

2020 Legislative Platform and Priorities

In Florida, libraries are critical to the overall state economy by providing our residents with essential services and serving as a foundation for all levels of education. Some recent statistics show that approximately **52 percent of Floridians have a library card**, visiting our libraries 66.4 million times in person and 87.2 million virtual visits to library websites. A recent study commissioned by the Florida Department of State found that **public libraries provide a \$10.18 return on every dollar invested**.

Public Libraries Grant Funding Programs

1 State Aid to Public Libraries Grant Program

Increase funding to \$33,000,000

Public Libraries that receive State Aid to Public Libraries funding **invest** approximately \$559 million annually **in delivering library services to the public**. FLA seeks to restore State Aid funding levels to at least \$33,000,000, which would begin to bring the State's support for library services more in line with historic levels.

Note! Maintenance of Effort is \$23,180,603. This represents the funding level that Florida must commit to in order to receive important federal grant funding from Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) which is estimated to be approximately \$9 million; money that would otherwise funnel to other states! **Let's commit to keeping this federal money in Florida.**

Legislative budget request by Department of State: \$21,468,993

2 Library Cooperative Grant Program (F.S. 257.40-42)

Appropriate recurring \$2,000,000

FLA supports state funding for the five (5) Multitype Library Cooperatives in Florida, administered by the Division of Library and Information Services, Department of State. MLC funds support bibliographic record enhancement, statewide delivery service support, union catalog support and development, reciprocal borrowing, cooperative cataloging, cooperative reference services, cooperative collection development, digitization, and implementation of or support for innovation in the use of technologies related to resource sharing.

Legislative budget request by Department of State: \$2,000,000

Public Libraries Construction Grant Funding

3 Appropriate funding of \$15,470,000 to support all eligible applications (F.S. 257.191)

Public libraries require immediate, significant state investment to accommodate advances in IT infrastructure, renovate aging buildings, institute energy efficient technologies, and to increase accessibility for all patrons. Many library projects have been put on hold to the detriment of their communities.

Thirty-four (34) applications have been reviewed and deemed eligible for Public Library Construction Grant funding in 2020-2021. This **locally matched** funding helps generate economic development, demonstrates local investment in our libraries, and, provides for new library construction, renovations, and critical infrastructure improvements to ensure the vitality of libraries in our communities.

Innovative Initiatives Funding in Libraries

4 Appropriate funding of \$2,000,000 to create an innovation grant program

FLA supports establishing a competitive grant program for innovative library services administered by the Division of Library and Information Services, Department of State. With these funds, libraries can develop new service delivery models and programs that incorporate workforce readiness, economic development support, STEM learning, and community engagement spaces.

Smart Horizons Career Online High School Funding

5 Appropriate \$750,000

FLA supports recurring funding for this program administered by the Division of Library and Information Services, Department of State, that allows 19-and-older out of school adults to complete a private, accredited high school diploma and career certificate through participating public library systems. As of September 2019, more than 630 students have graduated and an additional 463 students are actively working on their coursework. This program makes a private high school diploma more accessible to Floridians and prepares them for success in the workforce.

Funding for Academic Libraries

6 State University and College Libraries – Increase FALSC E-Resources funding to \$8,473,107

Academic libraries are essential for student success, faculty research, and accreditation. Since 2012, the costs for e-resources have risen at an average annual rate of 3% while the state appropriation has remained flat. This budget gap has resulted in the loss of 27 e-resources packages, representing a loss of access to millions of scholarly articles and other academic resources for public university and college students.

Support for Cultural Affairs

Support for Cultural Affairs and Florida Humanities Council Funding

FLA supports the Florida Humanities Council in their funding efforts each year and strongly encourages financial support for other Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State, programming and grant projects throughout the state.

Policy Issues

Library Instructional Materials

Florida state law (*F. S. 1006.28*) allows parents, and any residents, to challenge the use of textbooks and instructional materials they find objectionable via an independent hearing. FLA monitors the use of this law by citizens to challenge materials selected by professional educators and librarians.

School Library Media Centers

FLA endorses the Florida Association for Media in Education restoration of professional instruction by a certified school library media specialist in school library media centers in all school districts.

Division of Library and Information Services, Department of State

FLA supports continued funding for the Division of Library and Information Services, Department of State. Its programs and services are essential for providing Florida's libraries with the guidance, training, resources, and support for library staff throughout the State of Florida.

Bureau of Braille and Talking Books (Department of Education budget)

FLA supports continued financial support for the Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Service, which provides quality access to library services to all eligible residents of Florida, a state that has one of the largest populations of sight-impaired individuals in the United States.

Department of Corrections Library Services (Department of Corrections budget)

The Florida Library Association supports continued funding for correctional libraries.