



CHIEF OFFICERS OF STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES

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Open Letter to Supporters of Increased Federal Funding for Libraries January 30, 2020

The New Year brings much to celebrate for libraries across the country, starting with the 2020 federal budget. You know by now that the budget passed with an increase of \$10 million to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which includes \$6 million for the LSTA Grants to States program. This increase was the result of ongoing efforts by many in the library community who took actions to emphasize the importance and value of public libraries to policymakers.

Among those actions were resolutions passed by over [30 state, regional and national organizations](#) that expressed support for COSLA's ambitious "\$1 per capita" proposal. These were helpful in drawing attention to the need for higher funding levels to IMLS generally and the Grants to States program more specifically. To all of those organizations, thank you.

While "\$1 per capita" is a long-term goal, COSLA is heartened by the thoughtful conversations prompted by advancing it. We are grateful for the support provided to our campaign. It resulted in heightened attention to the importance of federal funding for libraries. We deeply appreciate the partnerships that have emerged as we work collectively to increase the resources available to libraries big and small, urban and rural. While the increase doesn't fully achieve our goal, it does mark excellent progress. The 2020 increase brings IMLS funding 30% closer to the \$232 million Museum and Library Services Act reauthorization level for Grants to States and discretionary grant programs.

COSLA is looking ahead to 2021 and to where there may be opportunities to work together again to build on the momentum that was generated over the last year. Interim increases demonstrate meaningful progress toward our ultimate objective, reaching "\$1 per capita" for the Grants to States program, or \$329 million based on current population. Milestones that will help to point us in the right direction this year include continued conversation across the library community and additional opportunities to advocate for increases to IMLS' budget in 2021. Likewise, telling the 'library story' in a way that resonates with policy makers continues to be a key activity for associations like COSLA and yours.

Again, thanks to all for your partnership. Please know that COSLA's commitment to ensuring that all libraries benefit from federal funding is steadfast.

Sincerely,

Stacey Aldrich
President
State Librarian, Hawaii State Public Library System