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LOCAL NEWS

Popular botanic garden in Massachusetts calls federal grant cut "devastating"

**WBZ
NEWS**

By **Neal Riley**
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A popular destination for flower lovers in central Massachusetts says it has suffered a "devastating" federal grant cut. The New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston found out last week that a \$250,000 grant has been canceled, the CEO says.

The three-year "Museums for America" grant came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency that was the target of an executive order from President Trump. The garden intended to use the money to hire a full-time worker to survey its large plant collection, make records available online and also for "enhancing the visitor experience."

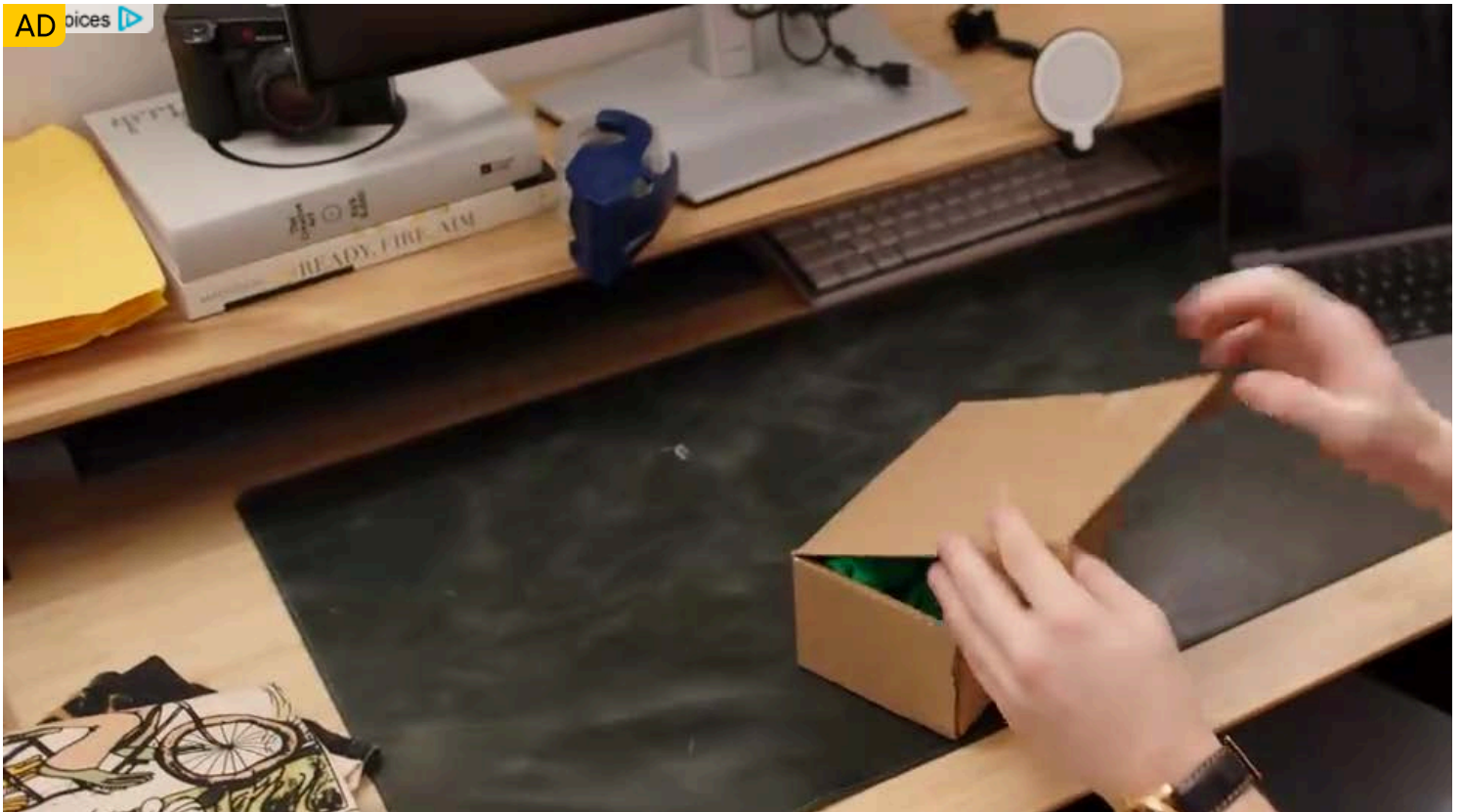
"The loss of this grant is devastating," CEO Grace Elton said in a statement. "We will appeal the grant termination and call on our community and our elected officials for support."

WBZ-TV reached out to the IMLS for comment. Weeks ago, nearly all employees there were put on administrative leave. An executive order from Mr. Trump called for the agency and six other governmental entities to be reduced to "the

minimum presence" after Department of Government Efficiency employees were spotted in the IMLS building.

Museums and libraries affected by federal cuts

The IMLS awarded \$267 million in grants across the country last year. Elton said "We are concerned not only for our garden but for cultural institutions across the state and country that face similar grant terminations."



The Museum of African-American History Boston and Nantucket told WBZ-TV earlier this month it is concerned about its future after a \$500,000, three-year grant from the IMLS was cut because "we no longer align with the White House policies."

The Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst said last week it found out that a \$117,000 grant from the IMLS was terminated. The grant money was being used to digitize its catalogue of materials about the influential poet.

"The notice states, 'IMLS has determined that your grant is unfortunately no longer consistent with the agency's priorities and no longer serves the interest of the United States and the IMLS Program,'" the museum posted to Facebook.

The New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

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The New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is a 200-acre space with conservatories, hiking trails and meadows that welcomes more than 200,000 visitors a year. One of the more popular spring displays is a daffodil exhibit that features more than 25,000 flowers.

In 2023, Tower Hill was named the best botanical garden in the U.S. by Travel Awaits.

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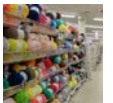
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Neal J. Riley is a digital producer for CBS Boston. He has been with WBZ-TV since 2014. His work has appeared in The Boston Globe and The San Francisco Chronicle. Neal is a graduate of Boston University.