

## PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MAINE STATE LIBRARY LAYOFFS DUE TO FEDERAL FUNDING INACCESSIBILITY

**Augusta, Maine** – The Maine State Library today announced that due to ongoing inability to access Federal funding, the State Library will close for two weeks to reorganize its operations and has issued layoff notices to 13 staff members whose positions are supported by Federal funds.

The State Library last received funds from its 2025 Federal award advance through the Institute and Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on March 24, 2025, and has not received any communication from IMLS on if, or when, this funding may be restored.

IMLS funding represents 30% of the State Library’s annual budget. The 13 affected employees represent approximately 30% of the State Library’s staff. If the State Library’s Federal funding becomes accessible, the layoffs could be rescinded.

“Losing access to this Federal funding harms Maine residents and will have negative consequences in communities across the state,” said Lori Fisher, Maine State Librarian.

“Despite these significant cuts, the Maine State Library remains committed to advancing the mission of libraries in Maine and to serving every library patron to the best of our ability.”

In Federal fiscal year 2024, the State Library was awarded \$1,526,754 from the IMLS Library Services & Technology Act, Grants-to-States program to library services and programs across the state. In Maine, there are more than 600 school libraries, 257 public libraries, 33 academic libraries at universities and colleges, and select special libraries in government buildings, correctional institutions, and health care and nonprofit settings.

The Maine State Library has received funding through IMLS since its inception; annual amounts are determined by a population formula.

The State Library's closure will begin Thursday 4/10/25. During this reorganization period, the State Library location at 242 State Street in Augusta will not be open to the public.

The State Library is continuing to evaluate the range of impacts on library services from this funding cut and will provide further updates as information becomes available.

Federally funded staff provide key services for MSL's patrons and the state's libraries. Services they perform include serving the public who come through the doors or access our collection online; organizing our collection of over 7 linear miles books and other items; ensuring the public has access to all of the library holdings in the state—over 10 million items; providing 1:1 consultations and professional development services for library staff across the state; ensuring those who are homebound or live in remote communities have access to library services; and Maine residents who are blind, visually impaired or have a print disability are provided with reading materials.

The services these professionals provide everyday are core to the State Library's mission to *help people, make Maine libraries stronger and transform information into knowledge.*

### **Library Services and Technology Act funding in Maine**

IMLS funding supports State Library services authorized under the Library Services and Technology Act. Since 1996, LSTA has played an essential role in ensuring Maine's residents and their libraries have the services, resources, and support necessary to thrive.

The State Library uses its LSTA funding for services for all Maine residents and the state's school, academic, and public libraries. Because of LSTA funding, Mainers have access to more than 10 million items through our robust resource sharing systems. Our 18,000 card holders and over 10,000 annual visitors benefit from our collections and programming. LSTA sustains the Talking Books program for Maine residents who are visually impaired or who have a print disability and the Books by Mail program for rural and homebound residents.

LSTA funding also provides critical services for the state's libraries, including professional development and consulting for library staff, support for workforce development, literacy programs for all ages, youth enrichment programs, and collaboration with educational and cultural organizations statewide.

**About Maine State Library:** Established in 1837, the Maine State Library strives to help people, make Maine libraries stronger, and transform information into knowledge. The services provided by Maine State Library are available to all Maine residents and are free of charge. To learn more, visit <https://www.maine.gov/msl/>.

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