



2019 Legislative Platform

The South Dakota Library Association calls on legislators to recognize the importance of all libraries in South Dakota. Today's libraries are not just about what we have for people but what we do for and with people. Libraries and librarians transform lives and communities. Investment in all sizes and types of libraries is *essential* for *all* citizens of South Dakota.

- In 2016, there were more than 1.4 billion in-person visits to public libraries in the U.S. – more than all Major League Baseball, National Football League, and National Basketball Association games combined.
- In 2017, South Dakota's public libraries received 3.7 million visitors. That's an average of five visits per resident.
- Urban Institute researchers repeatedly found that public libraries are highly regarded, and are seen as contributing to stability, safety and quality of life in neighborhoods.
- In 2017, 90% of libraries provided public wifi which was used 800,000 times. Public access computers recorded 500,000 hours of use (an average of 450 hours per computer).
- Literacy development begins at birth and is closely linked to a baby's earliest experiences with books and stories.
- Libraries help lower the achievement gap of lower-income students over the summer months by offering summer learning opportunities to kids of all backgrounds.
- Students in high-poverty schools are almost twice as likely to graduate when the school library is staffed with a certified school librarian.
- A growing body of evidence suggests that university students' academic success is linked to library usage, including improved student retention and an enhanced academic experience.
- Today nearly all job applications are only available online. Libraries provide the necessary resources to assist in using and learning the technology skills needed to apply for those jobs.
- Librarians help people fact-check and have for decades.

Therefore, the South Dakota Library Association encourages strong state and local support to fund and staff 21st century school libraries, and to strengthen public libraries in South Dakota. Likewise, SDLA advocates for increased funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency which offers "Grants to States" that fund state priorities and helps equalize free access to information for all our citizens.