

**American
Library
Association**

**Office of
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Improving Literacy Through School Libraries

SUMMARY

The Improving Literacy Through School Library program is designed to improve student literacy skills and academic achievement by providing schools with up-to-date library materials and to ensure that school library media centers are staffed by well-trained and professionally certified school media specialists.

The program is administered by the Department of Education and is the first program specifically aimed at upgrading school libraries since the original school library resources program was established in 1965.

Recent studies show there is a clear link between the quality of library media programs in schools staffed by an experienced school library media specialist and student academic achievement. School library media centers can contribute to improved student achievement by providing up-to-date instructional materials aligned to the curriculum and instructional practices, collaborating with and supporting teachers, administrators, and parents, and extending their hours of operation beyond the school day.

FUNDING HISTORY

Improving Literacy Through School Libraries is authorized through Title I, Part B, Subpart 4, section 1251, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110).

The U.S. Department of Education awards competitive grants to high poverty school districts. Only school districts in which 20 percent of the students served are from families with incomes below the poverty line are eligible to apply. In FY2003, out of 824 applicants, only 73 were awarded funding.

<u>FY 2002</u>	<u>FY 2003</u>	<u>FY 2004</u>	<u>FY 2005 Adm. Request</u>
\$12,500,000	\$12,400,000	\$19,800,000	\$19,800,000

Urge Congress to provide \$100 million for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program in FY 2005. The President's FY2005 budget freezes funding for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program at the FY 2004 level. As a result, when inflation is taken into account, this will leave less money for our most severely distressed communities to upgrade substandard library collections, to contribute to improved student achievement, and for professional development.

When the funding levels are less than \$100 million in a fiscal year, the Secretary awards competitive grants to eligible school districts. When funds are equal to or more than \$100 million, the program will be distributed as formula grants to state departments of education.

Most recently, a study in Florida cited a 22 percent increase in test scores for schools with a professional librarian on staff.