## The Impact of Losing Federal Funding for Washington Libraries

Federal funding plays a crucial role in supporting libraries across Washington. Each year, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provides annual funding through the Grants to States program. The current award is $3.9 million. This funding is managed by the Washington State Library (WSL) and directly benefits public, tribal, K-12, and community college libraries. Losing these funds would have devastating consequences, especially for smaller and rural libraries. Here’s what is at stake:

### Key Library Programs at Risk

1. Access to eBooks and Audiobooks:

* WSL oversees the Washington Digital Library Consortium, which serves 40 library systems.
* This consortium lends over 1 million eBooks and audiobooks annually.
* Without federal funding, this vital resource would be in serious jeopardy.

2. Research Databases:

* WSL negotiates statewide database licenses, ensuring affordable access to high-quality research tools.
* Federal funds cover half the cost, making these resources available to all libraries.

3. 24/7 Reference Help:

* AskWA chat service allows patrons to get answers anytime.
* WSL covers 50% of the service cost.

4. Digitized Heritage Materials:

* Historical newspapers and local materials are digitized and hosted online.
* Over 1 million pages from more than 100 historical Washington newspapers are available.
* Over 1 million records are available through the Northwest hub for the Digital Public Library of American (DPLA) platform from more than 300 contributors.

5. Support for Rural Libraries:

* WSL hosts and maintains websites for 13 small libraries and provides technical support.
* Programs like LibTech supply broadband equipment and internet access to underserved areas.

6. Tribal Library Support:

* WSL helps tribal libraries secure funding, update technology, and improve services.

7. Consulting

* Libraries across the state look to WSL as a wellspring of expertise and experience, and WSL consults with libraries in all areas of need.

8. Training

* WSL offers extensive training for librarians, staff, directors, boards, and trustees through Library Development staff, world-class contracted trainers, and resources like OCLC’s WebJunction.
* Recorded training is available statewide via the Niche Academy platform.
* Grants help librarians attend conferences, bring in trainers, and support onsite staff training.
* Certified training for school librarians is provided during the state’s October In-Service Day, including participants being able to collect official clock hours through OSPI.

9. Institutional Library Services and the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library

* 30% of the annual federal award goes to maintaining and expanding service to the ILS and WTTBL programs.
* Loss of these funds would threaten the existence of the Institutional Library program and severely weaken the breadth of service for WTBBL.

### Impact on Staff

Federal funding supports 32 partially or fully funded Library Development staff, staff at Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) in Seattle, and prison and hospital library staff.

### Consequences of Losing Funding

* **No eBooks:** Smaller libraries won’t afford digital collections.
* **Fewer Resources**: Loss of research databases, training, and AskWA chat service.
* **Rural Libraries at Risk**: Many small libraries depend on WSL for websites, broadband, and technical help.
* **Prison and Hospital Libraries:** Institutional libraries would be endangered.
* **Staff Cuts**: Jobs supported by federal funding would be eliminated.
* **End of Innovative Projects**: Programs like tabletop gaming grants and digital newspaper pilots would stop.

### Why Federal Funding Matters

Libraries are essential to Washington communities. They provide free internet, job training, and access to books and resources for people of all backgrounds. Federal funds make this possible. Without them, countless programs and services would disappear, leaving many communities without access to the resources they rely on.

We must ensure continued support to keep Washington libraries strong and accessible to everyone.