



# Arkansas State Library Explainer

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## What is the Arkansas State Library?

The Arkansas State Library (ASL) is both a library and a division of state government. As a library, ASL delivers specialized information services to public employees, patent and trademark researchers, individuals conducting research on both the state and federal governments, Arkansans with a print disability, and librarians across the state.

Director of the Arkansas State Library, also known as the “State Librarian” reports to both the Secretary of Education and to a seven member board appointed by the Governor.

## What does ASL do?

The work of ASL falls under three broad categories: 1) Serve as the reference and research library for Arkansas’ public employees; 2) Provide statewide library services to blind and print disabled Arkansans; and 3) Provide guidance and support for the development of local public libraries throughout the state of Arkansas.

## What library services does ASL provide to public employees?

ASL serves as the reference and research library for state government, and provides specialized information resources that are not available at other libraries. Unique collections at ASL that support the work of public employees include state and federal documents, Arkansas history resources, and proprietary databases. Proprietary databases provide public employees with access to news reports, articles, studies, and data that is not freely available elsewhere. Subject matter includes: agriculture, health and medicine, business and finance, industry, fisheries and wildlife, law, science and technology, and more.

## How does ASL support patent and trademark researchers?

ASL is the state’s only Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC). PTRC assists entrepreneurs, inventors, attorneys, and historians with research related to patent and trademark information, and supports their information needs related to intellectual property. Services include assisting users with searching for registered patents, providing directories of local patent attorneys, pro bono programs, and demonstrations of how to use the complex search tools that are used to complete a patent and trademark search.

## Why does ASL collect state and federal government documents?

The government documents collections at ASL provide transparency and accountability of both state and government institutions by collecting government publications and making them freely searchable and browsable by the public. Government documents include regulations, policies, reports, and studies. The collection assists educators, students, journalists, lawmakers, public employees, and the general public with research in the areas of civics, political science, law, history, and public administration.

## What does the Arkansas Library for the Blind and Print Disabled do?

The Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (BPD) provides audiobooks, magazines, and braille to Arkansans with a print disability. These services are provided free to individuals with a print disability. Print disabilities include blindness, low vision, and physical or reading disabilities that make it difficult to read standard print materials.

Materials are available in both physical formats that are mailed to users' homes, and in digital formats available for instant download. BPD librarians help users find books that match their interests and reading preferences from a collection of thousands of audio and braille books. Users can also access magazines, electronic braille, and music scores through BPD.

### Does ASL oversee public libraries?

No. In the state of Arkansas public libraries are units of local government. Public libraries can be departments of municipal government or county government. Multiple counties and / or cities can also work together to pool and share resources through regional library systems. Public libraries have local boards made up of qualifying electors of the county, municipality, or region served by

the library. Board members are appointed by the county judge, mayor, or, in the case of regional libraries, some combination thereof.

### How does ASL support public libraries?

ASL provides support to public libraries in two ways: 1) through direct grants, known as "State Aid" that provide broad flexibility for local libraries to use funds in the ways that most benefit the local community; and 2) through statewide services that reduce duplication of local efforts and reduce costs statewide.

Statewide services are designed to help local libraries reach their full potential and to meet the needs of the local community. Statewide services benefit local libraries in a wide variety of ways, and libraries can pick and choose which programs to participate in.

#### EXAMPLES OF STATEWIDE SERVICES

- Continuing education (CE) programs that help librarians improve skills and knowledge. CE webinars are offered weekly. A variety of in-person workshops are offered throughout the year across the state.
- The statewide summer reading program provides every library with a ready to implement program that includes art, activities, reading lists, and promotional materials. There are four summer reading program levels to ensure that Arkansans in every age group can participate: early literacy, children, teen, and adult.
- The Arkansas Digital Library Consortium allows libraries to pool resources to build a robust collection of e-books and audio e-books from 143 libraries statewide.

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