

Ensuring Our Future

Bridging the Divide

Connecting people with information through libraries



With over 400 public library buildings in New Jersey, the expansion of Network Services in support of economic development and literacy skills would mean that communities statewide would have the resources to ensure that the people of our state are able to compete in today's ever-changing economy.

The State Library continues its focus on learning, innovation and creativity, seeking out exemplary models of technology that can help assist our local libraries to remain relevant and essential community anchors.

Focus on development skills, digital inclusion, early and emergent literacy, adult basic education and support for formal education will help to close the widening educational and digital divide for the workforce of today and tomorrow's technologically sophisticated environment.

The State Library provides additional support for public, school, academic, and special libraries, continuing to promote services for learners of all ages. These include key areas of digital literacy, business outreach, workforce development, and summer reading programs.



New Jersey State Library

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Budget Priorities

New Jersey Residents Need Your Support for New Jersey Libraries

Initiative: Full Funding of Per Capita State Aid

PURPOSE The State Library is requesting an additional \$6.7 million to fund the Per Capita State Aid program at the statutory formula level of \$10.387 million.

The New Jersey Legislature established the Per Capita State Aid program to provide library aid to public libraries in recognition of the important services that public libraries provide for New Jersey residents. This funding helps to maintain and expand library resources and programs

94% of Americans polled say that a public library improves the quality of life in a community.

– PEW RESEARCH

and provides an incentive for libraries to meet minimum standards of service. The formula encourages municipalities and counties to support their public library at an appropriate level.

Initiative: Statewide Information Infrastructure

PURPOSE The State library endeavors to leverage resource sharing and promote economies of scale through larger units of service. We request \$3.6 million in additional Network Aid to support the array of services provided to libraries throughout the state. These efforts focus on economic development, literacy, and the lifelong learning needs of our residents and support the people of New Jersey in their quality of work and life.

▪ \$2 million is for the continuation and expansion of services that public libraries are providing to the unemployed and underemployed people of the state, and New Jersey's small businesses and entrepreneurs.

▪ \$1.6 million is requested in order to address lifelong learning and literacy needs of New Jersey residents. Areas of focus include early literacy, digital inclusion, English as a second language, adult basic education, as well as homework help and support for formal education.

FY2015

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

Initiative: Full Funding of Per Capita State Aid

IMPACT Per Capita State Aid is essentially an incentive program encouraging local governments to invest in their libraries so that they, in turn, may offer quality services, programs and materials to their residents. According to the original statutory intent of the law, it would provide 15-20 percent of the funds for local library budgets. In contrast FY 2014 appropriations provide less than one percent.

Per Capita State Aid funds are the only state funds available to local libraries to be directed toward unique community needs. Per Capita State Aid funds have been used by public libraries to purchase library materials, to support staff salaries and benefits, and for other library operating expenses. Forty seven million library visits, 60 million items circulated, and over 10 million users of public internet computers are indicators of the high demand and usage of New Jersey Public Library resources.

The combination of reduced budgets at the local level as well as a 49 percent decrease in Per Capita State Aid since FY 2011 has resulted in libraries reducing hours, decreasing staff numbers, and closing library branch locations. The restoration

▪ **The State Library is requesting an additional \$6.7 million to restore the Per Capita State Aid program to the statutory formula of \$10.387 million.**



of Per Capita State Aid funding would allow libraries to reinstate hours of operation and be more available to New Jersey's residents.

Based on the formula in N.J.S.A. 18A:74-3, \$10,387,356 would be required (in FY 2015) to fully fund this program pursuant to the Per Capita State Aid law. This full appropriation would provide less than a modest 2.4 percent of the local libraries' annual budgets.

- **Library budgets have decreased at both the local and state levels.**
- **Due to decreased funding, libraries have reduced hours, furloughed staff, and closed branch locations.**
- **It is imperative that state aid be restored to assist libraries in serving the millions of New Jersey residents who are in need of public library services.**

Initiative: Statewide Information Infrastructure

IMPACT New Jersey's libraries, comprising the State Library and public, school, academic and special libraries provide opportunities and assistance for the people of New Jersey, in support of their pursuit of knowledge, learning and rewarding employment. Key areas of assistance include school readiness, formal education and informal learning, technology skills and digital literacy, business outreach and workforce development. This network of library access points spans the state and is intended to provide resources for all.

- **Funding of \$2 million would allow the State Library to provide increased assistance to job seekers, small businesses and entrepreneurs who benefited greatly from the State Library's federal Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) grant, which ended on June 30, 2013.**

In addition the State Library will be able to expand its existing alliances with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the state's Small Business Resource Centers, and the New Jersey Business Action Center.

Funds would be allocated to reinstate resources and training programs that were utilized by more than 62,000 residents, resulting in 15,000 job applications being submitted.



- **Funding of \$1.6 million for literacy would also provide for an on demand, real-time tutoring service for students in all grades (K-college) to assist them with homework assignments, research papers and studying for standardized tests.**

This type of resource levels the playing field for all students in New Jersey, regardless of school district. Libraries across the state would also be able to provide an online service that provides both English lessons to New Jersey residents who want to learn English,

and lessons in 35 foreign languages for native English speakers who need second language skills for business or travel. Early literacy stations will also be established for the youngest patrons. This will greatly aid in advancing the literacy skills of the people of New Jersey.