

# DOGE is Cutting NEH Cultural Funding to Illinois and Across Country

*Impacts include devastating cuts to grants in Illinois that have already been awarded and eliminating the majority of the small federal agency's scope and staff*



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2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has issued deep cuts to the the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in a sweeping and unprecedented effort to dismantle the agency, halt its programs, and withdraw funding from all 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils, including [Illinois Humanities](#), the state partner of the NEH.

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*Illinois Humanities Executive Director Gabrielle Lyon*

Late last night, Illinois Humanities received notice from DOGE, signed by Michael McDonald, Acting Chair of NEH, that its operating grant had been terminated, despite the fact that funding is a “statutorially required activity” which can only be changed with the approval of Congress.

For more than 50 years, the U.S. has invested in humanities initiatives that promote lifelong learning, educate our citizens to think critically, and foster an understanding of our history, the human experience, and our neighbors.

“The impact on Illinois—and the country—will be staggering,” Illinois Humanities Executive Director Gabrielle Lyon said. “Our grant that was terminated represents a third of our budget—roughly \$2M. This loss means we will be unable to provide free history and heritage programs, funding for rural museums and historical societies, and otherwise available educational programs for youth and adults. Now multiply that across every state and territory.”

The NEH has directed \$34M in funding to Illinois since 2019. Grants support essential cultural infrastructure spanning museums, universities, community organizations, as well as programs that benefit veterans, rural communities, and more. From the Field Museum in Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, to the Western Illinois Museum in Macomb and the Cairo Historical Preservation Project, the impact of these cuts will be detrimental to every county

and congressional district in Illinois.

“As a nonpartisan, statewide nonprofit organization we take our responsibility to steward the funding we receive from all sources—individuals, foundations, and government—extremely seriously,” Lyon said. “Last year alone we served over 20,000 Illinoisians and awarded 137 grants totalling more than \$800,000 to small towns and rural communities—communities not eligible for other sources of funding. I cannot overstate the importance of this agency to Illinois.”

Lyon continued, “The NEH makes a huge difference in terms of supporting the cultural life of our country and telling the full story of America. I love being a champion for the humanities because the humanities create our most precious resource as a democracy: our public.”

For over five decades, NEH and state humanities councils have received broad bipartisan support in Congress. With a modest budget of just \$211M—less than 0.001% of the federal budget—NEH and state partners like Illinois Humanities serve every congressional district in the country.

State humanities councils are critical to carrying out the on-the-ground work that no other entity is positioned to do. Illinois Humanities funds both organizations and individuals in the state’s largest and smallest communities in addition to offering free, statewide programs that amplify the voices of rural communities, promote education from Kindergarten through adulthood, and preserve and reflect upon the country’s history.

Chris Vallillo, a member of the [Illinois Humanities Road Scholars Speakers Bureau](#) since the 1990s and resident of Macomb, Illinois, comments, “Illinois Humanities has been critical to bringing all manner of cultural presentations and workshops to areas that have been historically underserved. These unprecedented cuts represent a direct threat to the culture and heritage of our region as well as the economic stability of rural Illinois.”

Cuts to the NEH will make a negligible difference in the federal budget, but will be felt by everyday Americans in each congressional district, undermining efforts tied to education, tourism and economic development, community cohesion, and cultural equity.

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About Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities, the Illinois partner for the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a statewide nonprofit organization that activates the humanities through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that foster reflection, spark conversation, build community, and strengthen civic engagement. Learn more at [ILHumanities.org](#) and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) @ILHumanities.

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