



2024 Legislative Priorities

The Iowa Library Association advocates at local, state, and federal levels for support and programs which ensure Iowa libraries are equipped and resourced to provide essential services to all. The Iowa Library Association's legislative vision empowers Iowa Libraries to build essential community infrastructure by focusing our efforts on the following areas:

Access to All

Providing all information resources directly or indirectly by the library, in a variety of needful formats or methods, to all library users is a foundational tenet of librarianship. Access to all creates an informed citizenry and directly benefits the quality of life to all in the state.

- ILA will support broadband development funding and program initiatives related to digital inclusion, access, and affordability.
- ILA will endorse State of Iowa Library funding and programs to provide increased support and training to Iowa libraries related to technology and digital inclusion as well as state-wide initiatives such as Open Access and IowaShares.
- ILA will advocate that [State Aid to Public Libraries](#) be retained at a minimum level of \$1.1 million dollars.
- ILA will advocate for the continued oversight and transparency provided by the Iowa Governor's Commission of Libraries and for its positions to be filled on a consistent and efficient basis.

Autonomy

An important contribution of libraries to society is their provision of support for autonomy which is a primary value of Iowans and is essential to living a flourishing life.

- ILA will support legislation that affirms the autonomy of libraries and other taxing jurisdictions including control of revenue assigned to those jurisdictions by voters.
 - [HF 718](#) reallocated the majority of all levy funds to general operating budgets. Communities have lost their right to petition for ballot and then vote for new levies. As part of the levy consolidation, 97 library levies were absorbed into general operational funds. The money is still collected but it is no longer specifically dedicated to library services. The Iowa Library Association urges Iowa communities and local government officials to discuss the levy bill-related changes that will diminish and harm library services throughout the state.
- ILA will continue to build coalitions with affinity groups, associations, and organizations with similar interests in legislation and funding which support literacy, learning, and librarianship in Iowa.
- ILA will advocate to preserve Iowa's tradition of hometown governance for libraries by maintaining support for the autonomy of public library boards and public school boards to develop and apply appropriate policies through local processes.

Education

As containers of opportunities, Iowa libraries give life to ideas for the students and communities who access and enjoy them in order to enrich themselves, others, and the lifelong learning of all.

- ILA will support protections to the right to read, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, and first amendment rights of Iowans in school, public, and academic libraries.
- ILA will support library funding and access to affordable e-resources for work and study.
- ILA will support State of Iowa Board of Regents funding for grants to develop Open Educational Resources (OER).
- ILA will advocate for the designation of school librarians as instructional staff who provide student learning in school libraries, classrooms, learning commons, makerspaces, labs, and virtual learning spaces.
 - School librarians play a critical role within the educational team of every Iowa school district, teaching lifelong skills which help students navigate, use, and evaluate information across platforms. Appropriate designation of teacher librarians from the Department of Education is crucial.

Economic Development

National studies demonstrate that the Return on Investment (ROI) for libraries is quite high. Every \$1 invested in a library returns \$5 to the local economy.

- ILA will monitor property tax legislation, tax abatement, incentive legislation, and any legislation that could have a negative impact on revenue for libraries.
- ILA will monitor any legislation regarding the governance of libraries, prioritizing local control.
- ILA will support funding and programs to provide increased support and training to Iowa libraries related to workforce and economic development initiatives.
- ILA 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.
- ILA will support broadband development funding and programs for initiatives where libraries can play a key role in program development, and implementation (i.e., telehealth, workforce training, etc.).
- ILA will support patrons' consumer rights for fair access and pricing for digital content to libraries.

Intellectual Freedom

The Library Bill of Rights was written in Iowa in 1938 and has become the national standard for free people reading freely. Let's keep that legacy intact for the next generation by honoring our state motto, Iowa, Freedom to Flourish.

- ILA will oppose legislative proposals for censorship in any form, or infringement of Iowans' freedom to read, view, or learn.
- ILA will oppose any legislation that criminalizes librarians, teacher librarians, educators, or students performing duties that are aligned with the [core tenets of librarianship](#).
- ILA will support retaining [Iowa Code 728](#), which is consistent with federal and state law, as well as the professional ethics of educators and librarians.
- ILA will continue to seek and advocate for guidance from the Department of Education in regard to the application of [Senate File 496](#) and any legislation which impacts the work of teacher librarians.
 - Iowa Library Association and Iowa Association of School Librarians submitted a [letter of inquiry](#) to the Department of Education on May 3, 2023, seeking clarification on logistical means to apply the law but have not yet received guidance.