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The New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. (Spectrum News 1/Cam Jandrow)

NEWS

'Devastating:' New England Botanic Garden loses \$250k grant amid cuts by the federal government

BY CAM JANDROW | WORCESTER

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BOYLSTON, Mass. - Funding cuts made by the Trump Administration are being felt here in Central Massachusetts. The New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill saying a significant grant they received last year has been canceled.

The \$250,000 grant was awarded to the garden last year. They were hoping to use that funding to expand their garden their practices. CEO Grace Elton says

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extensive reporting from us if we were to ever be considered for an IMLS grant again."

What You Need To Know

- New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill was notified that its \$250,000 Museums for America grant awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services had been canceled.
- The grant was intended as a 3-year grant allowing the botanic garden to expand what they call essential curatorial practices.
- NEBG is now planning on appealing the federal government's decision.

The funding was going to be used to hire a staff member to take inventory of those plants and create an online database for people around the world. In fact, the garden had already hired said staff member.

Elton describes this as important work. And work which must continue.

"Every plant we have has data behind it," she said. "We know where it's from, we know the purpose of why that plant is in the garden. It serves some kind of purpose. It's not just 'it's beautiful.' But it might have conservation value or educational value, research value."

The grant came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It was a process which took the garden a number of years. According to Elton, the IMLS represents just 0.0046% of the federal budget.

Elton says the garden is already working on back-up plans on how to continue their mission. If the grant doesn't return, she says cuts are inevitable.

"We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit," said Elton. "Our income comes from revenue at the gate, so if you buy a ticket or go to a special event. Also, we have an endowment that does support a small portion of our operations. And then philanthropy. So, we are already asking so much of our community to support our daily operations that taking away a big piece of funding such as this grant, it has to give somewhere."