The Falmouth Memorial Library staff are being asked – what impact does the recent cut to the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services have on public libraries locally? Here at Falmouth Memorial Library (FML) the answer is… we don't really know yet.

As of this writing, we've seen colleagues laid off at Maine State Library (MSL) who provide essential services to libraries across the State. While MSL takes some time to absorb these losses and reorganize – prioritizing services, functions, and projects, we wait to see how those changes might have subsequent financial impacts to us.

Unfortunately, it isn't only cuts to IMLS, but also a move to end the Digital Equity Act, freezing grants for digital access programs, as well as termination of grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities. Here at FML we partner on literacy programs with Maine Humanities Council, and with the National Digital Equity Center for computer classes. Those classes are now paused for the summer, and we can't yet know if they'll return. FML participates in the eBook platform cloudLibrary, with administrative and financial support from MSL. Will they still be able to purchase content we all share? Will we have to increase our cost-share for Inter Library Loan delivery once the current contract runs out? We don't know. Probably?

The budget at FML for FY26 is already fixed; public libraries have a long lead time when it comes to anticipating and planning for our community needs. But the grant funding listed above was terminated immediately upon announcement, with no warning, and now cases will move through the court system to release those necessary promised funds. It seems certain that FML will need to increase cost sharing for programs and services currently offered by local partners with federal funding. What is less certain is how much our financial cost will rise, and how much we can absorb, versus what we will have to stop offering. And of course, when. There's too much still unknown to answer the many questions we all have. In the meantime, if you'd like to read more, I encourage you to read here, and contact your local representatives in support of all public libraries in Maine.

https://www.pressherald.com/2025/05/18/maine-state-library-layoffs-temporary-closure-part-of-national-trend-after-trumps-order/

https://www.pressherald.com/2025/05/12/trump-cuts-35-million-in-maine-funding-after-calling-digital-access-initiatives-racist/

https://www.pressherald.com/2025/04/05/maine-cultural-organizations-reeling-from-canceled-humanities-grants-threats-to-funding/

https://www.maine.gov/msl/news/display.shtml?id=13168894