

**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mike Nepl, Director of Government Relations / [advocate@nyla.org](mailto:advocate@nyla.org)

Phone: (518) 432-6952 x102

**SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE:**

**30% OF NEW YORKERS RELY ON LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY AS PRIMARY SOURCE OF INTERNET ACCESS;  
20% OF WOMEN AND LATINO HOUSEHOLDS, 30% OF HOUSEHOLDS EARNING LESS THAN \$50,000  
ANNUALLY**

**75% OF NEW YORKERS: PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE CRITICAL RESOURCE FOR FINDING  
TRUSTWORTHY INFORMATION**

**CONFIRMS PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE INDISPENSIBLE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR WOMEN,  
COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS**

**ALBANY, NY** – A Siena College Research Institute poll conducted between January 30<sup>th</sup> – February 12<sup>th</sup> of this year confirms that public libraries are leading the charge in bridging the equity gap, as New Yorkers increasingly rely on the education and technology services provided by libraries.

New York State Education Law requires a minimum level of state funding necessary to ensure every New Yorker, in every community, has access to quality library services. The minimum funding for FY2018-19 is \$102.6 million, though NYS has failed to meet this minimum funding threshold each year since 2007. Chronic underfunding of library services continues to ignore the needs of New Yorkers – particularly those needs of economically vulnerable citizens and historically disadvantaged communities.

As New Yorkers increasingly identify their local public libraries as crucial providers of childhood literacy programs and career enhancement services, for the third consecutive year polling data also found libraries serve as indispensable points of internet access: for 30% of respondents, or nearly five million New Yorkers, including 20% of women, 20% of Latinos, 30% of households making less than \$50,000 annually, their local public library serves as their primary point of internet access.

The Siena poll findings include:

- 60% of New Yorkers have recently utilized the resources of their local public library, with 75% of those respondents indicating they use the library at least once a month, and 25% indicating they visit at least once a week;
- 75% of respondents indicate their local library plays an important role in helping people find trustworthy information, including nearly 85% of Latino respondents;
- 47% of African-American, and 30% of Latino respondents, as well as 30% of those without a college education have recently used the library for career building and job seeking;
- 89% say their local library contributes an important role in creating educational opportunities for people of all ages;
- 48% of respondents indicate that they have pursued personal learning activities through the offerings of their local library, compared to 51% indicating those activities took place in high schools or colleges, and 38% indicating museums or community centers;
- New Yorkers value library services in all settings: 97% say it is important that elementary school students have access to a school library staffed by a certified school librarian, 96% say it is important in the secondary school setting, and 91% in the college setting.

These results make clear that Governor Cuomo and state policymakers are out of touch with New Yorkers when it comes to valuing library services, and confirms prior polling that showed 90% support increased funding, and 92% consider their public library as a core component of their local education infrastructure. State Library Aid should be fully-funded under the law, but funding must at least increase in proportion to any increase in overall education funding.

**About NYLA:**

The New York Library Association (NYLA) educates and advocates on behalf of New York's library community. NYLA is the oldest state library association in the country and represents school, college, special and public libraries, library staff, trustees, and students from around the state.

NYLA is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff in Albany and serves as the spokesperson on library matters to the media and public policymakers.

For more information contact:

Michael Neppi  
General Counsel & Director of Government Relations and Advocacy  
New York Library Association  
advocate@nyla.org  
518-432-6952  
www.nyla.org

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