The State of America's Libraries 2015

A Report from the American Library Association

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ABOUT ALA

The American Library Association (ALA), the voice of America's libraries, is the oldest, largest, and most influential library association in the world. Its approximately 56,000 members are primarily librarians but also trustees, publishers, and other library supporters. The Association represents all types of libraries; its mission is to promote the highest-quality library and information services and public access to information.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Libraries provide people of all ages and backgrounds with unlimited possibilities to participate in a media- and technology-enriched society. As community anchors, libraries touch people's lives in many ways and stand as protectorates of the tenets of a democratic government. This report discusses current issues, developments, and practices of academic, school, and public libraries.

Academic libraries provide resources and services to support the learning, teaching, and research needs of students, faculty, and staff. Surveys show that both students and faculty value high-quality digital and print collections and the instructional support that helps them use these resources. Academic librarians are finding creative ways to repurpose library spaces and make optimal budgeting choices.

School libraries provide learning environments that enable students to acquire the reading, research, digital literacy, and citizenship skills necessary for college and career readiness. Certified school librarians ensure that 21st-century information literacy skills, dispositions, responsibilities, and assessments are integrated throughout all curriculum areas.

Public libraries serve as community anchors that address economic, educational, and health disparities in the community. They offer educational programs, print and digital books, access to databases, meeting spaces, and instruction on how to use new technologies. More than two-thirds of Americans two-thirds of Americans agree that libraries are important because they improve the quality of life in a community, promote literacy and reading, and provide many people with a chance to succeed.

Issues and trends

Libraries demonstrate their value as community anchors by responding to issues and identifying trends that impact the community. Free library programs provide learning opportunities and entertainment for children as well as adults. Books and digital resources support educational goals from early literacy through lifelong learning. Library collections include books and resources that represent the diversity of people, cultures, and the faraway places that make up the world we live in. Librarians help protect people's rights by proactively supporting equitable access and intellectual freedom. A high standard of education helps librarians respond to many issues and trends.

Traditional library programs, from story times to author talks, have always been popular with patrons. New forms of programming today, from makerspaces to drop-in craft activities reflect our changing world. In 2012, there were 92.6 million attendees at the 4 million programs offered by public libraries. This represents a 10-year increase of 54.4% in program attendance.

In addition to programs, libraries engage our nation's youth, from preschool through the teen years, with books and digital resources. Early literacy materials include books and e-resources that introduce words and concepts. Children benefit from storytime, homework assistance, and

diverse books. Many libraries provide a space for teens to hang out, read, do homework in groups, and try out new technologies. Young adult collections and teen programs have flourished in libraries in the past decade.

Youth learn about various cultures and traditions through library books and programs. Librarians have proactively called for diversity in children's literature. In her April 2014 white paper, *[The Importance of Diversity in Library Programs and Material Collections for Children (PDF)](#)*, Jamie Campbell Naidoo explores the critical role libraries play in helping children make cross-cultural connections. She calls on libraries to include diverse programming and materials for children as an essential step in meeting the needs of their communities.

Access and challenges

While most community members appreciate having a window to the world through a diverse collection of books and programs, not all do. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) has been tracking a significant number of challenges to diverse titles. Authors of color, as well as books with diverse content, are disproportionately challenged and banned.

Author [Malinda Lo analyzed](#) OIF's annual Top Ten Banned and Challenged Books lists for the last decade and discovered that 52% of the books challenged or banned included diverse content. OIF analyzed the 2014 Top Ten Challenged Books and found that eight of the 10 titles included diverse content.

Out of 311 challenges recorded by the OIF, the "Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2014" are:

1. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
   Reasons: Anti-family, cultural insensitivity, drugs/alcohol/smoking, gambling, offensive language, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited for age group, violence. Additional reasons: "depictions of bullying."
2. *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi
   Reasons: Gambling, offensive language, political viewpoint. Additional reasons: "politically, racially, and socially offensive," "graphic depictions."
3. *And Tango Makes Three*, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
   Reasons: Anti-family, homosexuality, political viewpoint, religious viewpoint, unsuited for age group. Additional reasons: "promotes the homosexual agenda."
4. *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison
   Reasons: Sexually explicit, unsuited for age group. Additional reasons: "contains controversial issues."
5. *It's Perfectly Normal*, by Robie Harris
   Reasons: Nudity, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group. Additional reasons: "alleges it [to be] child pornography."
6. *Saga*, by Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples
   Reasons: Anti-Family, nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited for age group.
7. *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini
   Reasons: Offensive language, unsuited to age group, violence.

8. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky
   Reasons: Drugs/alcohol/smoking, homosexuality, offensive language, sexually explicit, unsuited for age group. Additional reasons: "date rape and masturbation."
9. *A Stolen Life: A Memoir*, Jaycee Dugard
   Reasons: Drugs/alcohol/smoking, offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited for age group.
10. *Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier
    Reasons: Sexually explicit.

Library education

Challenges to books are one of the many situations that librarians learn to manage while studying for the professional degree in librarianship. A high standard of professional education prepares librarians to understand and respond to the needs of their communities. On February 2, 2015, the ALA Council approved the latest edition of the *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies (PDF)*. The standards were developed through a multiyear research and input collaborative with the public and the profession by the ALA Committee on Accreditation. The accreditation standards benchmark the high standard of professionalism in library education.

National issues and trends

Many federal government policy and regulatory issues are of importance to libraries and the people who use them. Policies related to library funding, personal privacy, workforce development, and copyright law are a few of the issues of interest to the library community.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is up for reauthorization in 2015. ESEA was signed into law in on April 11, 1965, by President Lyndon Baines Johnson and provided grants to schools serving low-income students, created scholarships for low-income college students, and created special education centers. Title II of the original act included provisions for school library resources, textbooks, and other instructional materials. But in more recent versions of the law, including the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, library resources were excluded. The library community is lobbying to have language specifically about school libraries included in the reauthorization of ESEA.

Libraries protect patron privacy. The USA Freedom Act, supported by ALA and other groups, aims at balancing personal privacy with national security. Although the bill was discussed throughout 2014, the Senate voted on November 18, 2014, to end further discussion of the measure. Advocates can still take action on the issue. Librarians, library users, and privacy supporters will come together May 1–7 to observe Choose Privacy Week, ALA's annual event to promote the importance of individual privacy rights.

Federal funding in the amount of $180.9 million was approved to support the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) in FY2014. LSTA funding is the primary source of federal support for libraries. Most of the funds go directly to the states to support grants to public libraries.

On July 22, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a law that authorizes public libraries to be eligible providers with access to federal funding for effective job training and job search programs.

Copyright questions frequently arise in libraries. Federal court cases continue to favor reasonable fair use rights, especially those that add value to an original work or serve a different, socially beneficial purpose. In June 2014, the US 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ruling in *Authors Guild v. HathiTrust,* which holds that providing access to works for people with print disabilities constitutes fair use.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) increased the total E-Rate fund—which provides discounts to libraries and schools to help them obtain affordable internet access—from $2.4 billion to $3.9 billion annually. The agency also changed its policy to make it easier for libraries and schools to deploy high-speed broadband technologies and develop network infrastructures inside their facilities.

In February 2015, the FCC took action to help ensure net neutrality. Its Open Internet order requires broadband internet providers to provide a fast, fair, and open internet and comply with an array of rules.

INTRODUCTION

[Anchor institutions (PDF)](#) are defined as large, spatially immobile, nonprofit organizations that play an integral role in the local economy. In 2002, when Harvard Business School Professor Michael Porter began discussing the [potential benefit (PDF)](#) of anchor institutions in the economic development of communities, he was referring, for the most part, to well-funded medical centers and universities that provided jobs and other benefits to the community. Since that time, there has been much discussion about the nature and purpose of anchor institutions.

During the 2000s, the idea gained currency that communities also have smaller organizations that serve as anchors. Today, it is recognized that community anchors include libraries, museums, faith-based institutions, community foundations, municipal entities, and other nonprofit organizations. In addition to the economic benefits, the mission of anchor institutions includes creating a more democratic, just, and equitable society.

In this report, we celebrate the importance of academic, school, and public libraries as proactive community anchors. Libraries are democratic community anchors with unlimited possibilities to promote education, equity, social and racial justice, place, and community.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Academic libraries provide resources and services to support the learning, teaching, and research needs of students, faculty, and staff. Surveys show that students and faculty value academic libraries, their high-quality digital and print collections, and the instructional support that helps them use these resources. Academic librarians are finding creative ways to repurpose library spaces and make optimal budgeting choices.

As pressure on the higher education community to demonstrate value continues, academic libraries are meeting the challenge. Some 59% of chief academic officers rated library resources and services "very effective"—more effective than on-campus teaching and instruction, online courses and programs, academic support services, research and scholarship, administrative information systems and operations, and data analysis and organizational analytics.

The impact of academic librarians on student learning can be seen in the 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement, which reports that 33% of first-year students agreed that their experience at their institution contributed "very much" to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in using information effectively. More impressively, 47% of college seniors agreed with the same statement.

Academic librarians are working largely with reallocated funds to transform programs and services by repurposing space, migrating collections, and redeploying staff in the digital resources environment.

Academic researchers are users of big data, extremely large data sets that are beyond the capability of most software tools to process and analyze. Academic librarians traditionally assess the research needs of academics; however, big data poses new challenges. The sheer quantity and rate of accumulation of data require new skills, but also resources to enable researchers to share, analyze, and reuse it.

In the past three years, 62.6% of academic libraries reported repurposing space for group study, student success areas (writing/tutoring centers), quiet study space, technology learning spaces, and additional seating. Doctoral/research institutions undertook the most renovations (79.5%), followed by baccalaureate schools (60.8%), comprehensive schools (65.1%), and associate degree–granting institutions (47.3%). Within the next five years, 79% of doctoral/research institutions, 69% of comprehensive institutions, 65% of baccalaureate schools, and 45% of associate degree-granting institutions are planning additions, renovations, refurbishments, or new buildings.

A recent survey found that 15.5% of academic libraries expect library space usage to increase significantly with 27.4% of doctoral/research institutions forecasting a significant increase.

[Library expenditures](#) for collection materials averaged $6.3 million for doctoral/research institutions, $774,701 for comprehensive institutions, $462,929 for baccalaureate schools, and $144,062 for associate degree–granting institutions. The percentage of the collection materials budget spent on ongoing resource purchases (including subscription expenditures) averaged 68.7% of the total materials budget. On average, doctoral/research institutions spent 74.3% of their materials budgets on ongoing purchases in 2013, comprehensive schools spent an average of 75.4%, baccalaureate schools spent an average of 70.6%, and associate degree–granting institutions spent an average of 54.8%. Between 2000 and 2014, there were 232 new academic library buildings completed in the United States and Puerto Rico, including four new buildings in 2014.

Staffing

Doctoral/research institutions employed an average of 49.58 professional staff, comprehensive institutions employed an average of 10.8 professional staff, baccalaureate schools employed an average of 6 professional staff, and associate degree–granting institutions employed an average of 5.24 professional staff according to a [recent survey](#).

Academic libraries provided 26.3% of all jobs for new library school graduates in 2013, down from 33.3% in 2012. The most recent [survey of first-year students (PDF)](#) found that 0.7% planned to become a librarian.

Salaries

Academic library expenditures for [salaries and wages](#) accounted for 55.4% of the total expenditures on average. Salaries and wages constituted 74.1% of total library expenditures for associate degree–granting institutions, 51.4% for baccalaureate, 52.3% for comprehensive schools, and 43.8% for doctoral/research institutions.

The [average salary](#) for academic librarians was $53,000. Two-thirds of academic librarians received a [salary increase](#) of 3.4% in 2013. Although most of the raises were cost-of-living or merit pay increases, 9% of academic librarians received increases as the result of a job change.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

As students strive to meet the rigor of education standards, certified school librarians play an essential part in ensuring that 21st-century information literacy skills, dispositions, responsibilities, and assessments are integrated throughout all curriculum areas.

College and career readiness = Reading rigor

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (PDF) (NAEP) calls for an increasing shift to nonfiction by grade-level in order to help students prepare for the demands of college and career:

- 50% at 4th grade
- 55% at 8th grade
- 70% at 12th grade

However, research shows that students' ability to independently read complex texts decreases by grade band. The rate of students independently reading at least one book at or above their text complexity grade band drops significantly after elementary school:

- 81–98% in grades 2–5
- 24–32% in grades 6–8
- 7–14% in high school

College and career readiness = Inquiry learning and research

The school librarian leads in building 21st-century skills by collaborating with classroom teachers to design inquiry-based learning environments. In inquiry learning, students identify their own questions and create projects guided by the teacher and school librarian. School librarians develop engaging learning tasks that integrate key critical thinking, technology, and information literacy skills with subject-area content.

The statistics in the section below represent student inquiry and research skills and show *good* results and responses in the current environment, *bad* results and responses, and unacceptable (*ugly*) results and responses. All of these statistics point to the preparedness or unpreparedness of students for college and careers.

The good

- 94% of education professionals report that students demonstrate improved learning, performance, and achievement when technology is used in the curriculum.
- 50% of high school students seek information online to help better understand a topic studied in class.

The bad

- Four of the top 10 most cited websites come from user-generated websites (Wikipedia, YouTube, Yahoo! Answers, and Answers.com).
- 54% of students say they would be less likely to cite sources if they didn't have research management tools.

The ugly

- 51% of college freshman have a hard time learning to navigate new tools and 43% have trouble making sense of information once sources are found.
- College freshman have the most difficulty conducting research:
  - coming up with keywords (75%)
  - sorting through irrelevant search results (57%)
  - identifying and selecting sources (51%)
  - integrating writing styles from different sources (43%)

College and career readiness = Digital literacy and citizenship

Learning is a 24/7 enterprise for students today, with the traditional school day only a small part of the overall time that students spend learning, especially using technology. Embedded in schools is a culture almost entirely based on information, shaped and defined by the student. They consume it, share it, produce it, and publish it. School librarians have an opportunity to provide truly personalized learning experiences.

- 46% of principals say that digital content—such as videos, simulations, and animations—is having the greatest impact on transforming teaching and learning.
- 40% of district administrators note the implementation of blended learning environments as having the greatest impact on transforming teaching and learning.
- 52% of school librarians identify themselves as teachers of digital citizenship within their schools.
- 70% of US job recruiters have rejected candidates based on their online reputations.
- 38% of college admission officers have discovered something online that resulted in a negative impact on their evaluation of a student.
- 39% of teens say they have sent or posted sexually suggestive messages.
- 86% of teens believe it's permissible to illegally download and share music.
- $400 is the average amount lost to online crimes reported by teens.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries are community anchors that address economic, education, and health disparities in the community. Educational programs, print and digital books, databases, meeting spaces, and instruction on how to use new technologies are among the many resources and services provided by libraries. More than two-thirds of Americans agree that libraries are important because they improve the quality of life in a community, promote literacy and reading, and provide many people with a chance to succeed.

Digital inclusion

One role of the library as a community anchor is to provide equitable access to technology and digital content. A comprehensive approach to creating digital inclusion will ensure an equal opportunity for all, regardless of geographic location, socioeconomic status, or any other factor.

The Digital Inclusion Survey found that public libraries address these disparities by providing free access to broadband, public access technologies, digital content, digital literacy learning opportunities, and a range of programming that helps build digitally inclusive communities.

The survey found that nearly all (97.5%) public libraries offer free wireless internet access. Technology training is offered in nearly all (98.0%) public libraries, and nearly all offer education and learning programs (99.5%) and summer reading programs (98.4%). Almost 80% of libraries offer programs that aid patrons with job applications, interview skills, and résumé development. Three-fourths of libraries offer community, civic engagement, or e-government programs. Nearly all libraries offer patrons assistance in completing online government forms.

Chief Officers of State Library Agencies survey

To gain a better understanding of how public libraries are faring in the face of funding challenges, flat budgets, and the need to supplement the nation's educational needs, the American Library Association conducts an annual survey on state library support.

Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) members are the heads of their state library administrative agencies and leaders in statewide library development. The chief officers responded to the ALA's online survey between October 28, 2014, and December 3, 2014. The report highlights changes in support for public library funding on a state level, reductions and closures, state collaborations, and broadband planning.

The ALA received responses from 47 of 50 states and from the District of Columbia; the West Virginia, Washington, Pennsylvania, and New York State library agencies did not respond. The following is a short summary of some of the interesting points from the survey.

Direct aid to public libraries. For states that provide direct state aid for public libraries, 45% reported no change from FY2014, 21% reported increased funding, and 17% reported decreased funding from FY2014, with Missouri and Alabama reporting cuts of 9%–10% or more.

The chief officers felt cautious about predicting changes in direct funding for public libraries; 44% felt state aid for public libraries would remain unchanged and 46% felt that it was too soon to tell whether the funding would increase or decrease.

Branch closures. The number of states reporting library branch closures is down, from 10 states reporting knowledge of closures to only five this year. As in previous years, the number of closures in each state was between one and five libraries.

Libraries involved in collaborations and digital literacy. Many state library agencies have formal collaborations with other state agencies. Twenty states currently have statewide partnerships related to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education; other states have collaborations to assist with other education initiatives, workforce development, literacy, and summer reading.

Though only 38% of state library agencies reported having a specific goal related to digital literacy through their local libraries, they did indicate a heavy involvement in digital literacy initiatives.

Helping meet America's broadband needs. Fifty-seven percent of responding states have state-specific broadband plans. The public libraries or state library agencies in only five of those 27 states are *not* involved in meeting those goals.

ISSUES AND TRENDS

Librarians respond to issues and identify trends that are of importance to the community. Books and digital resources support educational goals from early literacy through lifelong learning. Free library programs provide learning opportunities and entertainment for children as well as adults. Library collections include books and resources that represent the diversity of people, cultures, and the faraway places that make up the world we live in. Librarians help protect people's rights by proactively supporting equitable access and intellectual freedom. A high standard of professional library education helps librarians respond to many issues and emerging trends of importance to the community.

Children's and teen services

The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Libraries engage our nation's youth, from preschool through the teen years, with books, digital resources, and a wide array of programs. Early literacy materials include books and e-resources that introduce words and concepts. Lap-sit storytimes involve parents in the learning process. Homework assistance enhances learning for children, and diverse literature collections spark their imaginations. Recognizing the growing independence of young adults, many libraries provide a space for teens to hang out, read, do homework in groups, and try out new technologies. Young adult collections and teen programs have flourished in libraries in the past decade.

Early literacy
According to the [White House](), research shows that in the first three years of life, children from low-income families hear about 30 million fewer total words than their more affluent counterparts. This "word gap" can lead to differences not only in vocabulary size, but also in school readiness and long-term educational and social success.

In fall 2014, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), an ALA division, participated in a White House event on federal, state, and local efforts to bridge the word gap. ALSC launched a public awareness project, [Babies Need Words Every Day](), to help the nation's libraries reach caregivers of young children outside of the library. ALSC is providing free, downloadable posters featuring colorful illustrations, rhymes, finger plays, and literacy tips. Librarians are encouraged to work with businesses and public buildings in their communities to display the posters over changing tables.

Diversity in children's literature
Last year there was an upswing in conversations and a groundswell toward activism to address the dearth of diversity reflected in children's literature—both in content and among writers and illustrators. In her April 2014 white paper, *[The Importance of Diversity in Library Programs and Material Collections for Children (PDF)](),* Jamie Campbell Naidoo explores the critical role

libraries play in helping children make cross-cultural connections. She calls on libraries to include diversity in programming and materials for children as an important step in meeting the needs of their communities.

Continuing to push conversations toward action, ALSC, in collaboration with the Children's Book Council, planned and brought together leaders in children's literature, literacy, and youth-serving organizations in January 2015 for Day of Diversity: Dialogue and Action in Children's Literature and Library Programming. This full-day event focused on strategies for increasing diversity awareness within the publishing and library communities and ensuring that all children have access to diverse literature and library programming.

Digital literacy
Digital literacy continues to grow as an important library service. Research shows that families are increasing their access to digital media, but they lack the knowledge to use it effectively in a way that enables learning. Additionally, libraries are incorporating more digital media in their programming for young children.

In 2014, ALSC, Little eLit, and the iSchool at the University of Washington surveyed public libraries to learn more about how libraries are using new media in their services for youth. A total of 415 libraries participated in the survey. Initial results showed that 71% of the respondents reported using one or more kinds of new media in their programming for young children. Some 58% of libraries plan to increase new media availability in programs and services for youth.

Teen services in school and public libraries
In January 2014 the Young Adult Library Services Association, an ALA division, supported by funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, published a report, The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action (PDF). This document explores the current state of teen services in libraries, as well as the environmental causes that are driving the need for change. Libraries are responding by revisiting their overall teen services programs. In particular, noteworthy trends were observed in program administration, services, spaces, and staffing.

A major trend in program administration in 2014 was an emphasis on outcomes-based planning and evaluation. Teen services have evolved from an early phase that simply emphasized the need to offer activities for teens into a purposeful approach that makes use of the unique strengths of libraries and provides targeted activities based on the particular needs of teens in the library's community. This is achieved primarily through community assessment and outreach.

Perhaps the biggest trend in teen services in 2014 was the focus on a connected learning approach to planning and delivering activities for and with teens. Connected learning is an educational method designed to make learning relevant by focusing on the interests of the learner and connecting those interests with educational opportunities through coaches or mentors. The connected learning approach recognizes that in order for youth to be prepared for 21st-century jobs, they need to continue their learning beyond the formal classroom. Models of connected

learning in libraries can be seen via the [Learning Labs](#) project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the MacArthur Foundation.

Space was another area of emphasis in 2014 and is an essential part of the connected learning method. The physical library space needs to be flexible to adapt to different learning activities and accommodate peer-to-peer learning. Makerspaces in particular are trending and provide evidence that libraries are continuing to evolve beyond the traditional focus on collections to a 21st-century emphasis on offering services and learning opportunities.

New models of staffing were tested in 2014 and the trend is likely to continue. Recognizing that teens have a variety of needs at this stage of their development and that librarians cannot and should not be experts in all things, libraries are tapping other human resources in their communities. Examples include artists-in-residence programs, hiring social workers, and making use of local experts as coaches. These new staffing models are needed to help support the connected learning approach. Another staffing trend moved librarians away from their desks so that they can provide community outreach and connect with teens wherever they happen to be.

Public programs

Libraries have always been dynamic institutions. From their earliest days, they have served numerous purposes, growing organically as new public needs arose. Their roles as community anchors, centers for academic life and research, and cherished public spaces have led many libraries to become centers of their neighborhoods' social and cultural life. As equal-access places of learning, libraries are safe and neutral spaces where all ideas might be pursued.

The breadth, variety, and number of programs presented in all types of libraries are growing tremendously. In 2012, there were 92.6 million attendees at the 4 million programs offered by US public libraries, according to *Public Libraries in the United States Survey: Fiscal Year 2012*. This represents an increase of 54.4% in attendance from 10 years ago.

Today, libraries are as likely to offer children's storytimes as museum-quality exhibitions, compelling arts offerings, and issue-based discussions. They have responded to the growth in computer technology by providing both access and training, from coding classes to 3D printing and gadget petting zoos. They offer employment and skills-building classes to help patrons cope with a changing job market, provide services to veterans and the homeless, bring hands-on arts and learning opportunities to older adults, and offer assistance in using government services.

At the same time, they continue to schedule the author talks, book discussion groups, craft instruction, film programs, and other cultural and educational programs upon which their communities have come to depend.

Libraries also address unique community needs, offering a neutral space for patrons, residents, faculty, and students to discuss and resolve critical issues. This is of particular importance during times of crisis and polarized political climates, of which there was no shortage in 2014. The fatal

shooting of unarmed teenager Michael Brown on August 9 brought chaos to Ferguson, Missouri, a city of about 21,000 near St. Louis. The ensuing protests divided residents and caused schools and city services to shut down—but the [Ferguson Municipal Public Library](#) stayed open, providing a much-needed safe haven for the community and serving as an ad hoc school. The public took note, and $400,000 in donations poured into the library from around the world.

Both the quality and quantity of library programming is on the rise, but tight budgets demand that library professionals justify program expenses and demonstrate an impact. This is a challenge, as little data exists to indicate whether, or how, programming affects individuals and communities.

The American Library Association's Public Programs Office, with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, seeks to explore this untapped area of research with the [National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (PDF)](#) (NILPPA). During a proposed eight-year research plan, researchers will:

- map the terrain of library program types and experiences;
- collect quantitative and qualitative data to better understand programs, particularly program innovators;
- create tools and professional competencies related to library programming; and
- develop a model to explain how programming responds to change, affects the perception of libraries, and predicts change in communities.

Equitable access

The library's role of promoting equitable access to information, and being a welcoming place to all who enter its doors, continues to be critical to our communities. According to the [2013 Program for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies](#) (PIAAC), one in six American adults struggle with basic English literacy. This amounts to a staggering 36 million people ages 16–65 who struggle on a daily basis to perform such basic tasks as completing a job application, understanding a medication label, or reading a simple story to their children.

Libraries play a pivotal role in providing literacy services to individuals in their communities, and because of the innovative and effective services that they provide on an ongoing basis, libraries are premier partners in literacy nationwide. By helping individuals attain literacy skills, libraries open the doors to truly equitable access to information.

United States Census projections show that our nation's population will continue to be increasingly diverse in the years to come, which means that our libraries will be serving increasingly diverse communities. In order to provide a welcoming place for all, it is imperative that diverse viewpoints are incorporated into all service planning and delivery.

The most effective way to include diverse viewpoints is to ensure that library staff and decision makers reflect the populations in the communities they are serving. In 2010–2011, less than 17%

of ALA-accredited master's degrees were awarded to individuals from racially diverse backgrounds.

Recruitment programs must focus on bringing more individuals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds into the library profession. Libraries must also retain and engage these professionals and provide a pipeline of diverse library leaders with relevant viewpoints and experiences attuned to serving multicultural communities. By applying this strategy, libraries can ensure equitable access to information by providing welcoming library spaces, services, and collections that are relevant to everyone in the community.

Intellectual freedom

In March 2013, the graphic novel *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi was removed from libraries and classrooms in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) on the grounds that it contained inappropriate language and images. Students had been reading it for their human rights unit, but a parent complained to the superintendent about its content. This incident is one example of a new and frustrating pattern of school administrations not adhering to their own policies. Thanks to an effort by CPS students and the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), the directive was modified to affect only 7th grade classrooms.

The superintendent of the Independent School District of Highland Park, Texas, removed seven books from the English curriculum in September 2014, ignoring the school's policy on challenges to instructional materials. Two organizations were formed by local parents to oppose the decision: HP Kids Read and Speak Up for Standards. Both groups are debating community standards, selection policies, and opt-out alternatives. Only two of the seven titles were formally challenged and both were ultimately retained: *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein and *The Working Poor* by David Shipler.

At the Sussex Central High School Library in Georgetown, Delaware, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily M. Danforth was The Miseducation of Cameron Post by Emily M. Danforth was quietly removed from the shelf in late 2014. When the act of censorship came to light, the school's Gay-Straight Alliance created its own library so students would still be able to read the book. Multiple conference calls and emails were exchanged between many First Amendment organizations to support the librarian, the book, and the freedom to read. The high school now owns four copies of the book; all are checked out and there is a waiting list to read it.

Book challenges in 2014

Out of 311 challenges recorded by the OIF, the "Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2014" are:

1. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
   Reasons: Anti-family, cultural insensitivity, drugs/alcohol/smoking, gambling, offensive language, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited for age group, violence. Additional reasons: "depictions of bullying."

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   Reasons: Sexually explicit, unsuited for age group. Additional reasons: "contains controversial issues."
5. *It's Perfectly Normal*, by Robie Harris
   Reasons: Nudity, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group. Additional reasons: "alleges it [to be] child pornography."
6. *Saga*, by Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples
   Reasons: Anti-Family, nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited for age group.
7. *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini
   Reasons: Offensive language, unsuited to age group, violence.
8. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky
   Reasons: drugs/alcohol/smoking, homosexuality, offensive language, sexually explicit, unsuited for age group. Additional reasons: "date rape and masturbation."
9. *A Stolen Life: A Memoir*, Jaycee Dugard
   Reasons: Drugs/alcohol/smoking, offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited for age group.
10. *Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier
    Reasons: Sexually explicit.

The OIF has been tracking an increasing number of challenges to diverse titles. Authors of color and books with diverse content are disproportionately challenged and banned. The OIF defines books with diverse content as those that include:

- Non-white main and/or secondary characters
- LGBT main and/or secondary characters
- Disabled main and/or secondary characters
- Issues about race or racism
- LGBT issues
- Issues about religion, which encompass in this situation the Holocaust and terrorism
- Issues about disability and/or mental illness
- Non-Western settings, in which the West is North America and Europe

[Malinda Lo analyzed](#) OIF's list of the "Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books: 2000–2009" and the "Top Ten Challenged Books" lists for 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Lo discovered that 52% of

the books challenged or banned include diverse content. OIF analyzed the 2014 Top Ten Challenged Books and found that eight of the ten titles included diverse content.

Conference panels and intellectual freedom advocacy efforts are being organized to reverse this growing trend. OIF joins the profession in promoting diverse viewpoints in library collections, to defend the First Amendment rights of their readers, and to protect these titles from censors.

Challenged Book 2014 Infographic data:

Diverse content in top ten challenged books 2005-2014:
- 2014: 8 of 10
- 2013: 5 of 10
- 2012: 5 of 10
- 2011: 4 of 10
- 2010: 5 of 10
- 2009: 4 of 10
- 2008: 5 of 10
- 2007: 6 of 10
- 2006: 5 of 10
- 2005: 4 of 10

Challenges by initiator:
- Board Member 1%
- Librarian 1%
- Religious organization 1%
- Politician or Elected Official 1%
- Clergy 2%
- Pressure group 2%
- Government Body 4%
- Administrator 6%
- Patron 23%
- Parent 35%
- Other 10%

Reasons for Challenges 2014
- Abortion 1%
- Anti-Ethnic 1%
- Inaccurate 1%
- Sexism 1%
- Gangs 2%
- Occult Satanism 2%

- Political Viewpoint   2%
- Racism 2%
- Sex Education 2%
- Suicide 2%
- Cultural Insensitivity 3%
- Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking 5%
- Anti-Family 6%
- Homosexuality 6%
- Nudity 10%
- Offensive Language 23%
- Other Offensive Item 12%
- Religious Viewpoint 10%
- Violence 14%
- Unsuited For Age Group 21%
- Sexually Explicit 34%

Note: Most challenges include more than one reason.

Challenges by Institution 2014
Public Library 38%, School Library 11%, School 36%, Other 15%

New intellectual freedom resources
- The ninth edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* will be published in April with new interpretations. For the first time in decades, the manual has been completely reformatted into a user-friendly edition.
- *Banned Books: Challenging Our Freedom to Read,* 2014 edition by Robert Doyle.
- *Books Under Fire: A Hit List of Banned and Challenged Children's Books* by Pat R. Scales.
- *Fencing Out Knowledge: Impacts of CIPA 10 Years Later (PDF)* by Kristen R. Batch.

Choose Privacy Week
On May 1–7, librarians, library users, and privacy advocates come together to observe Choose Privacy Week, ALA's annual event to promote the importance of individual privacy rights. In 2014, Choose Privacy Week featured two online events: a special webinar, "How to be a Privacy Wiz: Defense against the Dark Arts with Privacy Tools," that provided advice about protecting personal data from the dark forces online that undermine privacy; and an online colloquium, "Libraries, National Security, and Privacy," presented by the Rutgers School of Communication and Information for MLIS students and librarians. In addition, the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee's Privacy Subcommittee introduced a new edition of the Privacy Tool Kit that highlights the effects of emerging technologies on library users' privacy.

Accreditation standards

The professional degree in librarianship continually expands with constituents' needs. Degree programs accredited by the American Library Association now offer more than 20 distinct areas of concentration beyond foundation courses, including cultural heritage, community informatics, and digital archives. Foundation curricula encompass information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management.

New ALA Accreditation Standards were adopted in 2015. The ALA *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* serve as a guidepost for program quality. The latest edition, developed through a multiyear research and input collaborative with the public and the field by the ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA), was approved for adoption by the ALA Council on February 2, 2015. By identifying those programs meeting the standards, the committee offers a means of quality control in the professional staffing of library and information services. Each program is evaluated for conformity to the standards, which address systematic planning, curriculum, faculty, students, administration, finances, and resources.

The number of ALA-accredited programs is also expanding, with three programs initially accredited in the last few years in the US and Canada. Two programs are currently in candidacy status for initial accreditation with visits scheduled in spring and fall 2016.

With half of the 59 accredited programs in the two-year review process conducted every three to seven years, the pool of review volunteers must also expand. Each review is conducted with a panel of three to six, depending on program size, number of campuses, and complexity. Reviewers and COA members alike describe this engagement with ALA as the most satisfying of their careers.

NATIONAL ISSUES AND TRENDS

Many federal government policy and regulatory issues are of importance to libraries and the people who use them. Policies related to personal privacy, library funding, workforce development, and copyright law are a few of the issues of interest to the library community.

A free and open information society today means access to electronic information resources. Libraries provide this access and stay attuned to policy and regulatory issues that affect users' rights, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), privacy, E-Rate, net neutrality, and copyright.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) turns 50

Certified school librarians are a crucial factor in students developing 21st-century information literacy skills and dispositions. Yet school libraries remain threatened with closures and reductions in credentialed staff. This dire situation highlights the importance of the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

On April 11, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into law. Title I of ESEA was designed to distribute funding to schools and school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families. Title II was of particular interest to school libraries, as it provided grants to schools for library resources, textbooks, and other instructional materials.

The current reauthorization of this bill is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was signed into law in 2001. Under No Child Left Behind, Title II is aimed at improving student achievement through the evaluation and training of teachers and principals. Resources for libraries are not included. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is calling for a new ESEA that reflects upon lessons learned from NCLB. Parents, teachers, administrators, and librarians are lobbying to have language that specifically addresses school libraries in the reauthorization of ESEA.

In February, US Senator Jack Reed (D-R.I.) joined Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) to introduce the SKILLS Act (S.312). This amendment to ESEA would:

- expand the scope of professional development to include digital literacy, reading, and writing instruction across all grade levels;
- focus on coordination and shared planning time between teachers and librarians; and
- ensure that appropriate books and materials are available for students with special learning needs, including English learners.

The American Library Association recommends that the reauthorization (PDF) ensure that school libraries:

- are staffed by a state-certified or licensed school librarian;
- have up-to-date books, materials, equipment, and technology (including broadband);
- include regular collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians to assist with development and implementation of the curriculum and other school reform efforts; and
- support the development of digital literacy skills.

Privacy

The American Library Association collaborated with other groups in several coalitions to support robust versions of the USA FREEDOM Act that would have meaningfully improved the balance between national security and the protection of personal privacy. A much weaker variation of that bill passed in the US House in May 2014; the US Senate, however, failed to bring a related ALA-backed bill to the floor for debate. With the scheduled expiration of key parts of the USA Patriot Act on June 1, 2015, including the library provision (Section 215), a major debate over privacy, cybersecurity, and surveillance law reform early in the 114th Congress is assured.

In March 2014, ALA and the Internet Archive, a nonprofit digital library, joined forces to file a friend of the court brief in *Riley v. California* and *United States v. Brima Wurie*, two appellate cases consolidated by the US Supreme Court to permit it to examine the constitutionality of warrantless cellphone searches after police arrests. In the amicus brief, both organizations argued that such searches violate the Fourth Amendment. In June, the US Supreme Court agreed, unanimously ruling that the Fourth Amendment requires police officers to obtain a warrant before they can lawfully search an arrestee's cellphone.

Federal library funding

In December 2014, President Obama signed a $1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill and a continuing resolution—called a cromnibus—funding much of the federal government through October 2015. The continuing resolution was necessary due to the failure to pass funding bills by October. Programs supported by the library community received level funding or only a slight adjustment.

The Library Services and Technology Act received level funding at $180.9 million. LSTA funding is the primary source of federal funding for libraries. It was originally authorized at $232 million, but has never received funding at that level. Most of LSTA funding supports direct grants to states, which then determine how these funds will be allocated for programs such as job-searching databases, résumé workshops, and summer reading programs.

Under the cromnibus spending bill:

- Grants to states programs received level funding of nearly $154 million.
- National Leadership grants received level funding of $12 million.
- Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grants received level funding of $10 million.

- Grants for Native American and Native Hawaiian library services received level funding of $3.9 million.
- Funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which administers the LSTA program, received an increase of $1 million to $227 million. The increase is largely due to anticipated costs to move the agency's office in Washington.
- Innovative Approaches to Literacy, a competitive grant program under the Department of Education that requires at least half of the funds to go to low-income school libraries, was level funded at $25 million.

On February 2, 2015, President Obama sent to Congress his nearly $4 trillion budget request to fund the federal government for fiscal year 2016. This year's request was sent several months earlier than the previous year. Although this is only the first step in the appropriations process, the request does indicate the president's priorities for the next year.

The president included in his request $8.8 million in funding for a national digital platform for library and museum services, which will give Americans free electronic access to the resources of libraries, archives, and museums by promoting the use of technology. He requested an increase of nearly $6 million for overall LSTA funding, though grants to states would drop by $348,000. The Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant program was not funded in the proposal.

Workforce bill passes

In July, President Obama signed the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)](#), a law that authorizes public libraries to be eligible providers with access to federal funding for effective job training and job search programs. In a statement, ALA President Courtney Young applauded the presidential signing of the act and thanked Senator Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Representative Rush D. Holt Jr. (D-N.J.) for their efforts to include libraries in the legislation. ALA will keep a close watch on the Department of Labor's implementation of WIOA over the next year. In October, ALA hosted a webinar on "$2.2 Billion Reasons to Pay Attention to WIOA," an interactive event that focused on how public libraries can make use of the act's provisions.

Copyright updates

There were some positive developments in the realm of copyright. The US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld the ruling in *[Authors Guild v. HathiTrust](#)*, deciding that providing a full text search database and providing access to works for people with print disabilities is fair use.

In October 2014, the US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit handed down an important decision in *[Cambridge University Press et al. v. Carl V. Patton et al.](#)* (the Georgia State University e-reserves case). This decision emphasizes a thoughtful analysis of fair use and a rejection of the highly restrictive guidelines promoted by many publishers. Critically, this decision affirms the importance of flexible limitations on publisher's rights, such as fair use.

Overall, federal court cases continue to favor reasonable fair use rights, especially those that add value to an original work or serve a different, socially beneficial purpose.

While Congress continues to hold hearings about various aspects of copyright, the US Copyright Office and the [US Patent and Trademark Office (PDF)](#) published studies on [orphan works](#), [music licensing (PDF)](#), and [other topics](#) to inform decision-making.

E-Rate
The big win occurred at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) through the adoption of two landmark orders to improve the [E-Rate](#) program, which provides financial support to libraries and K–12 schools for advanced telecommunications services. The FCC increased the total E-Rate fund from $2.4 billion to $3.9 billion annually and made important policy changes to make it easier for libraries and schools to deploy high-speed broadband technologies and develop the network infrastructure inside their facilities. The American Library Association spent a considerable amount of time on E-Rate policy advocacy in 2014, working with several partners in the library sector and beyond.

Net neutrality
[Network neutrality](#) means that internet service providers should treat all websites and services the same. Without net neutrality, providers can choose to block legal content and decide the speed and quality of data transmission. In February 2015, the FCC took action to help ensure net neutrality. The agency's [Open Internet Order](#) requires broadband internet providers to provide a fast, fair, and open internet and to comply with an array of rules. What FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler calls the order's "[bright-line rules](#)" are designed to prevent providers from controlling what people have access to on the internet. Under these rules:

- internet providers cannot block access to content providers such as Netflix;
- internet providers cannot impair or degrade internet traffic on the basis of content; and
- Internet providers cannot provide higher speeds to one website over another website for any reason, especially money.

Hundreds gather for 40th annual National Library Legislative Day
Hundreds of library supporters from across the country met with their congressional representatives on May 5–6, 2014, to advocate for libraries during the American Library Association's [40th annual National Library Legislative Day.](#) Senator Angus King (I-Maine) jumpstarted the event by addressing library advocates at the opening briefing at the Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, D.C. Additional speakers included Maine State Librarian Linda Lord; Gabriel Rottman, legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union; Shawn Daugherty, assistant director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources; and Peter Jaszi, intellectual property expert and professor of law at the American University Washington College of Law. Library supporters who could not attend the meetings connected virtually with legislators via phone calls, emails, and social media platforms.

ALA Policy Revolution

ALA launched the [Policy Revolution!](#) initiative in 2013 to reposition the library community in its national public policy advocacy. Decision makers and influencers do not have a good understanding of how contemporary libraries contribute to the array of national policy goals such as education, employment, entrepreneurship, community engagement, and individual empowerment—[The E's of Libraries.](#) Thus the first goal of the initiative is to develop a national public policy agenda for the library community. A [draft agenda](#) was circulated in January 2015 for public comment.

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The following ALA divisions and offices also contributed to this report.

- American Association of School Librarians
- *American Libraries* magazine
- Association for Library Service to Children
- Association of College and Research Libraries
- Office for Accreditation
- Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services
- Office for Information Technology Policy
- Office for Intellectual Freedom
- Office for Library Advocacy
- Office for Research and Statistics
- Office of Government Relations
- Public Information Office
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