CLA Legislative Priorities 2016

The purpose of the California Library Association’s Advocacy and Legislative Committee (CLA/ALC) is to monitor and take action on various proposed and enacted pieces of legislation which impact library services to California residents. To that end, CLA/ALC works closely with the CLA Board, association members, and CLA’s lobbyists.

During the 2016 legislative session, CLA/ALC will concentrate on supporting:

- Flexible and adaptable library facilities (bond issues, needs assessments, etc.), recognizing that libraries of the future may have needs different from the present; working toward a future library construction bond; and urging support for the inclusion of libraries in any economic stimulus bond packages
- High-speed, high capacity broadband provision for all libraries to ensure full, equal electronic services
- Engagement in Adult Education Block Grant (a.k.a. AB86) local consortiums for libraries to be fully valued and vested in the Adult Education continuum
- Tools and outreach to ensure Library Directors advocate and educate their legislators on the life-changing impact of today’s innovative libraries in California
- Improved literacy by exploring the feasibility of:
  - A library card for every child in California
  - A Universal Library Card
- Efforts to lower the voter approval threshold for local library bond measures and special taxes to 55%
- Protection of the operating budget of the State Library to allow for better support to the Legislature and the library community
- Federal efforts as adequate funding and reauthorization of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), universal services provision (Telecommunications Act of 1996), the Government Printing Offices, and the Library of Congress

In addition, CLA will continue its annual efforts in the following areas:

- Monitoring of and opposition to legislation that restricts open access to information in any format
- Monitoring of state taxation policies and procedures so libraries are fairly and adequately funded, ensuring long-term sustainability
- Supporting provision of literacy skills at all levels
- Ensuring the provision of funding and support for technology to enhance workforce development efforts, individual learning, entrepreneurial/business centers, and lifelong learning
- Supporting all efforts to ensure creativity, innovation, and growth by restoring lost revenues
Specific to the 2016-2017 Legislative Session, in addition to the ongoing appropriations of $2.25 million for the Broadband Annual Membership fee and $225k for the Broadband Aggregator Administration fee, the committee endorses the following request:

2016-17 STATE BUDGET: Minimum Funding Request

- $5.8 million for California Library Services Act (CLSA) – This is a $4 million increase over the 2015/16 ongoing appropriation of $1.8 million. Money to be used to: 1) strengthen regional library consortia* to maintain and grow library membership and participation, and 2) determine the feasibility and implementation of a “library card for every child in California” campaign
- $6.8 million for Adult Literacy (CLLS) – This is a $2 million increase over the 2015/16 ongoing appropriation to start and restart literacy programs across the state, and to address the substantial wait-list for adult literacy learners brought on by the loss of funding in 2011/2012
- $1 million to plan for a Universal Library Card campaign, to assure citizen’s access and to support their efforts from primary education to job success to lifelong learning
- Appropriate funding for grants to connect public libraries to the Broadband backbone and assist libraries in adapting to the CENIC project
- $100,000 to assess the effectiveness, share best practices, and purchase additional scholarships for the Career Online High School program, which gives students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and credentialed career certificate at the same time
- Appropriate funding for three additional Library Programs Consultants within the State Library to administer Literacy, Broadband, and the Career Online High School program.

The work of CLA/ALC is done through advocacy in its many forms. Methods include working with other library organizations such as the California School Library Association (CSLA) and the California Coalition of County Law Libraries (CCCLL), or developing partnerships with non-library organizations on legislative issues of mutual interest.

Of course, the most effective advocacy comes from a first-hand professional relationship between library staff members; library groups such as Friends of the Library, Library Foundation members, or Library Commissioners; the residents they serve; and the legislators themselves.

Finally, the CLA/ALC also supports the rights of all to a free public library with full and open access to information and the confidentiality of library user records as ensured by California State Statutes. Further, it supports the American Library Association’s positions on federal issues and supports National Library Legislative Day, annually sending well-qualified CLA members to represent California interests.

*Library consortia provide (among other benefits):

- Staff continuing education opportunities
- Support for collection and resource sharing through a regional delivery system
- Increased shared vendor discounts
- Local expertise and mentoring options