

FEDERAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Urban Libraries Council



ULC's advocacy strategy seeks to garner more support and funding for policies that strengthen and advance the essential role of public libraries. Through engagement with lawmakers in Congress and U.S. federal agencies, we advocate for several key policy positions that center the critical role that public libraries play in urban communities. To preserve, improve and expand library services in communities nationwide, Congress should consider the policy recommendations outlined below.

1. Funding & Partnership Opportunities

➤ Libraries are essential public infrastructure that need to be preserved for future generations.



- Bolster support for increased funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support its broad mission of supporting all types of libraries, state library agencies, archives and museums nationally.
- Bolster support for infrastructure through federal grants, extending historic site preservation to libraries and include public libraries in future infrastructure legislation, and/or support a national public library infrastructure bill.
- Support the reauthorization of Museum and Library Services Act including ensuring future investments in our nation's public library as essential community assets.

➤ Public libraries are leaders in workforce development, digital inclusion and economic mobility.



- Increase literacy and education funding nationally and support legislative policies and investments in the U.S. Department of Education and IMLS which advance the role of the public library.
- Ensure inclusion and new funding for libraries through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reauthorization.
- Access to existing funding to support programs and partnerships led by public libraries in skill development and workforce training.
- Advance investments in public libraries as digital leaders including support for broadband, devices and E-Rate, including sustainable funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and off-campus use

Learn more at [UrbanLibraries.org/initiatives/advocacy](https://www.UrbanLibraries.org/initiatives/advocacy)



2. Awareness Opportunities

As ULC begins engagement with Congress and U.S. federal agencies, we seek to educate them on key issues facing public libraries to inform legislation and funding opportunities.

- **Urban libraries have essential mandates that are not fully recognized in federal funding opportunities. This includes providing access to health and mental health support, offering citizenship classes and supporting unhoused individuals.**



- Build congressional and federal agency awareness and advocating for the role and need for public libraries in health services including public health, mental health and social workers.
- Increase congressional and federal agency awareness and support for public housing and affordable housing partnerships with libraries.
- Increase awareness of public libraries as pathways to citizenship and civic engagement.

- **Intellectual freedom and access to information is a fundamental value of democracy and individual rights.**



- Adhere to the value that libraries are places where people can read and learn freely from all points of view, make up their own minds and engage in their communities.
- Active support of efforts to protect intellectual freedom, including a congressional anti-book ban legislation.
- Advance congressional awareness of the issues for public libraries on access and fair pricing for e-content, including the need to modernize copyright law.

- **Education and literacy across a lifetime remain core to a healthy economy and strong nation.**



- Educate congressional and federal agency partners on the role libraries play in building strong local economies, supporting entrepreneurship and expanding economic opportunity.
- Partner with national organizations to increase funding for out-of-school programs and resources and increase awareness of early childhood and family literacy programs. For college and career readiness, advance the role of libraries as on-ramps to earning a high school diploma or attending college.
- Build support for Library Services and Technology Act (LTSA) funding through IMLS and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program by the U.S. Department of Education.