

Missouri Library Association Legislative Priorities for 2021 (FY2022)

Advocate at the local, state, and federal level for as much support as possible. Libraries have made an impact in people's lives during the pandemic. When many other resources and services were unavailable, libraries across the state offered expanded digital and remote services to serve Missourians.

- a. Offering expanded WiFi access in parking lots, even when closed.
- b. Offering free homework, career, and health resources that users can access from home.
- c. Offering devices and hotspots to patrons to bridge the technology gap.
- d. Increasing bandwidth and expanding access to the Internet for library users.

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.

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.

While A&E funding will be greatly reduced, due to the pandemic, MLA supports the full restoration of A&E funding.

MLA supports the expansion of broadband across Missouri, and legislation that provides that goal in an equitable manner to bridge, and ultimately, eliminate, the technology gap.

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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.

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

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.

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

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 Section 230 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.

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.