

ILF Legislative Program

Core Values

The fundamental values that direct the policies and actions of the ILF legislative efforts are:

- All Indiana residents can access a public library.
- Public library districts shall be autonomous library taxing districts.
- The state shall fund resource sharing.
- The state shall fund the Indiana State Library.
- All schools shall provide a media program that is professionally supervised and adequately funded.

ACCESS

Major value: All Indiana Residents Can Access a Public Library That Provides a Full Range of Services

1. **Vision:** Access to reliable information through a public library is a right of ALL Indiana residents.

Rationale: All areas of the state not presently served by a public library district (i.e., the unserved) shall be directed by the State to organize a library district or affiliate with a library located in a contiguous district to form a new library district. Libraries in underserved areas can also be encouraged to form new districts.

2. **Vision:** Universal access, i.e. convenient, non-fee based access to the Internet and a full range of library materials shall be available to all Indiana residents.

Rationale: Access to information should be barrier free.

3. **Vision:** The principles of the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations shall be respected by the State.

Rationale: Library staff shall exercise the provisions of intellectual freedom in the selection and dissemination of library materials, use of meeting rooms, displays, etc. without fear of harassment and retaliation.

4. **Vision:** Public libraries shall serve their constituents by meeting or exceeding the criteria of the most current Public Library Standards.

Rationale: Standards help a library district to evaluate its performance and provide a yardstick for accountability.

GOVERNANCE/LOCAL FUNDING

Major Value: Autonomous Library Taxing Districts

1. **Vision:** Public library users in Indiana are best served by public libraries that are autonomous library taxing districts, i.e. municipal corporations, governed by a board that has both operating and fiscal authority and responsibility.

Rationale: Autonomous library boards are responsive to the needs of the constituents in their library districts and represent the diversity in their communities. Checks and balances in place within the current system ensure that libraries are prudent and accountable in the use of public funds.

2. **Vision:** The most stable, broad based local sources for funding public library services should be supported. Funding from local COIT, CAGIT, excise and financial institution taxes should also be advocated.

Rationale: Public libraries receive a very small fraction of their total income from the state and even less from federal programs. They are almost totally dependent upon tax income generated at the local level for all operating expenses as well as all capital improvements. Public libraries, like most other municipal corporations, require a stable, permanent source of funding. Experientially, the local property tax has proven to be the most stable.

STATE FUNDING

Major Value: The State Shall Fund Resource Sharing

1. **Vision:** The sharing of information resources among libraries of all types shall be a priority for library service in Indiana.

Rationale: Resource sharing that includes, but is not limited to, cross district borrowing by individuals, interlibrary loan, and telecommunications or vehicular delivery systems should be supported by the state with an equitable funding formula, allowing for a mix of funding — federal, state and local.

2. **Vision:** Service equity shall be matched by fiscal equity. Extending library service to all residents of Indiana must also be accompanied by extending the fiscal responsibility for that service to all residents.

Rationale: Resource sharing programs are economically sound and help to equalize the level of service available to citizens throughout the state.

3. *Vision:* The State shall fund access to a range of databases for all of Indiana's libraries and citizens.

Rationale: Many of Indiana's libraries can not afford to purchase the INSPIRE databases individually. Programs like INSPIRE must be funded by the state to be economically feasible and to equalize access to citizens throughout the state.

Major Value: The State Shall Fund the Indiana State Library.

1. *Vision:* The State Library shall be properly funded to support its leadership role in the state.

Rationale: The State Library is the only state agency that can direct, support, train, gather statistics, etc. for libraries in Indiana. It can only function in a leadership role if it is funded at a level that allows it to achieve the same or higher standards as those set for the libraries it must aid and assist.

2. *Vision:* Library networks that provide programs and services to all types of libraries shall be funded by the state.

Rationale: No one library can provide for all the needs of its constituents. Only networks can best provide certain types of services and programs, and they do not have the option to tax.

SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS

Major Value: School Media Centers shall be adequately supported by state and local funding.

1. *Vision:* School corporations shall provide a professionally supervised library media program.
2. *Rationale:* Indiana Administrative Code states that all schools shall have a media program that is an integral part of the educational program and a licensed media specialist shall supervise the media program. (Indiana State Board of Education; 511 IAC 6.1-5-6; filed Jan 9, 1989, 11:00 a.m.: 12 IR 1192)
2. *Vision:* The annual spending required for school library media collections shall be adequate to provide the materials needed to support the educational mission of the school.

Rationale: To assure the continued funding for school media programs to enable schools to purchase at least two books per student, the minimum annual spending required for school library media collections in each school building must be increased.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The Indiana Library Federation supports a legislative program that provides for stronger libraries of all types. All libraries in Indiana are assets to the communities they serve, whether they are public, academic, or school media centers.

- Public Libraries are community assets providing access to information for all citizens. Local libraries are resource centers for education, employment, economic development and recreation.
- Academic libraries provide the support necessary to pursue post-secondary education and continuing education for adults at all stages of their lives and careers. Services of academic libraries complement those offered by public libraries. Free sharing of collections among Indiana's libraries opens the university research collections to all citizens.
- School media centers provide the materials and support needed to prepare children to live, work and govern in the future.

Through our advocacy efforts, the Indiana Library Federation strives to communicate the importance of libraries and librarians, to improve library funding, and influence public policy about libraries of all types.

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