

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

H.P. 926 - L.D. 1404

Resolve, to Create a Working Group on the Status of School Libraries and on Public Libraries in Maine

Sec. 1. State Librarian to convene working group. Resolved: That the State Librarian shall convene a working group on the status of school libraries and public libraries in the State, referred to in this resolve as "the working group."

Sec. 2. Working group membership. Resolved: That the working group consists of 15 members as follows:

1. The State Librarian;
2. The President of the Maine Library Association or the president's designee;
3. The President of the Maine Association of School Libraries or the president's designee;
4. A representative of the Maine Principals' Association, appointed by the Commissioner of Education;
5. A representative from the Maine School Superintendents Association, appointed by the Commissioner of Education;
6. Three representatives of nonprofit public libraries, who must be from libraries of different sizes and from different regions of the State and one of whom must be a member of that representative's library governing board, appointed by the President of the Maine Library Association;
7. Two representatives of municipal public libraries, who must be from libraries of different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by the President of the Maine Library Association;
8. Three representatives of public school libraries, who must be from schools of different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by the board of the Maine Association of School Libraries;
9. One staff member of the Department of Education, appointed by the Commissioner of Education; and

10. One staff member from the library development division within the Maine State Library, appointed by the State Librarian.

Sec. 3. Chair. Resolved: That the State Librarian is the chair of the working group.

Sec. 4. Convening of working group. Resolved: That the chair shall call the first meeting of the working group within 45 days of the effective date of this resolve. A majority of the working group membership constitutes a quorum. The member of the working group who is a staff member from the library development division within the Maine State Library shall take minutes at each meeting, which must be posted on the Maine State Library's publicly accessible website within 5 business days of the meeting.

Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the working group shall study:

1. Library services for specific segments of the State's population, including individuals 55 years of age and older, individuals with disabilities, youth and children, immigrant and migrant communities, tribal communities and individuals residing in remote areas of the State;

2. The role that libraries play in emergency preparedness; cultural diversity and inclusion; public health and safety; community identity and resiliency; economic development; and access to public services and resources; and

3. The current overall status of public and school libraries in the State, which may include information related to partnerships, resources, facilities, technology and staffing.

In the performance of its duties under this section, the working group shall solicit input from the general public and library users across the State.

Sec. 6. Study guidance. Resolved: That, in performing the duties under section 5, the working group may:

1. Assess current community, county and state partnerships with public and school libraries and identify gap areas and potential additional partners, including an assessment of regional partnerships based on areas of need in each region;

2. Study the size and diversity of library holdings and assess the strengths of and gaps in materials available to residents of the State, including an assessment of how resources are shared across different libraries and communities and how to best find economies of scale through shared resources among public and school libraries;

3. Study the status of public and school library facilities across the State, with a focus on how to improve accessibility, safety and energy efficiency while still accounting for historic preservation and local community needs;

4. Study whether public and school libraries in the State have sufficient access to basic technological resources, cybersecurity resources, electronic catalogs, interlibrary loan services and appropriate hardware and software to address community member needs;

5. Study staffing levels at public and school libraries in the State, whether staffing levels are sufficient to meet user needs, how libraries use volunteers and what resources are available for workforce development and training of library staff;

6. Solicit input from the Maine Library Commission; and

7. Examine models for library management and organization in other states, including the formation of statewide service networks.

Sec. 7. Staff assistance; mileage reimbursement. Resolved: That the Maine State Library shall provide administrative, technical and legal assistance to the working group, including contracting with an outside facilitator with experience in leading community and library discussions to assist the State Librarian with meeting facilitation and organization.

Members of the working group are entitled to mileage reimbursement from the Maine State Library for travel to in-person meetings at the same rate as under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 8 for not more than 12 meetings.

Sec. 8. Report. Resolved: That, no later than November 1, 2027, the State Librarian shall submit a report based on the study under section 5 for presentation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs. The report must include:

1. Specific and detailed findings and proposals concerning the issues studied by the working group;
2. Recommendations for updating the Maine Revised Statutes, agency rules and governance structures of public and school libraries in the State to ensure equitable access for residents of the State, efficient use of resources and high quality in the provision of services;
3. Recommendations related to the funding needs of public and school libraries in the State, including capital, ongoing and special funding; and
4. Any other information or recommendations the working group determines necessary to include in the report.

The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs is authorized to report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.

Sec. 9. Appropriations and allocations. Resolved: That the following appropriations and allocations are made.

LIBRARY, MAINE STATE

Maine State Library 0217

Initiative: Provides one-time funding in fiscal year 2025-26 and fiscal year 2026-27 only for the cost of contracting with an outside facilitator with experience in leading community and library discussions and to reimburse working group members for mileage.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$9,000	\$9,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$9,000	\$9,000