american libraries

SMALL BUSINESS CENTERS STUDY ROOMS STEAM LABS
ARCHIVES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS GATHERING SPACES
STORYTIME BOOKMOBILES PLAYROOMS AUTHOR TALKS
CLASSROOMS RECORDING STUDIOS COMPUTER LABS
EARLY LEARNING SPACES ESL CLASSES TUTORING CENTERS
COMMUNITY GARDENS MAKERSPACES MUSIC ROOMS
ART GALLERIES READING NOOKS LITERACY CLASSES

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THE STATE OF

AMERICA'S LIBRARIES

2020

A report from the
American Library Association

Top 10 Most Challenged Books p. 15

About the Report

STEVE ZALUSKY is communications specialist with the American Library Association's Communications and Marketing Office. Prior to working with the Association, he spent many years working for news organizations in the Chicago area. He can be reached at 312-280-1546 or szalusky@ala.org.

The following ALA divisions and offices also contributed to this report.

- American Association of School Librarians
- *American Libraries*
- Association for Library Service to Children
- Association of College and Research Libraries
- Association of Specialized, Government, and Cooperative Library Agencies
- Communications and Marketing Office
- Library and Information Resource Center
- Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services
- Office for Intellectual Freedom
- Public Library Association
- Public Policy and Advocacy Office
- Young Adult Library Services Association

PRESS CONTACT

Macey Morales
Deputy Director
Communications and Marketing Office
American Library Association
312-280-4393
mmorales@ala.org

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ABOUT ALA

The American Library Association (ALA) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice of libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit ala.org.

Photo: Anthony Lindsay Photography

The Half Moon Bay branch of the San Mateo County (Calif.) Libraries was featured in the 2019 AIA/ALA Library Building Awards.

THE STATE OF
AMERICA'S
LIBRARIES
2020

A report from the American Library Association

EDITED BY Steve Zalusky

THE STATE OF
AMERICA'S LIBRARIES
2020 A report from the American Library Association

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The theme of National Library Week in 2020 is "Find the Library at Your Place." (The theme was changed from "Find Your Place in the Library" to reflect the altered landscape in the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight how libraries are offering the virtual services and digital content their communities need more than ever.) It takes its cue from 2019–2020 ALA President Wanda Kay Brown's presidential initiative "Finding Your ALA," which aims to promote the value of libraries through a lens of social justice and inclusion. At the beginning of her term, Brown wrote in *American Libraries,* "Libraries are essential for the health of our democracy, our communities, and our future." During the week of April 19–25, Americans take time to celebrate the libraries and library workers who connect them with the resources they need. Libraries provide free access to books, online resources, and family programming. Library business centers help support entrepreneurship and worker retraining. Attendance at free public programs in libraries has gone up. Libraries offer opportunities for everyone and—in many cases—a safe place to be.
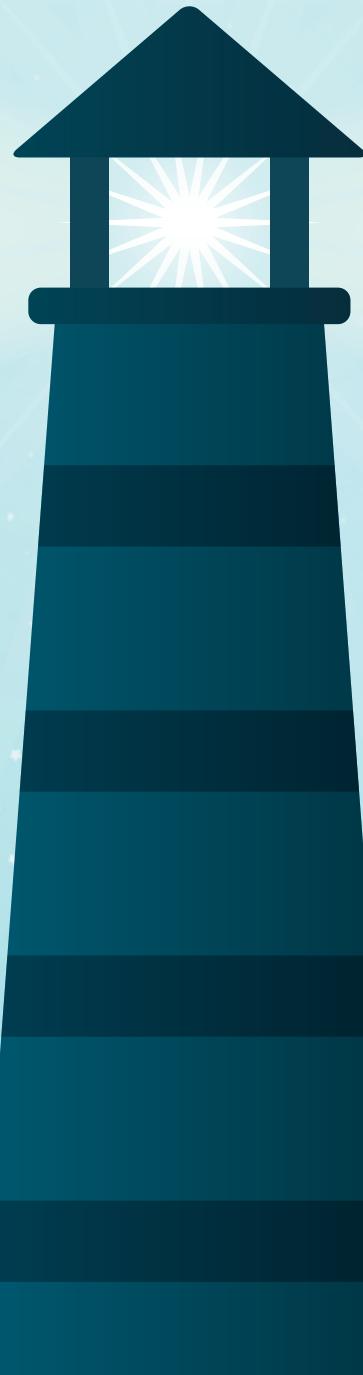
Access and challenges

Most challenges to library resources in 2019 focused on materials and programs associated with issues of concern to those in the gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer communities, most notably books affirming transgender youth, like Alex Gino's *George*.

Top Ten Most Challenged Books in 2019. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 377 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2019. Of the 566 books challenged or banned in 2019, the following are the top 10 most frequently challenged:

1. *George,* by Alex Gino
2. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out,* by Susan Kuklin
3. *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo,* by Jill Twiss, illustrated by EG Keller
4. *Sex is a Funny Word,* by Cory Silverberg, illustrated by Fiona Smyth
5. *Prince & Knight,* by Daniel Haack, illustrated by Stevie Lewis
6. *I Am Jazz,* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas
7. *The Handmaid's Tale,* by Margaret Atwood
8. *Drama,* written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier
9. **Harry Potter** series, by J. K. Rowling
10. *And Tango Makes Three,* by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, illustrated by Henry Cole

Major issues

Today's libraries are at the heart of their communities, delivering innovative educational resources and programs. Library staff work to create an equitable society by providing free access to accurate information to all people. In many parts of the

EDITOR'S NOTE

As the *State of America's Libraries* report goes to press, the coronavirus pandemic has upended our nation and our profession, so much so that aspects of this report—which provides a snapshot of our industry in 2019—now read like dispatches from a distant era.

What hasn't changed is our belief that service and stewardship to our communities are core to the library profession. We continue to see this every day even as library buildings close to the public but often sustain or grow their virtual services and make their resources freely available to all. Today and everyday, our nation's libraries are on the front lines, playing an invaluable role in keeping communities connected.

From the vantage point of the present, it's clear that, as this report attests, libraries are more important and necessary than ever—and they have an important role to play in keeping our communities strong during and after this unprecedented time. Read on for inspiration and assurance that our profession is ready for the challenge. •

country, public libraries provide the only access to information for underrepresented, marginalized, and vulnerable communities. Often the library is the first point of contact that connects people who have serious needs to other community agencies.

Inclusion. ALA was one of 100 voluntary national partner organizations that participated in the design of Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT), the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's national and community-based process to plan for and bring about transformational and sustainable change and to address the historic and contemporary effects of racism. As part of this work, ALA's Public Programs Office and Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services convened Racial Healing Circles at nine library conferences, helping participants to recognize our common humanity, acknowledge the truth of past wrongs, and build the authentic relationships necessary to begin transforming communities and shifting our national discourse.

Federal funding. Libraries rely on federal funds to support initiatives on the local, state, and federal levels. Most federal library funds are distributed through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to each state through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The Innovative Approaches

DID YOU KNOW?

Following a year of intense engagement by ALA members, the president signed a spending bill containing a **$10 million increase** for IMLS.

to Literacy (IAL) grant program from the US Department of Education supports school libraries working to foster reading skills at the most crucial early years of a child's development. LSTA and IAL provide critical assistance, giving libraries across the country the financial support they need to serve their communities.

Following a year of intense engagement by ALA members, Congress approved in December, and the president signed, a spending bill containing a $10 million increase for IMLS, the largest increase for the program in more than a decade.

Congress appropriated $252 million for IMLS, including a $6.2 million increase dedicated to LSTA. Highlights from the $195.4 million for LSTA include:

- $166.8 million for LSTA Grants to States ($160.8 million in FY2019)
- $5.3 million for LSTA Native American Library Services ($5.1 million in FY2019)
- $10 million for LSTA Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grants ($10 million in FY2019)
- $13.4 million for LSTA National Leadership for Libraries ($13.4 million in FY2019)

Overall funding for the Department of Education increased by $1.3 billion, raising its total budget to $72.8 billion. The IAL program received $27 million for FY2020, the same level as 2019. Other library-eligible programs received increases:

- $1.21 billion for Title IV Part A Well-Rounded Education ($1.17 billion in FY2019)

- $192 million for Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants ($190 million in FY2019)
- $1.25 billion for 21st Century Community Learning Centers ($1.22 billion in FY2019)
- $16.3 billion for Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies ($15.9 billion in FY2019)
- $2.13 billion for Title II Supporting Effective Instruction ($2.06 billion in FY2019)

The Library of Congress and the National Library of Medicine also received funding increases.

The 2020 Census: Striving for a complete count

Public libraries are playing a key role in the success of the 2020 Census. In preparation for the census, public libraries ramped up efforts to ensure an accurate, fair, and inclusive count for communities. With staff support and resources developed by ALA and the Public Library Association (PLA), including its Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census, library workers from around the country joined state and local Complete Count Committees, collaborating with community stakeholders.

On Census Day, April 1, 2019, then–ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo highlighted libraries' critical role of achieving a fair and accurate count in the 2020 Census by participating in a press conference held by the US Census Bureau, joining top leaders in the bureau and other national stakeholders.

Also, on Census Day, ALA joined an amicus brief to the US Supreme Court opposing the last-minute addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. In June, the Supreme Court ruled against the administration's proposed addition, removing a significant distraction from preparations for a complete count.

From left: ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo; Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby; and Annie E. Casey Foundation President and CEO Lisa Hamilton at the US Census Bureau's Census Day press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., April 1, 2019.

Big Life Change?

Don't forget your health insurance!
You may qualify for a Special Enrollment Period!

Birth or adoption

Moving

Immigration status change

and many more!

Also, did you know you can enroll in Medicaid and CHIP anytime of the year? Visit **healthcare.gov/screener** to learn more.

Libraries can *act now* with premade communications materials for...

- Coverage options, including **Medicaid** or **Special Enrollment Period**
- **Using your health insurance**
- **Preventive care**
- **Social media–friendly assets**
- **Radio ad scripts**
- **Spanish-language assets**

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The popularity of libraries is surging. The public response to the work of our nation's libraries is reflected in an increased number of visits. According to a recent Gallup poll, visiting the library is the "most common cultural activity Americans engage in by far." In 2019, US adults reported taking an average of 10.5 trips to the library, a frequency that exceeded their participation in eight other common leisure activities. Americans attended live music or theatrical events and visited national or historic parks roughly four times a year on average and visited museums and gambling casinos 2.5 times annually.

Public libraries are attracting a cross-section of visitors, including adults in low-income households and young people. For example, US adults aged 18–29 visit the library much more than older age groups.

According to Gallup, "Despite the proliferation of digital-based activities over the past two decades—including digital books, podcasts, streaming entertainment services, and advanced gaming—libraries have endured as a place Americans visit nearly monthly on average. Whether because they offer services like free Wi-Fi,

DigitalLearn.org offers free courses geared toward users new to computers.

movie rentals, or activities for children, libraries are most utilized by young adults, women, and residents of low-income households."

Learning and parent engagement

Libraries are embracing their roles in learning and promoting parental engagement in education. Research shows that increased parental involvement reduces or eradicates the literacy gap between children whose mothers have varying levels of education.

While high-income households can spend more on enrichment activities, public libraries are leveling the playing field by offering free access to collections and programs that bring families together. Parental support helps teenagers improve their interpersonal and decision-making skills and avoid reckless impulses, while public libraries offer enriching programs for all ages that help kids and their parents bond by learning side-by-side. The public library also helps parents avoid social isolation and its potential for depression, which decreases the family's risk of child behavioral issues and maltreatment.

The Public Library Association (PLA), a division of ALA, is helping libraries capitalize on all these strengths through its family engagement initiatives and training.

Wellness and health

Promoting wellness and helping community members connect to vital health and social services is a growing trend in US public libraries. More than 70% of Americans agree that libraries can assist people who are seeking health information. More than 80% of those looking for diet, nutrition, and fitness information online at the library report that they subsequently made changes in their diet and exercise.

Libraries provide a diverse array of health literacy and awareness services for their communities. Public library collections offer materials on healthy lifestyles, cookbooks that address medical dietary needs, multimedia for physical exercise instruction, and self-help mental health materials. Some libraries take healthy lifestyle services even further by offering walking, hiking, bicycling, or running programs that take place outside the library building. Nearly 23% of public libraries host fitness or yoga classes. Independently and with support from PLA's Libraries Connecting You to Coverage project, hundreds of public libraries are encouraging community members to secure health insurance coverage through information dissemination, education, and partnerships.

Dozens of public libraries are also hiring social work practitioners, interns, or students to address the social service needs of their customers. PLA's Social Worker Task Force and the training and resources it provides to the public library field are identifying best practices and educating public library staff about such critical issues as trauma-informed care, serving persons experiencing homelessness, and more.

Economic opportunity

Public libraries drive economic opportunity for their community members through skill development and small business support. Nearly 90% of public libraries offer digital literacy training programs, through which community members can learn résumé development and job searching and gain new skills to aid in career advancement. Nearly half of the more than 16,000 public libraries in the US provide free services for small businesses and entrepreneurs, from offering access to market-trends databases to hosting business-coaching

The Redwood City (Calif.) Public Library installed two bee hives on the downtown library's rooftop.

classes and even providing seed capital through business-plan competitions.

Public libraries are ideal partners in researching new ideas or markets, developing business plans, gaining access to emerging technologies, and learning about intellectual property. PLA helps public libraries increase digital literacy and economic opportunity by creating tools like DigitalLearn for teaching basic computer skills and by developing such initiatives as Libraries Lead with Digital Skills, a 2019 partnership with Grow with Google that provided funding and tools so that hundreds of public libraries could offer programs to help community members develop their skills, careers, and businesses.

Nontraditional collections

The best proof that public libraries are about more than just books is their evolution into libraries of things, offering nontraditional collections that are community-specific and imaginative. The wide array of items available to check out includes mattresses, dolls, bicycles, binoculars, and accordions. At the Beaverton (Oreg.) City Library, patrons can check out kitchenware, outdoor equipment, and games.

Libraries have even delved into the area of beekeeping. The Redwood City (Calif.) Public Library collaborated with the Beekeepers' Guild of San Mateo and the owner of a local farm, culminating in the installation of two hives on the downtown library's rooftop. If there is something that can't be checked out at your public library, it likely hasn't been invented yet.

DID YOU KNOW?

Patrons can check out kitchenware, outdoor equipment, and games at the Beaverton (Oreg.) City Library.

Photo: Redwood City (Calif.) Public Library

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

O ur nation's academic libraries have a major impact on student success. Statistics gathered by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of ALA, demonstrate how academic libraries support many types of high-impact educational practices (HIPS) that have beneficial effects on student retention, graduation rates, time to graduation, and grade point average.

ACRL conducts an annual survey of staffing, collections, expenditures, operations, and initiatives for all academic libraries in the United States. The most recent data, from 2018, show that academic libraries promote deep learning by promoting student engagement as measured by the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Of the 10 practices that qualify as HIPS, first-year seminars, writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research with a faculty member, and capstone projects for seniors are the learning experiences most frequently promoted by academic libraries.

Academic libraries also support other high-impact practices, including international study and global learning, service-learning projects, internships, and e-portfolios. Nearly 27%

of academic libraries in the US provide support for at least one high-impact educational practice. (This statistic and other academic library data can be found in ACRL's *2018 ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics* and the ACRLMetrics subscription-only database online.)

Programs and services

Academic librarians are uniquely situated to influence student learning in a variety of ways—through the reference desk, one-shot classroom sessions, one-on-one consultations, collaboration with faculty, and cocurricular activities. Academic library staff provided instructional sessions (both face-to-face and electronic) to more than 7 million students annually (nearly one-third of the 2018 student FTE enrollment). More than 57% of the almost 800,000 instructional sessions were digital or electronic.

Doctoral degree-granting institutions averaged more than 15,400 reference transactions and consultations per year, followed by comprehensive universities (with more than 4,900 transactions and consultations), community colleges (with more than 8,100 transactions and consultations), and baccalaureate schools (more than 2,700 transactions and consultations.

DID YOU KNOW?

7 MILLION

students received instructional sessions (both face-to-face and electronic) from academic library staff annually (nearly one-third of the 2018 student FTE enrollment).

1 BILLION+

visits were reported by academic libraries collectively in 2018 (an average of 47 visits per FTE student).

Access and usage

Libraries in doctoral degree–granting institutions were open an average of 109.75 hours per week and were visited by more than 966,000 users on average annually. Comprehensive university libraries were open on average 91.02 hours per week and averaged 296,000 visits per year. Baccalaureate libraries were open an average of 89.74 hours per week and averaged 179,000 visits per year. Community colleges were open an average of 63.77 hours per week and averaged 203,000 visits per year. Collectively, academic libraries reported more than 1 billion visits in 2018 for an average of 47 visits per FTE student.

Electronic resource usage continued to grow in academic libraries. Materials in institutional repositories received more than 622 million uses, ebooks more than 532 million uses, and e-serials recorded more than 818 million uses. Additionally, academic libraries borrowed more than 6.3 million items for their communities from other libraries through interlibrary loan.

Collections

Academic library expenditures for collection materials averaged $5,346,929 for doctoral degree–granting institutions, $682,823 for comprehensive degree–granting institutions, $494,883 for baccalaureate schools, and $196,050 for associate degree–granting institutions.

On average, doctoral degree–granting institutions spent 77.4% of their materials budgets on ongoing commitments to subscriptions in 2018; comprehensive schools spent an average of 80.7%; baccalaureate schools spent an average of 79.6%; and associate degree–granting institutions spent an average of 64.8%. All academic libraries

The Barbara J. Burger iZone at the University of Rochester in New York, was featured in *American Libraries'* 2019 Library Design Showcase.

spent an average of 73.8% of their materials budget on ongoing subscriptions.

In 2018, doctoral degree–granting institutions spent an average of $356.77 per student on materials; comprehensive schools spent an average of $140.18; baccalaureate schools averaged $222.55 per student in materials expenditures; and associate degree–granting institutions spent an average of $39.65.

Staffing trends

Spending on salaries and wages accounted for 56.3% of total library expenditures on average. Salaries and wages constituted 72.9% of total library expenditures for associate degree–granting institutions, 51.6% for baccalaureates, 55.4% for comprehensive schools, and 42.8% for doctoral or research institutions.

Associate degree–granting institutions had an average of 4.92 FTE librarians serving 4,945 students; baccalaureate schools had an average of 5.38 FTE librarians serving 2,224 students; comprehensive universities served an average of 4,871 students with an average of 7.8 FTE librarians; and doctoral or research institutions served 14,957 students with 30.13 FTE librarians.

Photo: Revette Studio

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

School librarians and school libraries continue to evolve to meet the demand for equity and access in a culturally responsive learning environment offering physical and digital resources and connections to a global world. Today's world requires them to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape, yet school librarians—a unique position in the school environment for understanding the questioning, selection, and creation of knowledge from this landscape—continue to be threatened with the loss of positions.

Standards

In a 2012 Pew Research Center survey, 83% of teachers responded that students are overwhelmed by the amount of information available online, and 60% stated that the increasing array of technologies makes it more difficult to locate credible information. The inability to curate information was echoed in a 2016 Stanford University study that found nearly 80% of high school students struggle to verify the credibility of a source. This lack of knowledge and skill is the result of many schools failing to provide students with well-resourced school libraries staffed by qualified school librarians—the vital center in every school for improved reading scores, one-to-one technology initiatives, and expanded pathways to college, career, and life.

The 2018 *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries,* developed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of ALA, establishes an integrated framework for the learner, school librarian, and school library as an essential element of teaching and learning. Within this framework, the shared foundations (Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage) are centered on information to enable success through innovation, collaboration, exploration, deep thinking, and creativity. School librarians hold a common belief that reading is the core of personal and academic competency.

As literacy leaders, school librarians are positioned to elevate the importance of reading and reading proficiency to support all learners' academic success. Decades of research indicates that there is a positive correlation between learners' attending schools with full-time, state-certified school librarians and higher scores on standardized reading tests.

The need for school librarians to instruct students in information literacy is evident in the need for using data in decision-making. The perception is that youth growing up with access to ubiquitous technology can easily and effectively use data. Yet a recent report on data literacy found that "60% of US workers 16 to 24 years old—people who had been raised surrounded by technology—are overwhelmed by the data they must read and analyze as part of their jobs."

As school districts face constrained budgets each year, all too many consider

DID YOU KNOW?

Decades of research indicates that there is a positive correlation between learners' attending schools with full-time, state-certified school librarians and higher scores on standardized reading tests.

Kerri Price, a Charleston County (S.C.) Teacher Librarian Cohort member in University of South Carolina's Library Scholar program, works with students in her school library, alongside her therapy dog, Bailey.

school librarians for potential cuts. In a nation rebounding economically from low unemployment rates, _Forbes magazine notes_ that the "public school librarian sector has not rebounded, and the nation's collective failure to rebuild its public information infrastructure is hitting minorities the hardest."

Case studies

In South Carolina, which requires every public school to have at least one school librarian with an MLIS degree, the state had 60 school librarian vacancies in 2018.

In April 2019, every librarian in Spokane (Wash.) Public Schools was told that they would lose their jobs in 2020, since the school district suffers from a $31 million deficit.

School librarians have been described as an endangered species in Michigan. In 2019, 92% of schools statewide don't employ a full-time, certified librarian, while the number of school librarians in the state declined 73% between 2000 and 2016, far beyond the national decline of 20% during that period. Michigan is 47th in the nation in the number of librarians it offers per student.

A 2019 informational brief sponsored by the New York State Library reviewed research studies on the critical role of the school librarian in the learning process. The brief found significance in the "sustainability of school libraries for the success of all students" and concluded that as education and employment changes, "the school librarians' contributions, whether direct or indirect, are consistently shown to be of positive value to not only students and teachers, but the wider community" for future learning.

ISSUES AND TRENDS

Intellectual freedom

Challenges to library materials and programs addressing issues of concern to those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, and related (LGBTQIA+) communities continued unabated in 2019, with a rising number of coordinated, organized challenges to books, programs, speakers, and other library resources that address LGBTQIA+ issues and themes.

A notable feature of these challenges is an effort to frame any material with LGBTQIA+ themes or characters as inherently pornographic or unsuitable for minors, even when the materials are intended for children and families and they are age and developmentally appropriate. For example, a pastor in Upshur, West Virginia, challenged the children's picture book *Prince & Knight*, claiming that the fractured fairy tale "is a deliberate attempt to indoctrinate young children, especially boys, into the LGBTQA lifestyle." Similarly, an organized group in Loudoun County, Virginia, protested the addition of diverse children's and young adult books addressing LGBTQIA+ themes and characters to classroom libraries, claiming that the books advance a "political agenda" endorsed by the LGBTQIA+ community.

Organized groups also continued to protest and disrupt Drag Queen Story Hour events held in libraries, claiming that the events advance political, social, and religious agendas that are inconsistent with the groups' conservative Christian beliefs about gender and sexual identity. In 2019, OIF tracked more than 30 challenges to Drag Queen Story Hours and other Pride programs, and identified a new and distressing trend of disinviting authors who had been invited to speak or read from their books, solely on the grounds that the authors identify as LGTBQIA+ or because their books include LGBTQIA+ themes. Authors who have been disinvited include Lilah Sturges (*Lumberjanes*), Leslèa Newman (*Gittel's Journey*), Julia Watts (*Quiver*), Meredith Russo (*If I Was Your Girl*), and Robin Stevenson (*Kid Activists*).

While challenges to LGBTQIA+ books made up the majority of entries on OIF's Top Ten Most Challenged Books list for 2019, libraries continued to receive challenges to library resources based on objections to profanity, sex, and themes related to race, religion, and social justice. These included books such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale,* Nic Stone's *Dear Martin,* Jason Reynolds's and Brendan Kiely's *All American Boys,* and the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling. Also challenged were online research databases provided by EBSCO and Gale Cengage, based on unsubstantiated and unverified claims that these databases, curated to be appropriate for each age and educational level, contain explicit sexual content.

Like the challenges to LGBTQIA+ materials, many of these challenges are pursued by well-organized pressure groups intent on banning books and resources they deem pornographic or unsuitable for minors. A serious concern is their efforts to pass state legislation that would make it possible to sue or criminally prosecute librarians and educators

Prince & Knight, written by Daniel Haack and illustrated by Stevie Lewis

for providing or lending constitutionally protected, mainstream materials to minors. Among the works identified as unsuitable by these groups are Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner,* and Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*.

The decision made by county commissioners in Citrus County, Florida, to deny funding for a digital subscription to the *New York Times* demonstrated how partisan differences can impair public library users' access to high quality information resources. The commissioners unanimously denied a request from their local library to spend $2,700 annually on the digital resource, stating that the paper is "fake news" and that they "agree with Donald Trump." Approval of the subscription fee would have reduced costs for the library and expanded access from four print copies of the newspaper to unlimited digital access for every person holding a Citrus County Library card.

A number of high-profile challenges to materials in prison libraries and classrooms drew attention to the chronic and arbitrary censorship of reading materials and information resources in prisons. Reports compiled by PEN America revealed that thousands of mainstream publications—including fiction, nonfiction, and periodicals—have been banned from prisons on the grounds that the materials pose a threat to the "good order" or security of the prison. But a close examination of these lists reveals that many books banned from prisons share a focus on social justice, race relations, or racism in the administration of the criminal justice system. In one instance, prison staff entered a library maintained by the University of Illinois Education Justice Project at the Danville Correctional Center and removed 200 books that were previously approved for use by people who are incarcerated and were earning college degrees through the program. Among the

titles removed from the library were W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* and *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*

Despite all these challenges and concerns, libraries across the country continued to be welcoming community institutions that foster intellectual freedom and inclusivity by developing and defending collections, resources, and services that reflect and celebrate the diversity of their communities.

Top 10 Most Challenged Books in 2019. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 377 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2019. Overall, 566 books were targeted. Here are the "Top 10 Most Challenged Books in 2019," along with the reasons cited for censoring the books:

1 | *George* by Alex Gino

Challenged, banned, restricted, and hidden to avoid controversy; for LGBTQIA+ content and a transgender character; because schools and libraries should not "put books in a child's hand that require discussion"; for sexual references; and for conflicting with a religious viewpoint and "traditional family structure"
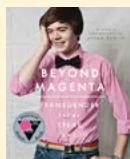
2 | *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin

Challenged for LGBTQIA+ content, for "its effect on any young people who would read it," and for concerns that it was sexually explicit and biased

3 | *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* by Jill Twiss, illustrated by EG Keller

Challenged and vandalized for LGBTQIA+ content and political viewpoints, for concerns that it is "designed to pollute the morals of its readers," and for not including a content warning
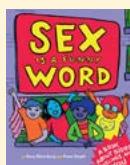
4 | *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg, illustrated by Fiona Smyth

Challenged, banned, and relocated for LGBTQIA+ content; for discussing gender identity and sex education; and for concerns that the title and illustrations were "inappropriate"

CENSORSHIP

BY THE NUMBERS 2019

Censorship is a dead end. It limits exploration and creates barriers to access information. The path toward the freedom to read starts at the library. **Learn more at ala.org/bbooks.**

WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?

Attempt to remove or restrict materials or services based on content

WHAT IS A BAN?

Removal of materials or cancellation of services based on content

WHO INITIATES CHALLENGES?

18% Parents

45% Patrons
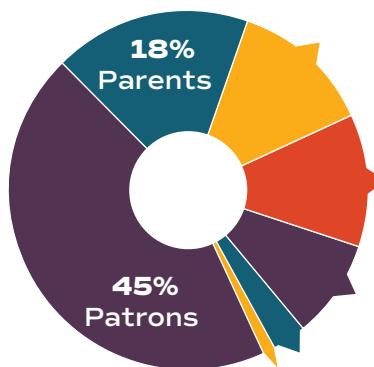
13% Board/administration

12% Political/religious groups

8% Librarians/teachers

3% Elected officials

1% Students

Statistics based on 361 responses

REASONS FOR CHALLENGES

RACIST CONTENT
SPREADS MISINFORMATION
WITCHCRAFT
GENDER DYSPHORIA
ABORTION
NUDITY RACIAL SLURS
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT
PRO-IMMIGRANT
ANTI-SEMITIC
RAPE
DRUGS DRINKING
CLIMATE CHANGE ILLEGAL ALIENS
INFLUENCING VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE
UNSCIENTIFIC IDEOLOGY STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATIONS
VIOLENCE
ANTI-POLICE
INACCURATE
LGBTQIA+
PORNOGRAPHIC
SEX EDUCATION
GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS
RADICAL ISLAM
PROFANITY
BIASED
GRAMMATICALLY INCORRECT
FAKE NEWS
LEFTIST PROPAGANDA
POLITICAL VIEWPOINT
RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINT
TRANSGENDER CHARACTER
SUICIDE

Each word and phrase in this graphic is cited from 2019 censorship reports

WHERE DO CHALLENGES TAKE PLACE?

607

Total materials affected in censorship attempts in 2019

(including books, films, newspapers)

+14%

Increase from last year

66%
Public libraries

19%
School libraries

12%
Schools

2%
Academia

1%
Special/prison libraries

Statistics based on 377 responses

BOOKS AND BEYOND

The ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked **377 challenges** in 2019. Here's the breakdown:

56%
Books

22%
Programs, meeting rooms

9%
Displays, artwork

8%
Films

5%
Other*
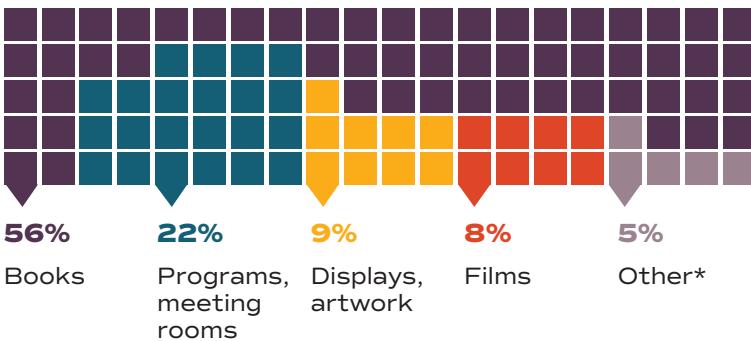
* Includes social media, hate crimes, games, filtering, databases, newspapers, magazines

READERS ON CENSORSHIP

"

Had I had a book like that on the shelf, I might have realized a lot sooner that I could love myself. I might have realized a lot sooner that it's O.K. to feel different."

Community member on keeping "Prince & Knight" on a public library's shelves

"

Obviously, I'm a Christian, and I take my God very seriously, but if I just simply ban everything that's going to be said about my God or about my faith, then I'm living in my own little, narrow world."

Pastor on the inclusion of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" on a school's summer reading list

CENSORSHIP STATISTICS COMPILED BY:

OFFICE FOR *Intellectual Freedom*
American Library Association

5 | *Prince & Knight* by Daniel Haack, illustrated by Stevie Lewis

Challenged and restricted for featuring a gay marriage and LGBTQIA+ content; for being "a deliberate attempt to indoctrinate young children" with the potential to cause confusion, curiosity, and gender dysphoria; and for conflicting with a religious viewpoint

6 | *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas

Challenged and relocated for LGBTQIA+ content, for a transgender character, and for confronting a topic that is "sensitive, controversial, and politically charged"
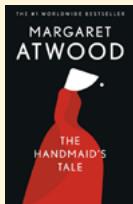
7 | *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

Banned and challenged for profanity and for "vulgarity and sexual overtones"
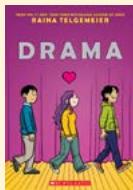
8 | *Drama* written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier

Challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and for concerns that it goes against "family values/morals"
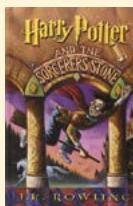
9 | **Harry Potter series** by J. K. Rowling

Banned and forbidden from discussion for referring to magic and witchcraft, for containing actual curses and spells, and for characters that use "nefarious means" to attain goals
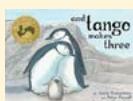
10 | *And Tango Makes Three* by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, illustrated by Henry Cole

Challenged and relocated for LGBTQIA+ content

Privacy. In January 2019, the ALA Council unanimously approved the addition of a new, seventh article to the ALA Library Bill of Rights: "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information."

The new article establishes a robust information norm in support of library users' privacy rights and provides libraries and librarians with a strong foundation for advocating for users' privacy rights. Recent controversies concerning third-party library service and resource providers' practices regarding the collection, storage, and use of library users' personal data and circulation records prompted ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee to form a working group to establish privacy guidelines for library vendors.

Net neutrality

The ALA continues to fight for an open internet. In October 2019, the US Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit upheld the Federal Communications Commission's authority to issue its 2018 Order eliminating network neutrality protections. However, the Association was heartened by the court's ruling that states may fill the gap left by the FCC's abdication of its broadband authority. The court vacated the portion of the Order in which the FCC attempted to preempt state or local efforts to protect an open internet.

As ALA President Wanda Kay Brown stated, "Without strong and clear net neutrality protections in place, there is nothing to stop internet service providers from blocking or throttling legal internet traffic or setting up commercial arrangements where certain traffic is prioritized."

Building 21st-century skills

Libraries are at the forefront of efforts to promote digital literacy. ALA's Digital Literacy Task Force defines digital literacy as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." In the process, libraries have forged partnerships that play a critical role in fostering digital literacy.

Building on the strong partnership between ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office and Google through the multiyear Libraries Ready to Code initiative, the $1 million Libraries Lead with Digital Skills initiative launched at the end of January 2019 with a 50-state tour kickoff at the Free Library of Philadelphia. Following each state tour, the Public Library Association opened grant applications to local public libraries that are working to develop digital skills. To support outreach in each state, ALA collaborated with the Chief Offices of State Library Agencies and ALA chapters to promote the grant opportunities in their states, providing resources and updates.

Libraries help bridge the digital divide experienced by families facing economic challenges and lacking access to such technologies as smartphones and tablets.

- The National Center for Education Statistics found that a student's access to digital resources at home greatly affects academic and literacy scores. On average, those without access scored at least 8% lower in core subjects. Even more, their literacy scores were more than 20% lower than students with access.
- The Pew Research Center notes that more than 25% of low-income households do not have a smartphone. Nearly 50% do not have a computer, and even more do not own a tablet. In contrast, more than half of higher income families have more than one device.

Plano (Tex.) Public Library System offers bilingual backpacks that include books, flash cards, and other resources to support language learning.

- Research by Digital Equity for Learning estimates at least 20% of mobile-only families have too many people sharing the same device. As a result, there is not enough access for everyone.
- Libraries connect families of all ages, incomes, and abilities with a variety of tech experiences, offering such resources as STEAM kits and bilingual backpacks with DVDs and tablets providing learning language tools.

Services to teens

A 2016 World Economic Forum report underscores that 65% of children entering elementary school will be employed in jobs that do not yet exist. The same report also notes, "Workers will need to have the appropriate skills enabling them to thrive in the workplace of the future and the ability to continue to retrain throughout their lives." In June 2019, the Afterschool Alliance reported that employers ranked critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and collaboration, and communication skills as essential competencies for entry into the workforce.

Similarly, a May 2019 report produced by the Connected Learning Alliance notes that in order for young people to develop an occupational identity (a vision of their future selves in the workforce, a knowledge of what they like to do and what their skills are, and a sense of where they belong) requires exposure to role models, engagement in activities parallel to professional

DID YOU KNOW?

65%

of children entering elementary school will be employed in jobs that do not yet exist.

Photo: Plano (Tex.) Public Library System

practice, and participation in authentic communities of practice through work experiences, internships, and civic action.

Taking the workforce development needs of teens into account, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of ALA, is leading two IMLS-funded projects that are designed to help library staff support teens in gaining the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce of the future.

Eighty small, rural, and tribal library staff members throughout the United States were trained as a part of the Future Ready with the Library project. They gained skills in working with their communities to assist middle schoolers in identifying their interests and learning with and from peers and adult experts about those passions. Library services developed through this project include the Pottsboro (Tex.) Library and the Cherokee (Iowa) Public Library, which both produced e-sports programs. As a part of these initiatives, teens who are passionate about gaming can build critical-thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills, and at the same time learn about how a gaming-related interest can lead to future work opportunities.

The Transforming Teen Services: A Train the Trainer Approach initiative brings 45 states, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District of Columbia together in support of library staff acquiring skills to help teens find their interests and gain the computational-thinking literacies required for their future work. In each of the states and territories, at least one staff member from the state library agency and one public library front-line

staff member are offering training. In the first 18 months of the project, more than 500 library staff were trained; by the end of the project on June 30, 2021, some 7,000 library staffers will be bringing their newly acquired skills to more than 100,000 youths.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

Equitable access means more than equality. It includes working to make sure community members have all the resources they need. These needs may differ as a result of their race and ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identification, socioeconomic status, or physical ability.

In 2019, ALA and several other library associations in the US pledged their commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). In a joint statement they declared, "Libraries serve as the cornerstone of our society. Regardless of the type of library, constituency, or region, we stand together to support the efforts of libraries to provide equitable access for all through inclusive collections, resources, services, and programs."

That statement was backed up by efforts across the spectrum of library service during 2019. ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo and her Diversity Advisory Board developed an EDI video series to give visibility to a diverse representation of library workers, champions, and patrons to help deepen the understanding of the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in action in our nation's libraries.

ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) worked diligently to promote EDI, facilitating the first ever EDIcon, a half-day training for library and information services audiences that introduced foundational concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion within a social justice framework. In its pilot year, ODLOS offered the workshop 10 times at

DID YOU KNOW?

29%
of low-income households do not have a smartphone.

46%
of low-income households do not have a computer.
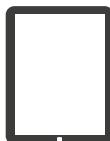
64%
of low-income households do not have a tablet.

various sites across the country. The training encouraged participants to see equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of everyone's everyday work. ODLOS staff also engaged in short- and long-term consultation with several public and academic libraries and library associations.

In partnership with the Office for Intellectual Freedom, ODLOS launched a new resource on hateful conduct in libraries. This document responds to requests by ALA members seeking to address a spike in reported hate crimes in libraries across the US, which ALA began tracking in 2016. It outlines best practices on how to create an environment that discourages hate speech and hateful conduct in the library, recommends what steps library workers should take after an incident, and suggests how libraries can better reflect the needs and values of their communities. Hate crimes in libraries can be reported via ALA's online form.

Other resources ODLOS introduced in 2019 include two updated outreach toolkits, "Literacy for All: Adult Literacy through Libraries" and "Keys to Engaging Older Adults," as well as a Libraries Respond page on cyber-bullying and doxxing.

The need for diverse books. In her keynote speech at the American Association of School Librarians National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in November 2019, Ellen Oh, children's book author and president and cofounder of We Need Diverse Books, raised the issue of the lack of diversity in children's books. "There are still more books about animals and inanimate objects than people of color," Oh said, citing statistics collected by the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin–Madison's School of Education.

Although much work remains to be done, 2019 proved a milestone year for literary events and cultural celebrations that reflect the library world's commitment

Ellen Oh, children's book author and president and cofounder of We Need Diverse Books, raised the issue of the lack of diversity in children's books In her keynote speech at the American Association of School Librarians National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in November 2019.

to EDI. ALA's Youth Media Awards at the ALA 2020 Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia included award announcements from the American Indian Library Association, the Association of Jewish Libraries, and the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association.

The 20th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Observance and Sunrise Celebration took place in January 2019. In addition to a keynote address by author Jeanne Theoharis, library leaders Virginia Moore and Satia Orange gave remarks on their shared vision for creating a space for library workers to honor King's principles of nonviolent social change and racial equality for all. 2019 also marked the 50th anniversary of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards. Library professionals were encouraged to host their own programming surrounding the awards.

ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table celebrated its 50th anniversary with an event at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., that featured Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies speaking on current events and human rights.

Assistive technology and accessibility. In the United States, nearly 10 million persons are hard of hearing, and close to one million are functionally deaf, according to the Survey of Income and Program Participation. Libraries have promoted improved assistive technologies for many years. Today, there are assistive listening technologies, real-time captioning services, internet captioning applications, a wide range of relay services, digital television with captions, and video remote interpreting services. Many libraries provide American Sign Language interpreters for programs, and some include sound amplification and digital loop technology.

Photo: American Association of School Librarians

The Deaf Literacy Center of Pinellas (Fla.) Public Library Cooperative serves the greater Tampa area.

Assistive technology can include low- or high-tech options that improve how individuals interact and engage with products, programs, and services. This is one area where libraries are working to incorporate new and existing options so that patrons with disabilities can maximize their library experiences. Libraries can partner with community organizations that specialize in assistive technology, seek feedback from community members who need access to assistive equipment, and work with state technology centers to open the door wider for patrons with disabilities.

Libraries are paying extra attention to patrons with special needs. One example is the Louisville (Ohio) Public Library, which, with the assistance of a $50,000 LSTA grant, opened its Sensory Space in August 2018. It offers teen sensory relaxation sessions, adult sensory exploration, sensory storytimes, and other activities for patrons on the autism spectrum. Louisville is one of the first public libraries to offer a free multisensory environment, which is housed in the library's Discovery Center.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services includes accessibility as one of its 10 priority areas. Our nation's libraries strive to create environments, services, and programming that are accessible to all. Accessibility can include a range of options that improve patron participation in library programs and experience with library resources. Libraries are expanding their reach to include persons with disabilities.

Local public, state, university, and school libraries are welcoming and including deaf and hard of hearing adults and children. Maryland State Library sponsors the Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL). In partnership with the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Montgomery County Public

Library, and liaisons in county public library systems, DCDL offers online resources on deaf culture, programming, and training for library staff in the state.

Public libraries that offer services for the deaf and hard of hearing include the San Francisco Public Library and the District of Columbia Public Library. Tennessee's Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program, a statewide special library headquartered at Nashville Public Library, offers assistive devices, media resources, and in-service training programs. The Deaf Literacy Center of Pinellas (Fla.) Public Library Cooperative serves the greater Tampa area.

National Black Deaf Advocates, the official advocacy organization for thousands of deaf African Americans, offers books on deaf culture not always available in public libraries.

Other library accessibility efforts include:

- The Center for Accessibility, part of the District of Columbia Public Library, supports patrons through its DC Talking Book and Braille Library, part of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. There are three librarians, each overseeing one area: service to the deaf community, service to the blind community, and assistive technology resources. It plans to hire a children's librarian. Successful programming for youth has included a Braille book club for girls, a Vision Impaired Teens program (in partnership with DC Public Schools that provides technology and employment training), and a series of classes on gaming for blind youth led by a volunteer from the Federal Communications Commission.
- Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library's Inclusive Services provides unique programs for children and teens both with and without disabilities. It works closely with its community of disabled persons in Brooklyn, attending meetings and discussing ways to make the

library more accessible. Two examples of technology that assists young patrons include adaptive switch toys that allow children with limited fine and gross motor skills to play with toys, and message communication devices that can record answers to questions or the chorus of a song or book, so that children who are nonverbal can participate actively in programs.

- Bloomfield Township (Mich.) Public Library developed an Accessibility Support Collection that contains adaptive technology. It makes available adaptive toys with large buttons for easy activation, assistive tools such as reading pens that read text for the visually impaired, and adaptive accessories such as mice and screen-reader software for PCs at inclusive technology stations.

Fine-free libraries. In 2019, the ALA Council passed a resolution declaring library fines a form of social inequity, presenting "an economic barrier to access of library materials and services." It urged libraries to scrutinize "their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them."

Libraries nationwide are following the trend of dropping fines for overdue books, among them Chicago Public Library. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot stated, "Like too many Chicagoans, I know what it is like to grow up in financially challenging circumstances and understand what it is like to be just one bill or one mistake away from crushing debt. The bold reforms we're taking to make the Chicago Public Library system fine-free and forgive City Sticker debt will end the regressive practices disproportionately impacting those who can least afford it, ensure every Chicagoan can utilize our city's services and resources, and eliminate the cycles of debt and generational poverty because of a few mistakes." She noted that one out of three patrons were unable to check out items because they owe $10 or more in fines and fees.

The San Francisco Public Library's decision to go fine free was based on a study conducted in conjunction with the San Francisco Financial Justice Project of the Treasurer's Office. It found that eliminating the overdue fines increased patron access to materials and services, reduced the inequitable impact of overdue fines, and improved patron relationships with their library.

In adopting the fine-free model, the Free Library of Philadelphia delivered an early Valentine's Day present to its patrons. "By saying goodbye to fines, we're welcoming back the nearly 88,000 cardholders who are currently unable to take full advantage of the library due to owing fines. We're also anticipating increases in circulation, an uptick in new library card signups, and more overall visits to libraries throughout the city," said Siobhan A. Reardon, president and director of the Free Library. "It's going to be a positive change in many ways, and I'm so proud that we'll be one of the largest library systems in the country to eliminate this penalty."

Ebooks

Libraries' mission of providing access to all was severely hamstrung by a series of decisions by major publishers in 2019.

The Hachette Book Group (HBG) changed its digital lending model for libraries, replacing its perpetual ownership model with a two-year access plan for ebooks and digital audiobooks. HBG, one of the "Big Five" publishers (the others are HarperCollins, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House, and Simon &

From left: Alan S. Inouye, ALA senior director of public policy and government relations; PLA Executive Director Barb Macikas; and ALA Past President Sari Feldman deliver boxes full of petitions to the offices of Macmillan Publishers on October 30, 2019.

Homa Naficy speaking at the 2020 I Love My Librarian Award Ceremony at the American Library Association's Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Philadelphia.

Schuster), also decreased library prices for ebooks and digital audiobooks by as much as 25%; however, the initial "discount" will be eliminated if the library renews its access to those titles.

Simon & Schuster also altered its lending model for libraries. It replaced perpetual access for digital audiobook lending with two-year access at prices ranging from $39.99 to $79.99, placing a financial burden on public libraries and limiting access to the public.

But Macmillan Publishers created a tsunami within the library world when it placed an embargo on sales of new ebook titles to libraries. Beginning November 1, 2019, Macmillan restricted library systems of all sizes from purchasing more than one copy of a new ebook title. Eight weeks after its release, libraries can buy an unlimited number of two-year licenses for a new ebook title.

Macmillan's decision galvanized a strong response. In August 2019, ALA and its Public Library Association division launched an #eBooksForAll campaign, rolling out the website as a hub of information and resources to mobilize the public. Advocates promoted the campaign to patrons, publishing op-eds in local news media, releasing organizational statements opposing the embargo, and flooding the email inbox of Macmillan CEO John Sargent.

The #eBooksForAll petition gathered more than 250,000 signatures of supporters from library workers and the general public by early 2020. ALA extended the scope of its advocacy by contributing to a congressional investigation into antitrust behavior in digital markets, and several ALA chapters began to explore legislative action at the state level.

I Love My Librarian Award

Each year, based on nominations from the public, ALA honors the lasting contributions of librarians working in public, school, college, community college, and university libraries with the I Love My Librarian Award. In 2019, library users nationwide submitted 1,974 nominations detailing how their favorite librarians have gone above and beyond to improve community members' lives.

The honorees were:

- **Jesús Alonso-Regalado,** subject librarian for history, Latin American studies, and Romance languages at the University at Albany Libraries, New York, supports teaching and learning through information literacy instruction and his commitment to Open Access.

- **Stephanie Dannehl,** school librarian and tech integration specialist at Bertrand (Neb.) Community School, has developed a program to bring in village residents as guest readers and to teach students' families new technology skills year-round.
- **Cathy Evans,** director of libraries at St. Mary's Episcopal School in Memphis, Tennessee, has created a culture of reading by ensuring that all students are informed, critical thinkers who are prepared to contribute to a global society.
- **Melissa Glanden,** librarian at Powhatan (Va,) High School, has transformed the school's library. Her introduction of new technologies, a makerspace, and dedicated zones within the library sparked an uptick in visits and circulation of books and other materials.
- **Mary Anne Hansen,** research services librarian at Montana State University, Bozeman, leads the library's Tribal College Librarians Professional Development Institute, which provides key opportunities for librarians serving Indigenous college students.
- **Homa Naficy,** executive director of the American Place at Hartford (Conn.) Public Library, assists immigrants and refugees with English-language classes, job assistance, computer training, and GED preparation as they adapt to a new home.
- **Maria Papanastassiou,** Kids' World assistant manager at the Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library, serves children who are differently abled. Her work, passion, and dedication has helped families with diverse needs find a home at the library.
- **Leah Plocharczyk,** interim director of Florida Atlantic University's John D. MacArthur Library in Jupiter, has made a powerful impact through the book club she created for adults with intellectual disabilities.

- **Janet Tom,** reference librarian at the San Francisco Public Library, was nominated for her ability to bring taboo subjects out of the dark and discuss them with care and respect. Her innovative "Death and Dying" program series was instrumental in helping community members deal with grief and dispelling the stigma around discussions of mortality.
- **Tracie Walker-Reed,** library media specialist at H. Grady Spruce High School in Dallas, Texas, tutors and mentors at-risk and low-income students, supporting the learning process through instruction, technology, and access to print and digital library books.

Sustainability

Libraries play an important role in promoting community awareness about resilience, climate change, and a sustainable future. They are also leading by example in taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint.

ALA added sustainability as a core value of librarianship in January 2019, committing to the "triple bottom line" framework for sustainability recommended by the ALA Special Task Force on Sustainability. This tripod consists of practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable.

In adopting sustainability as a core value, ALA recognizes the findings in a 2018 report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The report, written and edited in October 2018 by 91 scientists from 40 countries who analyzed more than 6,000 scientific studies, found that the immediate consequences of climate change are far more dire than originally predicted, calling for a transformation of the world economy at a speed and scale that has "no documented historic precedent."

Libraries like the Shelter Island (N.Y.) Library are plowing the path of sustainability. The library earned a Green Business Partnership Certification. Its green activities include decreasing paper usage and discontinuing the purchase of single-use water bottles. It also educates patrons by hosting programs that encourage green practices, including one session on how to upgrade aging septic systems.

Other libraries like the Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library (SMPL) are offering more programs on the climate crisis. One, "Hope for Our Planet," featured a speaker from the Citizens' Climate Lobby, an environmental advocacy group that prescribes remedies on the local, national, and international level. SMPL also offers a Green Prize for Sustainable Literature in partnership with the city's Office of Sustainability and the Environment.

In addition, The ALA's Sustainability Round Table offers programming at ALA conferences on climate change and other

DID YOU KNOW?

1,974

nominations were submitted by library users nationwide for the 2019 I Love My Librarian Award,

environmental issues. Its Enviro Scan Taskforce maintains a sustainability database of resources on Zotero that can be helpful in planning library programs.

Libraries of the future

The ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries works to identify global trends that affect libraries. Over the past year, libraries and library workers have continued to demonstrate their ability to adapt their services to new and emerging community priorities.

Mobility and transportation. The rise in popularity of electric scooters and bicycles, expanded bike-sharing programs, and an increased emphasis on commuting by public buses and trains demonstrate a growing interest in sustainable forms of transportation. Across the country, library workers have begun to explore their role in supporting this movement, and several libraries are partnering with transportation agencies to expand access for residents.

The Omaha (Neb.) Public Library (OPL) and the Heartland Bike Share program created a partnership offering library cardholders access to a B-cycle pass for up to five days. Each OPL branch has four passes; patrons can check their availability in the library's online catalog. Similar to the library's zoo and museum passes, the Heartland B-cycle passes are another way that the library ensures that residents have equal access to community resources.

As part of the city's "Go Boston 2030" plan to build a safe, reliable, and equitable transportation network, in May 2019 Boston Mayor Marty Walsh announced a partnership with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to make the system's CharlieCards available at several Boston Public Library branch locations. With better access to these more affordable fares, the partnership encourages more trips by public transportation that help reduce traffic congestion and emissions from motor vehicles.

A partnership between Knoxville (Tenn.) Area Transit and Knox County Public Library (KCPL) makes public transportation more enjoyable with a Books on Buses program that encourages passengers to grab a new book as they board their bus. The library's Friends group donates the books for the program as part of its Books in the Community program.

Colocation. Libraries have long served as hubs for services and programs that are responsive to community needs. In recent years, several libraries have begun exploring colocation of their physical branches with community and campus services, creating efficiencies and new benefits for their communities.

The Chicago Public Library and the Chicago Housing Authority opened three new city-owned facilities that colocate branch libraries with public housing. Beyond the financial benefits and

savings realized by constructing and operating a single city-owned building, the colocation creates a cultural asset that helps integrate socioeconomic diversity into changing urban neighborhoods.

At the University of Arizona in Tucson, a new Student Success District will bring together an updated Main Library, the Albert B. Weaver Science-Engineering Library, the university's Bear Down Gym, and a new four-story Student Success Building into an interconnected district designed to serve student's 24/7 learning needs. The district's indoor and outdoor spaces help support out-of-classroom learning that is collaborative, hands-on, and designed for technological engagement.

As District of Columbia Public Library continues with the transformation of its Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Executive Director Richard Reyes-Gavilan has indicated he plans to work across city services to create a "city within a city" with room for municipal agencies and hotel services within the new building. The library's prime location could provide services like DC Health Link with a physical office space within the library for direct connection with city residents.

Making access easier. Expanding access to information resources is at the core of what libraries do. Making that access easier has been a frequent opportunity for innovation in libraries, which continue to offer surprising service enhancements that help bring information to their communities.

The Mountain View (Calif.) Public Library piloted a BookBot created by Google's experimental Area 120 division. The wheeled personal delivery robot only operated within a limited radius of the library but allowed residents to schedule pickup of their library materials directly from their doorstep. While the BookBot pilot lasted only a few months, it was popular. Residents would stop to take photos of it as

it carried out its book tasks. And BookBot demonstrated one possible direction for the future of library circulation.

Self-service smart lockers, like those used by Amazon and UPS, are providing libraries with new opportunities to streamline holds and reserves processes. At the Toledo–Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library, placement of smart lockers in the libraries' 24/7 lobbies allows community members to collect library materials anytime. At Arizona State University in Phoenix, students can request delivery to self-service book delivery lockers at Armstrong Hall, across the campus from the university's Hayden Library. And at the Topeka and Shawnee County (Kan.) Public Library, residents can ask for books to be delivered to smart lockers at either a community center or a local Hy-Vee grocery store.

The Hinsdale (Ill.) Public Library has taken notes from the subscription economy to introduce new adult, teen (grades 6–12), and junior (grades 4–5) book boxes that feature preselected, newly released books—along with fun bookish treats. Library staff work with readers to curate book selections suited to their specified tastes. Each month, subscribers visit the library to pick up their book box and offer feedback on the previous month's selections. The program leverages staff expertise in reader services while offering delight and surprise to library borrowers.

Artificial intelligence. How is AI changing libraries? And how will it continue to change them?

That is a hotly debated question. Past ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo wrote in March 2019 that it is "time to include AI on our professional agenda and in our national conversation." The itinerary for that conversation will likely offer challenges to such concerns as privacy, intellectual freedom, and access.

The University of Rhode Island opened its Artificial Intelligence Lab in September

In 2019, the Mountain View (Calif.) Public Library piloted a BookBot created by Google's experimental Area 120 division.

2018, the first AI facility housed in a library. The cross-disciplinary lab is open to all students, faculty, and staff for research into robotics, wearable technology, smart cities, and technological ethics.

The Cambridge (Mass.) Public Library partnered with Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries and Harvard's metaLAB to host the installation of a "Laughing Room," in which participants enter an artificially intelligent room that plays a laugh track whenever something is said that the room's algorithm deems funny.

Also at MIT, work is being done on building a technical infrastructure so its collections are accessible by APIs and therefore can be used by machine-learning algorithms. Library Director Chris Bourg said it is important for academic libraries to make their collections readable by AI tools so that reputable scholarly literature is available.

Other new developments include the use of bots in academic libraries. At the University of Oklahoma Library, a chatbot assists students with such questions as where to find subject-specific databases. Library officials hope that AI will enhance collaboration by matching peers in different disciplines, but they also wonder whether the technology will lead to human librarians getting replaced by their technological equivalents.

The bottom line was stated succinctly by Garcia-Febo: "Librarians and library professionals will need to be at the forefront to support communities as these technologies transform our world."

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