



SUFFOLK COUNTY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Tom Suozzi

51 Glen Street

Second Floor

Glen Cove, NY 11542

Dear Representative Suozzi,

We respectfully urge you to ensure that federal support for universal, affordable broadband access remains a top priority. The E-Rate program, funded through the Universal Service Fund, delivers **nearly \$100 million annually to New York's libraries and schools, including approximately \$35 million to Long Island alone.** This program ensures that residents—students, seniors, small business owners, job seekers—can access high-speed internet at their public libraries and schools.

Without E-Rate, Long Island institutions would face an impossible choice: forgo public internet access or raise local property taxes by tens of millions of dollars. At a time when Long Islanders contribute significantly more to the federal budget than they receive in return, and when the SALT deduction cap remains in place, neither option is sustainable nor fair.

E-Rate is not only an education and economic development tool, it is a critical public safety asset. Libraries and schools depend on these reliable internet connections to communicate with local agencies, first responders, and emergency services.

We understand that the majority may be proceeding with budget proposals without full bipartisan collaboration, but we urge you to make it clear to your colleagues across the aisle that continuing the **E-Rate program is in the best interest of Long Island's taxpayers, voters, students, and families.**

Additionally, we ask for your support in preserving funding for the **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).** LSTA is the single largest source of federal support for libraries in the U.S., and the \$8 million New York receives annually is essential for enabling statewide initiatives and delivering vital support to local libraries and systems. These funds facilitate construction grants, continuing education, innovation, and access to critical services for patrons across every district.

Please help convey to your colleagues the value and impact of LSTA and IMLS funding, particularly for your constituents on Long Island, where libraries serve as gateways to lifelong learning, early literacy, and economic opportunity.

Libraries are foundational to New York's education ecosystem. They are often a child's first classroom and an adult's lifelong learning center. They provide the tools and resources necessary for residents to succeed academically, enter the workforce, manage health and financial information, and engage as informed citizens. **Including libraries as central partners in any legislation focused on literacy, education, and economic mobility will strengthen these outcomes and help ensure equitable progress.**

We appreciate your ongoing support and your leadership on behalf of Long Island's families and public institutions.

On behalf of the Suffolk County Library Association Board,

Anthony Giansante
President of the Suffolk County Library Association