

## Federal Agency Yanks Back Major Grant from Imagine Children's Museum

*Loss of federal funding threatens longstanding early learning program  
for preschool children and families in Snohomish County*

Everett, WA (April 21, 2025) – [Imagine Children's Museum](#) was notified that a major \$250,000 grant has been terminated by the Institute of Museum and Library Services ([IMLS](#)). The prestigious Museums for America grant pledged three years of funding to expand the Museum's successful *Little Science Lab* program, providing free, high-quality early learning to preschool-age children at several community-based locations throughout Snohomish County. It is offered in interactive sessions offered to young children and their caregivers at public libraries, community centers and preschools, providing children with engaging, hands-on activities that promote foundational science and math skills.

"Preschool-age children throughout Snohomish County stand to lose the most with this decision by the federal government," said Elizabeth (Elee) Wood, PhD, Chief Executive Officer at Imagine Children's Museum. "The termination of this federal grant represents a sudden and significant loss of as much as \$222,973 in funding through 2027, leaving us without the critical resources we need to continue this essential program. We are actively reallocating internal resources to deliver the program as planned and without interruption through June 2025, but without further funding, we will not be able to continue."

Last week, Imagine Children's Museum received an email from IMLS with a generic letter notifying the Museum that the grant was terminated on April 8. The Museum had adhered to all deadlines set forth in the grant and had not received any communication providing explanation or cause. The termination letter did not adhere to any of the rules required by IMLS's own terms for grant terminations.

[Museums for America](#) (MFA) has been the largest grant funding opportunity of the IMLS, which is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. In fiscal year 2024, Imagine Children's Museum was one of 115 museums of diverse sizes, disciplines and geographies across the United States selected to be MFA grant recipients, and one of only two institutions in Washington state. Nationwide, recipient institutions were pledged \$23,361,915 in federal funding to support strategic, project-based initiatives to serve the public through exhibitions, educational programs, professional development, research and collections management.

On March 14, President Trump issued an [Executive Order](#) to dramatically reduce the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), as well as six other agencies, and named Keith E. Sonderling as the new acting director of IMLS. Later that month, IMLS employees were notified by email that they had been placed on administrative leave. While IMLS has not made public an official accounting of all canceled grants, it appears several IMLS grants

were terminated on the same date. The Museum has received no response to the clarifying questions it has sent to IMLS.

“We are here to serve children and to support their healthy development through playful learning,” said Wood. “We are fortunate to have incredible support in our community, and are grateful to the Board, staff, volunteers and community members who are working hard to figure out what comes next for Imagine Children’s Museum and this program for preschool-age children.”

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**About Imagine Children’s Museum**

Imagine Children's Museum has been a cherished destination for playful learning and creative exploration for over 30 years. Our mission is to enrich the lives of children through playful learning by offering interactive exhibits, educational programs, and family-friendly activities. Located in Everett, WA, the museum also offers high-quality playful learning programs at community-based locations throughout Snohomish County and beyond. As the largest children’s museum on the West Coast, Imagine is the ultimate play and learning destination for children and their families. Discover where play inspires imaginations! Plan your next visit today at [ImagineCM.org](http://ImagineCM.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).