



CHIEF OFFICERS OF STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES

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June 13, 2025

From: Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)

Subject: Testimony prepared for the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies; addressing the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the single largest source of Federal funding for library services in the United States. While the total IMLS 2025 budget of \$294.8 million makes up just 0.005% of the Federal budget, IMLS grant programs and services benefit every state in the nation. No other program administered by the federal government has such extensive reach and the power to benefit all Americans from the very young to the very old, and everyone in between. As such, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), representing all 50 states, respectfully requests the Subcommittee maintain all functions, programs and services of the IMLS through an appropriation in the 2026 federal budget that is no less than the funding provided in each of the 2024 and 2025 federal budgets, or \$294.8 million.

The IMLS Grants to States program, the largest grant program administered by IMLS under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), provides a total of \$180 million in funding for state library agencies across the country, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories and federated states. Each state library agency uses these dollars to advance the work of libraries in their state. Local libraries, in turn, support the unique needs of individuals in their communities.

Grants to States funding, on average, constitutes one third to over one half of each state library agency's annual budget. These funds, which must be matched by state dollars, are expended to support services and programs as established in each state's individual Five Year State Plan in accordance with the rules and regulations established in the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018, Chapter 72 of Title 20 of the U.S. Code. Please see the appended allotment table to see the distribution of IMLS Grants to States funding in the states and territories in 2025.

COSLA appreciates the challenge faced by Congress to weigh conflicting priorities to create a fiscally responsible Federal budget. The Subcommittee can feel confident when appropriating funds to IMLS knowing that, for each dollar spent on libraries, society receives an estimated \$3.21 in goods and services plus indirect economic benefits (Georgia Public Libraries Estimated Service Valuation and Economic Impact, University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2018). Examples exist in every state that demonstrate how these dollars are invested wisely and strategically to leverage resources and to improve the lives of people across the United States.

The Oklahoma Division of Libraries uses Grants to States funds to procure statewide access to high quality online research databases. By using federal dollars and bidding once for this service at the state level on behalf of all Oklahomans, this procurement saves local taxpayers over \$38 million annually. In the past year, Oklahomans used these resources over 87 million times to complete homework assignments, increase workforce skills, and research health information. Without this federal funding, most rural schools and libraries could not afford access to these resources.

Kansas also uses Grants to States funds to provide free access statewide to a wide range of high-quality online resources that support education, job searching, research and lifelong learning. In small communities, these databases bridge the gap in access to high-quality information, making education, career growth and personal enrichment more accessible without extra costs to residents. Similarly, the State Library of Louisiana uses Grants to States funds for statewide services, providing job preparation materials and test preparation tools for jobseekers and homework help for student and adult learners through the Louisiana Library Connection.

In Wisconsin, Grants to States funds have provided the Library Services Team at the Department of Public Instruction with the means to pilot innovative new ideas. The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium Digital Library provides access to a robust statewide eBook collection that now sees 9 million checkouts per year. Recollection Wisconsin, a project that connects cultural heritage institutions throughout Wisconsin to preserve, promote, and facilitate digital access to Wisconsin's rich history, was initially supported by LSTA funds and state library agency staff. Now, Recollection Wisconsin contains hundreds of thousands of photographs, maps, letters, diaries, oral histories, and other historical resources. Both projects have moved off federal funding after showing statewide impact. Without LSTA funding, these efforts would have been impossible at state scale. Having federal funding and statewide oversight from Wisconsin Library Services reduced duplication of efforts and provided fertile grounds for collaboration and efficiency in creating modern library services that benefit all residents of the state.

In New Hampshire, approximately 50% of Grants to States funds support a statewide interlibrary loan (ILL) service. It is a critical component of the State Library's effort to create equitable access to service for all New Hampshire public libraries, regardless of the size of the town served or the level of local funding. In 2024, more than 360,000 items were moved across the state, and the fleet of vans covered more than 220,000 miles. Though the scale of this project is significant, it is also the most efficient and economical way to share resources and provide services to residents. For example, in the tiny town of Mont Vernon, population 2,584, the ILL vans deliver books each month for no fewer than eight book groups.

Grants to States funds directly support summer reading and early literacy in many states. In Connecticut, local public libraries ran 8,827 summer reading programs and activities, with 229,470 kids, teens, and families participating in 2024. Thirteen public libraries received Summer Enrichment Grants totaling \$21,210, and LSTA subawards totaling \$57,000 were given to 18 libraries to improve summer reading and family engagement. Similarly, funds support the CT Library for Accessible Books, which circulated 164,232 audio and braille books to over 5,000 active patrons including 316 veterans. Many other states also use LSTA funds to support libraries serving the blind and print-disabled, ensuring that those who cannot use traditional print materials have access to reading materials in audio or braille format.

Beyond Grants to States, there are additional LSTA grants that are vital to the development and support of libraries: National Leadership Grants, Native American/Native Hawaiian Library Services Grants, and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program. For example, Hawaii received a Native Hawaiian Library Services grant that supported the Ulukau online digital repository project, which has become a cornerstone of Hawaiian knowledge preservation because it makes historical texts, genealogical records and language resources available worldwide. This would not have been possible without grant support through IMLS.

In addition to grantmaking, IMLS works cooperatively with every state library agency to collect, analyze and utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate its services and the impact of the dollars they administer on behalf of the U.S. government and every American taxpayer. The investment IMLS makes in data collection through the Public Library Survey (PLS) and grant reporting ensures that dollars are invested wisely and strategically, and programs have the impact intended. The data collected and analyzed by IMLS and its contractors produces a wealth of information to inform data-driven decision making at the federal, state and local level, all to ensure the most effective, efficient and impactful use of taxpayer dollars.

Montana libraries use PLS data to benchmark their progress, compare with peers, and set realistic, public-focused goals. The North Lake County Library District in Polson, Montana, uses PLS data to ensure its programs are closely aligned with the educational needs of the community. Detailed data helps library leaders assess how useful a service or program is to its users, and if it is the best use of library funds. Similarly, the Great Falls Public Library monitors library card registration data to discover new ways to reach more readers. As one of Montana's largest libraries, Great Falls can compare itself with only a handful of peers in the state, but access to national data allows library leadership to spot trends and adopt best practices from libraries across the country. In 2022, Great Falls Public Library developed a Master Plan to evaluate how well it was meeting community needs. PLS data played a key role in conversations with residents, which ultimately led to the successful passage of a major library levy.

The IMLS is exemplary in its responsible and strategic use of federal funds. A small but highly effective team supports and manages programs and grants from Maine to Micronesia, from Juneau to San Juan, ensuring funds are spent to advance, support, and empower America's libraries, museums and related organizations and meet the changing needs of our nation's libraries and museums and the communities they serve. While a miniscule portion of the U.S. budget, IMLS programs serve and impact a major portion of the population, with over 55% of Americans holding a library card according to a 2016 report by the IMLS, and more using additional library services such as public computers, internet and library programming.

On behalf of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, we thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the critical services that libraries provide to the constituents of your state, and in cities, towns and villages across America. To ensure the continued support of those services in ways that are unique and impactful to each state and community, we ask that you include full funding of at least \$294.8 million for the IMLS in the 2026 federal budget, with no less than \$180 million of those funds dedicated to the Grants to States program.

Sincerely,

Nicolle Davies, COSLA President
Colorado State Library

Jamie Ritter, COSLA Vice President
Tennessee State Library

Karen Mellor, COSLA Public Policy Co-Chair
Rhode Island Office of Library & Information
Services

Jennie Stapp, COSLA Public Policy Co-Chair
Montana State Library

**INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM & LIBRARY SERVICES
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT
FY 2025 IMLS APPROPRIATIONS: STATE ALLOTMENT TABLE (PUBLIC LAW 119-4)**

State	IMLS Federal Funds	State	IMLS Federal Funds
ALABAMA	\$2,923,391	NEW MEXICO	\$1,794,408
ALASKA	\$1,276,008	NEW YORK	\$8,155,016
ARIZONA	\$3,827,596	NORTH CAROLINA	\$5,119,245
ARKANSAS	\$2,151,698	NORTH DAKOTA	\$1,297,053
CALIFORNIA	\$15,704,570	OHIO	\$5,431,480
COLORADO	\$3,221,648	OKLAHOMA	\$2,527,240
CONNECTICUT	\$2,370,494	OREGON	\$2,593,238
DELAWARE	\$1,392,277	PENNSYLVANIA	\$5,877,282
FLORIDA	\$9,715,885	RHODE ISLAND	\$1,414,798
GEORGIA	\$5,169,534	SOUTH CAROLINA	\$3,043,147
HAWAII	\$1,539,292	SOUTH DAKOTA	\$1,344,824
IDAHO	\$1,746,437	TENNESSEE	\$3,695,347
ILLINOIS	\$5,739,828	TEXAS	\$12,668,868
INDIANA	\$3,582,177	UTAH	\$2,306,555
IOWA	\$2,208,804	VERMONT	\$1,241,835
KANSAS	\$2,107,788	VIRGINIA	\$4,285,840
KENTUCKY	\$2,711,080	WASHINGTON	\$3,967,737
LOUISIANA	\$2,714,573	WEST VIRGINIA	\$1,596,414
MAINE	\$1,523,952	WISCONSIN	\$3,222,946
MARYLAND	\$3,335,658	WYOMING	\$1,219,133
MASSACHUSETTS	\$3,661,196	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$1,261,881
MICHIGAN	\$4,781,545	PUERTO RICO	\$1,571,304
MINNESOTA	\$3,160,362	AMERICAN SAMOA	\$116,135
MISSISSIPPI	\$2,097,510	NORTHERN MARIANAS	\$118,999
MISSOURI	\$3,329,037	GUAM	\$163,281
MONTANA	\$1,424,093	VIRGIN ISLANDS	\$138,706
NEBRASKA	\$1,747,871	MARSHALL ISLANDS	\$130,966
NEVADA	\$2,218,492	MICRONESIA	\$136,867
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$1,525,451	PALAU	\$108,184
NEW JERSEY	\$4,543,024		
Total			\$180,000,000

The IMLS Federal funds (allotments) are calculated using the current base provisions set into law (20 U.S.C. § 9101 et seq., see in particular §§ 9123-9133) and population figures from the Bureau of the Census (BOC) as of December 2024. For FY2025, the base amount for states, DC, and PR was \$1,000,000, and for all others the base was \$100,000. Table reflects funds available as of June 2025.