



# AFSCME Facts

## Funding for Libraries and Museums In the American Rescue Plan March 23, 2021

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, **dedicates nearly \$8.9 billion to libraries and museums** to implement public health protocols, increase broadband accessibility and fund payroll costs.

### What funding did libraries and museums receive in the American Rescue Plan?

Libraries and Museums will receive nearly \$8.9 billion in funding through the American Rescue Plan. This funding includes:

- **\$200 million for public libraries** through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
- **\$7.172 billion** for public libraries and schools through the Federal Communication Commission's new **Emergency Education Connectivity Fund**.
- **\$1.25 billion** for the **Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program**.
- **\$135 million** for the **National Endowment of Arts**.
- **\$135 million** for the **National Endowment for the Humanities**.

### What can the IMLS funding be used for?

Of the \$200 million in IMLS funding, \$178 million will be allocated directly to State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs) to distribute to public libraries based on need. The remaining \$22 million will go towards continuing IMLS research and development of projects such as the REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums ([REALM](#)) project.

The funding allocated to SLAAs can be used to:

- Offer greater access to technology, including by expanding digital networks and connectivity, purchasing hotspots, computers, and digital content.
- Establish mobile digital labs.
- Enhance workforce development and jobseeker programming.
- Ensure training and technical support for libraries, including assistance with the safe handling of materials.

### Can libraries use IMLS funding to cover payroll costs?

No. Currently, guidance does not allow for payroll costs, but this funding will help libraries expand their services without having to redirect other funding away from staff.

### **How much is my state receiving from IMLS?**

Estimated state allocations are available on the IMLS website through [this link](#). Each state will receive at least \$2 million. Typically, IMLS funding requires a state match, but the American Rescue Plan waives that requirement for this funding.

### **What is the Emergency Education Connectivity Fund?**

The Emergency Education Connectivity Fund is a new \$7.172 billion fund that will allow public libraries to improve access to WiFi in their communities. Administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) alongside its E-Rate program, this fund will allow for 100% reimbursement of the cost of hotspots and other WiFi capable devices such as modems, routers, laptops and tablets that are circulated to patrons and community members.

### **Which libraries are eligible to access the Connectivity Fund? When does the program expire?**

Full guidance for the Emergency Education Connectivity Fund is being drafted and will be available in the next few months. Generally, libraries currently eligible for discounted telecommunications services through the FCC's E-Rate program are expected to be eligible for support through this new fund.

This funding will be available through FY 2030.

### **What is the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program?**

The \$1.25-billion Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program is administered by the Small Business Administration and provides assistance to venues that have closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Museums that were operating on February 29, 2020, and have space for live performances in their buildings, such as a theater or performance space, may be eligible.

### **What does the SBA count as a museum?**

For this program, museums include aquariums, arboretums, botanical gardens, art museums, children's museums, general museums, historic houses and sites, history museums, nature centers, natural history and anthropology museums, planetariums, science and technology centers, specialized museums and zoos.

### **Can publicly owned institutions access the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant funding?**

Yes. Public institutions can access this funding if the institution acts solely as a museum or venue operator. For example, a city parks and recreation department that operates a bandstand in a public park would not qualify for this funding.

The [full guidance on qualifications](#) is available through the SBA.

**What can Shuttered Venue Operators Grant funding be used for?**

Funds may be used for specific expenses such as payroll costs, rent payments, utility payments, scheduled mortgage payments, scheduled debt payments and worker protection expenditures.

**Is my institution eligible to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts or from the National Endowment for the Humanities? What will it cover?**

Guidance for the combined \$270 million in grant funding from the NEA and the NEH is still forthcoming and should be available by April 2021. Generally, museums, libraries, historic sites, archives and some educational institutions will be eligible to apply for this grant funding. Most (60%) of this funding will be provided in direct grants to institutions and organizations. The remaining 40% of the NEA funding will go to state arts agencies and regional arts organizations, and the other 40% of the NEH funding will go to state humanities councils.

The funding will support a wide range of humanities initiatives and may cover costs such as personnel, technology, training, materials, supplies, equipment and associated indirect costs.

**Does the American Rescue Plan include other potential sources of federal support for libraries and museums?**

Yes. The American Rescue Plan includes \$350 billion in flexible, direct aid for states and local governments, which can be used to cover increased expenditures, replace lost revenue and mitigate the economic harm due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments may also use this funding to support private-sector organizations that have been harmed. Further, this new relief law extends and expands other kinds of relief that are available to support private employers experiencing financial shortfalls, such as the Paycheck Protection Program and Employee Retention Credits. Information about these programs and other forms of assistance included in the American Rescue Plan are available [here](#) on AFSCME's website.