

Campaign for “One Dollar Per Capita” LSTA Grants to States Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is “\$1 per capita?”

\$1 per capita is an effort by the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) and regional state library groups such as Western Council and the Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast to substantially increase the Grants to States portion of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Funding through the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Why \$1 per capita?

One dollar per capita represents a doubling of current funding for the Grants to States program. The current funding for Grants to States is \$160.8 million. COSLA proposes to increase that funding level to \$325 million. Funding for Grants to States has remained essentially flat for more than 20 years despite rising costs to state library agencies and local libraries.

Would \$1 per capita really result in \$1 per capita funding in every state?

Any additional funding would be subject to the formula for allocating LSTA Grants to States funds as specified in the Museum and Library Services Act. The formula is a combination of a base grant and per capita funding. While all states would see substantive increases, the funds would not be distributed on a strict \$1 per capita basis.

Didn't Congress just increase the base for LSTA Grants to States funding?

These are two separate but related efforts. Simultaneous to the push for greater appropriation for LSTA, COSLA and ALA successfully advocated for language in the reauthorization of the Museum and Library Service Act (MLSA) language that would increase the base allocation to states from \$680,000 to \$1,000,000. This change was adopted as part of the MLSA reauthorization which Congress passed in December 2018. However, this is independent of the effort to increase the total appropriation. That said, the new formula for the base grant will mean that any increase in the total appropriation will be a greater boost for smaller population states than would have been the case without the base increase.

How would the states use these new federal funds?

COSLA argues that increased federal investment in libraries will support lifelong learning, early literacy, economic growth, workforce development, services to veterans, community sustainability, and many other programs that grow communities and enrich the lives of persons of all ages.

According to data compiled by the Institute for Museum and Library Services, each year over 1,500 projects funded through the Grants to States program support a wide variety of initiatives, including access to electronic resources, computer instruction, homework centers, summer reading programs, digitization of special collections, access to e-books and adaptive technology, mobile library services, and outreach programs to underserved populations.

How would these additional funds affect a state's maintenance-of-effort and match requirements?

States would still be required to provide a match and maintain effort according to the current formula. States' MOE status would not be adversely affected by additional federal funds, however, the match requirement might create a limitation. If a state did not have sufficient expenditures from state, local, and other non-federal entities to fully match additional federal dollars, that state would not receive the full allocation for which they would be eligible.

How do we know this is an effective use of federal funds?

COSLA intends to highlight the numerous studies that have repeatedly proven that investment in libraries yields a significant return on investment in local economies.

The LSTA Grants to States program supports library services in virtually every community and congressional district in the U.S. and by the terms of the grant, 96% of funds must be used to support direct services rather than administrative costs.

Further, the states are held accountable through extensive reporting and evaluation by both state and federal governments. The Library Services and Technology Act requires all state library agencies to submit five-year plans and states must detail how specific projects respond to their state plans. The IMLS and the state library agencies are also partnering in a comprehensive planning and evaluation initiative called "Measuring Success."

Has COSLA officially endorsed this effort?

COSLA members affirmed their support for this effort at the October 2018 meeting in Bismarck. The COSLA Board adopted a resolution of support for the effort in December 2018.

How can states support the campaign for \$1 per capita?

Resolutions of support from organizations such as state library associations will be very helpful at this time. As of January 2019, 19 state library associations have adopted resolutions of support. Also, any expression of support from any local government, non-profit organization, business, or individual, would be very helpful. Build momentum for the effort by speaking to library and community groups and seeking allies and partners in the effort.

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