

SAMPLE LETTER

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee Number 1 on Education Finance
State Capitor, Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator,

Please reinstate funding for public libraries --\$3.7 million to Adult Literacy Programs (the California Library Literacy and English Acquisition Program), \$8.5 million to the California Library Services Act, and \$3 million to the Public Library Foundation.

The need for library services in the past few years has increased significantly. The growing need for access to digital and online resources, continuing education resources and employment opportunity information has made libraries essential in communities across our state and country.

Just as we need air to survive, we need libraries to thrive in a time of economic uncertainty, technological illiteracy and information overload. Libraries provide equitable access for all. It is still the only place that you can go to get free access to all types of information enhanced by use of technology. Thousands rely on these free services to use computers and Adult Literacy services as well as access to employment databases.

Right now, libraries are part of the solution when a community is struggling economically. Libraries continue to design and offer programs customized for their local communities' needs, providing residents with guidance, including sessions with career advisers, workshops in resume writing and interviewing, job-search resources and connections with outside agencies that offer training and job placement. Each day an estimated 300,000 people receive job-seeking help at public libraries. More than 74% of libraries offer software and other resources to help patrons create resumes and employment materials, and 72% of libraries report that staff helped patrons complete online job applications.

Additionally libraries provide a non-threatening learning atmosphere for adults that need to build their reading and basic literacy skills. It is estimated that 23% of adults in California lack basic literacy skills such that they would be unable to fill out a job application. Last year Adult Literacy programs throughout our state served 22,733 adult learners using 12,609 volunteer tutors who volunteered 855,206 hours (a value of \$20 million in volunteer time). These library based literacy programs leveraged every \$1 of state funds to raise \$5 in local/private funds, much of which will not be available without the state's money to leverage.

Public libraries have received no state funds in 2011/2012 which has forced libraries to make deep cuts to hours and staffing levels. For Adult Literacy alone, we estimate that 25% fewer learners will be served (approximately 5,500 adults) as a result. If funds are not restored for 2012/2013, libraries across our state will be forced to make continued cuts in service and may result in closures.

There are very few other options for these adults. 57% of our programs reported that there is no other local service. And 76% reported a decrease in service or the elimination of their local adult school. The need for library services is needed now more than ever.

Don't let this happen! Providing Library and Literacy services makes good economic sense when you consider that 70% of our adult learners were in their prime wage-earning years (ages 20 - 49). And the Libraries work! California clearly needs Libraries to help strengthen our economic stability.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)