



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2209

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We appreciate the inclusion of \$50 million in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for libraries to expand Internet access across the country. This funding was a vital first step, but we will need to do more to help Americans stay informed and connected during this crisis. **We urge you to include at least \$2 billion in dedicated fiscal stabilization funding through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in the next COVID-19 response bill.**

Libraries are vital institutions not just for the resources they provide the American people, but the economic value they bring to communities, rural, suburban and urban. According to IMLS, Americans make more than 1.3 billion visits to public libraries each year. Libraries employ nearly 370,000 American workers and generate billions of dollars in economic activity, including the purchase of \$4 billion in books and other materials annually.

With libraries across the nation taking necessary steps to safeguard their employees and communities by closing their doors to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, we should do all we can to ensure library services continue, remotely for now and in-person in the future. Without an immediate robust infusion of federal support, libraries will be forced to make massive cuts, both in terms of staffing and purchases. These cuts would ripple throughout our communities, impacting support for education, workforce recovery, and access to computers and the Internet.

Additional federal support will also ensure libraries can continue providing essential services during this crisis. Libraries have expanded access to digital educational content, computing devices, and broadband connections. They have also been delivering books, boosting e-book offerings, movie rentals, and other reading and entertainment resources, and hosting online story times, virtual classes, exhibitions, and discussion groups.

Libraries have also gone above and beyond their missions to contribute to the COVID-19 response. They are leveraging their physical spaces to host local emergency planning meetings

and serving as distribution points for food, medical supplies, student laptops, books, and hotspots. They are also lending and using their 3D printers to print face-shields and related items for health workers. Finally, like other public and private institutions, libraries are meeting communities' demand for information resources, like career development for those who have been laid off.

If libraries can avoid huge cuts, they are uniquely positioned to lead communities in their recovery. Small businesses and entrepreneurs will rely on library resources to reconfigure business plans and conduct market research. At the same time, many of the millions of new job seekers in economic distress will depend on libraries to apply for assistance and improve their job search and interview skills. Students and adult learners will continue to need library books, digital resources, technology access, and hotspot lending.

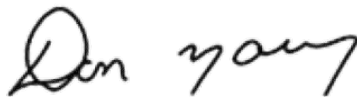
We urge the inclusion of \$2 billion to be distributed through IMLS under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The LSTA programs will allow relief to effectively and efficiently reach every state to meet local needs, particularly in low-income and rural areas. This funding should include a minimum state allotment of at least \$10 million and waive matching and maintenance of effort requirements. In addition, \$200 million would be reserved for direct grants from IMLS to support libraries most impacted by COVID-19 and \$40 million for IMLS to administer these funds and conduct outreach, research, and data collection.

We must ensure libraries across the country can continue providing needed services to our communities, keep employees working, and prepare to reopen stronger than ever. We thank you for your longstanding commitment to our public libraries and your consideration of our request as you craft the next COVID-19 response measure.

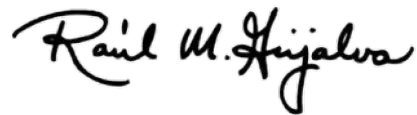
Sincerely,



ANDY LEVIN
Member of Congress



DON YOUNG
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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