



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

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Support New York IDEALS: **Increasing Democratic Engagement through Adaptive Library Services** **\$200M for Statewide Library Aid**

Background

- Persistent failure to fund the State Library Aid program has disenfranchised millions of vulnerable New Yorkers who lack access to information resources and trusted, community-based information professionals
- Access to information is a fundamental human right - information inequality plagues vulnerable, marginalized, and historically oppressed populations – NY's failure to act risks creation of a permanent "digital underclass"
- NYS must guarantee information equity for all New Yorkers through aggressive investment in library services

New York's Antiquated Approach to Library Funding

- Libraries are safe, welcoming public spaces that foster community cohesion through inclusive programming
- State Library Aid must increase to support local programming needs – libraries which rely on local funding streams face difficult decisions when inclusive, supportive programming is met with political resistance
- Funding for academic libraries and library systems, in partnership with school & public libraries, to develop short- and long-term plans to continue building a diverse, inclusive profession
- Funding to establish and maintain licensed social workers at each public library system, tasked with connecting vulnerable New Yorkers with community-based organizations and non/public service agencies

Digital Equity Initiatives

- Less-resourced and historically oppressed communities disproportionately confront inequities in technology training and availability – a 2017 Siena poll found the local public library is the primary source of internet access for 25% of low-income households, and 20% of African-American and Latino respondents
- State Library Aid must increase to provide school, public, and academic libraries and library systems adequate funding to advance information fluency through collaborative action

Access to Professional, Certified Librarians & Information Scientists

- New York's students lack a universal right to instruction in information sciences by a certified School Library Media Specialist, diminishing college-readiness, career opportunities, and meaningful participation in civic life
- Public libraries serving small neighborhoods and rural communities lack resources to hire the skilled, well-trained staff needed to meet patrons' information needs
- State Library Aid must increase to provide every student with access to competent instruction in information sciences by a SLMS, guarantee public libraries are staffed by professional librarians, and provide quality CE

Literacy & Information Fluency

- Libraries and librarians connect disenfranchised individuals and marginalized populations to information resources they would otherwise be denied, including educational, financial, health, and social justice info
- Increased funding to support remote and/or in-person delivery of core literacies to vulnerable adult populations, including incarcerated individuals



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Building Sustainable Communities: \$75M for Library Capital Infrastructure Improvements

Background:

- Local public libraries require immediate, significant state investment to accommodate advances in IT infrastructure and energy efficient technologies, and to increase accessibility for all patrons
- The most recent available data provided by the New York State Education Department's Division of Library Development (DLD) documents an existing \$1.7B in capital needs statewide
- The Public Library Capital Aid Program provides an immediate and efficient return on investment while boosting local economies; since 2007, state investment has leveraged more than \$580M in local funding – a 5:1 return
- Funding for the Public Library Capital Aid Program remained stagnant for a decade prior to recent investment; the accumulated capital needs forced the sale of library buildings, and has eroded operating funds for library services

Data Points:

- **New York State's public libraries are rapidly aging**
 - 48% of local libraries are more than 60 years old; an additional 33% are more than 30 years old
 - 25% are not accessible to differently-abled patrons
- **Public Libraries require capital investment to accommodate high-speed broadband infrastructure**
 - A January 2018 Siena poll found that for 27% of households making less than \$50,000 annually, the public library is their **primary source of internet access**
 - Stagnant funding disproportionately impacts economically disadvantaged communities, widening the digital divide
- **Public Libraries desperately require energy-efficient infrastructure upgrades**
 - Library use has surged statewide among all demographics, leading to longer hours of operation and increased energy costs
 - Energy inefficient buildings have increased operating costs and forced reductions in staffing, services, and programming
- **Public Library capital needs have been comparatively underfunded**
 - Public schools: \$2.3B, five-year capital investment (Library Capital Aid = 4.1%)
 - Higher Education: \$3.2B, five-year capital investment in SUNY & CUNY
 - State Parks: \$900M, five-year capital commitment to fully address \$1B in deferred maintenance



Libraries Count: Census 2020

\$40M for Library-Based Complete Count Initiatives

Background:

- The 2020 census will be conducted primarily online for the first time, threatening a catastrophic undercount
- In NYS, studies show that populations historically subject to undercounting - low-income households, New Americans, and communities of color -- disproportionately lack broadband internet access at home
- An 2020 undercount threatens our state budget & federal representation; in FY2019, NYS received \$60B in federal funding through population-based formulas & the 2010 undercount cost NY two Congressional seats

New York's Public Libraries are Crucial Partners for a 2020 Complete Count

- Statewide, at least 18% of households lack internet access, or rely on dial-up access; according to multiyear Siena Research Institute data, 25% of NYS households earning less than \$50k annually indicate their local public library is their primary point of internet access
- Historically undercounted populations disproportionately rely on smartphones to access the internet, according to survey data; further, smartphone-dependent adults are more likely to experience service disruptions due to financial reasons, including data limits
- 100% of NYC's "Hard-to-Count" (HTC) communities are within one mile of a library, with nearly 99% of NYS HTC tracts within 5 miles according to Mapping analysis conducted by the Center for Urban Research at CUNY

Libraries are Partnering with Community-Based Complete Count Organizations

- Libraries and library advocates across New York, in partnership with the NYS Complete Count Commission and New York Counts 2020, will serve a critical role as primary points of service for New Yorkers who need help completing the online census
- NYLA, along with New York Counts 2020, endorses the Fiscal Policy Institute's recent study detailing a \$40M funding need for a statewide, community-based, public outreach campaign to ensure a complete count in NYS
- For public libraries to effectively serve an influx of New Yorkers as the local, trusted places for reliable census information and/or complete their questionnaire, immediate infrastructure investment is needed

NYLA Recommendations for 2020 Complete Count Initiatives in NYS

- Funding for cybersecurity measures: libraries store legally-protected personal information for nearly 10 million New Yorkers statewide; the recent Australian census was hacked, causing prolonged services outages, tens of millions in damages, and compromised sensitive personal information
- Support for staff resources: approximately 1.4M New Yorkers rely on libraries for internet, and hundreds of thousands more will seek library staff support; estimates range from 150,000-175,000 total library staff hours
- IT infrastructure investments: many libraries will find it necessary to upgrade hardware and software resources, increase available bandwidth, and potentially hire (even temporarily) additional IT staff



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Equitable Access for All New Yorkers: **NYLA 2019 Legislative Agenda**

Equal Access to School Libraries and Librarians

Background:

- Current law denies primary students their basic right to instruction in information sciences. Secondary students often lack competent instruction due to easily circumvented SED regulations. Inadequate instruction in information sciences diminishes college-readiness, restricts career opportunities in the modern economy, and dissuades meaningful participation in civic life.

Impact:

- This legislation provides a long-overdue guarantee that all students have access to a quality school library staffed by a certified NYS School Library Media Specialist.

Transparent Contracting with Educational Institutions

Background:

- Aggressive confidentiality clauses and strict nondisclosure provisions force taxpayer-funded educational institutions into adhesion contracts and exorbitant pricing structures with corporate vendors -- even when the accessed content is wholly funded with taxpayer dollars.

Impact:

- This legislation requires open, transparent contracting between educational institutions and corporate vendors of educational resources, so education is more affordable, and information more accessible.

Universal Access to the Library Construction Aid Program

Background:

- Small and rural public libraries in dire need of capital improvements are disproportionately disadvantaged by the Public Library Construction Aid Program's requirements. Providing public library systems with greater discretion to award capital grants will broaden opportunities to address our state's aging public libraries.

Impact:

- This legislation maintains robust state oversight of the Public Library Construction Aid Program, while adding a 90/10 matching provision for qualifying capital projects.