

America's public libraries need billions of dollars for construction and renovation

ALA estimates that U.S. public libraries need **\$32 billion** for construction and renovation. At current funding levels, it would take **2 years** to meet today's needs.

America's public libraries operate approximately 10,000 locations nationwide across more than 200 million square feet. Americans visit these public libraries more than 3 billion times per year.

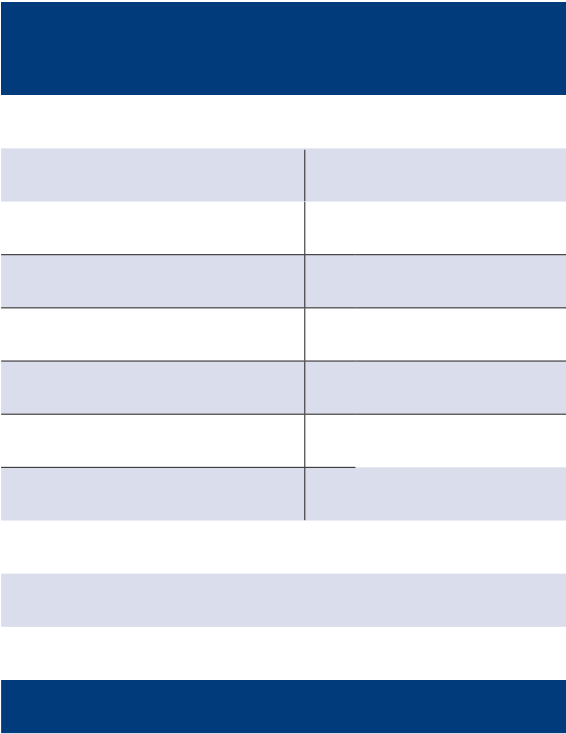
The average public library building is more than 40 years old, including hundreds of buildings that are more than 100 years old. Over time, these buildings must be renovated, expanded, or replaced to serve growing populations, meet new community needs, and protect the safety and health of library users and workers.

The physical plant of public libraries includes building structure, research foundations and roofs, grounds, chalkboards, walkways and parking lots, buildings systems such as HVAC and plumbing, and technology infrastructure such as electrical codes and WiFi routers.

Nine states—Alaska, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Washington, and West Virginia, plus the District of Columbia have assessed state-wide public library facilities needs in the past four years.⁶ Across these states, public libraries need more than \$3 billion for construction and renovation.

These assessments represent libraries that serve one in four Americans.⁷ Extrapolating from these states in proportion to their share of the national population, we estimate that public libraries nationwide need \$32 billion for construction and renovation.

At current levels of funding, based on nationwide capital spending over the last five years, it would take more than 2 years to meet today's estimated national need for construction and renovation.



NOTES

1. Reflects response for 40% of public libraries in Alaska (2%).
 2. Estimate based on partial response of \$3.1 billion in reported needs reflects response for 10% of public libraries in California.
 3. Needs estimated between \$100 million and \$200 million in the District of Columbia.
 4. Needs assessed only for 14 rural distressed counties (2 of Washington's 3 counties).
- Includes only West Virginia libraries self-assessing their facilities as critical, poor, or fair condition.
 - Assessments conducted according to the particular methodology used in each state and may not reflect the full scope of needs.
 - State population figures from the 2020 Census. Washington assessment and population figures reflect only 2 of the state's 3