## FY 2022 POTUS budget boosts higher education, academic library opportunities

It continues to be a busy year lobbying for libraries, enabled by COVID-19 relief and recovery laws, legislation in play to advance physical and human infrastructure, and other efforts. One of the challenges for ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy (PPA) Office is developing library proposals for funding that would advance the library mission, but that are also within the context of what is plausible in terms of what legislators and officials want to support. In this sense, lobbying is analogous to fundraising—or dating.

Recently, I've had the pleasure of meeting with a number of ACRL members from community colleges and universities to brainstorm proposals. Participants in this meeting and subsequent idea development included Jennifer Arnold (Central Piedmont Community College, North Carolina); Heather Blicher (J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Virginia); Raymond Pun (Hoover Institution, Stanford University); and Timothy Vollmer (University of California-Berkeley). Pun and Vollmer are also members of the ALA Policy Corps. Many thanks to them for generously sharing their insights, as well as to Interim ACRL Executive Director Kara Malenfant for her participation.

Based on this research and other advice (e.g., from our ALA committees), a number of proposals emerged. For example, community college libraries encounter the challenge of students without adequate access to laptops or tablets and Internet access. Thus, some community college libraries operate lending programs for computing devices and hotspots—similar to programs in public libraries. Support for community college libraries to develop or expand lending programs would benefit many deserving students.

Academic libraries often employ many work-study students. One Biden Administration priority is workforce development. Thus, there is the idea of an initiative that would transform a student job to an internship with structured professional development—supported by supplemental funding in the work-study program. Such an internship program would give preference to first-time college students. Also, more funding for work-study programs in general, and/or a higher rate of subsidy, would be beneficial, as well.

These are just two of the specific ideas that emerged. These ideas are based on Biden Administration priorities—technology access for all and workforce development. We are contemplating other proposals and welcome your ideas. Please send them to me at ainouye@alawash.org.

But what will happen to these ideas? One use is to support ALA's lobbying on the various bills in play in the coming weeks: the budget reconciliation bill, which you've likely heard often in the news, FY22 appropriations, and the Endless Frontier Act and its offshoots.

However, it is often the case that libraries are not specifically designated to receive funds but are among the eligible entities. In the technology example above, this would translate to new funding that community colleges may use to bolster technology access for students while not on campus, but would not specify that it must be administered through the library. Thus, you as librarians would have to make its case with your campus administration that the library is ideally suited to manage the technology lending program and receive appropriate funding.

For Capitol Hill, we are incorporating these ideas directly into our engagement. For the purpose of helping librarians make the case with campus administration, we are developing short documents to assist you in that local advocacy. We would release these supporting documents to the ACRL community once legislation is passed, both so we know what provisions are contained and because that would be the right moment for you to engage with campus decisionmakers. For resources on connecting with campus administration and other decision-makers, please see https://www.ala.org /advocacy/american-rescue-plan-state-guide. ✍

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