

CT State Library | Ambassadors 2025

Purpose of the CT State Library Ambassadors

With the [CT State Library Strategic Framework 2024](#), cultivating ambassadors is an integral component to the identified strategic priorities and goals to raise awareness and deepen collaborations. A key strategy is to create “a **CT State Library Ambassadors Corps** to engage in continuous dialogue; to serve as a reciprocal and collaborative entity; and to have minds with which to learn, create, and share inspired resources, services, and programs.” As we center the perspectives and needs of community, we rely on “Ambassador insights [to] inform the imagining, creation and evaluation of new and existing projects, programs, and services.” Reciprocally, we want to ensure that Ambassadors are empowered “with the tools and messaging to share the State Library’s rich offerings, resources, services, and programs.” Thus, we are committed to “invest[ing] in ongoing listening to and learning from stakeholders and partners to understand what they need to become State Library Ambassadors.”

Federal Funding Overview and Impact

Federal Recap

- On **March 14, 2025**, the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** was included in an **Executive Order**, targeting it for dismantling along with several other federal agencies.
 - By the end of March, IMLS staff members were placed on administrative leave, though over the following weeks, a handful of staff returned.
- On **April 4, 2025**, **CT Attorney General William Tong** joined a coalition of **20 other attorneys general** in suing the federal administration to stop the dismantling of three federal agencies including IMLS.
 - Filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island, Judge John J. McConell issued a temporary injunction in mid-May, ruling in

- favor of the states, and essentially ordering the administration to restore staffing and operations at IMLS and the other agencies.
- In the **second lawsuit, the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)**, the labor union whose members include IMLS employees, also sued the administration filing in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.
 - After Judge Richard J. Leon initially granted a temporary restraining order in May, the case essentially hit an end in early June when he denied the plaintiff's request for a preliminary injunction.
 - Also in **May 2025, Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, was fired.** She was the first African American and the first woman to hold this position.
 - The Library of Congress houses the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) of which the **CT Library for Accessible Books (CT LAB)** is a network library.

Connecticut Recap

- In early April, the **CT State Library received notification from IMLS that its FY 2024 federal grant awarded under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant to States program had been terminated effective April 1, 2025**, along with only two other states, California and Washington. The nearly \$2.2 million statutory grant was scheduled to cover through the current federal fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.
- Just a week later, **the State Library received notice that two competitive federal grants were also terminated, effective April 8, 2025**, in the middle of the grant period.
 - As part of the **Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program** (Grant Application No. RE-250063-OLS-21), the IMLS had awarded a two-year grant to the State Library in 2021 for \$310,000 to support **Transformation for Libraries: The Futures School**. In 2023, IMLS awarded a supplemental two-year grant for \$285,000 to continue the project.
 - Also in 2023, IMLS awarded the State Library with a **National Leadership Grants – Libraries** (Grant Application No. LG-254838-

OLS-23) for \$249,948 in support of the **Regional Digital Navigator Sharing Plan**.

- **On May 5, the CT State Library received notification from IMLS that its FY2024 federal LSTA Grants to States grant for \$2.16 million awarded had been reinstated**, reversing its April 1 decision to terminate the grant mid-year.
 - IMLS also told the State Library it planned to issue a FY2025 LSTA award to Connecticut.
 - There was no reason given for this reinstatement, just as no reason was given for the grant's initial termination.

What does federal library funding support in CT?

- **Federal funds granted through the Institute of Museum and Library Services Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Program supports much of the statutorily mandated statewide library infrastructure, programs, resources, and services that enable information and education access to the people of Connecticut.**
- Federal LSTA funds support **13 Division of Library Development (DLD) staff** of the State Library who sustain a number of Connecticut statewide statutory services and projects supporting all CT's libraries.
 - Federal funds do not directly support public libraries who are funded locally by their municipalities, however, local impact would be felt by the loss of programs and support across all CT communities.
- Below is a snapshot of **LSTA supported projects**, which include consulting, collections, training, programs, digital resources and much more.
 - The **E-Rate Program** provides funds for schools and libraries to improve their broadband access, saving 76 CT libraries \$497,221 in FY24 and is supported by 1 LSTA funded staff member.
 - LSTA funds provided \$133, 530 (free of charge to libraries) for 106 **Professional Development** virtual and in-person workshops attended by 1,300 library staff and is supported by 2 LSTA funded staff members.

- Libraries ran 8,827 **Summer Reading** programs and activities, with 229,470 kids, teens, and families participating and is supported by 2 LSTA funded staff members.
- The **CT Library for Accessible Books** (CT LAB) circulated 164,232 audio and braille books to 5,000+ active patrons including 316 veterans – that amounts to each patron borrowing 30 books in FY2024! Staff conducted 27 outreach sessions, reaching over 650 individuals. CTLAB is supported by 3 LSTA funded staff.
- The **Middletown Library Service Center's** (MLSC) core function is serving as a library for 270 public and school libraries, promoting resource sharing and supporting collections for children and young adults as well as professional development and programming for librarians. In FY2024, MLSC circulated 21,327 items. MLSC is supported by 3 LSTA funded staff.
- The **statewide eBook and audiobook platform eGO**, using the Palace Project app, provides eBook and audiobook access a collection of 50,000 books to public, academic, and school libraries across the state. FY24 was our second full year with the Palace Project app and the eGO CT program saw a 150 percent increase in the number of checkouts (7,767 in FY23 compared with 19,435 in FY24)! eGO is supported by 1 LSTA funded staff member.
- For additional details, visit the [CT State Library | Federal Library Funding in Connecticut LibGuide](#).

Where are we now?

With the passage of the Senate Reconciliation OBBA bill, it is anticipated that the IMLS will be eliminated. The OBBA bill is a tax and spending bill which addresses mandatory spending, not discretionary. Thus, it does not resolve the issue of funding for IMLS; it only provides the overall framework for the federal budget. The actual work in constructing the 2026 federal budget will take place in congressional committees starting this month. The administration's **draft federal budget for FY 2026 proposes to allocate only \$5.5 million for “sunsetting the agency,”** (see [IMLS Congressional Budget Justification FY 2026](#)) effectively demolishing the only federal agency dedicated to libraries and museums.

In addition, while there is a **need for the reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 by September 30, 2025 to ensure the existence of the IMLS as a federal agency**, IMLS will continue operations until September 30, 2026 with the current allocation of funds.

In the interim, **the CT State Library continues to work with Connecticut leadership at the state level to support state statutory programs, and with the state's federal delegation for the preservation of IMLS**. The hope is that the statewide statutory programs currently funded by LSTA will be funded by the state of Connecticut when federal funding runs out. The recently passed biennial CT state budget bill for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 does not contain funds to support currently federally funded state statutory programs.

Next Steps

As a state agency, we do not advocate for funding at the state level, though our partners can. As the State Library, we can educate and share information.

For those of you that would like to show support for the CT State Library, the Division of Library Development, and the CT Library for Accessible Books, we encourage you to contact your local and federal elected officials to share your thoughts and input, and we welcome you to use our resources shared on our LibGuides website to provide information. Hearing from State Library partners and Ambassadors on an ongoing basis can have an impact.