



2019 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The Florida Library Association promotes excellence in, and advocates for, Florida libraries. 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. 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 2013 survey commissioned by the Florida Department of State found that public libraries provide a \$10.18 return on every dollar invested.

The State of Florida is an important partner for libraries because it helps to bridge gaps in local funding of libraries. The State ensures libraries can continue to provide Florida residents with access to great services and resources, including, but not limited to job training, resume writing, literacy programs for all ages, computer training, tutoring services, print and digital content, collaborative and study spaces, and technology, all of which help Florida to become more economically competitive through an educated society. Libraries depend on the State of Florida in order to provide residents with the educational tools necessary for success. Below are the legislative and funding priorities for the Florida Library Association:

Funding for Public Libraries

State Aid to Public Libraries – Increase funding to \$33,000,000

Public Libraries that received State Aid to Public Libraries funding invest approximately \$518 million annually in delivering library services to the public. The State's investment of \$20.5 million, which was a \$2.5 million decrease from 2017, represents 4% of the total amount local governments invest in overall library expenditures. 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. This will help ensure our libraries are able to rebuild staffing levels and services to levels that benefit our residents.

Public Library Construction - Appropriate funding of \$11,250,000 to support all eligible applications

Libraries throughout the State are building and renovating again! Twenty-three applications have been reviewed and deemed eligible for Public Library Construction Grant funding in 2018-19. This locally matched funding helps create local jobs, 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 - 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 (DLIS). 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.

Multi-Type Library Cooperatives (MLCs) - Appropriate \$3,000,000 for continued funding

FLA supports the recurring appropriation of \$3,000,000 to fully fund the Library Cooperative Grant Program. MLCs reduce costs for libraries by facilitating resource sharing between libraries, providing training for over 16,000 library staff annually. These funds maintain Florida's online database of library collections, making resource sharing possible through interlibrary loan, and, services such as Ask-A-Librarian and Florida Library Jobs are available for use by libraries throughout the State of Florida.

Smart Horizons Career Online High School - \$750,000

FLA supports continued funding for this program that allows 19-and-older out of school adults to complete a private high school diploma and career certificate through 35 participating library systems. As of January 2019, more than 500 students have graduated and an additional 254 students are actively working on their coursework through 38 participating public libraries. This program makes a high school diploma more accessible to Floridians and prepares them for success in the workforce.

Funding for Academic Libraries

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. FLA supports increased funding for library e-resources for all State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS) libraries through the Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative (FALSC). E-resources are a cornerstone of affordable education. Student success depends on access to high quality, scholarly e-resources across all academic disciplines. It is essential that funding for them be increased as costs rise. 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 database packages, representing a loss of access to millions of scholarly articles and other academic resources for SUS and FCS students. An increase of \$1,620,091 will enable FALSC to acquire essential content on the behalf of all SUS and FCS institutions.

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.

State Library of Florida, Department of State – Ongoing Funding

FLA supports continued funding for the State Department's Division of Library and Information Services. 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

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

The Florida Library Association supports continued funding for correctional libraries.

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