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## ARPA Pulls Through for Library Funding and Broadband Assistance

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# ARPA Pulls Through for Library Funding and Broadband Assistance

April 8, 2021

David Sye

Access, Advocacy

## IMLS Provisions

Last month, Congress passed its most recent COVID-19 relief bill, the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) (ARPA). While this sweeping legislation featured stimulus checks, extended unemployment benefits, and funds COVID-19 vaccines, it also provides significant funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Section 2023 of the act appropriates \$200 million to the IMLS, and stipulates that at least 89% of funds should be awarded to state library administrative agencies which would be disseminated to individual libraries and museums. This \$200 million allotment was originally a part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act passed in December, but was scrapped prior to the passing of the legislation.

According to [ALA's analysis of the act and related legislation](#), ARPA funding will maintain and enhance library services such as expanding digital connectivity, establishing mobile digital labs, enhancing job-seeking programs, and improving training/technical support for libraries. Each state will receive an allotment of funds based on their population, with a base amount of \$2 million for states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. The base allotment for other territories is \$200,000. [You can see each state's allotment here.](#)



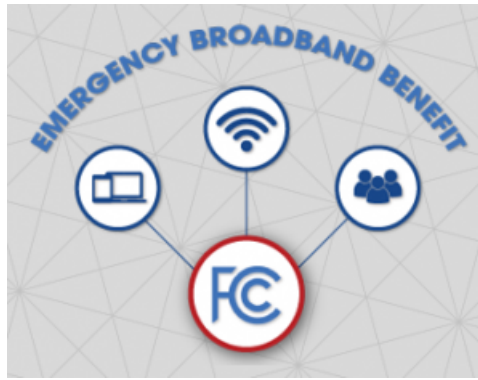
## Broadband provisions

I also want to follow up on my previous post regarding [ALA's broadband resolution and the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program](#). With regards to the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program), the [FCC has established processes](#) to move the program forward. The first step is to identify broadband providers. Certain providers have been designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier, and all they have to do is file with the Universal Service Administrative Company. Other providers need to obtain approval from the Wireline Competition Bureau. Providers were able to submit their forms beginning March 11.

For those of you hearing about this for the first time, the EBB Program includes providing \$50 per month to low-income families to be used towards broadband services. An eligible household needs to contain a member meets any of the following requirements:

1. Qualified to participate in the federal lifeline program
2. Qualified to participate in the free and reduced price lunch program
3. Has experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020 that is documented by layoff or furlough notice, application for unemployment benefits, or similar document
4. Has received a Federal Pell grant in the current year
5. Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program

ARPA also included additional provisions for broadband assistance. Section 3206, detailing a homeowner assistance fund, provides for payment assistance towards broadband internet service. Section 7402 of ARPA details provisions of funding for E-Rate support for emergency education connections and devices. Over \$7.1 billion has been appropriated towards schools and libraries to support remote learning. This aspect of the act has been [praised by the Federal Communications Committee Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel](#), who looks forward to implementing the program. In the FCC's memo, they cite that approximately one-third of Black, Latinx, and Native American students lack high-speed internet access at home. The funds will help eligible schools and libraries purchase technology such as Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and devices to help students connect and participate in their digital classrooms. Hopefully these funds will help address the prevalent "homework gap," in which students who lack effective home internet access have difficulties completing schoolwork.



### David Sye

David Sye is a Research and Instruction Librarian at Murray State University in southwestern Kentucky. He is liaison for the History, Political Science & Sociology, and Psychology departments, as well as teaching instruction sessions and credit-bearing courses on information literacy. He holds a BA in History from the

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