May 1, 2024

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We appreciate your past support for libraries by providing funding increases for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and urge you to continue this trend in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. LSTA grants enable libraries to develop services in every community throughout the nation, including people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, individuals with disabilities, residents of rural and urban areas, Native Americans, military families, veterans, and caregivers.

Libraries continue to play a vital role in our communities offering access for all to essential information on a wide range of topics, skills and career training, and computing services. According to a national survey (2022), nearly 100 percent of public libraries reported offering free Internet access. In rural areas, more than 83 percent of libraries reported serving as their community’s only provider of no fee Internet and computing services (The Last Mile, American Libraries, 2022) while 90 percent of public libraries offer technology training, and 76 percent assist navigating digital government resources.

Increasingly, libraries are about employment and business. Veterans transitioning into civilian life are turning to their local library for LSTA-supported services such as completion of education and job training skills, resume building, job application, and access to earned veteran and family benefits. LSTA grants have included projects like teaching veterans’ filmmaking and storytelling in Los Angeles, and helping veterans become librarians in Texas. (American Libraries, 2022) At a time when applying to many jobs must be completed online nearly all public libraries offer services which help patrons prepare resumes and conduct job searches according to a 2019 report. For small businesses and entrepreneurs, many libraries offer 3-D printers and makerspaces to help designers innovate and provide access to specialized databases and collections.

The building blocks of language and literacy form in the first three years of a child’s life. In their first year, a child’s brain doubles in size, and by age 3, a child’s brain is twice as active as an adult’s. Developing these skills makes it easier for children to learn to read in school according to a Maine State Library Report., While more than 80 percent of children from economically disadvantaged communities lose reading skills over the summer because they lack access to books, learning resources, and such enrichment opportunities as trips to the library, bookstore, or museum, according to a Reading Is Fundamental 2022 report. Solving the literacy crisis requires creative collaboration among various stakeholders—and libraries have a crucial role to play.

LSTA support those who have difficulty in using a library through grants that support library services for the blind and physically handicapped using assistive technology and accessible reading materials. For those who are blind or whose physical abilities limit their use of traditional print material, LSTA is a lifeline and connects them to a modern society.

Unfortunately, during this time of increased demand, many libraries continue to face increased cuts and severe budget pressures. COVID-19 has exacerbated budget constraints as libraries absorbed unbudgeted costs and increased demand for library services. LSTA is more essential now than ever; it is the only dedicated federal program which helps public libraries meet community needs by providing enhanced services through technology, reach underserved populations, and retain staff while recruiting new and diverse future librarians.
We greatly appreciate the strong support for LSTA, administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, provided by this Subcommittee in recent years, including $211.0 million in FY 2023. Increasing funding for LSTA in FY 2025 will help ensure that Americans of all ages have access to Internet, information services, academic, employment resources, and innovative services that meet community needs at public libraries (LSTA was reauthorized at $232 million in 2018). We encourage the Subcommittee to continue to address the ongoing needs of libraries through increasing regular annual funding.

Thank you for your attention to this request and your continued support in sustaining and strengthening our nation’s libraries and the innovative solutions they provide to communities across the nation.

Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

Kansas Third District

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress
Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Jared Golden  
Member of Congress

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress
Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress

Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Marie Gluesenkamp Perez  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress

Darin LaHood
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress
Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

Kathy Manning  
Member of Congress

Emilia Strong Sykes  
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress