



IMPERIAL COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 19, 2021

Contact: Gil Rebollar

(442) 265-1018

County of Imperial Announces \$1 Million State Budget Allocation for Public Library System in Imperial County

November 19, 2021 – The County of Imperial and Imperial County Free Library are proud to announce that \$1 million from the 2021 state budget will be allocated towards the Imperial County public library system thanks to the efforts of State Senator Ben Hueso.

“In a rural county, libraries provide access to books, computers, educational activities, and so much more, while also making efforts to address digital equity and our collective community recovery from the pandemic,” stated Imperial County Library, Crystal Duran. “The Imperial County Public Library System commends Senator Hueso for his advocacy and is looking forward to utilizing these funds to benefit our region.”

Pending final approval and/or additional information, proposed countywide projects utilizing this funding includes:

- **The Link+ system:** Funds would cover the startup and maintenance costs of the Link+ system for all public libraries in Imperial County through 2024. The Link+ system is a union of catalogs of shared holdings between over 70 member libraries across the western-pacific region, allowing library cardholders the ability to borrow an item from any member library if the cardholder’s library does not currently own the item.
- **Student Access Card:** Funds would cover the costs to develop and implement the Student Access Card Program at select schools allowing students in underserved areas throughout the County access to digital resources and in-library services through their annual school enrollment. Students attending schools in Calipatria, Holtville, Heber, Salton City, Niland, Westmorland, and Seeley will be prioritized, but other schools may participate in conjunction with their closest public library
- **Hotspot Lending:** Funds would cover all startup and data subscription costs to develop a hotspot-lending program for non-Children’s Internet Protection Compliant (CIPA) compliant public libraries in Imperial County. Participating libraries include the County, Brawley, and Calexico libraries. This program will allow adults with library cards in good standing to borrow a hotspot from their local public library for a set amount of time. The hotspots will include unlimited data so users can search for job openings, pay bills online, attend telehealth appointments, and more.
- **Libraries on the Spectrum (LoS):** Funds would cover costs to continue offering the LoS program at all public libraries in Imperial County. The goal would be to resume the program with monthly in-person programs at all locations. LoS is a countywide

initiative to increase access to resources for autistic individuals at all public libraries in Imperial County.

Other projects focused on the county library system are also under consideration.

“This \$1 million investment by Sen. Hueso and Gov. Newsom is going to help Imperial libraries be even more responsive to their community needs than they are already,” said Greg Lucas, California State Librarian. “The team that creates the magic at Imperial libraries plans a series of innovations that will make library services more easily available to more community members.”

“The County of Imperial is grateful to Senator Hueso and the State of California for this funding to increase access to books, internet, and technology for those who utilize our Imperial County public library system,” added Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Michael W. Kelley.

###

940 Main Street, Suite 208 · El Centro, CA 92243

442-265-1001 Tel · 442-265-1010 Fax

www.co.imperial.ca.us