



March 17, 2021

We are writing you today on behalf of our state's local, public, school, and academic libraries and library systems, and the more than 10 million New Yorker's who hold library cards.

First, let us reflect on the Governor's dangerous cuts to the library community. The Executive budget included a:

- 7.5% reduction to Library Aid
- Construction Aid proposal that addresses less than 1% of the community need
- Consolidation and reduction of reimbursable aid which includes school library materials

Next, we want to thank you. Your proposals indicated an understanding that, even with fiscal challenges ahead, our libraries require funding to serve your constituents and our beloved communities.

As the final budget language is crafted, we urge you to consider the following:

**State Library Aid: \$123.1**

The State Library Aid program is the primary source of funding for New York's library systems, which provide shared services and resources to each library in New York. These system services ensure that every community, and every New Yorker, regardless of relative wealth, has access to quality library materials and services. Library system services are efficient, effective, and empower libraries. According to the State Education Department (SED), each dollar invested in the State Library Aid program returns seven dollars in local library services.

**Library Construction: \$45M**

The State Division of Library Development estimates that library renovation and construction needs are \$1.5B statewide. Over 50% of public libraries in NYS are 60+ years old, and an additional 31% are 30+ years old. Investment in the Library Construction Aid program must be increased to address aging infrastructure, energy inefficient buildings and the evolving ways people use libraries.

**School Libraries:**

The consolidation of expense-based aid categories into a new "Services Aid" will have unintended and possibly disastrous consequences.

Under current law, library materials may be purchased and reimbursed to a school district at the rate of up to \$6.25 per pupil. School library materials include audio, visual, and printed materials. Without the dedicated funding provided by Library Materials Aid program, school libraries will be unable to maintain their current collections curated to reflect the diverse literacy needs of their students.

**Digital Inclusion Grant Program:**

Libraries provide access to resources such as internet, computers, and digital literacy programs for New Yorkers of all ages. With additional funding, libraries could expand their services and programs to a larger population.

We ask you to continue fighting on behalf of our local libraries and library services.

Your constituents, your community, and New York's libraries are counting on you.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Johannesen  
Executive Director



Briana McNamee  
Director of Government Relations & Advocacy