

Cultural Alliance *of* Maine

Learning, connecting, making visible, and building public support across our cultural sectors.

Cultural Alliance of Maine
16 State Street
Ellsworth, ME 04605

February 18, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwerson, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Education and Cultural Affairs:

The Cultural Alliance of Maine (CAM) is dedicated to strengthening and amplifying cultural organizations and communities through collective action, research, and advocacy. We serve as a backbone for collaboration and coordination across Maine's cultural sector, including the arts and humanities, libraries, museums, humanities organizations, historic preservation work, creative businesses, and cultural institutions across the state.

We are writing to testify in strong support of the Maine State Library's personnel requests included in the 2026-2027 supplemental budget: funding half of the Maine InfoNet (MIN) Director position with state funds; moving the Library Section Supervisor for Public Outreach from federal to state funding; and moving the Librarian Specialized Services position (Library Development) from federal to state funding.

These requests are prudent, necessary, and timely. CAM is deeply concerned that for the first time since 1997, federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding through the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is no longer a stable or predictable foundation for core library infrastructure and staffing. If FY26 IMLS funding comes through, it is subject to extraordinary uncertainty: delayed award letters, the ongoing threat of rescission, active litigation affecting the IMLS, and the possibility that future federal budget proposals will again attempt to eliminate the IMLS entirely.

The positions identified by the Maine State Library are not discretionary or exploratory roles dedicated to new initiatives. They support foundational services that touch every corner of the state and every type of library. If federal funding disruptions were to occur without a state backstop, the consequences would be immediate and damaging: interruptions to shared systems, reduced access for patrons with disabilities, and weakened support for local libraries that already operate at the margins.

Libraries are among Maine's most trusted, efficient, and widely used public institutions, with the most comprehensive access coverage across the state. In fact, **CAM's research and cultural asset mapping has shown that libraries are the most consistent community spaces for learning, connection, and creativity in many of Maine's most economically distressed regions.** This comprehensive access and network of local libraries is only possible through the stability of the Maine State Library's core staffing. These personnel items are an investment in literacy, education, workforce readiness, civic participation, and community resilience in every region.

On behalf of the Cultural Alliance of Maine and the many cultural and library partners we work with statewide, I urge you to support these items in the supplemental budget. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of Maine's libraries and the people they serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Mollie Cashwell
Director, Cultural Alliance of Maine