



City and Borough of Juneau
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TO: Chair Woll & Assembly Finance Committee
DATE: May 7, 2025
FROM: Robert Barr, Deputy City Manager
Catherine Melville, Library Director
RE: Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) - federal funding loss

On March 14, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14238, which directed that seven agencies, among them IMLS, "be eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law..." Subsequently, funding has been frozen, staff have been placed on administrative leave, and it is clear to us funding for existing programs will not be made available despite significant and unresolved legal questions related to the separation of powers and the executive's role in fulfilling congressionally directed appropriations.

IMLS funds various library and museum programs throughout the country. The statewide impact in Alaska is significant but is outside of the scope of this memo. This memo focuses on two local impacts: Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service and the Alaska Library Extension (ALEX) program.

- ILL is performed by Anchorage Public Library on behalf of the state and enables libraries to share materials with other libraries when their local collections don't meet the research or recreational needs of their patrons.
- ALEX is performed by Juneau Public Libraries (JPL) on behalf of the state and provides library services to rural areas of the state unable to operate their own library.

Historically, ALEX was a service provided regionally with state-funded (IMLS pass through) grants awarded to public libraries in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. Over time due to budget reductions, the program centralized in Juneau, and we have served eligible residents across the state for the past decade.

JPL staff have been in contact with the State Library and there is no certainty of continued funding after June 30. Accordingly, JPL staff have been notifying ILL and ALEX patrons of a disruption and/or elimination of service, dependent on future decisions at all levels of government.

Due to the size of the ALEX program and the integrated nature with overall JPL operations, elimination of this program has broader implications to staffing, hours of operation, and the materials budgets at JPL. Director Melville has provided two scenarios for your consideration.

In both scenarios, statewide/rural library services end. The Alaska State Library (ASL) has a statutory obligation to provide these services and it is not clear at this time how ASL intends to meet this obligation. At a high level:

- Scenario 1 maintains all core library services for Juneau patrons at an increased general fund cost of \$130,200.

- Scenario 2 reduces hours of operation by closing one weekday per week at all locations, reducing the materials budget by \$33k, and eliminating ILL. There is no additional general fund request in this scenario.

Detail on these scenarios is attached.

Recommendation

Given direction at the Assembly retreat to maintain existing services at a status-quo level, increase the general fund operating to the support to the Library in FY26 in the amount of 130,200 (scenario 1).