



April 13, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

First, we want to personally thank you for your leadership and continued work on COVID-19 relief efforts in our state.

During these unprecedented times, having access to digital resources is critically important. Libraries have stepped up to successfully deliver these resources to communities in need throughout New York. However, libraries, like other public and private institutions, are fulfilling community needs while anticipating lost revenue.

While many buildings are closed, libraries continue to serve on the forefront of digital equity by supporting home broadband access, loaning devices and offering technical support. Many libraries have hotspot lending programs for underserved families and students who do not have internet access at home. Libraries offer e-books, audiobooks, online learning, and tutoring sites for homework help. They stream story times, book discussions, and author visits to engage readers of all ages. They offer access to skill-building activities and resume development for those who have been recently unemployed, as well as to telehealth resources and trustworthy public health information.

School and academic librarians continue to be essential guides within our schools and institutions of higher education, leading everyday teaching and learning towards methods and outcomes that best prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. They have helped their institutions pivot to remote learning with direct instruction, digitization and curation of instructional materials, professional development for colleagues, and coordination of online instructional tools.

The Governor's Emergency Relief Fund under section 18002 of the CARES Act allows governors to allocate funds for emergency support to local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and any "education related entity" within the state that the governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services as described in section 18003(d)(1) of the CARES Act or in the Higher Education Act; for the provision of child care, early childhood education, or social and emotional support; and for the protection of education-related jobs.

We urge you to note that “other education related entity” includes libraries. By dedicating a portion of this funding to libraries, they will be able to maintain the staffing and services necessary to scale up relief efforts already underway and, equally important, to foster community resilience as we emerge from this crisis.

On behalf of the New York Library Association and our 7000+ members across the state, thank you for your commitment to libraries and for your consideration of our request as you begin implementation of the CARES Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Johannesen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeremy Johannesen
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Briana N. McNamee". The signature is cursive and written in a slightly slanted orientation.

Briana McNamee
Director of Government Relations & Advocacy