American Library Association

The American Library Association (ALA) is the only non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated entirely to America's libraries and library professionals. For almost 150 years, ALA has

provided resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. The ALA serves academic, public, school, government, and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit www.ala.org.

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