



CHIEF OFFICERS OF STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES

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Chief Officers of State Library Agencies Statement on Federal Funding for Libraries

LEXINGTON, KY - The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) administered by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provides critically important funding for our nation's libraries. LSTA Grants to States appropriations are distributed directly to each state and territory through a population-based formula. Each state identifies the most appropriate uses of these funds for library services and activities to meet their state's economic, educational, civic, and demographic needs. The return on investment for this program is substantial and is enhanced by each state's matching contribution. The innovations taking place in America's libraries today are a direct result of this vital and successful program.

COSLA urges Congress to preserve the Institute of Museum and Library Services and to maintain through LSTA funding investment in libraries as vital infrastructure.

State library agencies (which comprise the membership of COSLA) have reach into every public library in America and oversee the LSTA Grants to States program in their respective states. They work closely with public, school, and other libraries to determine how to best allocate Grants to States funds to deliver the greatest benefit to the communities in which they

live. LSTA Grants to States-funded projects and initiatives are developed with input from library users and from local and state leaders who understand that libraries are essential partners in advancing the educational, economic, and public policy goals of local and state government. LSTA Grants to States projects implemented through libraries at the state and local level ensure that all members of the community – whether they live in a small Rust Belt town in southeastern Wisconsin, on remote tribal land in rural Oklahoma, in a quiet middle-class suburb on the outskirts of Boston, or in an at-risk inner-city neighborhood in Los Angeles – have access to the information they need to succeed in the twenty-first century.

LSTA Grants to States funds are put to work in our states and communities in a myriad of ways that make a difference. Using these funds, the nation’s public libraries, rural and urban, large systems and small provide robust educational support for in-school, home-school, out-of-school and lifelong learners. Public libraries operate as community centers and offer programs well beyond the familiar sphere of literacy. They provide internet access; technology skills training; assistance to entrepreneurs; services for the blind and physically handicapped, and foster the history and cultural heritage of communities across the U.S.

LSTA Grants to States funds support programs that help people get and create jobs, programs that get children school ready, programs that support veterans, and more.

America’s libraries have a proud record of accomplishment in all these areas but they have not done it alone. The support that LSTA funding provides to the nation through its libraries has been an essential component of this success. LSTA makes it possible for libraries to innovate, adapt quickly to local needs, and develop the programs and services that enable members of the community of all ages to thrive. Every community in every state has benefitted from this outstanding program, and COSLA trusts that Congress will recognize this by preserving IMLS and sustaining the LSTA appropriation in the coming year.

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