



# LIBRARIES IN THE AGE OF BUDGET CUTS

WINTER 2017

*Photo above:* Americorps VISTA volunteer and Job Lab Coordinator Sarah McBryde works with Job Lab volunteers to get ready for a drop-in session for job seekers at Loussac Library.

*Once we get crime under control, we can get back to funding things that make a city great, like the Library.*

*In this economy, we just can't afford to invest more money in the Library.*

These are some of the arguments we heard during the recent Municipal budget debate as to why there wasn't enough funding to keep the Loussac Library open on Sundays. We'd like to counter these arguments and suggest that better funding for the Library is exactly the way to support our community during a recession.

The Library is the great equalizer of our time. It provides supportive learning spaces for young people, and is a key strand in the social safety net, providing a lifeline to jobs, educational opportunities, literacy and health resources. It's a place where people from all walks of life in Anchorage gather to form a community.

If we lose our library, who will pick up this role? If we allow our library to get nickel-and-dimed into irrelevance, is that any better?



**Support the Friends and the Foundation to help the Library meet its commitment to our community!**

*Without the library, I probably wouldn't have the career I have now...and it's true! As the child of a divorced mother who really struggled to make ends meet, there were a lot of times we didn't have the money to buy books. But thanks to the library I could read my fool head off, and that's what made me into a writer.*

*And now it's such an important part of the Irish music scene, and they have those super-cool Traditions Tuesdays too." -Lisa Maloney, Library Champion*

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Every year, the Library is asked to cut, 1, 2 and sometimes 5% from an already shoestring budget. And every year, the Library does its best to shave away here and there to preserve the important services that feed our community's growth.

This has brought us to where we stand today. We have incredible staff who are working with community partners and investors like you to do cutting-edge work that puts our library on the map nationally:

- **Job Lab:** an Americorps VISTA project that partners with volunteers, the Alaska Department of Labor and other agencies to provide job seekers with one-on-one help and a variety of library resources. Many participants have reported getting jobs thanks to this assistance.
- The **Loussac entrance renovation**, which created a vibrant, more accessible and welcoming space that is a great source of pride for our community.
- **Social Worker in the Library:** a partnership with UAA and the Department of Health to connect library patrons to much-needed resources.
- **ASD Library Card partnership:** now students can get a library card when they register for school. This year, 40,000 out of 46,000 ASD students received library cards that make valuable learning tools like Tumblebooks and Tutor.com accessible to all of our students.

At the same time, our library is struggling to keep up:

- Our materials budget is in the bottom quarter of our peer libraries across the country. When adjusted for inflation, it is **30% less than it was ten years ago** (and now we are also buying digital resources like ebooks, Hoopla and Lynda.com).

- Anchorage has half as many staff per capita as peer libraries like Grand Rapids and Oklahoma City. **To meet even the minimum standards of peer libraries, we need to increase from our current 77 to 94 FTE** (full-time equivalent) staff.

All of this comes at a time when more and more people are turning to the library to further their educations, grow their careers, find affordable entertainment and gain a sense of community. Just this year, Loussac visits increased by 27% from the second to third quarters, and in September we saw a 24% increase in program attendance over the same month in 2016.

We can't keep asking our library to do more with less.

Despite the Assembly's last-minute revival of \$125,000 in funding to maintain Loussac Sunday hours for half the year—many thanks to Members Rivera, Constant and Petersen for their amendment—the Library budget was cut by over \$300,000 this year. The Library has been operating on a bare bones budget for years and there is nothing left to cut besides hours, essential staff and materials. If this trend continues, the next thing we lose will be a branch.

That is why over the next year, the Anchorage Library Foundation is turning our attention to working with community leaders on long-term funding solutions for the library. We need big ideas and dramatic solutions to get the Library budget up to a level that allows it to provide the service that our community expects and deserves.

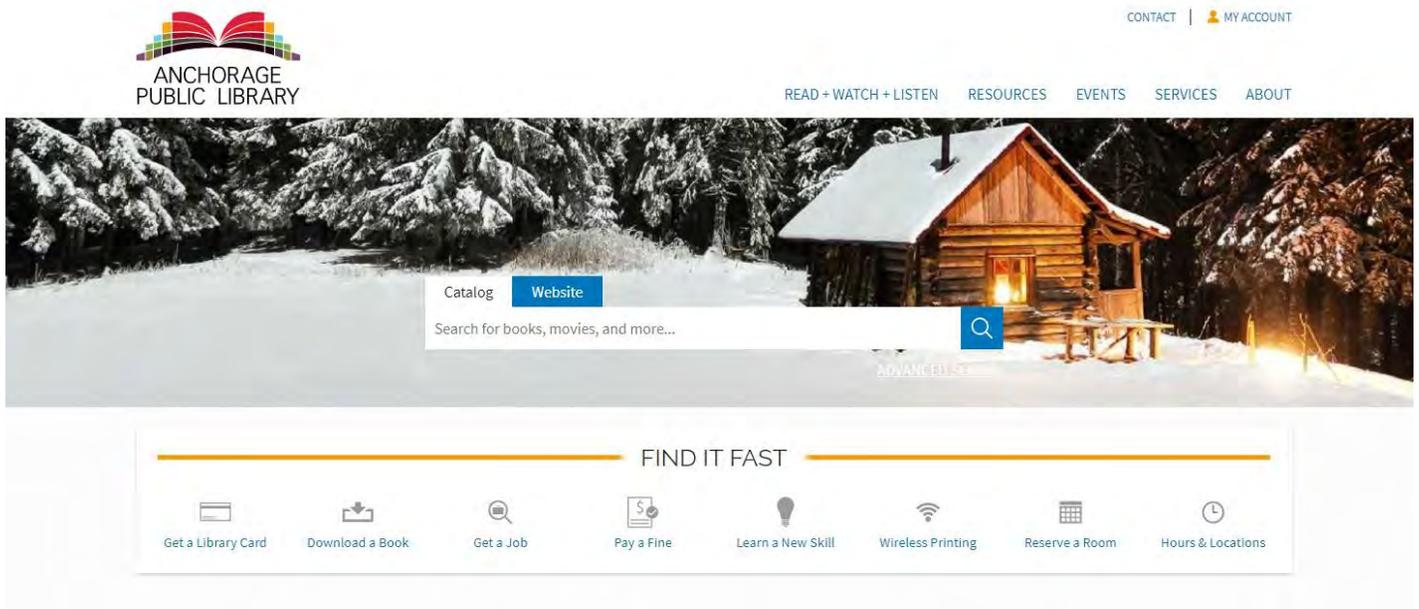
If you have ideas or would like to help us out, please contact [info@librarychampion.com](mailto:info@librarychampion.com). Additionally, if this is a cause that is important to you, we hope you will consider increasing your gift in 2018 to help us undertake this vital project. It takes a village to make a Library strong and we need everyone pulling together to support our Library!

*by Sigrid Brudie, Library Foundation President & Kim Hays, Library Foundation Vice President*

# New Library Website

*Made possible by Friends and Foundation donors like you!*

The Library just launched their fabulous new website—[www.anchoragelibrary.org](http://www.anchoragelibrary.org)—to make it easier for you discover all of the great resources the Library has to offer. Over the next few months, the Library will listen to feedback and study how the site is being used to continue to make improvements. If you have ideas or suggestions for how to make the site better, please let us know by emailing [askalibrarian@muni.org](mailto:askalibrarian@muni.org). Thanks for your patience over the years with our terrible old website and we hope you enjoy the new one!



Detach and mail to: Anchorage Library Foundation/Friends of the Library: PO Box 244714, Anchorage, AK 99524

## YES! I want to help the Anchorage Public Library transform lives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like this gift to go to a specific library (please list):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please keep my name anonymous in recognition materials.



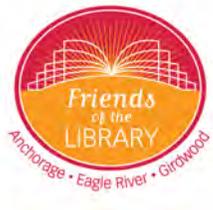
I'd like to support the Library's immediate needs for materials and programs with a gift in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Make check payable to: **Friends of the Library**



I'd like to support the long-term growth of the Library and new library initiatives with a gift in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Make check payable to: **Anchorage Library Foundation**



P.O. BOX 244714  
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[www.LibraryChampion.com](http://www.LibraryChampion.com)

## 100 Years of the Public Library in Anchorage

Thanks to everyone who attended our Library Halloween party celebrating 100 years of the Anchorage Public Library. Everyone looked fabulous and the costumes were incredible! Thanks again to Pulse Dance Company, Pamyua, Bridge Catering, BreAKout Alaska and the Acillquq dancers!

View party photos at [www.LibraryChampion.com](http://www.LibraryChampion.com)



## Become a Library Champion!

*VIP Donors get a commemorative Library Champion library card*

Don't forget—when you give \$100 or more to the Friends or Foundation by Dec. 31, you will receive this commemorative VIP Library Card designed by local artist and former Library Foundation President Andy Rogers. Cards will be mailed in January and you can bring them into the Loussac Library to have your existing bar code added to the card.

Donate today at: [www.LibraryChampion.com/Donate](http://www.LibraryChampion.com/Donate)

