

Statement in support of the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's mission to improve lives and build a stronger community is made more possible by support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

For example, in 2012, we received \$244,452 for a two-year project called "Read to Me, Charlotte" that focused on improving school readiness of young children living in the Reid Park Reid Park Academy school zone. By 2014, 359 children from birth to age five had participated in this program. As a result of the program, 100% of parents reported that their child showed a greater interest in reading together at home since attending the Wee Read storytime, and they were better prepared to help their child develop pre-reading skills.

Our Library relies on grant funds from the IMLS under the provisions of the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) as administered by the State Library of North Carolina. IMLS funds have increased the capacity of our organization to deliver our mission in innovative ways. Here are a few recent examples:

- We would not be able to offer accessible and mobile-friendly online programs and e-courses, such as early literacy storytimes for young children and resume writing workshop for adults, without \$89,000 in LSTA grants (funded by IMLS).
- We would not be able to provide increased computer access for those with disabilities, by providing adaptive computer technology such as special keyboards and trackballs at all Library locations, without nearly \$5,000 in LSTA grants (funded by IMLS).
- We would not be able to provide the free, accessible and popular Library mobile app, which provides access to the Library's resources for everyone using a mobile device, without nearly \$100,000 in LSTA grants (funded by IMLS).

Finally, IMLS is highly supportive of libraries through its National Medal for Library Service, which we received in 2006 along with a \$10,000 prize. The awards are given annually by the IMLS to museums and libraries that have demonstrated a long-term commitment to public service through innovative programs and community partnerships.

Today's news about cuts to IMLS is bad news for libraries and the communities served by these important public institutions. As recipients of IMLS funding, and the IMLS Medal in 2006, we are deeply concerned about this proposal.