



SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS

STRUCTURE AND FUNDING OF MICHIGAN'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Position adopted 1988, revised 1997, 2023

- I. A basic level of public library funding should insure basic services to all residents in Michigan. Basic services include:
 - A. Public libraries open a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week, staffed by a professional librarian;
 - B. A public library collection of books for all ages, periodicals and appropriate indexes, reference collection and audio visual materials;
 - C. A catalog, either card or electronic, of items owned by the library;
 - D. Interloan borrowing from other libraries; and
 - E. Programs for children and access to library materials and services for people with special needs.

- II. The organization of Michigan's public libraries should be uniform. Legislation should strive for uniformity in the following areas:
 - A. Powers of the local library board;
 - B. Minimum/maximum number of library board trustees;
 - C. Development of a long-range plan;
 - D. Development of policies and procedures; and
 - E. Required filing of documentation with the Library of Michigan.

- III. Library boards should be self-governing with financial autonomy/discretion, whether funding is through direct millage or appropriation. Boards should be empowered to place a bond issue and/or operating millage before the electors.

- IV. Recognized appropriate stable funding sources are local tax funds, state aid and penal fines.

- V. To be eligible for statewide per capita distribution of library funds (state aid, penal fines or any other), public libraries should be required to comply with basic/minimum standards.

- VI. The Detroit Public Library should continue to receive special state funding as a major resource library, available to all residents of the state.
- VII. Rural libraries, which serve a population of 25,000 or less, should receive special funding to improve local resources and to enable them to better meet basic standards of service.
- VIII. Penal fines are identified in the Michigan Constitution as an exclusive revenue source for public libraries. The state Legislature should not permit other state agencies access to portions of penal fines. There should be a centralized statewide distribution of penal fines with a uniformly applied formula.
- IX. The Library of Michigan, as the state library agency, has roles defined by law. Additional roles should include:
 - A. Disbursement and oversight of federal and state monies identified for public libraries;
 - B. Technical assistance to carry out cooperative programs throughout the state;
 - C. Development and encouragement of cooperative arrangements for maximum access to information across the state, including such things as a statewide database;
 - D. Consultation services to all sectors of the library community; and
 - E. Development of a statewide plan to improve interlibrary loan service by offsetting costs.
- X. The State of Michigan has a responsibility for funding statewide library services. Public Act 89 of 1977 provides state aid support for both public libraries and public library cooperatives. The state Legislature should fully fund the maximum permitted by the present law (50 cents per capita), as well as fund adjusted maximum cost of living increases experienced since 1977.
- XI. Statewide cooperative efforts among libraries should include:
 - A. Shared resources, such as: a database of materials owned by Michigan's libraries; interlibrary loan; development of union lists; reference information and referral services;
 - B. Improved communications and delivery systems, such as: telefacsimile (fax); WATS line; access to national databases; commercial and/or U.S. Postal Service; and future technological developments;
 - C. Conservation/preservation of rare materials;
 - D. Continuing education and training; and
 - E. Consultation services.
- XII. Within a public library cooperative, member libraries may benefit from shared activities, such as:
 - A. Cooperative or joint purchasing of such items as books, equipment and supplies;
 - B. A materials examination center to facilitate centralized ordering;

- C. Technical services including cataloging and creation of a database of materials owned by member libraries;
 - D. Resources development and sharing including: collection development, interlibrary loan, reference and referral services;
 - E. Improved communications and delivery systems including: telefacsimile (fax); WATS line; U.S. Postal Service; and vehicle on a regular basis;
 - F. Storage/warehousing;
 - G. Continuing education and training; and
 - H. Consultation services.
- XIII. Public libraries should cooperate with other types of libraries (school, academic, corporate, medical) in their communities. Cooperation should include: information exchange, interlibrary loan, and shared computerized access.
- XIV. Federal monies are an appropriate source of revenue for networking projects.
- XV. Potential sources of appropriate stable funding for public library services should be explored. One example would be using the state income tax as a source of revenue.
- XVI. The League supports full service public library systems.
- A. Public libraries should support our First Amendment right to intellectual freedom and expression by playing an important role in facilitating free and open access to information.
 - B. Individuals should be trusted to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. Removing and banning books from public libraries is a slippery slope to governmental censorship and the erosion of our country's commitment to freedom of expression.
 - C. Library staff, operating within the standards of the American Library Association, should make professional decisions about selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of resources, services and technologies without political interference.