

ALA American Library Association

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Omnibus & COVID-19 Relief Bill Summary

The spending deal that passed last night included big wins for library advocates. Our hard work throughout the year is evidenced by the successful results in funding levels.

The omnibus funding bill for FY 2021 includes:

- \$257.0 million in funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a \$5 million increase, raising the agency to \$257.0 million
- \$197.5 million for LSTA (included in the IMLS funding), an increase of \$2 million. The full increase is directed to states through the Grants to States program
- \$28 million for Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL), an increase of \$1 million. At least ½ of this funding is dedicated to school libraries
- \$167.5 million in funding for each of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, marking a \$5.25 million increase over last year for both programs
- \$462.8 million for the National Library of Medicine, an increase of \$5.9 million
- \$757.3 million for Library of Congress, an increase of \$32 million
- \$117.0 million for Government Publishing Office, level funding over last year
- \$377 million for the National Archives and Records Administration, an \$18 million increase, though this increase is earmarked for costs associated with the presidential transition and is a customary boost that the Archives receives in transition years. The bill also includes level funding of \$6.5 million for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Most of these programs had been targeted for elimination or significant cuts under the current administration. Thanks to the tireless work of ALA advocates and many champions in Congress, all of these programs saw an increase over FY2020 budgets.

See our [full funding chart](#).

In addition, the following provisions that impact libraries were included in the COVID-19 relief bill, which was bundled with the annual appropriations bill. The bill was nearly 6,000 pages and we will continue to share information as it is further analyzed.

COPYRIGHT

Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement Act of 2020 (CASE Act of 2020), which establishes copyright small claims proceedings. However, libraries or archives that do not wish to participate in these proceedings may preemptively opt out indefinitely at no cost.

EDUCATION STABILIZATION

Funding of \$81.9 billion for K-12 schools and higher education to prepare for or respond to the coronavirus, available through September 2022. School and academic libraries are eligible for this funding, which would necessitate advocacy at the state and campus or school district levels. Major funding components include:

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (Public K-12 schools): \$54.3 billion
- Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund: \$22.7 billion, which includes dedicated funds for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions
- Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund: \$4.1 billion (includes \$2.8 billion for private K-12 schools)
- Relief for outlying areas and the Bureau of Indian Education: \$818.8 million

SHUTTERED VENUES (MUSEUMS), PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

Provides \$15 billion for Grants for Shuttered Venue Operators, which include museums. Priority given to museums with greatest percentage revenue loss. Maximum grants of \$10 million, which can be applied to most usual operating expenses.

501(c)(6) ORGS

Many library organizations that have 501(c)(6) status are now eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program, provided they:

- do not receive more than 15 percent of receipts from lobbying activities
- have lobbying activities that do not comprise more than 15 percent of total activities
- do not have lobbying activities that exceeded \$1 million in the most recent tax year that ended prior to February 15, 2020
- have fewer than 300 employees

THEODORE ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

The United States (via the Secretary of Agriculture) will sell specified forest lands to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation at market price.

ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF INTERNET CONNECTIVITY AND GROWTH, NTIA -----

Establishes the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth in the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce. Libraries are included (and potentially included) in varied federal programs. Improved coordination across agencies should increase effectiveness and efficiency of efforts.

The Office will focus on outreach, communications, workshops, publications, training, toolkits, and white papers. It will track federal expenditures on broadband infrastructure and provide annual reporting on broadband deployment and impact. Scope of activities include federal programs with broadband-related activities. ALA endorsed this legislation when it was a stand-alone bill.

Title IX Broadband Internet Access Service Connecting Minority Communities

\$285 million is appropriated to establish an Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives at the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) 180 days after enactment. This new Office will collaborate with federal agencies to determine how to increase broadband access and digital opportunities in anchor communities. It will also collaborate with state/local/tribal governments, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Minority Serving Institutions, and other stakeholders in communications, education, business, and tech fields.

The Office will:

- Promote broadband initiatives to these anchor communities and 2) increase access and digital opportunity to anchor communities and 3) develop recommendations for deploying broadband access and increasing adoption of broadband services to anchor communities including 4) promoting digital literacy skills including virtual or in-person training and education 5) promote professional development opportunities especially in the tech fields
 - To students and faculty of these institutions
 - Seniors and veterans in the anchor communities
- Provide technical assistance in navigating federal grant opportunities

Eligible entities include HBCUs, TCU, MSI, and consortium led by these entities with a minority business enterprise or 501(c)(3).

The provision also establishes the **Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program** 45 days after enactment.

This program will provide grants to eligible entities to purchase broadband services or eligible equipment (hotspots, modems, routers, etc.) or to hire someone to provide training and other professional development or support for business ownership for eligible recipients in anchor communities.

- Prioritizes serving low-income students or people receiving unemployment insurance since March 1 (those eligible people with the greatest unmet financial need);
- Not less than 40% of grants are made to HBCUs; and
- Funds may be used for providing hotspots and other internet connected devices as well as routers, modems, and similar equipment necessary for connecting to the internet as well as educational instruction and learning, in-person or remotely. The program specifically references providing these services to patrons (among others).

Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program

\$3.2 billion is appropriated to the FCC to establish a reimbursement program to provide discounted broadband services to eligible households. To be eligible one person in the household must:

- Qualify for the Lifeline program;
- Receive benefits under the free and reduced price lunch program or the breakfast program;
- Have experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020. This must be documented by layoff or furlough notice, application for unemployment

- benefits or similar documentation, or that is otherwise verifiable through the National Verifier or National Lifeline Accountability Database; or
- Receive a federal Pell Grant in the current award year

A household shall be eligible for a monthly discount on its internet service cost. This discount shall be applied to the actual amount charged by the provider. Such a discount shall be no more than \$50/month per household or \$75/month on tribal land. For example, if a provider's basic rate for broadband connectivity is \$50/month and it is getting reimbursed at \$50/month, the household pays nothing. If the provider's basic rate is \$100/month and it is getting reimbursed at \$50/month, the household pays \$50/month.

A provider who supplies a household with a connected device may be reimbursed up to \$100. The charge to the household shall not be more than \$50. A provider may receive reimbursement for only one connected device per household.

Grants for Broadband Connectivity

Funds to NTIA to provide grants for tribal and underserved areas to provide fixed broadband services with minimum speeds of 25/3 Mbps and including latency that allows for real-time interactive applications. Eligible entities include tribal governments, tribal colleges or universities, and the Department of Hawaiian Homelands. Libraries that serve these communities could receive funding from these entities to carry out eligible programs.

\$1 billion for Tribal Broadband Connectivity grants to expand access to and adoption of broadband on tribal lands and for remote learning, telework or telehealth resources during the pandemic. Entities that receive grants funds must commit them within 180 days and they must be spent within one year.

In addition to broadband deployment and access purposes funds may be used for distance learning, telehealth, digital inclusion efforts, and broadband adoption activities. Libraries that provide such services could be eligible to also receive funding as a subgrant recipient.