KEY ISSUE: GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ACCESS

OBJECTIVE: Ensure all non-classified government information and government-funded research is available to every member of the public, free of charge and accessible to all persons with disabilities.

PERSPECTIVE: Libraries work to safeguard the public’s ability to access information of all types. Public access to information by and about the government is a basic tenet of democratic society, has long been a core principle of librarianship and is a foundation of the American Library Association.

PRIORITIES: ALA urges Members of the 115th Congress to:

- **ENACT** the Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act (S.760/H.R. 1770) to require federal agencies to publish their information online using non-proprietary, machine-readable data formats by codifying the 2013 government-wide open data policy.

- **PASS** the Preserving Data in Government Act of 2017 (S.960) to maintain open access to government data and, in particular, to require public notice by an agency prior to the removal of any such information from online or other availability.

- **EXPEDITE** adoption of the statutory changes proposed in the Equal Access to Congressional Research Service Reports Act (H.R. 2335) to provide public access to taxpayer-funded reports by the Congressional Research Service that are freely searchable, sortable and downloadable.

- **SUPPORT** legislation building on “FASTR,” the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act as introduced in the 114th Congress (S. 779/H.R. 1477), to assure prompt, no-fee public access to published articles and other materials based upon taxpayer-funded research.

- **BACK** strong whistleblower protection legislation and practices to promote government accountability, protect the public’s “right to know,” and foster participation in government.

- **FUND** the Government Publishing Office and the National Archives and Records Administration at levels that permit them to provide robust public access to and preserve all forms of government information.

- **ASSURE** continued public access through a single, well-funded repository to the unique information collections currently held by the National Technical Information Service.