Federal support for libraries and moving PA Forward

Pennsylvania libraries are amazing institutions! They are filled not only with physical resources ranging from books to computers and internet access, but also offer highly credentialed professionals that help citizens of all ages navigate the increasingly complex information world. Libraries have become pillars of their communities that support early education for a wide majority, inspirational learning materials and programs that focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), health programs and resources, and powerful workforce development tools.

Federal support for libraries comes from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and is through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The annual award to Pennsylvania for the Grants to States program is $5.4 million.

Another key federal support for libraries is the E-rate program through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The E-Rate program helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband and internet services. In PA this is a commitment of more than $4 million for libraries, and represents an average 66% discount.

✓ The PA Forward initiative - “Literacy is POWER. Libraries provide the FUEL, for you, your community, for Pennsylvania” started in 2011 with support from an LSTA grant. This framework has helped public, school, and academic libraries engage with their communities to expand services and resources in a very meaningful way. It has now expanded into the Star Library Program where libraries can earn bronze, silver, or gold star status and recognition for their community-oriented efforts. The result is PA communities are stronger because of strong libraries.

✓ The College and Research Division uses LSTA funding to provide mandated professional development that is high quality, and simultaneously cost-effective for ever-tightening budgets. The education is offered across the state and open to all types of librarians.

✓ The PaLA Academy of Leadership Studies (PALS) program is supported through LSTA assistance and helps librarians develop the skills to lead their institutions as cutting-edge centers of learning for all ages.

Fast Facts – Pennsylvania Libraries:

- There are 456 public libraries in PA with 629 outlets including branches and bookmobiles.
- Approximately 85% of public libraries are 501(c)(3) organizations that rely on the combination of state and local funding, donations, and fundraising for operational budgets.
- Libraries offer services to library card holders 24/7 through digital content including eBooks, audiobooks, and databases. In the latest data from 2014, there were more than 5.29 million registered library users, and more than 66.14 million items circulated in Pennsylvania public libraries.
- Professional librarians have a master’s degree in library science (MLS) or a master’s in library and information science (MLIS). They are on the front lines of teaching information literacy.
- Details on E-rate funding in PA can be found here: [http://www.statelibrary.pa.gov/Libraries/Subsidies-and-Grants/Pages/e-Rate.aspx](http://www.statelibrary.pa.gov/Libraries/Subsidies-and-Grants/Pages/e-Rate.aspx)