

Pauli Murray center says federal grant authorized in 2024 has been withdrawn

by [Melodie Woerman](#)

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The restored Durham, North Carolina, house where Pauli Murray spent part of her childhood. (Photo courtesy of the Pauli Murray Center)

The [Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice](#) in Durham, North Carolina, has announced that a multi-year, \$330,800 grant from the [Institute for Museum and Library Services](#) authorized in 2024 has been withdrawn.

A [news release](#) from the Murray Center said the money would have been used for a new staff position and the development of new exhibitions, programs, and educational curriculum that would have helped the center reach more people.

The center, housed in the [Murray Family Home](#), is dedicated to promoting the life and legacy of Pauli Murray, a pioneering attorney who fought against racial and gender discrimination. In 1977 they were first Black woman to be ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. They died in 1985. Born Anna Pauline Murray, they shortened their name to “Pauli” after college to reflect a less-gendered identity.

The Episcopal Church’s general convention [added Murray to the calendar](#) of lesser feasts and fasts in 2018; their feast day is observed on July 1.

The center’s grant was among those designated for Black American history and culture made through the institute. On March 14, President Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) that terminated the institute’s work.

The Institute for Museum and Library Services is an independent federal agency that supports libraries, archives, and museums in all US states and territories. Its [website](#) says it awarded \$266 million in grants and research funding to cultural institutions in 2024. The American Library Association has [said](#) that cuts to the institute’s funding also put public libraries at risk.

The Murray Center said that the termination of its grant “is included in a devastating wave of federal disinvestment from museums, cultural spaces and libraries across the nation” and that the termination notice says that “[the] grant is no longer consistent with the [IMLS’s] priorities and no longer serves the interest of the United States and the IMLS program.”

The loss of this federal funding follows the [removal](#) in March of Murray’s biography from the [National Park Service website](#) about the Murray Family Home, a National Historic Landmark, “due to their queer and transgender identity,” according to the center.

“It is clear that the federal government is making a targeted, intentional effort to erase the histories and contributions of Black people, queer people, women and other marginalized groups from the historical record,” Angela Thorpe Mason, the center’s executive director, said in the release.

She added, “The notion that the Rev. Pauli Murray’s lived experience as a Southerner, and work as a Black, gender non-confirming civil, women’s and human rights activist is against national interest, and essentially un-American, is abhorrent and indicative of the violent federal censorship the center has been navigating over

the course of the last month.”

Jesse Huddleston, chair of the center’s board, said, “We will not stop. Our assignments are clear, and our work continues. . . . We have overcome much and have come so far, not just by faith but also by the cooperative actions of countless people, rooted in a shared understanding that the legacy of Pauli Murray must be preserved and amplified, despite every oppressive attempt to render it invisible.”  
—Episcopal News Service