

## EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Libraries of all types are developing rapidly to take advantage of technological advancements and to meet the changing needs of communities across the nation. Many people in positions of power, however, do not yet understand the expanded roles and capabilities of modern libraries nor recognize the extent to which libraries can be catalysts for opportunity and progress. As a result, the nation severely underinvests in libraries. To reverse this trend, library allies must unite around shared long-term policy goals—specifically ones that pragmatically align to political and economic realities—and work together to educate and influence decision makers.

This National Policy Agenda for Libraries provides a vital framework for library advocates so that the community can engage actively in policy conversations with a strong, consistent voice. The vision for this collaborative national policy effort is to change perceptions and to earn libraries a seat at the table during decision making. Libraries can be viable solutions for many pressing national challenges if they are involved early enough in discussions about capacity and implementation. We encourage library entities to fashion their policy priorities under the rubric of this national policy agenda so that we may build shared momentum.

Led by the American Library Association Office for Information Technology Policy, this agenda was developed in concert with major library organizations that serve on a Library Advisory Committee for the Policy Revolution! initiative. Funding for this project is provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of a three-year grant that also supports efforts to deepen national stakeholder engagement and increase library policy advocacy capacity.

### Making the Case: Libraries are Essential

Libraries represent a critical national infrastructure that engages communities and delivers services, including digital literacy, workforce development, and economic development. An explosion of new communications technologies and channels creates the illusion of unlimited resources. But in truth, our knowledge pipeline and the public interest likely face dangerous choke points and inequities if thoughtful and balanced policies do not prevail.

Libraries are broadening their support of continuing education through new mechanisms enabled by technology

Literacy, a long-time focus of libraries, expands to include digital literacy that enables people to become proficient in new technologies such as maker spaces, 3D printers, and big data

Libraries provide a wide array of services that includes summer media and technology camps, afterschool enrichment and tutoring services, and STEM programming

Achieve new funding sources and capacity-building partnerships with public and private entities to improve student achievement and seamlessly upskill lifelong learners

## EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

skills training and small business support, among other programs

Seek funding for libraries under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and establish stronger partnerships with federal agencies including the Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce, and non-governmental groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Increase recognition of libraries as a vital public health resource

Formalize and expand support for library programs that help Americans live longer and healthier lives, especially efforts that enable preventative and proactive self-care

## GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

Increase recognition of libraries as a critical bridge between e-government services and residents with inadequate internet access or digital skills

Formalize and expand support for libraries as a point of delivery for government services and point of access for public information

## HERITAGE AND HISTORY

Gain recognition of libraries as principal stewards of the



Increase public and private library funding and modify existing national-level programs to include policies that specifically designate libraries as eligible funding recipients

## COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING

Broaden the national copyright conversation from its focus on piracy to encompass creativity, innovation and the needs of the entire country

Increase intensity of collaboration with alliances and coalitions, such as the Re:Create coalition

Secure improved accommodations for people with print disabilities with the development and diffusion of digital formats nationally and internationally

## DIGITAL CONTENT SYSTEMS

Continue to explore new infrastructure models that enable sharing and discovery across libraries of all types, as well as communities and cultural institutions

Champion new digital infrastructure investments, such as those represented by Institute of Museum and Library Services National Digital Platform grant program

## PRIVACY

Guide and participate in debates and conversations about privacy within a changing digital landscape

Advocate for policies that safeguard the privacy of library users and provide people with improved understanding and control over how their personal information is used and what they receive in exchange

## BROADBAND ACCESS, ADOPTION AND USE

Advocate for affordable access for all libraries to high-speed broadband infrastructure

Continue efforts to take full advantage of and expand opportunities provided by modernized E-rate and other federal programs supporting fast, fair and neutral wired and wireless networks

## LIBRARY-RELATED FUNCTIONS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Increase productive ties among relevant government units that provide oversight or

Research alternative models, such as the Ministry of Culture and Communications in France, and propose potential applications for the United States

## INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

Secure increased investments in the preparation of library staff and other information professionals for the new challenges of a digital age

Reorient existing training of information professionals to align more closely with national priorities and community needs

## The Library Advisory Committee

Andrea Berstler, Wicomico (Md.) Public Library  
John Carlo Bertot, University of Maryland, College Park  
RaShauna Brannon, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Melinda Cervantes, Pima County (Ariz.) Public Library (*member until April 2015*)  
Rose T. Dawson, Alexandria (Va.) Library  
Sandra Enimil, Ohio State University  
Alan G. Fishel, Arent Fox (*special advisor*)  
Marc Gartler, Madison (Wisc.) Public Library  
Anne Green, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (*special advisor*)  
Christopher Harris, Genesee Valley (N.Y.) BOCES  
Ann Joslin, Idaho Commission on Libraries  
Dan Lee, University of Arizona  
Susan McVey, Oklahoma Department of Libraries  
James G. Neal, Columbia University  
Vailey Oehlke, Multnomah County (Ore.) Library  
Pat Smith, Texas Library Association  
Tracy Strobel, Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library  
Ken Wiggan, Connecticut State Library  
Connie Williams, Petaluma (Calif.) City Schools  
Vivian Wynn, Wynn Library Consulting (Tenn.)

## For Further Information

This document is the executive brief of the full National Policy Agenda for Libraries. The eacy Agendaen.8o)-7b)3ee6()0(n)-37,19mE