

American Library Association

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ALA applauds library funding increase in President's 2008 budget

PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON - The American Library Association (ALA) applauds the funding increases for libraries proposed in President Bush's fiscal year (FY) 2008 budget and thanks the Administration for its consistent support of increased library funding. In an extremely tight fiscal environment, the President's commitment to increase federal funding for libraries demonstrates his recognition of the many ways libraries serve communities.

The President's Budget requests \$226,182,000 for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), an increase of \$15,585,000 over FY 2006 and an even bigger increase than LSTA would have received for FY 2007. The LSTA number includes an increase in the Grants to States program, bringing funding for that program to \$171,500,000. The ALA has actively supported an increase in Grants to States funding as this funding level will allow full implementation of a 2003 law to provide a more equitable distribution of state formula grants.

"This administration has demonstrated once again how important libraries are to this country," said Leslie Burger, President of the American Library Association. "The need for Federal support is greater than ever, as libraries work to do more with less. These funds will allow for the continued development of countless valuable services that libraries provide, including Internet access, public meeting spaces, mentorship programs, cultural development series, and of course traditional library materials."

The Budget also includes \$4 million for policy research and statistics. By investing in this analysis, the government can evaluate which library services best serve the needs of patrons, and librarians can adapt policy to changing trends accordingly. The ALA applauds the administration for this proposal and agrees it will strengthen help to better meet Americans' needs from their libraries.

The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program was level-funded.

"It's wonderful to see another increase in funding for libraries," said Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director of the ALA Washington Office. "The Improving

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Literacy through School Libraries program will help school libraries continue provide students with up-to-date technology and top-quality, age-appropriate reading materials. These resources are essential in order to ensure that America has a strong 21st-Century workforce.”

The Budget request includes \$26,500,000 for The First Lady's Twenty-First Century Librarian Program, a \$2,740,000 million increase over 2006. The funding increase demonstrates a consistent commitment by the President and the First Lady to ensure that the nation has another generation of trained librarians to serve their communities.

#

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is the only federal program exclusively created for libraries, and is administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The law's definition of a library includes institutions of all types and sizes, such as public, academic, research, school, state, and even digital libraries. The law includes grants for Native American and Native Hawaiian library services, as well as National Leadership grants aimed at education and training, research and demonstration projects, the preservation of library materials, and model projects between libraries and museums.

The Improving Literacy Through School Library program is part of the No Child Left Behind Act and designed to improve student literacy skills and academic achievement by providing schools with up-to date library materials and to ensure that school library media centers are staffed by well-trained and state certified school media specialists.



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