



## New York Library Association

*The Voice of the Library Community*  
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### **New York Libraries Play Vital Role in Helping Patrons Search for Jobs**

*As State Library Funding Gets Cut, More People are going to their Libraries for Services*

(ALBANY, N.Y.) The New York Library Association (NYLA) today announced the results of a recent survey which shows that 80% of the libraries in the state have helped someone search for a job in the past three months.

"As the state faces its most difficult economic crisis in decades, public library usage has rapidly increased, particularly with people seeking help in finding employment," said Michael Borges, NYLA's Executive Director. "Libraries provide people not only with help in finding jobs, but also with accessing public assistance programs, with basic computer training, help with résumé building and career development."

"When the neediest among us are looking for help, now is not the time to be cutting the very services and assistance New Yorkers rely on the most" Borges said. "When folks lose jobs or cut back on spending for fear of losing their jobs, people turn to libraries for free internet access and books, cds, videos and literacy programs for their families. Libraries have become part of society's safety net for the neediest in our communities." The poll also showed that 75% of libraries have helped a patron access a public assistance program in the last three months.

The Governor's 2009-10 Executive Budget proposes to reduce state funding for library services by \$18 million or 18%, which would reduce Library Aid to \$80.5 million, a level not seen since 1993. These cuts are on top of the two cuts already imposed on libraries in 2008, reducing Library Aid from \$102 million in 2007 to \$98.5 million at the end of 2008. The proposed cuts will also result in a corresponding loss of \$2 million in federal funds for library services in New York, reducing federal aid from \$9 million to \$7 million by 2011.

Borges stressed that "libraries are willing to do their fair share to address the state's fiscal deficit and we have already contributed twice to reduce the state's budget shortfalls, but we believe these proposed cuts are both draconian and disproportionate. Library traffic is up, circulation is up, and yet the state continues to cut our funding."

"We cannot single-handedly erase rising unemployment but we can be a bridge to hope for New Yorkers. We take our role as a resource for job seekers very seriously. Libraries are much more than just a repository for books – we are a vital part of the economic engine that drives New York State forward", stated Tom Galante, Director of the Queens Library.

Library advocates also pointed to a Zogby poll from last year which showed that a majority of New Yorkers support continued increases in state aid for libraries despite the economic times.

“In fact, 82 percent of New Yorkers support more state funding for updated library books and improved services,” said Borges

**About NYLA:** *The New York Library Association -- America’s first state library association -- was founded in 1890 to lead in the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship to enhance learning, quality of life, and equal opportunity for all New Yorkers. Today, NYLA is working stronger than ever to promote its mission of supporting libraries and information services.*

To learn more about the New York Library Association, please visit [www.nyla.org](http://www.nyla.org).