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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **American Rescue Plan Funds Enhance Maryland Library Programing, Services and Collections**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - The Maryland State Library Agency (MSL) is proud to announce that public library customers will soon benefit from \$3.2 million in special American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the Maryland State Library Agency provided by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This money will be used to provide enhancements to programming, services and collections across Maryland libraries. In the coming months, customers will start to see the impact of these funds on library services.

Irene M. Padilla, State Librarian states that “Maryland’s public libraries continued to respond to customer needs throughout the pandemic by providing increased digital resources, virtual programs and individualized services. Ongoing efforts to continually transform to meet society’s changing needs have proven to be very successful. These additional funds will help them move forward from being providers of books and information to respond to a wide range of ongoing and emerging needs in their communities”.

#### **ARPA Grants Awarded 2021-2022**

##### **Services Beyond the Library**

Not all Marylanders can easily get to a library branch during operating hours. Access to transportation and non-standard working hours mean that many people are not able to take advantage of the range of services libraries provide. In order to meet customers' needs where they live, work and play, more than \$1.7 million is being used to support the purchase of 14

mobile library vehicles, including bookmobiles, specialized service vehicles for job seekers and vans to provide neighborhood storytimes. The public library systems in Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester counties will now be able to provide enhanced services to rural areas, daycares, Boys and Girls clubs, retirement or long term care facilities and many other venues previously unserved. These initiatives will be augmented by local and foundation funding.

### **Reimagining Library Spaces and Services**

Libraries have traditionally been community hubs, and a place where people gather. The pandemic has changed how people interact with public spaces, and with each other. In order for libraries to continue being safe, welcoming spaces, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Eastern Shore Regional Library, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County, and Washington Counties received awards totalling more than \$450,000 to look at how to make the best use of library properties to serve changing customer needs. Prince George's County Memorial Library has been awarded \$140,000 to explore how customers interact with library staff, resources and programs, and how to adapt library services to meet new community needs.

### **Addressing Digital Equity**

Nearly a quarter of Maryland homes lack reliable access to high speed internet ([Abell report, Spring 2021](#)). By providing funds to enhance community broadband access, more Marylanders will be able to engage with resources and services that are only available virtually. More than \$400,000 dollars will be used by Calvert, Charles, Baltimore City (Enoch Pratt), Somerset and Talbot counties to address digital access issues through innovative strategies in pilot communities.

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Libraries are always striving to provide access to the best resources and services to all customers. Addressing issues around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will help to remove barriers to service and enhance the quality of libraries content. Anne Arundel, Calvert, Howard and the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association received awards totalling \$260,000 to audit and align collections, policies and services to reflect and celebrate Maryland's diversity at the local, regional and state level.

### **Building Infrastructure**

In addition to a \$546,800 grant for all county and regional libraries to use for staff development and registration for the Maryland Library Association annual conference, the balance of the ARPA award is being used to support local and statewide services.

As the state library agency for Maryland, MSL administers State and Federal funds to support Maryland public libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources, programs, and excellent customer service. The State Library Resource Center, at the main branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, serves as the official state library. MSL has oversight of the Maryland State Library

for the Blind and Print Disabled; Maryland's Public Libraries; the State Library Network; the Library Capital Grants Programs; and the Deaf Culture Digital Library.

***Maryland Libraries: Inspiring Library Innovation***

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