



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

6021 State Farm Road, Guilderland, NY 12084
518-432-6952 / 518-427-1697 FAX
info@nyla.org
www.nyla.org

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

December 21, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mike Nepl, Director of Government Relations / advocate@nyla.org
Phone: (518) 432-6952 x102

**NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARIES URGE GOVERNOR CUOMO TO END FUNDING CUTS
DECADE OF REDUCED STATE AID HAS INCREASED LOCAL TAX BURDENS; THREATENS INTERNET ACCESS
FOR MILLIONS OF NEW YORKERS; ENDANGERS EARLY LITERACY & EDUCATION PROGRAMS
SIENA RESEARCH POLL: 90% OF NEW YORKERS DEMAND INCREASED STATE LIBRARY AID**

ALBANY, NY – New York’s twenty-three public library systems, on behalf of all seven hundred fifty-six local public libraries throughout the state, have released a letter calling on Governor Cuomo to end the decade of damaging funding cuts to the State Library Aid program. The State Library Aid program is the primary source of funding for New York’s twenty-three public library systems, which provide shared services and resources for each of the state’s local public libraries. Public library system services ensure that every community, regardless of relative wealth, has access to a quality local library.

According to the State Education Department (SED), each dollar invested in the State Library Aid program returns seven dollars in local library services; more than \$117M in lost state funding has cost our communities more than \$800M in lost local library services.

“Governor Cuomo has successfully negotiated for increased library funding, but funding cuts that pre-date his administration remain in place, and continue to harm all New Yorkers,” **said Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director of the New York Library Association.** “When New York fails to fund the State Library Aid program, New Yorkers are forced to pay more in local taxes for diminished services. It is not only inefficient, it’s unconscionable.”

New Yorkers overwhelmingly support robust local public library services. According to statistics from SED’s Division of Library Development, local library budgets are approved by voters at a 97% rate. A January 2017 Siena Research poll found that 90% of New Yorkers favored increased State Library Aid, and a clear plurality favored full formula funding of \$102.6M annually.

The Siena Research poll additionally found:

- 92% of respondents indicate that public library services are an important part of their local education infrastructure; including 96% of women, 98% of African-Americans, 95% of Latinos, and 97% of households earning less than \$50,000 annually;
- 60% of respondents have used the services of their local library in the last six months; including a jump in usage across demographics since polling was first conducted in 2012;
- Nearly 80% of respondents indicate that this free access to broadband internet is important in their community, including 90% of African-Americans and 85% of Latinos;
- For 20% of African-American and Latino respondents, and for 25% of households earning less than \$50,000 annually, **the local public library is their primary source of internet access.**

To view the letter sent to Governor Cuomo, visit <http://bit.ly/2kXiv91>

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 of New York's libraries and serves as the spokesperson on library matters to the media and public policymakers.

For more information contact:

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

###