



## 2017 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Florida's libraries provide residents with essential services, are critical to the state's economy, and provide a foundation for education at all levels. Providing state funding for services and operations as well as opportunities for expansion and innovation will make our state more competitive in the economic sphere and give our residents the educational tools to succeed. It is the Florida Library Association's mission to promote excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for them. These are the legislative issues that the Florida Library Association strongly supports.

### **State Aid to Public Libraries**

Florida's State Aid grant program has been the cornerstone of public library support in our state since 1963 and is a national model. State Aid to Libraries is a vital source of state funding which enables public libraries to serve all Floridians. It is necessary that State Aid to Libraries grant funding be reinstated to the 2001 level of \$33.4 million. Current funding level of \$22,298,834 is less than was provided in 1994.

More than half of all Floridians have a library card and checked out an average of 6 books per person in 2014. Floridians visited their public library 75.1 million times in person and made 97.3 million virtual visits! A 2013 survey commissioned by the Florida Department of State found that public libraries provide a \$10.81 return on every dollar invested. State Aid grant funding assists Floridians with:

- Economic and Workforce development resources to job seekers and small businesses.
- Access to government services, especially e-government – public libraries are the “go to” place for Internet access to, and for librarian support in finding, the vast array of services and products online.
- Education and reading – libraries are the safety net that insures school success for students of all ages.

### **Public Library Construction**

The Legislature and Governor Scott funded all five of the 2016-17 projects. FLA will support the Division of Library and Information Services' Public Library Construction Grant 2017 - 2018 request. These grants provide local jobs and funds for critical infrastructure upgrades including those that address new technology in libraries, renovation, and expansion. Construction grants serve as a stimulus to local governments to provide Floridians with modern libraries capable of supporting their needs in a 21st century learning and industry environment.

### **State University and College Libraries**

Academic libraries are essential for student success, faculty research, and accreditation. FLA supports funding for statewide library e-resources through the Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative (FALSC), a part of the Innovation Institute's Florida Virtual Campus. FALSC acts as a responsible steward of public funds through the use of shared statewide e-resources that help reduce the cost of post-secondary education. Because E-resources are a cornerstone of affordable education, it is critical that funding for them be sustained as costs rise.

### **Multi-Type Library Cooperatives**

The 2016 – 2017 Legislature and Governor Scott fully funded the Library Cooperative Grant program for the state's five multi-type library cooperatives (MLCs) at \$2 million. FLA supports an appropriation of the same amount in 2017-18. MLCs reduce costs for libraries by promoting resource sharing and by providing training to library staff to keep them current in today's ever-changing world of technology and library services. These funds are used to

maintain Florida's online database of library collections making possible resource sharing through interlibrary loan. MLCs train over 16,000 participants annually.

### **Smart Horizons Career Online High School - Pilot**

In 2016-17 \$750,000 was appropriated for a second-year pilot to assess the program's effectiveness. The program provides a diploma awarding on-line high school to age 19 and over out of school adults through participating public libraries. As of September 2016, 40 students have graduated, 166 are enrolled, and 818 have completed a preliminary self-assessment. FLA supports continued funding of this program that makes high school diplomas, and the jobs that require them, available to Floridians.

### **State Library of Florida, Department of State**

FLA supports continued funding for the Division of Library and Information Services, its programs and services in the Department of State.

### **School Library Media Centers**

FLA endorses the 2017 Legislative Platform of the Florida Association for Media in Education, particularly the restoration of professional instruction by a certificated school library media specialist in school library media centers in all school districts. Studies conducted over the past eighteen years in more than twenty states demonstrate the positive impact of strong library media programs on student success.

### **State E-Book Program**

FLA supports the creation of a statewide e-book program that all Florida libraries can share to meet Floridians' needs in a cost effective manner. Florida has the opportunity to be a leader in providing e-book services.

### **Innovative Initiatives**

FLA supports establishing a grant program for innovative library services administered by the Division of Library and Information Services with an appropriation of \$1 million. These grants would be an investment in Florida's future. To meet community needs, libraries continually broaden their scope from traditional libraries to community hubs. These funds would allow libraries to innovate their service delivery models to incorporate workforce readiness and economic development support, STEM and STEAM learning, Maker services, early reading skills, and community engagement spaces for people to meet and learn.

### **Bureau of Braille and Talking Books**

FLA supports continued financial support for the Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Service to provide quality library services to all eligible residents of Florida. The State of Florida has the third largest population of sight-impaired individuals in the United States. More than 7.3 million people in the U.S. have a visual disability; 494,900 live in Florida.

### **Department of Correction Library Services**

The Florida Library Association supports continued funding for correctional libraries.

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Our Mission:

*The Florida Library Association is a statewide organization that promotes excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for libraries and providing high quality professional and leadership development for a diverse community of library staff, volunteers, and supporters.*