

Missouri Library Association Legislative Priorities for 2023 (FY2024)

The Missouri Library Association will advocate at the local, state, and federal level for as much support as possible to ensure that Missouri libraries are dependable and able to provide adequate services to their patrons. MLA will continue to advocate for the restoration and maintenance of funding for libraries.

MLA supports the full funding of the Non-resident Athletes and Entertainers (A&E) income tax. MLA will work with other state cultural partners to advocate for the full funding of the A&E income tax.

MLA will advocate that State Aid to Public Libraries be retained at a minimum level of \$4.5 million.

MLA will advocate that Remote Electronic Access for Libraries (REAL) program appropriation be retained at a minimum level of \$3.1 million.

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.

MLA will support legislation that sets fair standards for libraries purchasing electronic materials, such as eBooks, eAudiobooks, etc., from large and small publishers, in order to provide equitable access to Missourians.

MLA will oppose any legislation that proposes censorship in any form or infringes on Missourians' freedom to read, view, or learn.

MLA will oppose any legislation that criminalizes librarians for performing duties that are aligned with the core tenets of librarianship.

MLA will oppose any effort to grant or extend jurisdiction or governance to any political subdivision over the decisions or policies of statutorily established library districts beyond what may currently exist in the Missouri Constitution or the Statutes of the State of Missouri.

Ongoing Initiatives

State Level

MLA will monitor property tax legislation, tax abatement & incentive legislation, and any legislation that could have a negative impact on revenue for libraries.

MLA will monitor any legislation regarding the governance of libraries, prioritizing local control.

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MLA supports legislation that would provide a diversification of revenue from state and local options (i.e. local sales taxes and online sales taxes).

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 to retain net neutrality protections for the state of Missouri.

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 will continue to build coalitions with other political subdivisions that have similar interests in legislation and funding.

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.