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*Susanne Young, Secretary*  
**Jason Broughton, State Librarian**

**TO: Vermont Library Association**  
**FROM: Jason Broughton State Librarian / Commissioner of Libraries**  
**DATE: July 15<sup>th</sup> Vermont Library Association**  
**SUBJECT: Programmatic Updates on COVID19 Actions / Programs & Services**

### **Programs, Services, and Guidance for libraries under COVID19**

**Department of Libraries Library libraries across the state reopening (LIB):** The department continues to provide biweekly updates on reopening, COVID19 updates, and actions. The Department is following the directions of the Vermont Forward Plan by the Agency of Commerce & Community Development.

**Grants to public libraries for under the American Rescue Act Plan (LIB):** The department is disbursing \$980,000 dollars of federal funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to public libraries. Each public library has an opportunity to apply for at least \$2,000 through the Department of Libraries' [ARPA Grants to Public Libraries for Equipment and Supply Purchases](#)—in many cases the amounts are higher. Webinars are required to understand the requirements and merits of receiving funds. July 6 and 7, 2021 from 10 - 11:30am Registration

Sign up for a [listserv dedicated](#) to discussions about ARPA and other grants. This would be a great place to swap ideas. Review the list of allowable purchases and your [allocation amount](#). Then start planning on how to spend the full allocation and lay out your purchases and budget.

Once the application opens, the department will also have virtual office hours to address any questions as they come up. If a library has questions now, they are to review the [FAQ page](#) to see if they can find an answer there. If not, we ask that libraries kindly use the [question submission form](#) instead of emailing staff directly. This helps us manage the volume and triage the question to the right person.

### **Federal Government**

#### **AMERICA RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING, VT DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES FROM IMLS**

Here is what the Department of Libraries is planning to do with the funding through the ARP Act tentatively for Vermont.

1. Technology Grants for public libraries.
2. Grants to libraries & local historical societies/ museums to work together on programs and services.
3. Review of services and or applicable purchase for public facing or state associated academic libraries.
4. Services for public library trustees.
5. Services for school libraries.
6. Grants for Courier Services.
7. ABLE Library Grant & Impaired Hearing devices
8. Funding to library consortia in Vermont to purchase eBooks, Catalogs, etc.
9. Funding for an eBook platform.



10. Other additional funding considerations that are collaborative or partnering with entities and partners per the requirements of the Institute for Museum and Library Services.
11. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programming options.

**The following provisions apply per IMLS:**

To achieve the American Rescue Plan Act’s purposes with respect to Grants to States, this funding is to be used by September 30, 2022, in helping communities respond directly and immediately to the pandemic, as well as to related economic and community needs through equitable approaches. Spending priorities are as follows:

1. First, to support digital inclusion efforts to enable libraries to reach residents such as through internet hotspots, accessible Wi-Fi, and digital content and related resources, particularly in support of education, health, and workforce development needs. The following types of data, among others, can inform efforts to reach underserved populations:
  - Poverty/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Unemployment
  - Broadband availability.
2. Second, to provide rapid emergency relief to libraries across the country, allowing them to safely respond to the pandemic and implement public health protocols.
3. Third, to support library services that meet the needs of communities throughout the U.S., including costs such as personnel, technology, training, materials, supplies, equipment, and associated indirect costs; and
4. With respect to (1), (2), or (3), reach tribal and museum partners best positioned to assist with pandemic response efforts, in addition to traditionally eligible library entities, where appropriate.

**Special provisions**

- Matching (cost sharing) requirements for these funds are waived per Public Law 117-2

**Vermont State Government**

**House Government Office Committee meeting for Archives and Libraries joint administrative housekeeping (Arch-SOS/LIB-AOA):** Legislation has passed. The department is reviewing items and will begin having conversations with all group over time on what the changes will be regarding distribution of print documents such as pocket parts, Vermont Statutes Annotated, and ordering.

**Senate Appropriations Committee for the Department of Libraries Budget:** This has been compiled together under the Agency of Administration budget overall. Passed.

**Department of Libraries request funds for Fiber Connect for Libraries in the Governor’s Proposals:** Approved and passed by legislature. \$500,000 allotment. Discussions with the 40 libraries, Agency of Digital Services, Agency of Administration, Department of Finance, and Agency of Administration Financial Services have begun. Additionally, the Department of Public Services is provided updates on the status of the discussions and upcoming work as part of its overall goal of broadband connectivity.

**Senate Education Committee for Library Working Group Study Bill:** Passed. As enacted... [Draft Bill Template \(vermont.gov\)](#)

## **NEW Federal Consideration: Build America Libraries Act:**

**The Build America’s Libraries Act**, which was introduced in the U.S. Senate in January by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), and introduced in the House earlier this month by Representatives Andy Levin (D-MI) and Don Young (R-AK), would provide \$5 billion to fund upgrades to the nation’s library infrastructure to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, broadband capacity, environmental hazards, and accessibility barriers. Eligible uses of the funding include conducting facilities condition assessments, needs assessments, and master planning; financing new library facilities; or making capital improvements to existing library facilities, including buildings, grounds, and bookmobiles. Conversations federally on bill passage on libraries being included in the overall federal infrastructure plan are constantly changing.

CNN – Negro Brook conversation - [Why so many geographic sites in the US still have racist names - CNN](#)