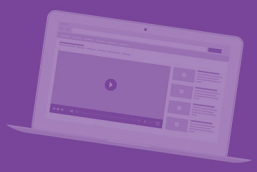
SPECIAL REPORT | APRIL 2018

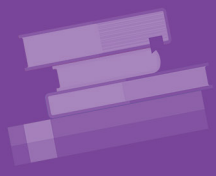
american libraries

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



The State of America's Libraries 2018

A Report from the American Library Association



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ABOUT THE REPORT

KATHY S. ROSA is the director of the ALA Library and Research Center. Rosa draws on many years of experience working in a variety of libraries. She has taught information and technology skills in school and public libraries, as well as library and information science courses for graduate students. She can be reached at 312-280-4273 or krosa@ala.org.

The following ALA divisions and offices also contributed to this report:

- American Association of School Librarians
- *American Libraries* magazine
- Association for Library Service to Children
- Association of College and Research Libraries
- Office for Accreditation
- Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services
- Office for Information Technology Policy
- Office for Intellectual Freedom
- Office for Research and Education
- Office of Government Relations
- Public Awareness Office
- Public Library Association
- Young Adult Library Services Association

HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT

American Library Association. *The State of America's Libraries 2018: A Report from the American Library Association.* Kathy S. Rosa, ed. 2018. www.ala.org/news/state-americas-libraries-report-2018

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ABOUT ALA

The American Library Association (ALA) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice of libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit ala.org.

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Libraries and other institutions: $74/year, 6 issues, US, Canada, and Mexico; foreign: $84. Subscription price for individuals included in ALA membership dues. 800-545-2433 x5108, email membership@ala.org, or visit ala.org.

PUBLISHED
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American Libraries | April 2018 | ISSN 0002-9769

Photo: Sam Kittner

Prince George's County (Md.) Memorial Library System, Laurel branch

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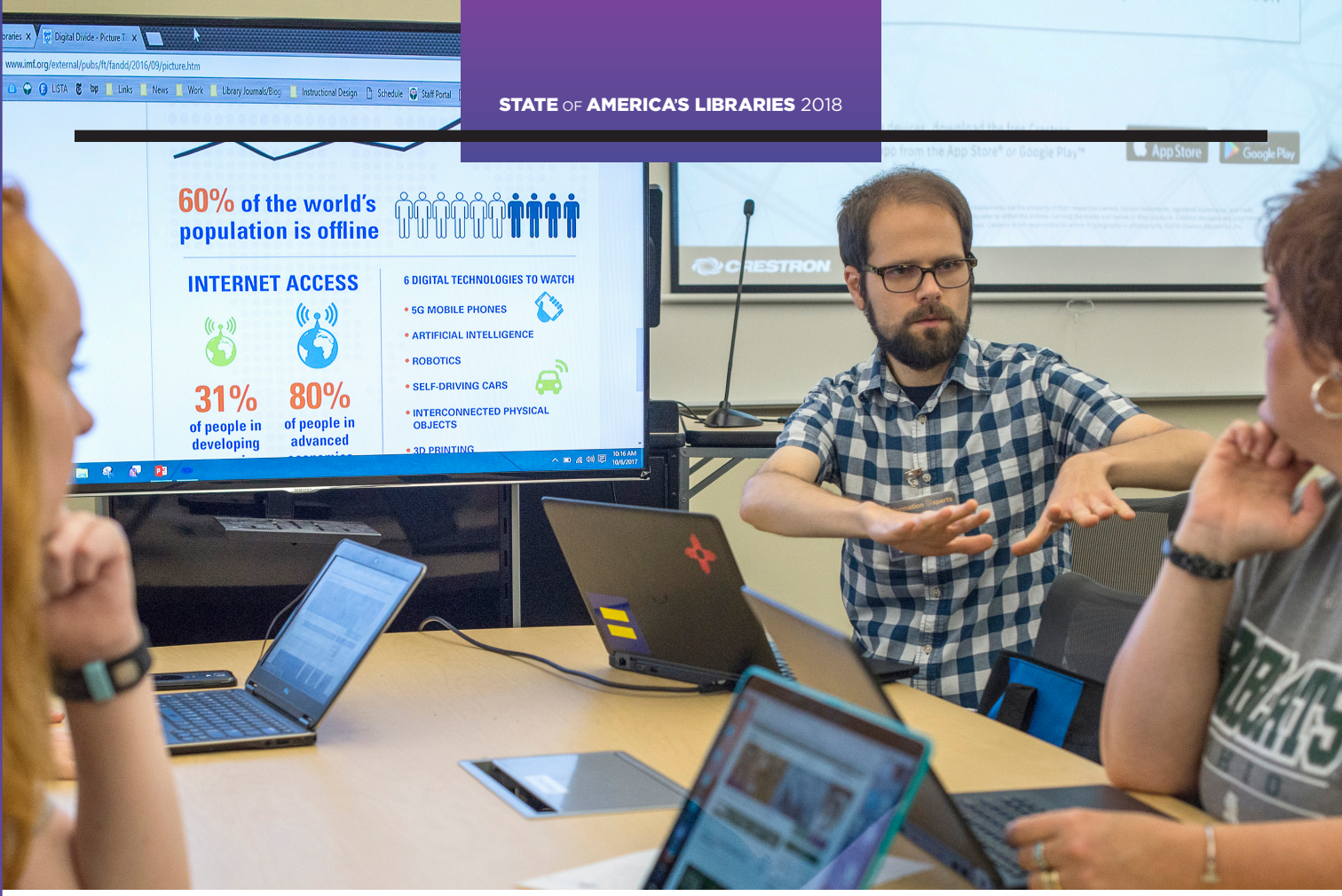
The State of America's Libraries 2018

A Report from the American Library Association

EDITED BY Kathy S. Rosa

The 2017 Harvard Harris Poll on Crime and Safety in America reports that voters rank healthcare, economy and jobs, and terrorism and national security as the most important issues facing the country today. In uncertain times, people turn to trusted institutions, such as libraries, for reliable information resources. The Pew Research Center reports that a growing number of people believe librarians can help them locate information they can trust, and a majority feel that the library provides a safe place to work and relax. Libraries and librarians empower people to lead with cutting-edge technologies, paths to lifelong learning, and responsiveness to social issues.



Bryan McGeary, subject librarian for the humanities, teaches "Foundations of Research 2: Information has Value" in Alden Library, Ohio University, Athens.

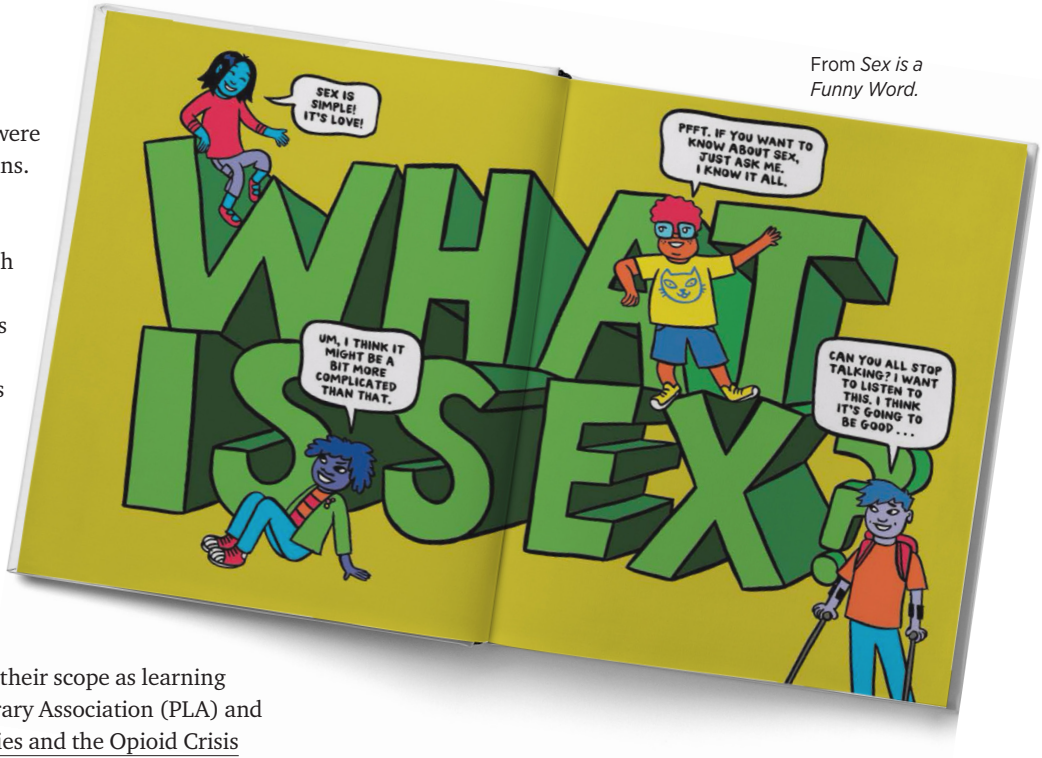
Photo: Lexi Browning/Ohio University Libraries

Academic libraries empower learners with access to authoritative digital and print collections, as well as instructional sessions. A recent study reports that 6.2 million students participated in face-to-face and online instructional sessions. Libraries in doctoral degree–granting institutions were open an average of 109 hours per week, followed by comprehensive university libraries at 88 hours per week and baccalaureate school libraries at 87 hours per week. Community college libraries were open an average of 63 hours per week.

Library staff are hired or retrained to deliver evolving library services. The top five new services currently supported by academic libraries are web development, open access institutional repositories, learning systems, digital humanities, and digital media production. Other services supported by library staff include massive open online course (MOOC) development, e-portfolio development, makerspaces, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

School libraries are a unique and essential part of the learning community. American Library Association (ALA) President Jim Neal writes, "School libraries are about innovative technologies and creative spaces. Through school libraries, students understand issues like privacy, confidentiality, intellectual freedom, open access, fair use, and how these relate to their work as learners. Students view libraries as a positive and essential part of their lives."

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Obama in 2015, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaced the No Child Left Behind version passed in 2002. For the first time, the legislation includes language on "effective school library programs" and student learning outcomes. In 2016–2017, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the ALA Office for Library Advocacy led state workshops to inform school librarians about strategies designed to



From *Sex is a Funny Word.*

ensure that school librarians were included in the state ESSA plans.

Public libraries lead in bridging the digital divide with 16,500 physical locations in communities of all sizes across the country. The resources and services of public libraries empower low-income families and expand access to health information.

Public libraries worked with community partners to help find ways to address the national opioid crisis by supporting community efforts within their scope as learning organizations. The Public Library Association (PLA) and WebJunction created a Libraries and the Opioid Crisis Facebook page where library workers can discuss the health crisis and share resources.

Access and challenges

The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) reported that bans and challenges to remove or restrict access to library materials rose from 45 in 2016 to 91 in 2017.

The theme for 2018's Banned Books Week, observed in libraries and bookstores across the country September 23–29, will be: "Banning books silences stories. Speak out!"

Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2017. OIF tracked 354 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2017. Some individual challenges resulted in requests to restrict or remove multiple titles. Overall, 416 books were targeted. Here are the "Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2017":

1. ***Thirteen Reasons Why,*** by Jay Asher
   Originally published in 2007, this *New York Times* bestseller has resurfaced as a controversial book after Netflix aired a TV series by the same name. This YA novel was challenged and banned in multiple school districts because it discusses suicide.

2. ***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian,*** by Sherman Alexie
   Consistently challenged since its publication in 2007 for acknowledging issues such as poverty, alcoholism, and sexuality, this National Book Award winner was challenged in school curricula because of profanity and situations that were deemed sexually explicit.

3. ***Drama,*** written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier
   This Stonewall Honor Award–winning, 2012 graphic novel from an acclaimed cartoonist was challenged and banned in school libraries because it includes LGBT characters and was considered "confusing."

4. ***The Kite Runner,*** by Khaled Hosseini
   This critically acclaimed, multigenerational novel was challenged and banned because it includes sexual violence and was thought to "lead to terrorism" and "promote Islam."

5. ***George,*** by Alex Gino
   Written for elementary-age children, this Lambda Literary Award winner was challenged and banned because it includes a transgender child.

6. ***Sex is a Funny Word,*** written by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth
   This 2015 informational children's book written by a certified sex educator was challenged because it addresses sex education and is believed to lead children to "want to have sex or ask questions about sex."

7. ***To Kill a Mockingbird,*** by Harper Lee
   This Pulitzer Prize–winning novel, considered an American classic, was challenged and banned because of violence and its use of the N-word.

8. ***The Hate U Give,*** by Angie Thomas
   Despite winning multiple awards and being the most searched-for book on Goodreads during its debut year, this YA novel was challenged and banned in school libraries and curricula because it was considered "pervasively vulgar" and because of drug use, profanity, and offensive language.

9. ***And Tango Makes Three,*** by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, illustrated by Henry Cole
   Returning after a brief hiatus from the Top Ten Most Challenged list, this ALA Notable Children's Book, published in 2005, was challenged and labeled because it features a same-sex relationship.

10. ***I Am Jazz,*** written by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas
    This autobiographical picture book cowritten by the 13-year-old protagonist was challenged because it addresses gender identity.

Issues and trends

Many libraries struggled to fund the resources and staff training needed to address both the serious societal issues teens are facing as well as meet the needs of historically underrepresented groups. A 2017 member survey by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) indicated that 51.9% had reached out to teens who aren't regular library users, and about the same number of respondents (51.2%) worked to build their own cultural competence skills.

Children encounter digital media in many places, including libraries, according to a recent report from the Erikson Institute's Technology in Early Childhood Center. Libraries provide a space for families to connect with the digital tools and media that ensure their access to information. Children's librarians are at the forefront of being trusted resources for the youngest members of their library communities.

The function of libraries as community centers is readily recognized. A Brookings Institution article even referred to librarians as "ad hoc social workers and navigators" who "help local people figure out the complexities of life." This role is especially evident, and never more essential, than in times of crisis, and 2017 has had its share of adversity—from natural disasters to shootings on school campuses.

Threats to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (the agency that provides federal support for libraries and museums in the US) and to federal policies that impact public access to information were met with strong opposition from America's libraries throughout the past year. By the time FY2018 officially began in October 2017, the Appropriations Committees from both houses of Congress had passed bills that maintained (and in the Senate, increased by $4 million) funding for libraries.

ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries has identified numerous trends that will affect libraries. Among them are:

Aging. An aging workforce and population will impact the workplace, government budgets, policy, and family life. For libraries, this could mean a change in the profile of their users, and in the profile of librarians and library professionals.

Income inequality. According to the Institute for Policy Studies, income inequality has been growing markedly for the past 30 years in the United States. Library services in support of skills development will likely become more important, empowering the upward mobility of people.

Connected learning. Social and digital media available via the internet will provide learners with limitless opportunities to seek and acquire new knowledge and skills. In order for connected learning to help level the playing field between the haves and have-nots, students must have regular access to new and emerging technologies and the internet. Libraries that offer access to these will be better able to integrate themselves into connected learning environments.

Academic Libraries

ALA's Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) conducts an annual survey of staffing, collections, expenditures, operations, and initiatives for all academic libraries in the United States. The statistics in this section are taken from the most recent data set in 2016.

Staffing trends

In the past five years, 21% of all academic libraries saw staffing increases, while 19% saw decreased funding and 60% reported flat budgets. Expenditures for salaries and wages accounted for 57.2% of the total library expenditures on average. Salaries and wages constituted 76.5% of total library expenditures for associate-degree granting institutions, 52.3% for baccalaureates, 55.7% for comprehensive schools, and 44.5% for doctoral/research institutions.

During the same time period, almost 61% of academic libraries repurposed or cross-trained staff to better support new technologies or services or provide support for new positions or library departments. Retirements and budget constriction were also factors.

Services

Although almost two-thirds of libraries reported flat budgets, new services continue to grow. The top five new services currently supported by academic libraries are web development, open access institutional repositories, learning systems, digital humanities, and digital media production. Other services supported by library staff include massive open online course (MOOC) development, e-portfolio development, makerspaces, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Most academic libraries employ staff to provide specialized assistance with copyright, metadata, data management, research impact, instructional design, and data visualization.

In the past five years, more than 58% of all academic libraries have changed their reference staffing models, with the most popular change being a switch to on-call staffing. Academic libraries also provide staff and other support to such campus services as writing centers (42%), tutoring (39%), testing (25%), diversity and equity (12%), and digital scholarship labs (11%).

Academic library staff provided instructional sessions (face-to-face as well as electronic) for more than 6.2 million students. Almost 43% of these sessions were digital.

Doctoral degree–granting institutions averaged the most reference transactions and consultations per year (more than 16,700), followed by comprehensive universities (more than 5,100 transactions and consultations), community colleges (more than 7,200), and baccalaureate schools (more than 2,300).

Doctoral or research universities accounted for more than 85% of institutional repository usage followed by comprehensive universities (9%), baccalaureate schools (5%), and community colleges (1%). More than 1.2 million items were accessed in 2016.

Access

Libraries in doctoral degree–granting institutions were open an average of 109 hours per week, followed by comprehensive university libraries at 88 hours per week and baccalaureate school libraries at 87 hours per week. Community college libraries were open an average of 63 hours per week.

Collections

Academic library expenditures for collection materials averaged $5,623,980 for doctoral degree–granting institutions, $701,778 for comprehensive degree–granting institutions, $493,206 for baccalaureate schools, and $148,822 for associate degree–granting institutions. On average, doctoral degree–granting institutions spent 70.9% of their materials budgets on ongoing commitments to subscriptions in 2016, comprehensive schools spent an average of 79.2%, baccalaureate schools spent 74.2%, and associate degree–granting institutions spent 55.2%. On average, academic libraries spent 69.8% of their materials budget on journal subscriptions.

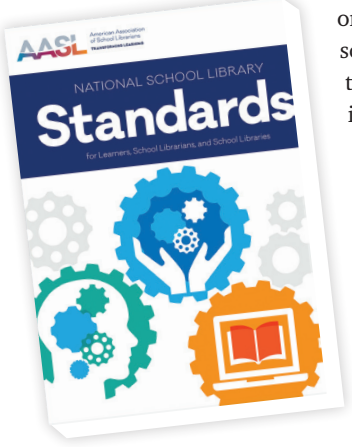
School Libraries

School libraries and librarians are vital to the educational community. The school library is a unique and essential part of the learning community, and when led by a qualified school librarian, prepares all learners for college, career, and life.

ALA President Jim Neal writes, "School libraries are about innovative technologies and creative spaces. Through school libraries, students understand issues like privacy, confidentiality, intellectual freedom, open access, fair use, and how these relate to their work as learners. Students view libraries as a positive and essential part of their lives."

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Obama in 2015, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaced the No Child Left Behind version passed in 2002. For the first time, the legislation included language on "effective school library programs" and student learning outcomes.

School librarians and administrators are not alone in creating the state ESSA plans. The American Association of School Librarians (AASL), as the national organization for the school library profession, is following ESSA and tracking individual states' approval. State workshops were offered by AASL and the ALA Office for Library Advocacy in 2016–2017, with more than 40 states participating.



These workshops were not only designed to inform school librarians about the legislation, but most importantly to walk them through developing a personalized, state-specific, advocacy and coalition-building plan to ensure that school librarians were included in the state ESSA plan. Follow-up interviews with workshop participants indicated a significant increase in general comfort level in advocating for school library programs. This will have a lasting impact on all state-level advocacy efforts.

"Collaborate" is one of the six Shared Foundations that anchor the AASL Standards Integrated Framework.

AASL's release of *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* is a groundbreaking publication that provides school librarians with a structure to develop curriculum tailored to their local priorities and accommodate learner growth through personalized experiences. The AASL Standards Integrated Framework, featured within the book, reflects a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning that demonstrates the connection between students, librarians, and standards.

Public Libraries

Public libraries continue to play a vital and expanding role in serving their communities. Through innovative programs and partnerships, they are narrowing the digital divide and the achievement gap for low-income families, as well as expanding access to health information.

Digital literacy

With more than 16,500 physical locations in communities of all sizes across the country, public libraries make powerful partners in bridging the digital divide. They are essential providers of public internet access, computers, and training that community members need to compete in today's digital world. In February 2017, the Public Library Association (PLA) and Cox Communications announced a new partnership intended to strengthen and expand the organizations' shared commitment to helping low-income students and their families use technology through greater access to digital literacy training in their local libraries and online at DigitalLearn.org.

Nurturing from a loving parent or caregiver in the early years of a child's life supports healthy brain development that forms the foundation for success later. Public and school libraries are taking a proactive approach toward engaging caregivers in supporting children's early literacy development. The Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) program is an excellent tool to ensure libraries' success. A study released November 17 by Susan B. Neuman, a professor of childhood education and literacy development at New York University, showed significantly greater engagement of parents and caregivers in the libraries that used the ECRR program.

Health literacy

Low health literacy is a major source of economic inefficiency in the US healthcare system. Nine in ten adults have difficulty understanding and making use of the health information they encounter every day. Last summer, PLA and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) launched a nationwide initiative to increase public library workers' knowledge and skills related to consumer health services. PLA and NNLM are assessing health information needs among public librarians and sharing free resources and professional development opportunities that will help library staff better serve their patrons' consumer health needs.

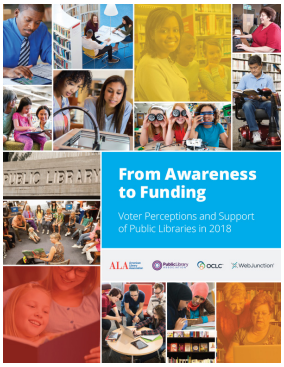
Public libraries have also worked closely with community partners to help find ways to address the national opioid crisis by supporting community efforts within their scope as learning organizations. PLA and WebJunction teamed up in September to present a virtual "town hall meeting" on the opioid crisis. They also created a Libraries and the Opioid Crisis Facebook page where library workers can discuss the health crisis and share resources.

Playing these important roles that help communities address critical needs in technology access, education, and health is changing the public's perception of libraries and shaping how libraries do business. Public libraries were recognized and rewarded at the ballot box with

widespread support in 2017. A vast majority of local ballot measures to expand programs, staffing, services, or collections, were approved.

Voter perceptions

OCLC, the ALA Office for Library Advocacy, and PLA collaborated in 2018 to update the seminal research published in OCLC's *From Awareness to Funding* report in 2008 in order to get a current understanding of voter perceptions, use, and attitudes toward public libraries, librarians, and library funding.



Several themes emerged from the new survey, *From Awareness to Funding: Voter Perceptions and Support of Public Libraries in 2018,* among them:

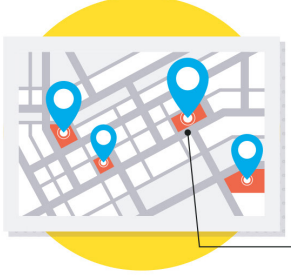
- A majority of US voters believe public libraries are essential to communities and a source of civic pride.
- Voters still highly value such traditional library services as free access to books and quiet areas, but they also increasingly value the library as a community hub.
- A disconnect still exists between the services libraries offer and public awareness and support for those services.
- Although a majority of voters are likely to support library funding at the local ballot box, fewer are committed to definite support.
- A majority of voters still do not realize that the primary source of library funding is local.

Other key findings:

- Some 55% of voters view the library as an essential public institution, and 58% feel that public libraries advance education.
- As many as 44% of voters (up from 35% in 2008) view the library is a place for people in the community to gather and socialize. They increasingly see this as an important role for libraries.
- A total of 70% of voters visited a public library in the last year, in addition to 52% who visited online.
- "Foundational" library services—including quiet spaces, access to books and technology, and Wi-Fi access—continue to be very important for two-thirds of voters.
- The majority of voters (58%) indicate they are likely to vote for local ballot efforts that benefit libraries. A strong majority also support federal funding for libraries and are willing to donate money to support libraries.
- There is confusion, however, in terms of the disproportionate impact of local funding for public libraries. Almost 60% believe public library funds come from sources other than local.

The 2018 survey was once again conducted by Leo Burnett USA. It reuses many of the same questions and the same segmentation as the original study to allow for comparison with the 2008 results. As with the original research, the survey findings are expected to generate important conversations about what the data means for future library planning and advocacy—which will then inform future local, state, and national initiatives.

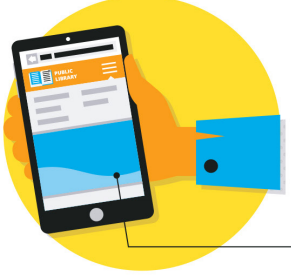
Voters frequently visit libraries in person and online



70%

of voters have visited a public library in the last year, an average of

8.6 visits



52%

have visited the library's website in the last year, an average of

7.6 visits

Infographic: *From Awareness to Funding: Voter Perceptions and Support of Public Libraries in 2018*

Issues and Trends

Intellectual freedom

In 2017, three key trends emerged in the area of intellectual freedom.

First, most challenges (formal attempts to remove or restrict access to library materials and services) go unreported. But a combination of publicity for the new reporting form used by the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) and outreach by state intellectual freedom committees resulted in a sharp increase in the number and types of challenges reported. Public challenges and bans rose from 45 in 2016 to 91 in 2017. These 91 cases are summarized and sourced in the *ALA Field Report 2017: Banned and Challenged Books,* published by OIF in April 2018.

Second, while book challenges constitute the majority of challenges, in 2018 OIF is highlighting challenges beyond books. People challenged films (featuring both pro- and anti-LGBT content), magazines (such as *Teen Vogue*), programs (including drag queen storytimes), displays and art exhibits (even Banned Books Week displays), and online resources including EBSCO databases and library social media posts. Authors (Colson Whitehead and Andrew Aydin, to name just two) have been invited, then disinvited. Although it's not specifically a library issue, campus protests (against mostly conservative speakers such as British political commentator Milo Yiannopoulos, white supremacist Richard B. Spencer, and political scientist Charles Murray) even resulted in property damage, most notably at the University of California, Berkeley. Studies, such as the National Undergraduate Study conducted by McLaughlin and Associates, continue to explore the support for free speech on campus.

Third, in cooperation with the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, OIF began to collect data on hate crimes in libraries. In 2017, 23 were reported (of a total of 57 since OIF began collecting the reports). Most of them involved vandalism—the scrawling of swastikas or epithets on library walls, or the destruction of Muslim religious texts. In two cases, one in a public library parking lot and another within a university library, men made death threats to women wearing hijab.

The theme for 2018's Banned Books Week, observed in libraries and bookstores across the country September 23–29, will be: "Banning books silences stories. Speak out!"

Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2017. OIF tracked 354 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2017. Some individual challenges resulted in requests to restrict or remove multiple titles. Overall, 416 books were targeted. Here are the "Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2017":

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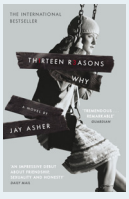

1 | *Thirteen Reasons Why*
By Jay Asher

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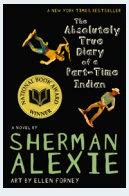

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Consistently challenged since its publication in 2007 for acknowledging issues such as poverty, alcoholism, and sexuality, this National Book Award winner was challenged in school curricula because of profanity and situations that were deemed sexually explicit.

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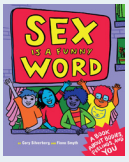

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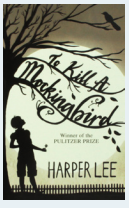
Written by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth

This 2015 informational children's book written by a certified sex educator was challenged because it addresses sex education and is believed to lead children to "want to have sex or ask questions about sex."



7 | *To Kill a Mockingbird*
By Harper Lee

This Pulitzer Prize–winning novel, considered an American classic, was challenged and banned because of violence and its use of the N-word.

8 | *The Hate U Give*
By Angie Thomas

Despite winning multiple awards and being the most searched-for book on Goodreads during its debut year, this YA novel was challenged and banned in school libraries and curricula because it was considered "pervasively vulgar" and because of drug use, profanity, and offensive language.

9 | *And Tango Makes Three*
By Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, illustrated by Henry Cole

Returning after a brief hiatus from the Top Ten Most Challenged list, this ALA Notable Children's Book, published in 2005, was challenged and labeled because it features a same-sex relationship.

10 | *I Am Jazz* Written by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas

This autobiographical picture book cowritten by the 13-year-old protagonist was challenged because it addresses gender identity.

CENSORSHIP

BY THE NUMBERS

Banning books silences stories and discussions. Censorship succeeds when no one talks about it. Raise your megaphone and speak out for banned books! Learn more at ala.org/bbooks.

DEFINITIONS

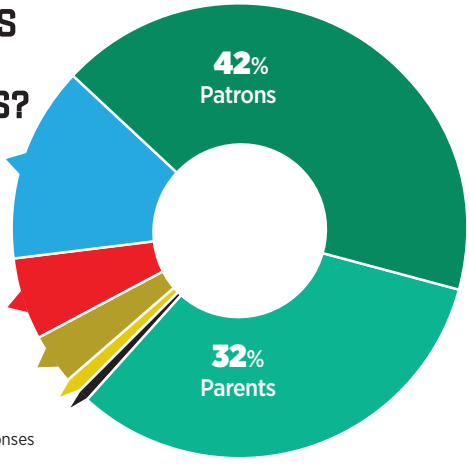
CHALLENGE
attempt to remove or restrict materials, based on objections from a person/group

BAN
removal of materials based on content

WHO INITIATES CHALLENGES TO MATERIALS?

- **14%** Board/ administration
- **6%** Librarians/ teachers
- **3%** Political and religious groups
- **2%** Elected officials
- **1%** Students

Statistics based on 318 responses



Banned Books Week 2018 is September 23-29.

WHERE DO CHALLENGES TAKE PLACE?

56% Public libraries

25% School (curriculum and classrooms)

16% School libraries

2% Academic libraries

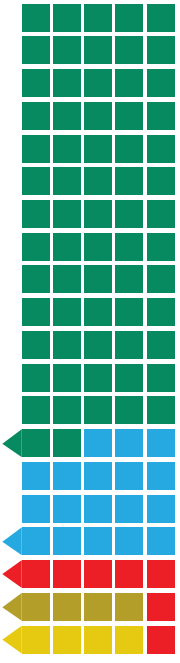
1% Special libraries/ other

WHY ARE MATERIALS CHALLENGED?

BEYOND BOOKS

Books aren't the only items threatened with censorship.

The American Library Association tracks challenges to materials and services in libraries, schools, and universities. In some cases, community members want an author's speaking engagement canceled or an LGBT display taken down. Other times, patrons would like certain DVDs or magazines removed from shelves. In 2017, 491 materials were challenged or censored.



Breakdown of 354 challenges tracked in 2017:

- **67%** Books
- **18%** Databases, magazines, films, games
- **7%** Programs
- **4%** Displays
- **4%** Other

Statistics on censorship are compiled by: OFFICE FOR *Intellectual Freedom* American Library Association

Shelby Barnes, an intern at Kitsap (Wash.) Regional Library, facilitates a STEM Pop-Up lab with an afterschool club as part of the Make Do Share project.

Photo: Kitsap (Wash.) Regional Library

Created by Helen R. Adams, April Dawkins, Jean Duncan McFarren, Lisa Errico, Valerie Nye, Kristin Pekoll, and Kristin Whitehair, and endorsed by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee in January 2018, the "Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, and Academic Libraries" provides a comprehensive guide to the creation of policies on the selection, deselection, and reconsideration of library resources. The toolkit was unveiled at the 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver, Colorado.

The theme for Choose Privacy Week (May 1–7, 2018) will be "Big Data is Watching You," with a focus on the collection, use, and analysis of big data (voluminous and complex data sets) and its possible consequences for patron privacy. The Choose Privacy Week website theme will be updated and changed to "Choose Privacy Every Day," to encourage librarians and the public to visit and use the privacy resources available through the website throughout the year.

Finally, in cooperation with the Office for Library Advocacy, OIF provided Advocacy and Intellectual Freedom Bootcamps for more than 350 librarians and trustees in 15 states. The workshops encourage attendees to adopt a more community-centric planning model, recruit library champions, brand libraries with the value of intellectual freedom, and use the power of story to create a climate of support for libraries and the freedom to read and learn.

Youth and teen services

2017 was a year of successes and challenges for US teens. While the Alliance for Excellent Education reported that the high school graduation rate hit an all-time high of 84.1%, there are still persistent gaps in standardized test scores and college attendance between Caucasian students and their African-American and Hispanic peers. Additionally, a 2017 survey by Youth Truth found that only one in two teens feels prepared for college upon leaving high school. Teens were also not immune to the political climate, with incidents of hate becoming more frequent in schools in 2017, as reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Similarly, teen services also experienced a year of challenges and successes. Many libraries struggled to address both the serious societal issues teens are facing as well as meet the needs of historically underrepresented groups. A 2017 member survey by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) indicated that just 51.9% had reached out to teens who aren't regular library users, and about the same number of respondents (51.2%) worked to build their own cultural competence skills. Despite the high numbers of teens reporting they leave high school unprepared for college, just 45.3% of respondents indicated they provided college and career readiness services in 2017.

One barrier to more effective teen library services is funding. A 2017 survey of state library agency staff who focus on youth services indicated that for 88.5% percent of respondents, lack of funding was a barrier to providing adequate teen services in their state. However, grant funding has enabled a small percentage of libraries to offer teen services aligned with the needs of today's teens, such as Kitsap (Wash.) Regional Library's Make Do Share project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). IMLS also funded LibraryU, a project from the Providence (R.I.) Public Library that will provide a national model for teen workforce development programming.

According to the same survey of state library agency staff, 88.5% of respondents indicated that access to continuing education for frontline library staff is another barrier to effective teen services. To address this, in 2017 YALSA began work on a National Agenda for Continuing Education in Teen Services, through an IMLS-funded grant. In addition, YALSA published its *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff,* which outlines the knowledge, skills, and dispositions all library staff required to effectively serve teens.

With lack of funding a barrier to many libraries' ability to improve teen services, the threat to federal funding for libraries that occurred in 2017 was taken seriously throughout the teen services community. Some 79.5% of respondents to the 2017 YALSA member survey indicated they participated in local advocacy activities.

As 2017 ended, many of the challenges related to teen services that libraries faced were poised to continue into 2018. YALSA's *National Research Agenda on Libraries, Learning, and Teens,* published in 2017, provides the library and academic communities with a call to action to conduct research to help move teen services forward in the years ahead.

Media mentorship

According to a recent report from the Erikson Institute's Technology in Early Childhood Center, libraries are one of the many places where children encounter digital media throughout their day. Libraries provide a space for families to connect with the digital tools and media that ensure their access to information. Children's librarians are at the forefront of being trusted resources for the youngest members of their library communities. In their roles as media mentors, children's librarians connect with families to help them make thoughtful decisions by sharing research, offering guidance with media use plans, and modeling appropriate ways to select and use new media. There is continuing interest and concern about children's media consumption. Through engagement and thoughtful conversation around the benefits and challenges of becoming media mentors, librarians are increasing opportunities to work with families as they navigate children's interaction with digital media.

Diversity and inclusion

Recent research by the Pew Research Center suggests that "Americans are more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past, and the US is projected to be even more diverse in the coming decades. By 2055, the US will not have a single racial or ethnic majority." Diversity and inclusion values have increasingly been incorporated into youth library services over recent years. Libraries are considering how and where efforts can be improved to create welcoming spaces for their diverse communities.

Many libraries offer bilingual activities to promote literacy and inspire imagination. For example, the Ohio State University Libraries partnered with other campus offices to sponsor a Children's Day/Book Day (El día de los niños/El día de los libros) event on April 22, 2017, at the annual block party in Prairie Township, Ohio. Children and their families came together to celebrate and read bilingual books.

Resources continue to be published centering around diversity and inclusion. Jamie Campbell Naidoo, vice-president of the Association for Library Service to Children, writes that it is time for "radical change" in the way we approach diversity in our libraries. "One avenue in our libraries is through intentional programming—specifically, inclusive programming that engages children and families in opportunities to explore diversity, understand commonalities, and build bridges of cross-cultural understanding."

ALA and its affiliates also issued a joint statement on libraries and equity, diversity, and inclusion in August 2017, stating, "As our nation increasingly becomes more diverse, so should library collections, staff, and our nation's social consciousness." Although still a current challenge, the need to transform and diversify librarianship in all possible areas is progressively becoming more crucial to better serve and respond to our changing communities.

Supporting children and families in times of need

The function of libraries as community centers is readily recognized. A Brookings Institution article even referred to librarians as "ad hoc social workers and navigators" who "help local people figure out the complexities of life." This role is especially evident, and never more essential, than in times of crisis, and 2017 has had its share of adversity—from natural disasters to shootings on school campuses.

Librarians respond in such times by delivering direct services and creating resources to help children and families cope. Two notable examples include:

- San Rafael (Calif.) Public Library staff joined relief efforts in the wake of the October 2017 Northern California wildfires, providing storytimes, crafts, and entertainment to the youngest fire victims who lost their homes and were thrown into unfamiliar surroundings.

Margaret Stawowy, children's librarian, San Rafael (Calif.) Public Library, conducts a storytime at a North Bay fire evacuation center.

Photo: Jill Harris

- Library and information science students at the University of Washington created a toolkit on "Youth Services Programming During a Time of Crisis" to assist public libraries in planning programs to help restore a sense of normalcy and safety for young people coping with upheaval.

Library programs

Library workers see the impact of library programs every day—from young people developing comprehension skills through summer reading programs, to older adults finding companionship and learning new skills through arts classes.

But the library field lacks sufficient data on whether and how these efforts are working—knowledge that is necessary in order to prepare the librarians of today and tomorrow to provide the best possible learning experiences for our nation.

In response, the ALA Public Programs Office has undertaken the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA), an intensive two-year initiative, funded by a $512,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, to collect and assess data from libraries across the country to understand and document the outcomes and values of US library programming.

With library programming on the rise, this research is taking place at a critical time. Though public libraries have seen a downward trend in circulation per capita (a drop of more than 11% since FY2012), program attendance has increased significantly in the same timeframe—nearly 17%, according to the 2017 Public Library Data Service report.

"As programming gains importance and requires more resources of the library (money, staff, space, collateral, equipment, etc.), libraries will need to better prepare to demonstrate their efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery," the report states. "Nevertheless, expanding the number of hours open to accommodate more programming (perhaps at more convenient times) implies a potential increase in commitment for additional resources, including staff. Correspondingly, there will be a need for libraries to justify those commitments."

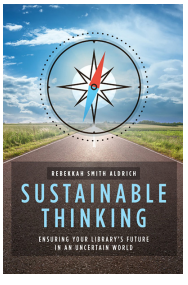
NILPPA is a necessary step toward that justification, said Mary Davis Fournier, deputy director of the Public Programs Office and director of the NILPPA initiative.

"In recent decades, we have seen public programming expand from a peripheral offering—most often directed toward children, such as storytimes—to a central library service for patrons of all ages," Fournier said. "Along the way, library services have changed to reflect their institutions as hubs for civic and cultural life in their communities. NILPPA will allow the field to understand this shift and prepare the library professionals of the future for a more community-focused librarianship."

This first-of-its-kind project, conducted in collaboration with social science think tank New Knowledge Organization Ltd., brings together a network of researchers and librarians from libraries of all types to answer two research questions: How can we characterize and categorize public programs offered by libraries today? What competencies and training are needed by professionals working with library programming?

The work has begun with a series of digital surveys in which programming librarians are polled about their program offerings, audiences, partners, and training. A series of focus groups will convene at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans to further identify how librarians came to acquire the skills they need to lead successful programs and how that learning can be translated into best practices for the larger library field.

Sustainability



"Sustainable thinking refers to the alignment of a library's core values and resources," writes Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, coordinator for library sustainability for the Mid-Hudson (N.Y.) Library System, "including staff time and energy, facilities, collections, and technology—with the local and global community's right to endure, bounce back from disruption, and thrive by bringing new and energetic life to fruition through choices made in all areas of library operations and outreach."

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions has formed an Environment, Sustainability, and Libraries Special Interest Group to address library sustainability. This group's mission is to address:

- Effects of climate change on libraries (modification of the conditions of storage and preservation, building insulation, impact on library finances and management).
- Applications of environment-friendly practices in libraries (recovery of rainwater, use of renewable energy sources, printing control, paper recycling).
- Proposed environmental recommendations for the profession (recycling of outdated documents, use of biodegradable materials).
- Increasing and promoting sustainability-related library resources and services (development of collections on environmental themes, exhibitions, outreach).
- Increasing librarians' own awareness of environmental concerns.

Some recent resources on sustainability include:

- The 2018 book *Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring Your Library's Future in an Uncertain World* by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich shows that the first step towards a sustainable library is sustainable thinking: a determined yet realistic attitude that will help librarians spot opportunities for institutional advancement, advocate for and safeguard operating funds, and generate intense loyalty from the communities they serve.
- The Special ALA Task Force on Sustainability is charged to develop a white paper that describes areas of focus and recommendations for the ALA Executive Board to increase the adoption and implementation of sustainable practices by the Association, the profession, libraries, and the communities they serve.
- The ALA Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT) was created in 2013 as a venue in which members can exchange ideas and opportunities regarding sustainability in order to move toward a more equitable, healthy, and economically viable society. The mission of the organization is to provide resources for the library community to support sustainability through curriculum development, collections, exhibits, events, advocacy, communication, library buildings, and space design. SustainRT is open to all ALA members and includes both individual members and organizational members.
- The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has created a LibGuide on Green Libraries: Sustainable Libraries that lists resources to help libraries go green.

National Issues and Trends

From Washington, D.C., the current outlook for libraries is as promising as it is challenging. The administration's threats to severely cut federal library funding for FY2018 had the effect of galvanizing support for libraries. ALA advocates rallied in unprecedented numbers to voice their support for federal library funding at strategic points throughout the year. Through countless emails, phone calls, and meetings with congressional staff, ALA advocates reminded members of Congress in every state and congressional district how indispensable libraries are for the communities they represent.

After a year of vigorously defending the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and federal policies that impact public access to information, America's libraries have emerged with renewed energy, fortitude, and a measure of success. By the time FY2018 officially began in October 2017, the Appropriations Committees from both houses of Congress had passed bills that maintained (and in the Senate, increased by $4 million) funding for libraries. When the White House FY2019 budget again proposed to eliminate IMLS, ALA President Jim Neal immediately responded with confidence, saying "there is bipartisan support for libraries in Congress, where decision-makers know that to cut funding for libraries is to undercut opportunity for their constituents."

Fortunately, Congress passed and President Trump signed an FY2018 omnibus spending bill on March 23 that includes significant federal funding increases for our nation's libraries. ALA advocates have helped libraries win $9 million more for IMLS than it had in FY2017, including $5.7 million for the Library Services and Technology Act.

There is also cause for optimism, not only with regards to federal funding, but also to government information access. At least half a dozen bills were introduced to increase government transparency and make more taxpayer-funded data available free to the public. On top of the good news about FY2018 funding for libraries, Congress added a policy provision that has been on ALA's advocacy agenda for years: Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports will now be published online by the Library of Congress, ensuring for the first time permanent public access to valuable government information. Also, Congress began the process of modernizing the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) for the first time since the 1960s. Library stakeholders convened by ALA's Washington Office submitted recommendations to make the FDLP relevant for future generations of information users.

Even amid setbacks on major issues like network neutrality, libraries gained a foothold. In the face of the Federal Communications Commission's inevitable rollback of the Open Internet Order, thousands of ALA members filed comments with the FCC as part of a massive groundswell of support for network neutrality. Libraries offered a unique voice to the debate and are viewed in Washington as a valued, sought-after partner in national public policymaking.

In preparation for the 75th anniversary of ALA's Washington Office, ALA is developing new resources and

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) shakes hands with Dianne Carty, director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, during National Library Legislative Day 2017.

Photo: Andrew Propp

Spaces and programs that bring people together may help improve the dialog across inequality and provide important economic opportunities for the community.

expanding capacity to facilitate advocacy for libraries. This year the ALA Policy Corps, a presidential initiative of Jim Neal, was established to cultivate a cadre of policy experts ready to lead targeted advocacy work at the national level and mentor a new generation of advocates. While National Library Legislative Day, which drew more than 500 library supporters to Washington in 2017, will remain ALA's premiere event on Capitol Hill (and is scheduled for May 7–8 in 2018), ALA is taking steps to increase direct advocacy in congressional districts.

America's libraries are poised to make even greater strides in advocacy in 2018—not just in greater numbers, but in deeper engagement in year-round advocacy.

Future Trends

ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries has identified numerous trends that will affect libraries. The following are three of the most prominent.

Aging. An aging workforce and population will change the US and other developed nations, impacting the workplace, government budgets, policy, and family life. An increasing life expectancy will require adequate retirement income and access to health care for aging adults. Adults may continue to work past traditional retirement ages. For libraries, this could mean a change in the profile of their users, especially in academic, medical, and special libraries, and in the profile of librarians and library professionals.

Increased time in retirement could result in demand for leisure activities to fill older adults' time, deeper pools of volunteer talent, or need for new community and gathering spaces. Large populations of older adults may shape the direction of collections (leisure reading, large print), programs (Medicaid support, technology instruction), and services (book delivery, deposit collections). Retired adults may find their way back into the workforce or campuses, potentially changing the user population for academic or special libraries.

Income inequality. President Barack Obama has called income inequality the "defining challenge of our time." According to the Institute for Policy Studies, income inequality refers to the extent to which income is distributed in an uneven manner among a population—and in the United States, income inequality has been growing markedly for the past 30 years.

Income inequality limits the upward mobility of people, especially the ability of those at the bottom of the distribution to rise. Library services in support of skills development will likely become more important, especially for administrators and funders, but libraries will need to make sure the skills they seek to develop align with the types of skills needed in the economy, especially STEM skills.

The library space—or any opportunities the library provides that bring different people together—could be especially important in combating income inequality. High-income and low-income people increasingly live in separate spaces, with city governments, schools, and communities more fragmented and less inclusive than before. Spaces and programs that bring people together may help improve the dialog across inequality and provide important economic opportunities for the community.

Connected learning. Social and digital media available via the internet connect students and young people to each other and to a host of formal and informal educators, providing limitless opportunities to seek and acquire new knowledge and skills.

Connected learning happens across learning networks including school, home, libraries, and community centers. Connected learning also supports the idea that learners achieve best when learning is reinforced and supported in multiple settings, providing opportunities for libraries to engage other institutions as partners in connected learning environments.

In order for connected learning to help level the playing field between the haves and have-nots, students must have regular access to new and emerging technologies and the internet. Libraries that offer access to these will be better able to integrate themselves into connected learning environments.

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