2017 National Library Legislative Day Priority

Support Public Access to Government Data and Taxpayer-Funded Information and Research

The American Library Association urges all Members of Congress to:

1) **ENACT** the *Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act* (S. 760/H.R. 1770) to **require all federal agencies to publish their information online** using non-proprietary, machine-readable data formats. The bill codifies and expands the 2013 government-wide “Open Data” policy (M-13-13), which has been integrated into agency policy across the federal government for the past three years.

2) **SUPPORT** legislation building on the *Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR)* as introduced in the 114th Congress (S. 779/H.R. 1477), to assure **prompt, no-fee public access to published articles and other materials based upon taxpayer-funded research**.

3) **EXPEDITE** adoption of the statutory changes proposed in the *Equal Access to Congressional Research Service Reports Act* as introduced in the 114th Congress (S. 2639/H.R. 4702) to **provide broad and permanent public access to taxpayer-funded reports by the Congressional Research Service** that are searchable, sortable and downloadable without charge.

4) **FUND** the Government Publishing Office and the National Archives and Records Administration at levels that permit them to provide robust public access to and preserve all forms of government information.

5) **ASSURE** continued public access through a single, well-funded repository to the unique information **collections currently held by the National Technical Information Service**.

What current government information access bills do libraries back and why?

- The *OPEN Government Data Act*, passed the Senate unanimously in late 2016 as S. 2852 and was reintroduced simultaneously in the Senate and House early in the 115th Congress. It will dramatically enhance public, business and scholarly access to government data by, among other means: setting an official presumption that “Government data assets made available by an agency shall be published as machine-readable data … in an open format, and … under open licenses;” and by requiring agencies to maintain and publish an inventory of all data assets. That inventory will help agencies and open data advocates identify key government information resources and transform them from documents and siloed databases into open data.