

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NYS LEGISLATURE PROPOSES HISTORIC \$64M INVESTMENT FOR
LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY CAPITAL & CONSTRUCTION AID**

FUNDING TO MODERNIZE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE; ADDRESS ACCESSIBILITY, ENERGY ISSUES

**NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CALLS ON GOVERNOR CUOMO TO SUPPORT EQUITY AGENDA,
INCLUDE HISTORIC FUNDING IN STATE BUDGET**

ALBANY, NY – Seeking to address the last decade of chronic underfunding for local public library infrastructure and services, leaders and library advocates in the NYS Legislature have proposed historic funding - \$64M for local public library capital and construction aid - in this year's state budget. More than half of New York's local public libraries are at least 60 years old; estimated statewide capital needs exceed \$1.7 billion

The State Senate and Assembly have each introduced legislation which rejects the funding cuts in Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget, and proposes funding to restore library services while making a historic \$64M investment in local public library capital and construction aid. Governor Cuomo's budget proposal slashed capital aid for local public libraries by nearly half, from \$29M to \$14M.

Senator Patty Ritchie, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries: "Libraries are our most trusted source of information, but most are in need of basic upgrades, like those that make them more energy efficient, handicap accessible and able to support changing and growing demands for educational services and the technology required to provide them. Investing in our libraries today means they continue to meet our communities' needs for the future."

Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director of the New York Library Association: "New York's local public libraries are core community educational resources for millions of New Yorkers. We are grateful that our partners in the legislature are seeking to address the past decade of inequitable funding, and we call on Governor Cuomo to partner with the Senate and Assembly to ensure their proposal is included in this year's state budget."

Tim Burke, NYLA President & Executive Director of the Upper Hudson Library System: “The library community is grateful for our partners and advocates in the New York State Legislature, particularly Assemblywoman Didi Barrett and Senator Patty Ritchie,” who chair each house’s respective library committee. “Governor Cuomo has worked to adopt the legislature’s funding recommendations for library programs in recent years, and we encourage him to continue supporting library services in this year’s budget.”

A [Siena College Research Institute poll](#) conducted between January 30th – February 12th 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. Local libraries are providers of childhood literacy programs and career enhancement services, and for the third consecutive year, polling data 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, and 30% of households making less than \$50,000 annually, the local public library is 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.

NYLA encourages supporters to visit nyla.org/advocacy to send a message to Governor Cuomo in support of library funding.

About NYLA:

The New York Library Association (NYLA) is the voice of the library community in New York. 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.

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