



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

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2015 BUDGET TALKING POINTS

BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Fully fund state library aid at \$102.6M as mandated in state Education Law
- Increase library aid each year in proportion to the increase in general education funding

Background:

- New York State Education Law specifies that state library aid for FY 2015-2016 shall be \$102.6M. This figure is based on the most recent census data. Total funding in last year's enacted budget was \$86.6M.
- In the FY 2014-15 proposed Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo broke with his own years-old precedent and failed to include the prior year's enacted library aid (\$85.6M) as the baseline aid allocation, opting for his prior year Executive Budget proposal of \$81.6M. This proposal amounted to a cut over the previous year's enacted budget (-4.7%), in contrast to his proposed state education aid increased (3.8%).
- Total education spending in last year's enacted budget increased 5.7%, but library aid increased only 1.2%.
- Current library aid is at 1997 levels. Despite the stewardship and dedication of librarians across the state, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide 21st century library services with 20th century funding.
- For two-thirds of households earning less than \$30,000 annually, and for one-third of African-American and Hispanic households, the local library is the primary source of internet access.
- When communities get to vote directly on their library budgets they are approved 96% of the time.
- Libraries and library systems are models of shared services and collaborative planning. According to the State Education Department, local communities realize \$7 in services for every \$1 allocated in state aid.
- The New York State Board of Regents has recommended a \$2.8M increase to the Library Construction Aid program; to begin to address the over \$1B in accumulated need for capital improvements to New York's libraries.
- **Libraries are a core component of our state's educational infrastructure – LIBRARIES ARE EDUCATION:**
 - Libraries are chartered by the same Board of Regents that oversees schools, colleges, BOCES and other educational institutions, and library aid is administered through the NYS Department of Education. Libraries are the leading digital literacy educators in New York State.
 - For pre-school aged children, libraries have continuously provided opportunities for enrichment in an environment dedicated to equality of access and free inquiry. When schools close at the end of each day, each week and each school year, libraries remain open to New York's children families.
 - **Library aid should increase each year in proportion with education funding.**