

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

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**NYS BUDGET INCLUDES \$34M INVESTMENT FOR
LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY CAPITAL & CONSTRUCTION AID**

FUNDING TO MODERNIZE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE; ADDRESS ACCESSIBILITY, ENERGY ISSUES

ALBANY, NY – Seeking to address the last decade of chronic underfunding for local public library infrastructure and services, New York State leaders have included a \$34M investment for local public library capital & construction aid in the FY2018-2019 state budget. Also included is a \$1M increase to state library aid, bringing the total to \$96.6M, the first increase since 2016.

Both state library aid and library capital & construction aid faced proposed cuts in Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget. Library capital & construction aid would have been scaled back by \$10M, despite a 2016 New York State Education Department report documenting a \$1.7B statewide capital need.

Senator Patty Ritchie, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries: "Libraries are a critical part of our local communities, but many are in need of basic upgrades to make them more energy efficient, handicap accessible and able to support the changing and growing demands for technology," said Senator Ritchie, chair of the Senate's Library Committee. "Knowing how important it is that our libraries are continually meeting these demands and helping people in every way possible is why I fought so hard to deliver this historic funding. I look forward to seeing what this budget can do for the future of libraries across New York State."

Assemblymember Didi Barrett, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Libraries and Education Technology: "Our libraries are playing an increasingly critical role in all our communities -- rural, urban and suburban," Barrett said. "Whether it's providing internet, workforce prep, homework help or simply fellowship, we need libraries that are accessible and technologically sophisticated to meet the needs of our diverse populations in 21st century New York."

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.

The increase in state funding will allow libraries to address their building needs, modernize their broadband infrastructure, and continue to best serve their communities.

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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