

COVID-19 relief for academic libraries

While budget cuts for college and research libraries are taking place at many institutions, ALA continues to advocate for libraries to be included in federal relief packages. The \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L.116-136), passed in April, would benefit college and research libraries. The majority of the CARES Act Education Stabilization Fund is reserved for institutions of higher education (IHE) centers around student aid and encourages maximum flexibility. For example, the Department of Education (ED) is suspending payments on federal student loans until September 30, 2020, and no interest would accrue during this period of suspension. However, as much as 49% of the Education Stabilization Fund may be expended (to cover any costs associated with significant changes to the delivery of instruction due to the coronavirus), with only a few constraints.

Separately, ED recently announced that it was providing additional flexibility to institutions relating to the Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program. This includes the ability for IHE to continue to pay FWS wages to students for the remainder of the current academic year in instances in which those students' jobs were interrupted as a result of the pandemic.

As the next economic relief packages take shape, ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy

Office is working to make sure that any discussion of education considers the value and contributions of libraries. Advocacy within individual institutions is necessary for the library to obtain a share of CARES Act funding. As with all advocacy, you must have compelling ideas and a proposal that articulates your needs—making the argument for why the library should receive a share based upon the role your library has played in helping to support any changes to the delivery of instruction within your institution. You'll also need to exercise your relationships within the institution to obtain intelligence and exert influence to steer some of these funds to the library.

HathiTrust responds to COVID-19

The novel coronavirus pandemic has brought into focus the need for digital access to information held in libraries around the world. U.S. copyright law allows for the fair use of content under certain conditions. Based on the four-factor analysis of fair use, coupled with an emergency that makes lawful access to physical copies impossible, libraries can operate to a significant extent to serve academic communities.

On March 31, HathiTrust, a digital preservation repository and advanced book search service, opened full-text access to books in its collection for HathiTrust library members in response to COVID-19. Because libraries were forced to close due to the coronavirus, physical access to books in university library collections was impossible. Member libraries with holdings in the repository can offer full-text access to those titles to their faculty, student, and academic communities. The service will be available until member libraries can re-open. *zz*

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