

August 25, 2025

The Honorable Tom Barrett
328 W Ottawa St., Suite A
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Congressman Tom Barrett,

On behalf of a coalition of associations representing Michigan's libraries, museums and historical societies, we write today to urge your support for funding the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

On March 14, the federal administration issued an Executive Order (EO) titled "Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy", which directs the IMLS to eliminate non-statutory programs and reduce its functions and personnel to the minimum required by law. Libraries, museums, archives and historical organizations across the country will feel the effects of these cuts, as they support widely popular statewide programs that benefit Michiganders.

On May 2, the federal administration released its fiscal year 2026 discretionary budget, which calls for the complete elimination of IMLS funding. While lawsuits challenging the EO make their way through the courts, we believe it's critical that Michigan's Congressional leaders take a strong stance in defense of IMLS and all the communities it serves.

IMLS funds provide the majority of support for statewide programs that are used every day across public libraries, K-12 schools and higher education. Michigan's eLibrary (MeL) provides access to 85+ online databases that Michiganders rely on for workforce development, research, digitized newspapers, genealogy, homework help and much more. In 2024, Michigan residents accessed 19 million+ trusted articles and journals through MeL. Michigan's eLibrary Catalog (MeLCat) - our statewide interlibrary loan system - allows Michiganders in every corner of the state to borrow materials from other libraries. That program saw 1 million+ books and other materials shared between libraries in 2024.

The changes proposed in the EO and the FY26 budget would cause lasting harm to Michigan's cultural and educational infrastructure. While the state receives relatively modest federal funding from IMLS, our 397 public libraries, 87 academic libraries, nearly 3,000 school libraries, 650 museums and hundreds of historical organizations use these funds efficiently and creatively to provide valuable service to the public. In fact, for every dollar spent, \$27.00 was returned to Michigan communities through these valuable services.

A June 2025 statewide poll commissioned by the Michigan Library Association also revealed broad support from Michigan residents for continued federal library funding. 78% of respondents said that IMLS funding from the federal government should remain as part of the federal budget.

Without IMLS support, schools, libraries, historical organizations, universities and community colleges would face major challenges in sustaining these programs, especially those with limited local funding. The economies of scale that make these statewide services affordable would disappear. For example, the current cost of MeL database subscriptions statewide is \$2,481,885 annually. If each institution were

to purchase those resources independently, the total cost would skyrocket to \$66,910,870. Michigan residents depend on these programs for education, career development, and access to reliable information. Continued federal funding through IMLS is essential to ensuring equal access for all.

We respectfully urge you to advocate for IMLS funding in the FY2026 federal budget. Thank you for your ongoing service to Michigan and our shared constituents.

Sincerely,



Dillon Geshel
Interim Executive Director
Michigan Library Association



Christine Beachler
President
Michigan Association of School Librarians



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