Building the Next Generation of Libraries

Improved Access to Information - $1.5 million One-Time; $2.5 million Ongoing

One-Time Funds:

The Brown administration has championed ensuring all Californians have access to the information they need to succeed.

An area in which one-time state investment can create ongoing benefit is to facilitate strategies to more easily connect more Californians to the information they're looking for.

New technologies allow faster and more cost-effective delivery of library materials as well as digital connections that could lead to achieving one of the governor's goals of a statewide library card.

Below are two complementary methods of providing greater access and customer service to library patrons particularly in underserved or geographically isolated communities.

- One approach uses online marketplaces to buy sought-after books and place them directly into the hands of community members. It's faster and cheaper than traditional interlibrary loan systems. A one-time $1 million investment can complete beta testing of its use along the Central Coast, the Central Valley and the Inland Empire as well as incentivize other libraries to adopt it as part of their service model.

- The other approach digitally connects the catalogs of multiple libraries. This allows a patron to either in person at the library or online at home seek a book, find it in the network, press a button and generally within a week have the book arrive at their library.

San Joaquin County and Bay Area libraries – both public and academic -- are connected in this way, which dramatically expands both the content and volume of what their patrons can access, including academic and technical journals.

The city, county and academic libraries north of San Francisco – some 30 of the state's 58 counties – want to connect to each other in the same way. They have agreed to pool local resources to cover the ongoing costs of such a network but set-up fees are $450,000.

A one-time state investment would facilitate significantly improved information access, particularly in areas which will likely not experience significant improvements in broadband connectivity in the short or near term.

Ongoing Funds:

$2.5 million – Approve in part the State Library's Budget Change Request 6120-008-BCP-2018

Information can't be accessed without being able to read. The highest yielding invest of a tax dollar is in helping someone to read better. The budget change proposal calls for a $5 million investment, which is justified, but $2.5 million would allow the state to restore services to the children of adult learners in the California Library Literacy Services program.

Literacy coordinators in California and other states, case studies and assessment done by Proliteracy and other groups indicate both a higher success rate for adult learners if their children are involved and a more likely end to the cycle of illiteracy in families. It has been several years since the state invested in this program, which continues to demonstrate both qualitative and quantitative value.

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Improved Connectivity - $5 million One-Time; $500,000 Ongoing

One-Time Funds:

$2 million -- Existing Broadband Connectivity Grants
($15,000 satellite branches-$30,000 for Main Branches)

The November 2017 update for this program shows as many as nine library jurisdictions connecting for the first time with nine eligible central branches and 21 satellite branches. That's $500,000 in grants.

Libraries who participated in the program in earlier years wish to add 50 satellite branches. That's $750,000. There's roughly $750,000 on hand now for expenditure in the current budget year.

Other requests to add branches are expected from libraries that connected in the first three years of the program, This increased funding will them to receive help in connecting more branches than the previous four-branch cap, as requested by the California Library Association.

$3 million -- Bring Libraries to 10 Gigabytes

Internet speed depends on capacity. A library may not be able to deliver the speed of a 1 gigabyte connection to its community because it lacks capacity. Libraries now connecting to the broadband network at 1 gigabyte aren't able to actually provide that level of connectivity.

In July 2018, libraries will begin a process that will continue over the next five years to weigh whether to upgrade their connectivity from one to 10 gigabytes as their existing provider contracts begin to expire.

These state funds would help libraries least able to afford the upgrades needed to boost capacity with priority going to those in areas where the most subsidized lunches are served to school children or the most underserved parts of the state.

Without the grant cap of the existing program, more strategic investments can be made in which, like connecting the catalogs of Northern California libraries, broad ongoing benefits can be achieved through one-time expenditure.

Ongoing Funds:

$500,000 – Approve State Library Budget Change proposal 6120-004-BCP-2018

This request contains:

- $350,000 for the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California, known as CENIC, to support the library broadband services by prospectively provide funding for public purpose and, broadband backbone fees and surcharges imposed by the California Public Utilities Commission and others.

- $150,000 to create a full-time Program Consultant at the State Library to assist local libraries in maximizing discounts through the federal Education-Rate program, coordinate state connectivity efforts and liaison with CENIC and the California Teleconnect Fund. Such a position is endorsed by CENIC and becomes more necessary with the loan program contemplated in this proposal.

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