

This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on June 29, 2014

Resolution in Support of Stable Funding for Air Force Libraries

Whereas the American Library Association supports the principle of equal access to information through the maintenance of publicly funded institutions providing library and information services;

Whereas the seventy-four general Air Force Base and Command libraries provide those essential services to Air Force personnel and their families;

Whereas Air Force Base libraries provide educational materials and services such as test study guides for individual learning and professional development, computers, and access to the military network that non-military libraries cannot provide;

Whereas Air Force Base libraries provide mission support materials and information on topics critical to mission success including aeronautics, aviation, base and unit histories, and access to Air Force-specific training sites;

Whereas Air Force Base libraries share resources with public, academic, and special libraries throughout the United States via cooperative agreements and relationships;

Whereas the Air Force Base libraries are staffed with experienced, professional librarians and dedicated staff who facilitate access to information, answering detailed reference questions from active duty and retired military members and families;

Whereas Air Force Base libraries have experienced budget cuts annually for the last 6 years resulting in material, staff, service, and hours of operation cuts;

Whereas Air Force Base libraries have been particularly affected by fiscal year 2013 and 2014 defense budget cuts and sequestration actions at all levels of funding resulting in large cuts to staff, service, and hours of operation; and

Whereas the thirteen Air Combat Command libraries lost Command level funding for staff or library materials in the summer of 2013 and will lose their Integrated Library System in May 2014; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. urges the United States Congress to direct the Department of Defense (DoD) and United States Air Force (USAF) to restore funding to Air Force Base and Command Libraries to FY2011 levels for staffing, materials, services and programs.
2. urges the Administration, DoD and USAF to develop responsible information and budget management strategies for Air Force Base and Command Libraries that aligns them directly with appropriated funds, rather than through base operations, where library funding is vulnerable to additional local cuts.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council
Sunday, June 29, 2014, in Las Vegas, Nevada

Additional Information

About Air Force Base Libraries:

- There are 74 general Air Force Base libraries. They support the Air Force mission, higher education, and the quality of life of Air Force personnel and their families. There were 5.1 million individuals and 6 million Internet users of Air Force Base Library services in FY2013.
- Air Force Base libraries provide educational materials and services such as DANTES test study guides for individual learning and professional development, Computer Access Card (CAC)-enabled computers, and access to the military network that non-military libraries cannot provide.
- Air Force Base libraries provide mission support materials and services such as aeronautics, aviation, USAF history, base and unit histories, and access to Air Force-specific training sites.
- Air Force Base libraries provide trusted and safe places for service members and families to study and gather for collaboration and community support.
- Air Force Base libraries contract for online and in-hand information utilizing group purchasing power and negotiate discounted pricing to serve all military constituents while expending a minimal amount of citizen tax dollars.
- Air Force Base libraries share resources with public, academic, and special libraries throughout the USA via cooperative agreements and relationships; and
- Air Force Base libraries loaned out 10.3 million items in FY13 from their multimillion dollar collections owned and paid for by tax dollars.
- Air Force Base libraries staff members have specialized library and Air Force training, fully understand the military and USAF ethos, and can tailor information delivery and services to suit specific requests by Airmen.

However,

- Air Force Base libraries have experienced budget cuts annually for the last 6 years resulting in material, staff, service, and hours of operation cuts.
- Air Force Base libraries have been particularly badly affected by fiscal year 2013 and 2014 defense budget cuts and sequestration actions at all levels of funding resulting in large cuts to staff, service, and hours of operation.
- Due to funding cuts, six Air Force Base libraries (Davis-Monthan, Nellis, Offutt, Dyess, Hill, and Kirtland) have closed since June 2013, a further three (F. E. Warren, Dover, and Robins) are scheduled to close or have had plans to close them submitted, and a further eight Air Force Base libraries no longer employ a professional librarian; and

About Air Combat Command Libraries:

- The 13 Air Combat Command Libraries lost Command level funding for staff or library materials (resulting in the closure of four of them and severe staff and hours cuts for the others) in the summer of 2013 and will lose their Integrated Library System in May 2014.

References:

Resolution on Saving Federal Libraries, 062806-CD20.10

Resolution on Federal Libraries and Information Centers as Governmental Activities, 011189-CD39

June 28, 2014