



**FROM THE EDITORS**

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America had a long history of fostering the social, economic, environmental, and educational well-being of communities by empowering federal agencies through funding and independent authority. However, the current regime’s actions reflect an authoritarian turn toward fascism, with tangible consequences for affected communities. This is particularly evident through funding freezes and proposed elimination of grant-making agencies central to the work of libraries and public education, such as the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), among many others. Numerous studies demonstrate a high return on investment for library funding with a mean of \$5.00 for every \$1.00 invested, according to Library Research Services, (Library Research Service, 2013). Funding from federal grants is essential to serve communities, particularly in rural areas, for children, and for other under-resourced populations.

In the 2024 fiscal year, Wych Historic House, Garden and Farm (IGSM-255860-OMS-24) was awarded an IMLS grant to manage programs such as their Home Farm Club, a collaborative community garden where community members contribute to the production of food through farming—building skills, enhancing sustainability, and feeding members of the community of the neighborhood of Germantown in Philadelphia. A grant to StoryCorps, Inc. (LG-256647-OLS-24) supports the One Small Step program in collaboration with numerous libraries to facilitate civic engagement and dialog amongst communities. The program “makes it easier to talk to and understand your neighbors, even ones that you might not agree with” (StoryCorps, 2025). The American Library Association’s Public Programs Office received a grant (RE-256725-OLS-24) to create The Programming Librarian Learning Lab, an online platform to grow and support the programming skills of librarians everywhere so that they can more effectively plan and implement programs that support their own local communities.

These projects, whether directly engaging communities or training library workers to develop programs, cannot happen without federal support. The support of our libraries and museums is essential in creating a society that is informed, engaged, and responsible. Creating an informed and engaged society and providing access to education resources should not be a partisan issue since it impacts everyone, no matter their political

affiliation. The Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 states the agency’s purpose as “To enhance and expand the capacity of museums, libraries, and information services to anticipate, respond to, and meet the evolving needs of communities and the public by identifying trends and developments that may impact the need for and delivery of services...” (2018). As we confront a future of increasing civil unrest, climate change, health crises, disruptive technology, and more, our communities are facing consequential challenges—the need for support is urgent.

Funding cuts will hurt communities, especially those most affected by systemic barriers. One way to advocate for your community and support the vital outreach and engagement work of libraries is by helping others understand what’s at stake. Emphasize that continued investment in the IMLS is essential to our nation’s well-being and keep contacting your representatives to demand that funding be restored and protected in future budgets. ALA makes it easy: visit [ala.org/showup](http://ala.org/showup). There are other tools like 5 Calls that make it easier than ever to connect with your representatives on a whole host of issues– they even provide sample scripts! Libraries are resilient because of library workers and library supporters, but sustaining resilience requires collective action and community support. We’re in this together.

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