



New York State's Public Library Systems

New York State has 23 public library systems that serve over 19 million people statewide.

There are 756 libraries with over 1,100 outlets, including branches, bookmobiles, and other community outlets. **The role of a public library system is to help connect libraries, strengthen local library services, and provide economies of scale through resource sharing and shared services.**

Public library systems were first created in the late 1950s when the State Legislature and Governor authorized the establishment of systems in Education Law. The State created library systems to help expand the resources of local libraries, enabling them to buy services and share resources cooperatively.

Since library systems were created, technology and information needs have changed and the emergence of libraries as important community centers and spaces have meant that library systems have evolved to keep pace with our users' needs.

Today, our public library systems help our members with:

- Support for the latest technologies including shared purchasing of e-books and other digital resources, database purchasing, library makerspaces, and hotspot lending
- Interlibrary loan and delivery of library materials statewide
- An automated catalog of library materials and IT services to member libraries
- Outreach services for persons with challenging conditions and life situations, underserved and unserved communities, and people who have difficulty reading, writing and speaking English
- Access to grants, such as the public library construction grant, and grant writing assistance to members
- Vital professional development and training for both library staff and trustees, especially for libraries with limited budgets
- Consulting services by professional librarians and staff for a variety of areas including library law, trustee and board development, library budgets, collection development, youth services, and human resources topics
- Guidance for our member libraries on youth and early literacy topics such as summer reading, programming, and collections

Public libraries continue to play a vital role in New Yorker's lives, whether it be a place to get library books, use the internet, search and apply for a job, a place to get vital and factual information from a professional librarian, or to take part in a virtual library program.

Public library systems continue to work hard behind the scenes to help support and strengthen our great public libraries in all that they do.

