Libraries provide essential public services not available elsewhere. In libraries across the state, Iowans can access the Internet, find early childhood education programs and homework help, and take advantage of resources for lifelong learning, career development, and personal enrichment. To support these vital services, the Iowa Library Association asks the General Assembly to meet the following goals in 2023:

ILA 2023 Session Focus Issues

- **Safeguarding Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read**
  The Iowa Library Association supports intellectual freedom, which is defined as the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. The Association stands against any proposed legislation which would inhibit the freedom to read or infringe upon the foundational ethics of the profession. The Association supports retaining Iowa Code 728, which is consistent with federal and state law, as well as the professional ethics of educators and librarians.

- **Book Pricing**
  Iowa Library Association advocates for fair access and pricing for digital content to libraries. The barriers created due to this issue hit hardest on those who face technology or financial challenges. The state’s smallest and rural libraries are the most burdened. Currently, libraries face many challenges to meet the ebook needs of Iowans:
  - Some publishers do not allow libraries to purchase licenses to some or all of their digital works.
  - Some publishers embargo the sale of new ebooks to libraries.
  - Many major publishers set library pricing as much as 6 times (or more) the cost to consumers for ebooks. (Note that libraries often purchase print books at a discount from consumer prices.)
  - Increasingly, ebooks publishers sell to libraries expire after one or two years, forcing libraries to repurchase ebooks to sustain access and further inflating the actual costs for an individual ebook.
  - Technology has enabled publishers to create two classes of customers—those who can afford to buy electronic literary products and public libraries who serve those who cannot—while charging the latter substantially more for the same product.

- **Funding of the state-wide delivery for $1 million**
  This service was launched by the State Library with precarious federal funds. Iowans quickly benefited from this service and librarians saw a positive impact on their operating budgets and their delivery of services. This service provides equal access to materials for our smallest libraries. This program needs reliable and consistent funding from the State to ensure ongoing success and growth.

The Iowa Library Association will continue to monitor and address other legislative issues as they affect the Iowa’s libraries and the communities they serve. Founded in 1890, the Iowa Library Association is the organized voice of Iowa’s libraries. Its members sustain Iowa’s public, academic, school, and special libraries.
ILA Pillar Issues

- **Funding for the State Library of Iowa**
  Every dollar invested in the State Library helps fulfill the Library's mission to improve service for all by partnering with public libraries. The State Library's funding has remained flat for many years; this must be corrected to ensure that the State Library receives the necessary funding to provide good quality, professional services.

- **$1 million for Direct State Aid**
  This statewide program of direct state aid for Iowa public libraries helps them modernize infrastructure, update technology, and provide innovative services. State assistance also ensures that Iowans can use their local library card to check-out materials at participating libraries across Iowa. Furthermore, state support for interlibrary loans gives Iowans equal access to library resources by promoting resource sharing between all types of libraries.

- **Recognition of school librarians as essential instructional staff**
  Direct the Department of Education to designate 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 to provide lifelong skills which help students navigate, use, and evaluate information across platforms.

- **Preserving Iowa’s tradition of hometown governance for public libraries**
  Preserve hometown governance of Iowa’s public by maintaining support for the autonomy of public library boards to create and adopt appropriate local policies.

- **Financial Relief for Libraries Affected by COVID-19**
  The COVID-19 pandemic has directly affected every library in the state of Iowa, making it difficult for libraries to deliver services or to effectively interact with their patrons. The loss of tax revenue and the negative economic impact have affected library budgets. Libraries are vital to every community and without proper funding, the residents of these communities will have less access to credible information in all formats, from books, to serials, to the internet.

The Iowa Library Association will continue to monitor and address other legislative issues as they affect the Iowa’s libraries and the communities they serve. Founded in 1890, the Iowa Library Association is the organized voice of Iowa’s libraries. Its members sustain Iowa’s public, academic, school, and special libraries.