

2021 Legislative & Policy Priorities

ILF Actively Advocates For:

Stable Taxing Structures that Support Libraries

All local units, including public libraries and schools, suffered revenue losses due to the pandemic. Along with property tax caps, libraries are unable to offset revenue losses by increasing fees and have no say in the distribution of local income tax dollars. As a result, public library budgets are particularly vulnerable to the economy and the whims of local officials.

ILF asks for a seat at the table if any tax structure changes are proposed considering the relatively small portion dedicated to libraries act as its primary funding source.



Photo Courtesy of Monroe County Library

School & Library Internet Funding

A state budget line item partially reimburses libraries for the cost of internet connectivity. Public libraries and schools provide access to students and residents who can't afford high-speed broadband or live in areas of the state without it. Increasing the biennial budget line item to \$5.5 million would help bring Indiana in-line with best practice standards based on population, bandwidth, and usage.

ILF requests maintaining the \$1.58 million per year and seeks a phased approach to \$5.5 million to achieve internet connectivity needs for libraries.

Expanded & Reliable Broadband Access

Broadband affordability and reliability must be improved to help Hoosiers keep pace in the fast-moving modern world. The COVID-19 pandemic made clear that broadband access is needed for student success, particularly in e-learning, as well as important functions like e-government transactions, telehealth, employment searches, and job training.

ILF members want to see additional broadband coverage for residents and communities, including schools and libraries.

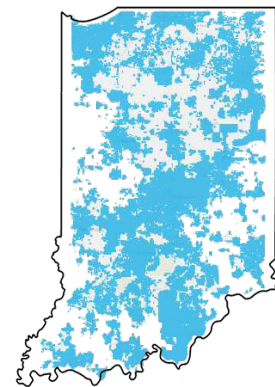


Image Courtesy of IndianaBroadbandMap.com

Effective School Library Programs with Qualified, Credentialed Staff

Student academic success correlates strongly with the presence of an effective school library program led by a certified librarian. Qualified school librarians teach students to navigate information and collaborate with fellow teachers to integrate print and digital resources into classroom and e-learning instruction. Research shows that access to library materials bridges the achievement gap, most significantly for children of color and children in poverty.

ILF advocates for schools to develop and maintain effective school library programs with qualified teacher librarians supported by library assistant professionals.

Indiana Library Federation leads, educates and advocates to advance library services for the benefit of Indiana residents.

Support Indiana libraries by getting involved in advocacy. Learn more at www.ilfonline.org.

ILF Supports:

Enhancing Quality of Place Through Great Library Service

With demographic and economic shifts, the public library serves as a constant: the community hub where community members meet and learn in-person and online. As of January 2021, 38 counties include areas unserved by public libraries ("library deserts"). *ILF advocates that all Indiana residents are ensured library service to create a greater quality of place in their communities.*

Funding for INSPIRE, Indiana's Virtual Library

INSPIRE is a online collection, managed by the Indiana State Library, that provides access to academic resources, Consumer Reports, historic newspapers, genealogy databases, and a testing and career center. It has been supported by the Indiana General Assembly since 1998. *ILF asks for the continued funding of INSPIRE, a critical educational and workforce support for Hoosiers.*



Lifelong Learning Initiatives to Increase Literacy, Education & Skills

Libraries provide critical resources to residents at all life stages. Hoosiers gain knowledge and skills through computer training, one-on-one instruction, and self-directed classes. Digital literacy increasingly is the key to the stable career. *ILF members support lifelong learning initiatives which bring greater literacy, education, and workforce skills to Indiana residents.*

ILF is Positioned for Action on:

Local Government Reorganization Efforts

Indiana libraries have continually shown good stewardship in the taxpayer dollars that fund them. *ILF asks to be a part of any discussions relating to proposals that could change the governance, funding, or oversight of libraries.*

Code Definition Update to "Library Services"

The section of Indiana Code relating to libraries is not keeping pace with changes in communities, delivery systems, or information. *ILF supports updating the definition of "library services" to reflect library responsiveness to changing community needs.*

Restrictions to Library Service Delivery Capabilities

Certain policies and practices in digital markets limit the ability of libraries to deliver core services. *ILF stands up for Hoosiers' right to read.*

Employment, Compensation, and Retirement Program Changes

ILF will be carefully watching any possible changes to employment, compensation and retirement programs that could affect librarians, including school librarians.

Advocacy Approach

ILF is a statewide nonprofit association dedicated to advancing library services for the benefit of Indiana residents. It is nonpartisan and reflects the core values of the library field, including lifelong learning, freedom of ideas, and civil discourse. ILF monitors public policies that affect all library types and the people who work in and support them. It engages its members and stakeholders to be ready for action in library advocacy.

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