

2016

# Institute of Museum and Library Services Act (1996): Report 02

American Library Association

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Washington Office  
**ISSUE BRIEF**  
**MAY 1996**

# ALA American Library Association

## FY97 APPROPRIATIONS

### *President's Budget Proposes Funding for Library Programs*

#### ADMINISTRATION'S FY97 BUDGET REQUEST

President Clinton's FY97 budget request was sent to Congress on March 19, 1996. The Administration requested \$110 million for a generic Library Programs category "to support new library programs to be authorized under pending legislation. Federal support would focus on enhancing the use of technology to provide the public with access to information and on providing special services to those who need them in order to use public libraries." The \$110 million for state grants would replace the current Library Services and Construction Act and Higher Education Act title II programs.

#### ACTION NEEDED

The President's request would be a 24 percent cut from FY95 levels, and a 16 percent cut from FY96 levels just passed by Congress and signed by Clinton. The Administration's request for FY97 is lower than the \$150 million currently under negotiation in the House Senate Conference on H.R. 1617, the bill which includes library program reauthorization. Library supporters should request funding levels at the FY96 agreed-upon level.

PROGRAM (in thousands)	FY95 APPROP.	FY96 FINAL	FY97 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST
TOTAL	\$144,161	\$132,505	\$110,000*
LSCA I-pub lib serv	83,227	\$ 92,636	} more for those distributed by formula
LSCA II-p.l. construct	17,792	16,369	
LSCA III-interlib coop	23,700	18,000	
LSCA VI-literacy	8,026	0	} losses felt here
HEA II-B-ed/training	4,916	2,500	
HEA II-B R&D	6,500	3,000	

(\*To fund legislation to be authorized)

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## LIBRARY SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY ACT

*Pending in H.R. 1617 and S. 143*

### Summary

With the Library Services and Construction Act scheduled to expire on September 30, 1996, immediate action is necessary to complete the work on the Library Services and Technology Act which will be its successor.

### Background

Both House and Senate have passed versions of the Library Services and Technology Act proposed by the American Library Association, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, and the Urban Libraries Council. A House-Senate conference committee (composed of members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities, and key members of the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee) must work out differences between the two versions of the CAREERS Act (H.R. 1617), a much larger block grant bill that contains the library provisions. (The Senate-passed version of H.R. 1617 consists of S. 143, the Workforce Development Act.)

ALA, COSLA, and ULC made joint recommendations to the House-Senate conference committee for a compromise that incorporates the strengths of both the House approach of a block grant to the states, and the Senate's more comprehensive federal role in support of libraries. Staffs of the conferees have worked out a reasonable compromise that, while not incorporating all the library community's recommendations, and not yet ratified by the conference committee itself, deserves support in order to continue a successor program to LSCA and HEA library programs.

The major points of staff agreement on this tentative compromise include:

- Administration of LSTA by an Institute of Museum and Library Services;
- An authorized level totaling \$150 million;
- A reduced setaside for federal level administration;
- A very small setaside for national leadership purposes in library science;
- Purposes of state based funds to include technology and special services, including services for children in poverty; and

**Library Services & Technology Act****Page 2**

- One funding stream allocated to states (rather than half for technology and half for special services).

**Current Status**

Other non-library issues in the CAREERS Act brought staff negotiations on a House-Senate compromise to a standstill for some time. Thus, further action on the tentative agreement on a Library Services and Technology Act administered by an Institute of Museum and Library Services was stalled. Recently, staff activity on other issues in H.R. 1617 resumed, but no timetable for completion of work has been announced.

Members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee and the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee need to hear that their staffs' work on a conference version of the Library Services and Technology Act is appreciated, and generally supported by library constituents, and that library supporters expect quick enactment of LSTA.

There is further danger to the program because the current LSCA sunsets as of September 30, 1996 unless Congress takes action in some way to prevent this outcome. The usual timing is that the LSCA program announcement would go out to state library agencies in April; states would submit their applications by July 1, and funds would be released to states with approved applications within one week of appropriations being enacted (normally by October 1 when FY97 begins). The "normal" cycle cannot begin because of the lack of authorization. Yet neither congressional authorizers nor appropriators nor the Administration intend the programs to disappear.

**ACTION NEEDED**

Senators and Representatives have done a good job in passing library program reauthorizations in both the House and Senate; the staffs of House-Senate conferees on H.R. 1617 have done more good work in putting together a reasonable House-Senate compromise on the Library Services and Technology Act to replace LSCA. They've done the job; library constituents appreciate their work. Don't let this good work languish. **Message to Congress: Thanks, now, please, finish the job.**

Legislators should find a way to bring the final version of LSTA to a vote. It's non-controversial. It would sharpen and update the small but mighty federal stimulus role in support of new and innovative library services and use of new technology to improve the way libraries reach and serve the public. This program must not be allowed to die. Legislative time before Congress adjourns in an election year is short. Fast and final action on the compromise version of the Library Services and Technology Act currently stalled within H.R. 1617 is needed by Congress.