

## President Obama's budget increases library funding

President Barack Obama in early February transmitted to U.S. Congress the Obama Administration's nearly \$4 trillion budget request to fund the federal government for the 2016 fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2015. Highlights for the library community include \$186.5 million in assistance to libraries through the Library Services and Technology Act, an important program that provides funding to states through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The budget included the allocation of \$8.8 million in funding for a national digital platform for library and museum services, which will give more Americans free and electronic access to the resources of libraries, archives, and museums by promoting the use of technology to expand access to the holdings of museums, libraries, and archives. This new program will be funded by the IMLS National Leadership Grant programs for Libraries (\$5.3 million) and Museums (\$3.5 million).

## Registration opens for 41st annual National Library Legislative Day

In January, registration opened for ALA's 41st annual National Library Legislative Day, a two-day advocacy event where hundreds of library supporters, leaders, and patrons meet with members of Congress in Washington, D.C. This year's National Library Legislative Day takes place May 4-5, 2015. Participants will receive advocacy tips and training, along with issues briefings prior to their meetings. Last year, more than 400 librarians, patrons, teens, and parents from across the country met with members of Congress to discuss key library issues.

First-time participants are eligible for a unique scholarship opportunity. The White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (WHCLIST) and

the ALA Washington Office are calling for nominations for the 2015 WHCLIST Award. Recipients of this award receive a stipend (\$300 and two free nights at a D.C. hotel) to a nonlibrarian participant in National Library Legislative Day. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2015. For more information, visit [www.ala.org/nlld](http://www.ala.org/nlld).

## Library leaders: E-rate opportunities take center stage

At the start of the ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, the association announced the launch of "Got E-rate?," a new initiative that encourages library leaders to apply for Internet discounts as part of the national e-rate program. The initiative is a response to the Federal Communications Commission's recent overhaul of the e-rate program, which included adding \$1.5 billion to the annual available funding. This infusion and other program changes provide new opportunities for libraries to radically rethink their broadband networks and begin to make gains toward the broadband speeds necessary for today's and tomorrow's library services.

In the coming weeks, ALA will launch a series of e-rate resources, including communications, education, practical tools, and technical support for librarians who are interested in applying for e-rate funding. Additionally, ALA will work collaboratively with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies and the Public Library Association to support libraries with applying for the e-rate program. *~*

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