

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
TO THE YOUNG DEMOCRATS DIVISION OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
NEW YORK CITY, JUNE 21, 1960

VERTICAL FILE

The American Library Association stands firmly for programs which will develop adequate library services to assist young people in meeting their informational and cultural needs. School libraries, college and university libraries and public libraries are all essential agencies in achieving this result. Books and materials selected to interest young people, and to meet the needs of retarded readers, contribute to a great degree to the improvement of reading. Young people who read with competence and enjoyment usually find satisfaction in school work, and are much less likely to become behavior problems. To provide the books and materials needed for youth of widely diverse backgrounds and ability, requires superior school libraries and services to youth in public libraries.

Young people's rooms and collections in public libraries can, and do, serve as important community agencies for youth. In some cities, librarians especially trained for library service to youth, are members of youth community councils, and work cooperatively with other agencies in planning for recreation and wholesome activity for young people. Some public libraries provide attractive rooms for young people, where they may browse and select books, listen to classical and popular recordings, meet as clubs to discuss books, and plan group activities. Young people's librarians give guidance in reading - sometimes suggesting books to assist in solving personal problems or to help young people to find new and constructive interests. Young people's librarians give book talks, and plan exhibits, for neighborhood houses, boys' and girls' clubs, and recreation centers in churches and other community organizations. These library services, however, are in need of strengthened support, and many more young people's librarians are necessary. In most small communities, these special library services to youth do not exist because of lack of staff and funds.

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School and public libraries also cooperate with parents and adult groups in providing books and information about youth and their problems. Librarians prepare

bibliographies for parents and youth workers, and sometimes conduct community discussion groups. Libraries also serve as clearing houses of information about community services to young people.

But in spite of the apparent strengths and achievements just described, the required potential is far from being reached. For the Country as a whole, all of our various libraries suffer from critical lacks. Standards of performance and facilities have been established recently for school, college and public libraries. When library resources and services are measured against these standards, however, the findings show appalling deficiencies.

For example, based on "Standards for School Library Programs" published by the American Library Association in 1960 these gaps are shown:

	ALA School Library Standards	Estimated National Averages for School Libraries from the U. S. Office of Education
Size of Collections	10 books per pupil	5 books per pupil
Annual Expenditure for Books	\$4 - \$6 per pupil	\$1.60 per pupil
Ratio of Librarians to Pupils	1 librarian to 300 pupils	1 librarian to 1,200 pupils

There are approximately 10,000,000 pupils enrolled in public elementary schools without libraries, and 150,000 pupils enrolled in public secondary schools without libraries.

The condition of college and university libraries is equally critical. Consider the following comparison between quantitative standards adopted by the Association of College and Research Libraries and the present state of academic libraries (based on Office of Education estimates):

	<u>College Library Standards</u>	<u>The Facts</u>
<u>Budget</u>	5 percent of the total education and general expenditures of the institution.	all institutions: 3.1 percent (public institutions, 2.9 percent; private institutions, 3.3 percent)
<u>Staff</u>	3 professional librarians; in addition, adequate non-professional staff.	6 of every 10 institutions have fewer than 3 full-time professional staff members; most of them have no full-time clerical staff.
<u>Book Stock</u>	50,000 volumes for schools with up to 600 students; collection to increase in proportion to enrollment.	6 of every 10 institutions have less than 50,000 volumes; nearly 4 out of 10 have less than 25,000 volumes.

Public libraries likewise need more money to maintain and improve current services, including activities in the field of youth, and to purchase essential books and other informational materials. These institutions also need funds for new and improved physical facilities. One study which only measured public libraries serving populations of 50,000 and over against the latest public library standards, came to the conclusion that \$73 million more per year would be needed by these public libraries in order for them to give adequate service to their communities. Furthermore, on a Nationwide basis, there are approximately 25 million people without local public library service and many additional millions with inadequate service. The supplying of funds to meet these deficiencies should be a joint responsibility of local, State and Federal Governments.

It is urged, therefore, that the Young Democrats Division of the Democratic National Committee, strongly support proposals which will improve resources and services of all libraries serving youth with full recognition of the role of the Federal Government in reaching these essential goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this statement on behalf of the American Library Association.