



American Library Association Support for New Jersey Libraries 2019 -- 2023

The American Library Association (ALA) is a non-partisan, non-profit membership organization that develops, promotes, and improves library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. ALA has remained committed to this mission since its inception in 1876, serving people of all demographic backgrounds and ideologies across the pluralistic United States. ALA membership provides individuals and organizations invaluable opportunities for continuing education, grants and scholarships, and a vibrant community of practice wherein a diverse membership develops standards and practices for libraries and librarians.

Today ALA stands as the oldest and largest library association in the world. ALA's impact and influence can be observed in the areas of adult and family literacy; broadband access; digital skills development; copyright and intellectual property; K-12 and higher education; support for small business and entrepreneurs; library services to active military personnel and veterans and their families; educational and career readiness support for people who are incarcerated or returning to their communities; out of school time activities and summer reading programs for youth; support for library access in small and rural communities; efforts to increase arts and civic participation; and workforce development and lifelong learning in general.

With a membership of more than 50,000, ALA has a 131-member elected council and a 15-member elected executive board, which includes a president elected by members to serve a term of one-year. ALA is guided by core American values, especially the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment's right to free speech, thought, and opinion.

The [Library Bill of Rights](#), adopted by ALA in 1939, embodies the free and open society that is the United States with the goal of free peoples reading freely irrespective of ideological, political, or religious beliefs. It affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas: and materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation; to provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues; that materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval; and a person's right to use a library including library meeting rooms should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, sexual orientation, gender, or views.

One of the most significant benefits to membership is full access to ALA's standards for library services; continuing education and professional development opportunities; community of practice and subject matter experts; and funding sources, grants, scholarships, in-kind support, and resources that help to underwrite the delivery of programs and services for library users. ALA membership also provides benefits to state libraries, including access to timely library data; reports and white papers; benchmarking information and environmental scans; policy and advocacy support; technical assistance on accessing federal and state-level funding; technical assistance on issues related to broadband access and affordability; e-rates, e-books and copyright; as well as discounts on job postings, product purchases, media subscriptions, and more.

ALA is the leading organization advocating for state-level funding from the federal government through the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) grants to states. Through ALA's efforts with its members and

allies, the State Library in New Jersey has seen an increase of \$428,504 or 9% from 2019 to 2023, to \$4,536,994 annually. The New Jersey State Library uses these federal dollars **every year** to provide communities with a variety of services and programs, including access to electronic databases, computer instruction, homework centers, summer reading programs, digitization of special collections, access to e-books and adaptive technology, bookmobile service, and development of outreach programs to the underserved.

During the pandemic years, ALA pushed for further support for libraries across the country as they were a critical resource needed more than ever as they provided urgent essential services for their communities. The New Jersey State Library received additional critical dollars, \$802,581 from the CARES Act and \$3,935,345 from the American Rescue Plan Act.

ALA is the second largest grant funder to libraries. Since 2021, ALA has awarded 53 libraries in New Jersey a total of \$297,600 for digital training workshops, bolstering technology in small and rural libraries, STEM resources, and other professional development and resources to help libraries better serve the needs of their communities.

ALA membership is voluntary and contributes directly back to ALA's mission, with the largest portions of dues going directly into supporting professional development for library workers (40%), membership engagement (21%), and advocating for the preservation of library services (14%). Individual and institutional memberships serve to improve and expand the reach of school, academic, and public library services, and learning; create an expansive and inclusive information ecosystem; and promote and raise the visibility of librarianship and library stewardship. For its services to the broader public, ALA has received numerous awards and recognition.

Guided by its mission "to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all," ALA remains committed to providing essential support, resources, and opportunities for every library and library worker in every state and territory across the nation to help them better serve their communities.

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