



Survey of Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, 2015

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Overview/ Introduction

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 a yearly survey to learn about the most up-to-date happenings from the state perspective.

COSLA members are heads of their respective states' library administrative agency and leaders in statewide library development. We thank them for their time and efforts in compiling this information, which helps the ALA advocate for public libraries and librarians with quantitative and qualitative data.

Of course, each state's library agency is different; some states provide direct state aid to libraries while others do not. The size of the financial resources each state library is budgeted varies; some state library agencies have expenditures greater than \$50 million, others spend less than \$5 million. Some libraries are state archives, some provide library services. But each State Library serves a vital role in directly or indirectly supporting public libraries within its state.

Those public libraries, in turn, assist in national initiatives like increasing America's output of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) graduates, state-level incentives to increase or maintain broadband capacity and deliver workforce opportunities, and local programs such as summer reading initiatives.

The Chief Officers responded to the ALA's online survey between October 28, 2014 and December 3rd, 2014. This report highlights current levels and changes in support for public library funding on a state level, reductions and closures, state collaborations and broadband planning.

Now conducted as a standalone project to help the Association and librarians better understand the public library funding landscape, this report continues the yearly survey that was part of the Gates Foundation-funded Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study from 2006 through 2012.

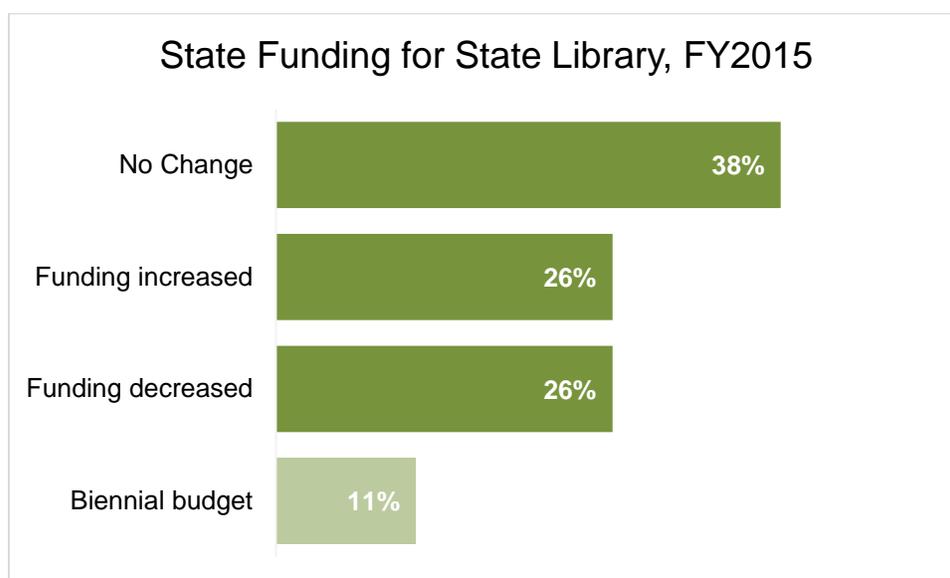
The ALA received responses from in 47 of 50 states and from the District of Columbia; West Virginia, Washington, Pennsylvania, and New York's State Library Agencies did not respond.

State Funding for the State Library

We asked both about state funding for the state library to the best of their ability (some states' budgets were not finalized at the time of this survey) and about direct state funding for public libraries.

Just under half (49%) of the responding states told the ALA that their budget was unchanged between Fiscal Year 2014 and Fiscal Year 2015, though five of those states operate on biennial budget calendars.

For states with annual budgets, thirty-eight percent reported flat funding. Twelve states report budget increases for the state library - but twelve states also report decreases.



Last year, 48% of libraries reported increases in the budget for the state library, a cautiously positive outlook for the agencies. But those were modest increases - 23 libraries, or 43 percent, reported gains in the 1-2% range. Could those increases be sustained?

FY 2015 finds nine of those 23 libraries reporting a second consecutive year of increases; four with a decrease after the 2014 increase; seven states with flat funding after a 2014 increase.

The list of states:

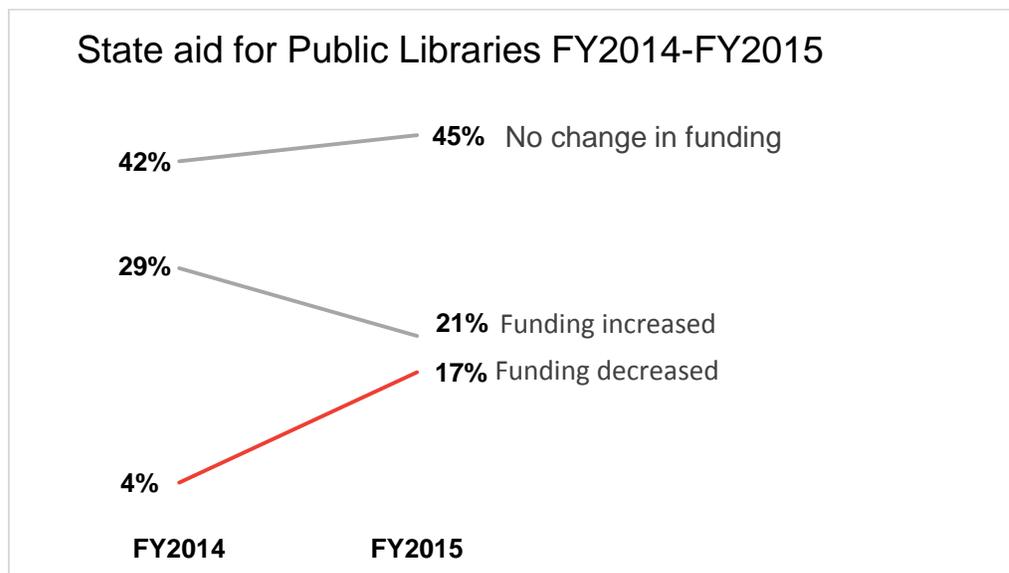
Consecutive increases								
Iowa	Idaho	Illinois	Massachusetts	Maine	Michigan	Nebraska	New Mexico	Utah
FY 2014 Increase, then FY 2015 decrease								
Hawaii	Rhode Island	South Dakota	Vermont					
FY 2014 Increase, then flat funding in FY 2015								
Arkansas	Delaware	Georgia	Montana	North Dakota	Tennessee	Texas		

Two states suffered consecutive years of decreases – Louisiana and also Missouri, where “\$6 million in library funding is in a 'restricted' status due to state budget shortfalls, but may be released later in fiscal year [2015]”, according to Barbara Reading, the Missouri State Librarian.

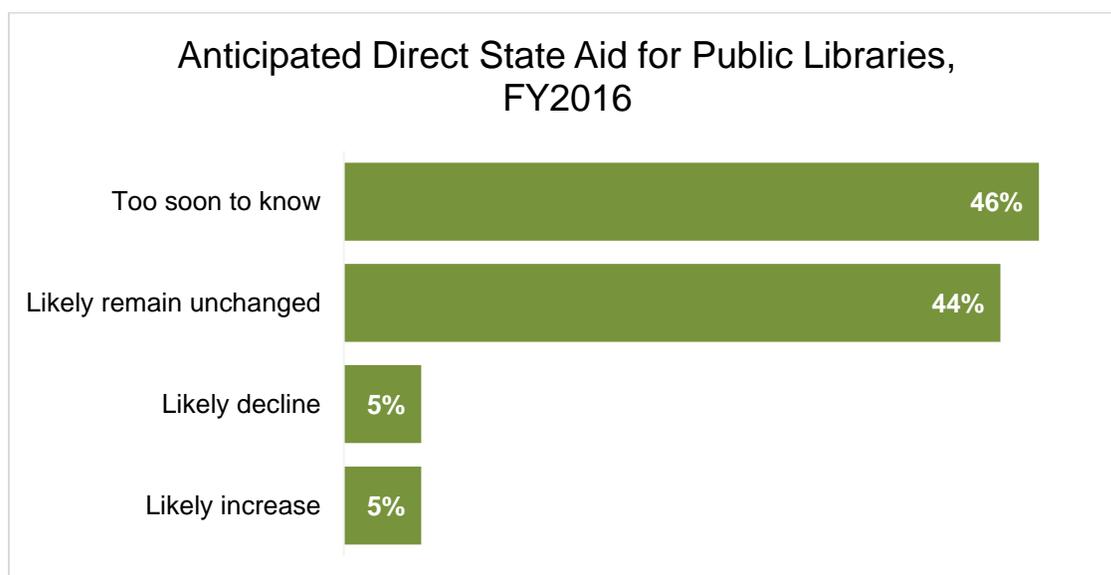
Direct Aid to Public Libraries

For states that provide direct state aid for public libraries, 21 states (45%) report no change from the previous fiscal year, while 10 states (21%) report increased direct funding for public libraries.

Eight states report decreased funding from FY2014, with Missouri and Alabama reporting cuts of 9-10% or more.



Despite the increases and decreases, most Chief Officers felt cautious about predicting changes in direct funding for public libraries - forty-four percent felt state aid for public libraries would remain unchanged and forty-six percent felt that it was too soon to tell whether the funding would increase or fall.

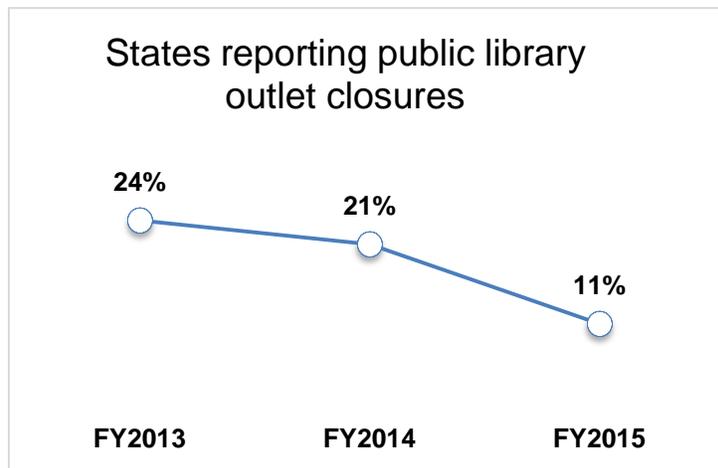


In New Mexico, "the state library received 150K from the legislature directing it for state aid and grants," according to Michael Delello - which was the increase in the state library's funding for that state. So even when funding increases, the funding may be for a one-time program – not to expand the work of the State Library in supporting public (and other) libraries in the state.

As in previous years, most respondents felt that the changes in the funding for the state library would not impact library programs or staffing levels that support public libraries.

Outlet Closures and Reductions in Hours

The trend in the number of states reporting outlet closures is downward, from ten states reporting knowledge of closures to only five this year. As in previous years, the number of closures in each state was in the one-to-five library range; no drastic shuttering of libraries to report.



After conversation with the State Library Agencies, we have added a response to capture the increase in operating hours as well to better tell the story of public library service.

Six states have no libraries that increased their hours of operation; eight states had no libraries that are reducing their hours of operation.

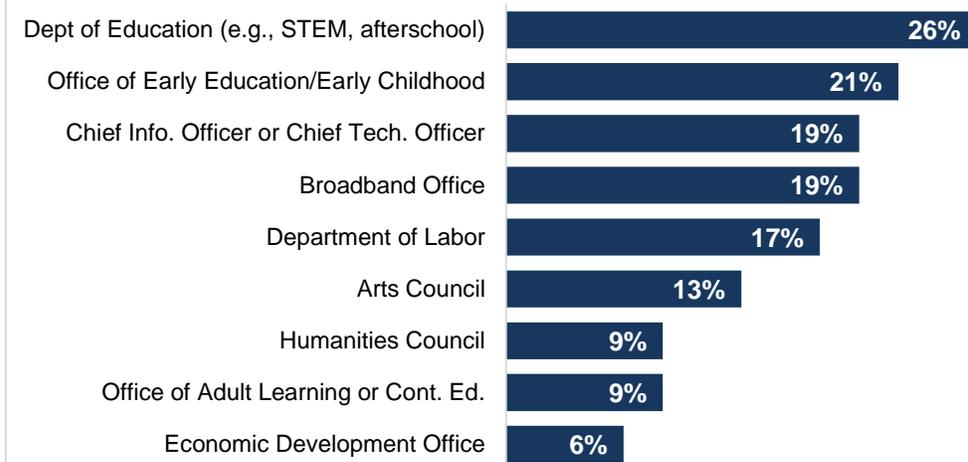
For both groups, the general consensus was that fewer than 10% of libraries in each state increased or reduced hours. Colorado was an outlier, reporting in the range of 26-50% of libraries increasing hours (though some of their state's public libraries reduced hours as well).

Libraries, involved in Collaborations

Public librarians know that the library is a place for the public to access a wide range of increasingly online-only services, from job services to tax forms.

New to this year's survey is a question capturing what formal funding and resource collaborations the State Library Agency is involved with within their state to better serve their citizens, starting on the next page.

Formal Funding/ Resources Collaborations

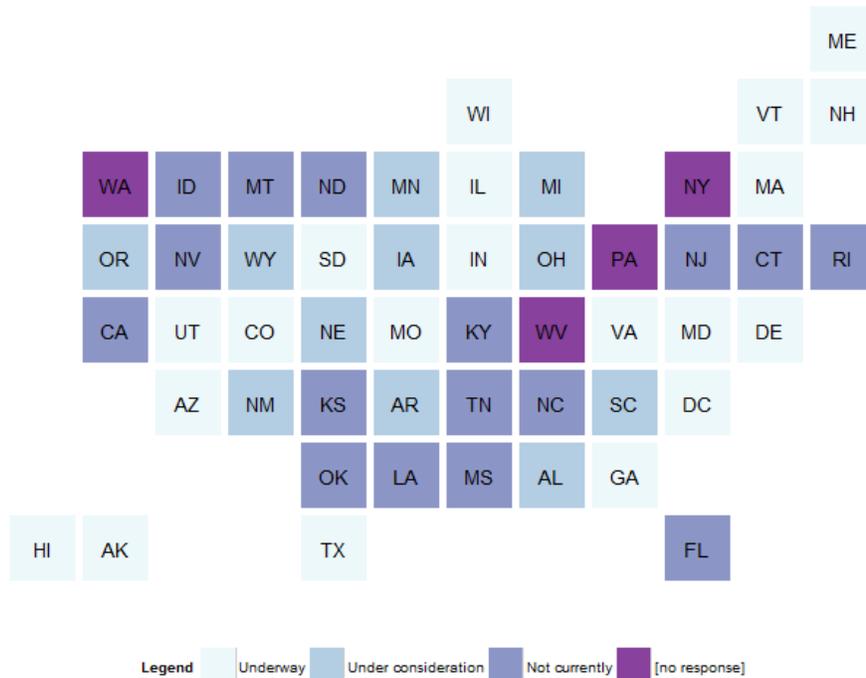


Some examples of successful partnerships include:

- Massachusetts partnering with the local National Hockey League team, the Boston Bruins, on a summer reading program.
- "Money School" workshops on financial literacy in Delaware libraries provided by the Delaware Financial Literacy Institute.
- The Utah State Library collaborates with the Department of Corrections on recording for the Blind.
- With funding from private foundations, the Vermont Center for the Book: The Vermont Early Literacy Initiative trains local librarians/youth to provide story hours and outreach programming to introduce pre-reading skills, math concepts, and social/emotional development activities to pre-school children, parents and child-care providers.
- Workforce activities in Wisconsin, Tennessee, Texas, Rhode Island, Ohio, North Carolina, Maine, Iowa, Idaho.
- Department of Education collaborations in Alaska, Arkansas, Kentucky, New Jersey, Nevada, and Virginia.

Meanwhile, 20 states currently have state-wide efforts related to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education, with another 11 states considering programs to supporting growth in students pursuing knowledge in those fields, a major national point of emphasis in education – see the graphic and map below.

Are State-level STEM efforts underway/ being considered?



State-level STEM effort, by percentages



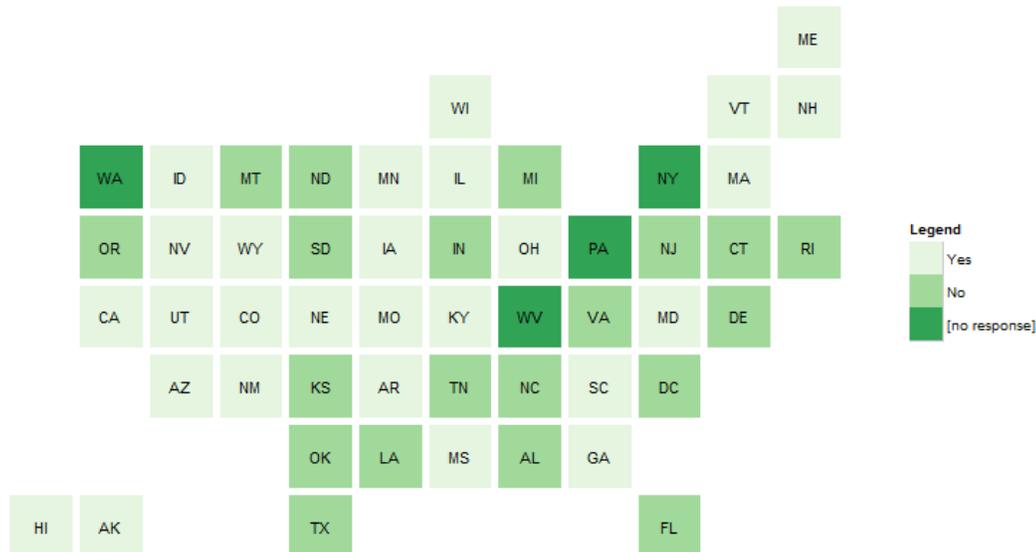
Meeting America's Broadband Needs

The ALA asked the Chief Officers about whether their state had a broadband plan - and if so, whether the State Library Agency and/ or local library was involved in helping households reach statewide goals.

Does state have a broadband plan with specific goals for broadband access and adoption?		If so, has the SLA and/or local libraries in the state been engaged in reaching those state goals?	
Yes	53.2 %	Yes	81%
		No	19%
No/ not aware of one	46.8 %		

Fifty-seven percent of responding states have state-specific broadband plans. Only the public library and/ or state library agency in five of those twenty-seven states are NOT involved in meeting those goals.

Does the State have a broadband plan with specific goals?



Public Libraries and Digital Access/ Literacy

Though only 38% of State Library Agencies reported having specific goals related to digital literacy through local libraries, SLAs reported heavy involvement in digital literacy initiatives. For example:

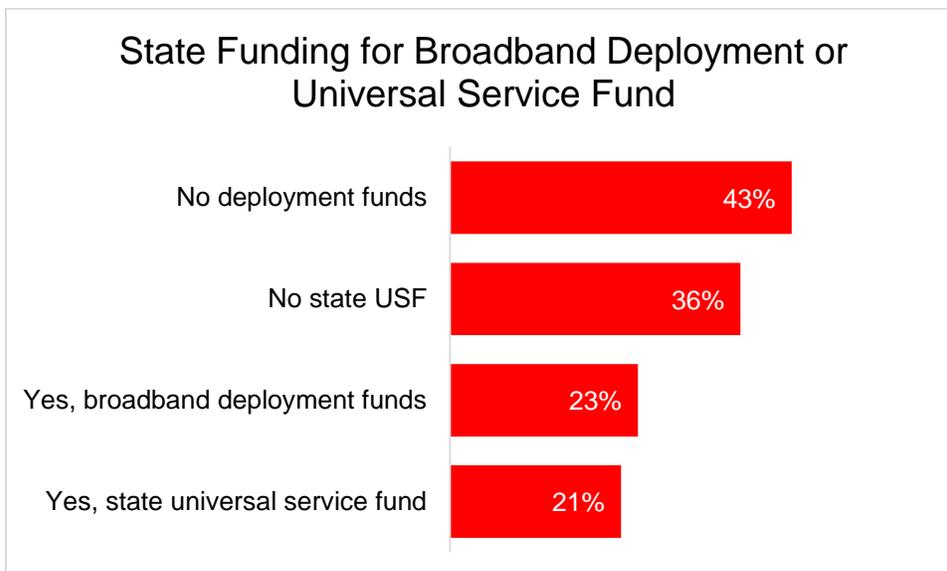
- Nevada and Arizona including digital literacy in their Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) plan.
- Vermont and Wisconsin's State Library Agencies make a point to include digital literacy/ inclusion in their budget asks and strategic plan.

The list of libraries with specific literacy goals through the local libraries is on the next page.

States with specific digital literacy goals through local libraries



A limited number of states have State Universal Service Fund or other state-funded deployment funds, helping libraries attain affordable broadband services for public use. But many states do not provide these funds on a state level, though libraries can apply individually through the Federal E-Rate program.



Delaware, Maine, Ohio, Rhode Island and Wisconsin offer funding for both broadband deployment and a state universal service.

Next

The Association continues to research factors that affect public library service, including broadband access, through a variety of grants and programs.

Soon to be published, the American Library Association's Digital Inclusion Survey report will delve more deeply into issues surrounding libraries on a public level. Meanwhile, this broad overview aims to help readers understand the current landscape in public libraries.

The Digital Inclusion Survey report, funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services and to be published this summer, will provide deeper insight into the services libraries provide and the broadband infrastructure issues public libraries contend with on a daily basis.

The survey also provides an interactive mapping tool, state-level details when available, and more information on how public libraries aid in digital inclusion.