

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Pillars of Our Communities



The **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** provides vital funding through grants that strengthen communities across the United States, and understanding how these funds directly impact Americans in communities of all sizes is critical. Through state grants under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), IMLS efficiently distributes funds nationwide, ensuring **resources are tailored to local needs and priorities**. From literacy programs to workforce training, support for homeschool families and to entrepreneurs, **IMLS funding translates into tangible benefits for millions of Americans through locally-driven initiatives that address specific community needs while advancing national priorities in education, workforce development and digital inclusion**.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Funded Programs

- **Resources for Homeschool Families: Choctaw County Library (MS).** The Choctaw County Library System is creating educational kits for homeschool families based on parent input. Organized by subject area and grade level, these resources will be catalogued and available for checkout. The library also is establishing a twice-monthly homeschool group with supporting program materials.
- **Connectivity in Rural Communities: Whitefish Community Library (MT).** Before the project, wireless download speeds were only 12 Mbps. After the upgrades, speeds increased to 522 Mbps, enabling community members to engage in virtual job interviews, online classes, and research at the library. Last year, the network supported 6,417 Wi-Fi and public computer sessions. Libraries in Montana often serve as the only free, reliable internet in rural areas where connectivity is critical.
- **Small Business Education: Gwinnett County Public Library (GA).** The New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator (NSEI) supports the formerly incarcerated with business education through in-person classes, online coursework and a robust network of mentors. A pitch event at the end of the program offers participants the chance to win funding for their business ideas.
- **Bible Preservation: Germantown Public Library (OH).** Germantown Public Library will conserve a 1719 German Bible translated by Martin Luther. The Bible contains handwritten family history records and a portrait of Colonel George Irbin Gunckel, who originally donated it to the library.
- **Future-Ready Communities and AI (NY).** The University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government is partnering with Urban Libraries Council (ULC) to examine how libraries can empower communities to better understand Artificial Intelligence. This three-year research project includes case studies, a comprehensive report and a practitioners' guide for libraries.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Pillars of Our Communities



- **Literacy and STEM Education: Virginia Beach Public Library (VA).** The Environmental STEM: Play and Learn initiative provides increased access to STEM learning opportunities for preschool-age children.
- **Books for the Blind: The State Library of Louisiana (LA).** The State Library of Louisiana used LSTA funds to loan 207,681 braille, large-print, digital, and audio books to patrons who have a temporary or permanent disability. The Crib to Crayons program helped parents work with their blind or visually-impaired children to develop critical skills for reading success.
- **Science of Reading: Toledo Lucas County Public Library (OH).** Building on its decades-long commitment to early literacy, Toledo's librarians take part in an intensive two-year training that focuses on teaching essential skills all kids need to learn to become good readers. Reading specialists also meet with families in the community, offering ideas for things families can do at home.
- **Homework & Education Support for All Ages: St. Martin Parish Library (LA).** LSTA funds support HomeworkLouisiana (HomeworkLa), an online, after-school tutoring program available to all students in Louisiana from kindergarten through basic college level, and adult education in more than 60 subjects, including preparation for the GED. In addition, services offered include test preparation and job search assistance and resources.
- **Safe Routes to Public Libraries.** ULC, in partnership with the Association for Rural & Small Libraries and the Safe Routes Partnership, has a grant from IMLS to research how the Safe Routes to Schools model can be expanded to ensure there are safe routes to the public library for all children. Libraries provide the access to learning, programs, homework help and safe afterschool spaces.

Support IMLS and reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA)

Who We Are | Urban Libraries Council

The Urban Libraries Council is dedicated to strengthening and advancing the essential role of public libraries as dynamic, accessible places for opportunity, learning and innovation. We connect public library leaders and drive transformative change to enrich the lives of individuals and urban communities across North America.

ULC represents 189 member libraries across the United States and Canada, including in 40 states. Member libraries in the United States serve more than 86 million residents.