



California State Librarian Calls for Increase in Federal Support for Libraries

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[Hayward, Calif.] – The federal government should increase spending to support public libraries to at least \$1 for every US resident, State Librarian Greg Lucas said in a speech today at the Hayward Public Library. Lucas noted that the federal government spends less than \$200 million on the nation’s 17,450 local libraries of which 1,130 are in California – the most of any state.

“The richest country on earth spends a lousy 60 cents for each of our 332 million citizens on the nation’s libraries,” Lucas told attendees of the Library Journal’s Design Institute, a semi-annual event that explores the world of designing, building, renovating, and retrofitting library spaces, both large and small.

“There’s tons of evidence that proves conclusively nothing but good comes from investing in libraries and literacy.”

The Library Journal’s Design Institutes are hosted at state-of-the-art library facilities. Hayward’s 58,000 square foot library with its soaring three-story atrium opened to the public four years ago.

Lucas also noted that the State Library is in the process of awarding \$489 million in “Building Forward” grants to modernize and renovate the state’s local libraries – the biggest one-time investment the state has ever made in public libraries.

Last year, \$312 million was awarded for 246 projects in 182 cities across 34 of California’s 58 counties. The remaining \$175 million will be awarded in October, Lucas said, but won’t be enough to cover more than 25 percent of the funding sought in the 148 applications the State Library received.

The State Library is also working to expand its “Sustainable Libraries” program. Fifteen libraries received grants this year of \$328,790 for projects centered on climate education, climate resilience, and community engagement. The library-led initiatives will take place across a wide range of statewide locations, from National City to Shasta, and are aimed at harnessing local resources and community strengths.

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About the State Library: Established in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for state government and the legislature. The library collection includes more than 4 million titles, 6,000 maps and 250,000 photographs, and includes an extensive collection of documents

from and about the state's rich history. Around the state, the State Library also serves California's local libraries, providing more than \$500 million state and federal funds to support public libraries and delivering statewide library programs and services.

In addition to acting as a steward of California's history, the State Library is investing nearly \$500 million to modernize and renovate the state's 1,127 local libraries, bringing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to every California child under the age of 5, and building a statewide eBook library with diverse titles in 80 languages. [State Library website](#)