

# MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT (MLSA)



The Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) is the main source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The MLSA includes the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the Museum Services Act (MSA) – both of which are under the direction of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

***The Library Services and Technology Act*** promotes improvements in library services, facilitates access to library resources for all members of local communities, and encourages resource sharing among libraries to maximize efficiency.

***The Museum Services Act*** promotes improvements in museum services, in part through the use of technology, assists in the care of the nation's cultural, historic, natural, and scientific heritage, supports educational programs for schools, families and communities, and encourages resource sharing and partnerships among museums, libraries, schools, and other community organizations.

**Libraries.** New York State has 7,000 libraries, 73 library systems, and the New York State Library. The state's libraries use LSTA funds to provide:

- Literacy programs for children, adults and families
- Counseling and job information for individuals in need of employment
- Consumer health information
- Marketing, demographic, and other information needed to develop plans for small businesses
- Training in new computer technology
- Extensive electronic information updated and maintained by librarians

LSTA also funds New York State's Summer Reading Program, which has been shown to raise student achievement and academic test scores and help prevent learning losses over the summer. This successful program met its 2010 participation goal two years early when more than 1.5 million children participated in the program in 2008 through 1,100 local public libraries and branches.

**Museums.** New York State has 1,900 museums and historical societies, including the New York State Museum – more than any other state. Many are among the leading art, history, and natural history institutions in the world.

Close to 51 million visitors, including more than 4.4 million school children, visit the state's museums and historical societies each year. Fifty-five percent of the state's museums offer education standards-based programs that serve more than two million students in grades K-12. Evaluations of the museum's education programs have found that they increase student knowledge and skills.



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For example:

- Museum-created resources used in school science programming increased student performance in both science and writing proficiency (Valle Imperial Project in Science)
- More students performed at the accomplished level in using evidential reasoning after participating in a Teaching Literacy Through Art program (Guggenheim)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REAUTHORIZATION**

### **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)**

- **Align the priorities of the LSTA State Grant Program with the General Goals and Purposes of LSTA**

Currently the use of funding under the state grant program is limited to six priorities, which are narrower than the goals of LSTA. The limited set of priorities has hampered support for programs and projects that would further enhance libraries' service delivery and assistance to schools and communities. Broadening the current list of priorities to include LSTA's goals would allow funding to be used for additional activities designed to improve library services and programs.

- **Authorize the Librarian Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program**

At present, the librarian education program is not authorized, but has been funded through the budget process. Authorization will provide stability for the program, protect its funding and the funding for other LSTA programs. The goal of the program is to ensure that libraries continue to be staffed by qualified professionals. The program recruits undergraduate and graduate students into all areas of library and information science, recruits and cultivates library leaders, and provides professional development for current library personnel.

- **Authorize the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to collect library data**

Data is critical to understanding the changing needs and uses of libraries and helps to ensure that library funding is used effectively. In 2007 IMLS was given responsibility, through the budget process, to collect and disseminate information on national and state public libraries. That authority and responsibility should be codified in the MLSA reauthorization. The authorization also should require that the data collection be coordinated in each state through a state-wide advisory committee.

### **Museum Services Act**

- **Reauthorize the Office of Museum Services and increase its funding to \$95 million over five years**

The proposed increase from the current authorization of \$38.6 million and the 2007 appropriations level of approximately \$31 million would be phased in over five years.



**Museum Services Act (con't)**

The increase would allow for enhanced investments in technology upgrades, lifelong community learning, capacity building, collection management, community engagement, research, and developing the next generation of museum professionals, among other important efforts.

When the appropriations level exceeds \$45 million, up to \$2 million would be appropriated for states to conduct needs assessments. When the appropriations level is between \$45 million and \$72 million, IMLS would establish new grants for conservation, traveling exhibits, and assisting small museums compete for federal grants more effectively. Appropriations above the \$72 million level would be used to support a state grant program. The state grant funding would help to secure museums' individual collections, expand their uses and access and strengthen museums' national network and collaborations.

***For additional information:***

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