

**Maura Gast**

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**From:** GRA <gra-articles@government-resource-associates.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 7:07 AM  
**To:** Maura Gast  
**Subject:** North Texas libraries face a new threat of federal cuts that extend well beyond books

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## **North Texas libraries face a new threat of federal cuts that extend well beyond books**

Fort Worth Star-Telegram  
By Kate Marijolic  
March 31, 2025 7:13 PM



Children play a game of rubber ducky fishing at the Fort Worth Public Library in downtown Fort Worth in this June 2007 file photo.

M.L. GRAY Star-Telegram

Texas libraries, including several in the Metroplex, are facing possible federal funding cuts for programs that have delivered books to seniors, digitized historic records, boosted literacy and supported library access for people with disabilities.

All employees of the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services were placed on administrative leave on Monday afternoon. The small agency, which employs about 70 people, provides funding to all 50 states, including Texas.

The union representing the agency's workers said 2025 grant applications are no longer being processed, and that it's "likely most grants will be terminated" due to a lack of staff. The IMLS awarded \$266.7 million to libraries, museums and other related groups across the country in 2024.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission, an organization that supports more than 500 libraries across the state, received an over \$12.5 million grant from the IMLS during the 2024 fiscal year. The federally allocated dollars made up 33% of TSLAC's annual budget.

The 2024 IMLS grant was the sole source of funding for Texas' interlibrary loan program, which covered over \$6 million used to transport materials between library systems for patrons. The federal funding was also the only source of the over \$2.1 million used to provide e-book programs for the state's small libraries, which more than 200 libraries were eligible for.

The TSLAC has been awarded over \$60 million from the IMLS since 2020. The state commission uses the money to digitize archive materials, provide resources to universities and K-12 schools, help finance a variety of programs at local libraries, support library programs for people with visual and physical reading disabilities and fund workforce development and literacy programs.

In 2022, the TSLAC was allotted over \$11.7 million from the IMLS. That money directly supported 28 programs in libraries across the state, many of which are in North Texans' own backyards.

Arlington's public library spent about \$22,000 of the money on a pilot program to provide homebound senior citizens with library services. The Mansfield Public Library used \$23,500 to start a mobile makerspace, which focused on STEM and nutrition education.

The Bedford Public Library used almost \$25,000 to create a food education program, starting a hydroponic garden and mobile kitchen it used to teach library patrons about nutrition.

MetroShare Libraries, a consortium of 11 North Texas libraries, used over \$73,000 to transport materials between partner libraries.

The Rowlett Public Library got about \$4,300 for a Wifi hotspot lending program; the 15 hotspots were checked out 151 times.

"Although the President cannot fully eliminate IMLS without Congressional approval, his order makes it clear that it is his goal to do so," the Texas Library Association said in a statement on Monday. "IMLS funding accounts for less than 0.003% of the annual federal budget but has an enormous impact on communities across our state and the country. Congress must understand how important IMLS is to our communities and that it is an essential investment in the quality of life of Texans."

In response to a request for comment on the imperilment of IMLS grants, a public information officer for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission sent the Star-Telegram a link to an infographic detailing the impact of the organization's 2024 grant.

The commission's website lists dozens of libraries the organization plans to award grants to during the 2025 fiscal year. A press release from July announcing the new grant funding year, which ends on June 30, conclude by stating where the money is sourced from.

"The majority of funding for local awards comes from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in Washington, D.C.," it read.

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