



2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The California Library Association — through its members and advocates — works to make a difference for all Californians by providing adequately funded libraries, which transform lives through their programs and services.

CLA has adopted the following legislative priorities for 2025:

1. Restoration of vital library funds which were cut in the previous budget cycle

- a. Restoration of CLSA (California Library Services Act) funding to pre-2024-25 levels. CLSA fosters resource sharing among libraries, particularly in rural areas where funding challenges negatively impact library access for patrons. CLSA funding was reduced by 50% in the previous budget cycle to \$1.88 million. CLA seeks a restoration of this funding and specifically requests that \$3.2 million be augmented to the current baseline, which would bring total funding for CLSA to \$5 million. NOTE: This new funding would be utilized for CLSA programs only and would be completely exclusive of Zip Books.
- b. Restoration of Lunch at the Library funding to pre-2024-25 levels. Lunch at the Library provides 300,000+ free and nutritious summer lunches, accompanied by literacy-enhanced wrap-around programming, at hundreds of libraries each year. Lunch at the Library funding was reduced in the previous budget cycle, from \$5.5 million to \$3 million. This reduction has a direct negative impact on the ability of libraries to fight food insecurity. CLA will seek a restoration of this funding to \$5.5 million.

2. New and Ongoing Funding Requests

- a. Funding support for this mandate, to ensure wrap-around services to enhance literacy and provide learning opportunities for UTK-12 students. This combination of priorities will guarantee low-barrier library access to millions of California school children.
 - i. SB321-Ashby (2023) was passed without accompanying financial support. CLA respectfully requests \$3.5 million in one-time funding to ensure library card access for California's school-aged children, without placing undue financial burden on library jurisdictions.
 - ii. CLA further requests \$3 million in ongoing funding to restore state-wide access to BrainFuse online services. Over 600,000 tutoring sessions were initiated during the two years this service was previously available. Funding restoration would provide universal access to vital learning services, via student library cards issued from SB321-Ashby.

3. Continuation of Federal funding. CLA recognizes the invaluable nature of federal funding for California's library jurisdictions. The USDA's Summer Meals Program helps libraries combat food insecurity, by providing meals at public library locations through Lunch at the Library. E-Rate funding ensures vital broadband internet access in at-risk communities. The Institute for Museum

and Library Services provides logistical and financial support for library services and programs throughout the state. To the extent feasible, CLA will advocate for the continuation of federal programs that support California libraries. Should such programs be reduced or eliminated, CLA will request gap funding from the State of California, to ensure continuation of services until such a time that funding can be reinstated.

4. **Equitable Access to Critical Library and Information Services.** When opportunities for advocacy arise, CLA shall take supportive positions on the following core library values:
 - a. Libraries as partners in community resiliency efforts including accessible buildings, upgrades to critical infrastructure, and support in times of disaster, such as wildfires and extreme heat.
 - b. Broadband equity and digital literacy for unserved and underserved communities.
 - c. Support the freedom to read and access to material with diverse points of view.
 - d. Support libraries as a safe haven for all community members.
 - e. Early literacy, school readiness, adult literacy, career development, vocational support, and assistance to vulnerable populations.
 - f. Mandate and fund credentialed Teacher Librarians in all California Public Schools and support creating a Library Lead position in the Statewide System of Support.
 - g. Support for libraries to purchase digital content including eBooks and eAudiobooks at the same price as consumers.
 - h. Support for California's law libraries.

CLA supports positive action in key areas, including, but not limited to Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, Intellectual Freedom, Privacy, and Net Neutrality.

CLA also monitors all state legislation that may impact items on the above list or that are identified as having an impact on libraries, library funding and/or library staff.