



## 2026 Legislative Priorities

The California Library Association — through its members and advocates — works to make a difference for all Californians by providing adequately funded libraries, which transform lives through their programs and services.

CLA has adopted the following legislative priorities for 2026:

### 1. Increase in funding to vital library programs that have been reduced in previous years

- Restoration of CLSA (California Library Services Act) funding. CLSA plays a vital role in fostering resource sharing among libraries, particularly in rural and under-resourced communities where limited funding constrains equitable access to library services. CLA requests the restoration of CLSA funding through an augmentation of \$3.2 million to the current baseline, bringing total program funding to \$5 million. *This request is specific to CLSA and does not include funding for the Zip Books program.*
- Restoration of Lunch at the Library funding. Lunch at the Library provides 300,000+ free and nutritious summer lunches, accompanied by literacy-enhanced wrap-around programming, at hundreds of libraries each year. Lunch at the Library funding was reduced in the previous budget years. CLA seeks an increase of \$2.5 million to Lunch at Library's current funding, bringing the total allocation to \$5.5 million.
- \$3 million to ensure the continuity of English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy programs, expanding opportunities for Californians across the state, and complementing California Library Literacy Services (CLLS).

### 2. One-time Funding Requests

- To strengthen California's digital readiness and workforce competitiveness, CLA requests \$4 million to establish grants that support library-led digital-literacy initiatives, prioritizing AI-literacy training for library professionals and the public.
- CLA requests that \$15 million in Proposition 4 funds be allocated to public libraries, which increasingly serve as community resilience centers during

climate-related disasters such as wildfires and extreme heat events. These funds would enable libraries to develop and enhance critical disaster-response infrastructure, including, but not limited to, installing emergency power systems, improving ventilation, deploying air-scrubbing technology, and upgrading heating and cooling systems to ensure safe, reliable community shelter in times of crisis.

### **3. Federal Funding**

CLA recognizes the critical importance of sustained federal funding for California's library jurisdictions. Programs such as the USDA's Summer Meals Program, delivered in tandem with Lunch at the Library, help combat food insecurity by providing meals at public library sites. E-Rate ensures equitable broadband access in vulnerable communities, while the Institute for Museum and Library Services provides essential financial and logistical support for library programs statewide. CLA will continue to advocate for the preservation and strengthening of these federal programs. Should federal funding be reduced or eliminated, CLA will seek gap funding from the State of California to maintain uninterrupted library services until federal support is restored.

### **4. Equitable Access to Critical Library and Information Services**

When opportunities for advocacy arise, CLA shall support legislation that advances the core values of libraries, including:

- Ensuring broadband equity and expanding digital literacy in unserved and underserved communities.
- Protecting the freedom to read and guaranteeing access to materials representing diverse perspectives.
- Promoting literacy for all ages, advancing career development, and providing assistance to vulnerable populations.
- Securing fair pricing for libraries to purchase digital content, including eBooks and eAudiobooks, at the same rates as consumers.
- Strengthening and sustaining California's network of law libraries.
- Supporting future initiatives to lower the voter approval threshold for local construction bonds and special taxes to 55%, while actively pursuing opportunities to secure additional funding for library construction grants.
- Support for a robustly funded State library, for both mission-specific operational needs and for the provision of supportive services to libraries state-wide

CLA supports positive action in key areas, including, but not limited to, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, Intellectual Freedom, Privacy, and Net Neutrality.