Missouri Library Association Legislative Priorities for 2020 (FY2021)

To ensure that Missouri libraries are dependable and able to provide adequate services to their patrons, the Missouri Library Association will continue to advocate for the restoration of funding for libraries.

The MO Secretary of State has prioritized restoring the REAL Appropriation for libraries. MLA supports this position.

a. In FY2013, the REAL Appropriation amount was $3,109,250. We will advocate for the full restoration. For FY2020, the REAL Appropriation is $2,000,000.

b. The REAL Appropriation needs to be restored in order to support the Governor’s initiative of bringing broadband to academic centers throughout the state of Missouri and to rural Missourians.

c. Internet access is essential in Missourians’ lives. It is essential for connecting with governments, job opportunities, higher education, skill-building opportunities, and the world.

The MO Secretary of State is advocating for the full restoration of A&E funding. MLA supports this position.

a. The Non-Resident Athletes and Entertainers Income Tax is an income tax on the earnings of professional athletes and entertainers when they perform or play in Missouri. It is collected by the state and, by statute, is to be distributed among:
   i. Missouri State Library Networking Fund (10%)
   ii. Missouri Humanities Council Trust Fund (10%)
   iii. Missouri Public Television Broadcasting Corporation Special Fund (10%)
   iv. Missouri Historic Preservation Revolving Fund (10%)
   v. Missouri Arts Council Trust Fund (60%)

b. Since FY2013, a maximum of only 22% of those funds have been distributed to those organizations. In FY2018, Missouri collected nearly $36 million from this tax, but only distributed $8.25 million, roughly 23%.

c. MLA will advocate that the A&E Statute (143.183) be funded and distributed as originally intended by statute.

MLA will advocate that State Aid to Libraries be retained at the current level, and supports returning to a funding level of $.55 per capita.
Missouri Library Association Legislative Priorities for 2020 (FY2021)

MLA will support legislation that affirms the autonomy of libraries and other taxing jurisdictions including control of revenue assigned to those jurisdictions by voters.

MLA supports the revision of incentives and tax abatements that are beneficial to libraries throughout the state.

a. MLA supports any legislation that allows for libraries and other political subdivisions the option to keep more of their voter-approved revenue on new and existing projects.

b. MLA encourages libraries to work toward local reform of incentives and tax abatements including proposed legislative changes.

Working with other local taxing authorities, MLA will support the improvement of the Hancock Amendment (Article X, Sections 16-24) to ensure that political subdivisions can provide adequate services to growing populations.

a. Due to the Hancock Amendment, tax levels remain stagnant in communities. As property values increase, tax levies decrease, and revenue does not keep up with inflation. This dictates that political subdivisions provide the same amount of services with less revenue.

b. MLA supports strict annual adherence to mandated reassessment schedules and practices.

MLA will support legislation to retain net neutrality protections for the state of Missouri.

The DC Circuit Court upheld the FCC’s authority to remove net neutrality protections on a Federal level. However, the court vacated the portion of the order which allows the FCC to preempt state and local efforts to protect an open internet.

In defending the equitable access to information, MLA will support any efforts put forth protecting an open Internet for Missourians.

Federal Advocacy: Advocate that the Universal Service Fund remains fully funded. This fund is under threat for reduction or elimination, and it provides funding for four essential service initiatives, including e-Rate.

The Universal Service Fund provides funds for the High-Cost program (Connect America Fund for rural broadband), Lifeline program (broadband for low-income households), Schools and Libraries program (E-Rate), and Rural Health Care program (broadband for healthcare needs). Telecommunications providers are required to contribute to this fund to ensure “universal service” of telecommunications.
Missouri Library Association Legislative Priorities for 2020 (FY2021)

Ongoing Initiatives

State Level
MLA will monitor property tax legislation, tax abatement & incentive legislation and any legislation that could have negative impact on revenue.
MLA will monitor any legislation regarding the governance of libraries, prioritizing local control.
MLA supports legislation that would provide a diversification of revenue from state and local options.
MLA will continue to build coalitions with other political subdivisions that have similar interests in legislation and funding.
MLA will monitor legislative activities related to firearms in public places. MLA continues to support any addition of public libraries to the list of entities (MO State Statutes 571.107.1) that can restrict firearms or the ability of locally controlled governing bodies to decide what is best for their specific communities.
MLA will monitor legislation affecting “affirmative defense,” protecting librarians and teachers from prosecution when the public views materials that some may find harmful or offensive. MLA will advocate to retain affirmative defense and the educational exemption for schools and libraries.

Federal Level
MLA will continue to work in conjunction with other state library associations and the American Library Association to retain federal funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), with a focus on the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which provides funding for grants at the state level.
MLA will join ALA in support of the protection of patrons’ information, including the defense of due process in acquisition of that information.
MLA will continue to advocate for the retention of the Communications Decency Act. Schools, libraries, and other public services should not be held liable for the content submitted on their social media pages by other users. While entities may curate information; they must not censor that information.