

Support for New York State Libraries Is Under Threat—Act Now!

The New York State (NYS) Library relies on \$8.1 million in federal funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through its Grants to States Program. This funding is crucial for supporting New York's 7,000 libraries, 72 library systems, and the NYS Library itself. Notably, 55 of the NYS Library's 84 positions are funded by these federal dollars. The anticipated loss of this funding will severely undermine the NYS Library and jeopardize essential services for communities across the state.

Critical Services at Stake

Administration of State-Level Services for Public Libraries and Library Systems

Every action of the State Library is driven by its mission to empower libraries. As local libraries face numerous challenges, the State Library is committed to designing policies that strengthen their resilience, expand access, and support their long-term success. This includes:

- **Ensuring Essential Funding for Local Libraries:** Distributing \$104.6 million in State Aid to support libraries of all types, with a focus on timely, efficient allocation and strong oversight to maximize impact. Our commitment is to ensure libraries receive the resources they need to serve and strengthen their communities effectively.
- **Maximizing Public Library Construction Aid:** Managing \$45 million in funding to help libraries—especially small and rural ones—secure critical resources for facility improvements. We provide hands-on support in reviewing and strengthening applications, ensuring libraries can meet state standards and create safe, accessible, and modern spaces for their communities.
- **Providing Technical Assistance:** Supporting 762 public libraries with expert guidance on chartering, funding, governance, and accountability to strengthen their operations and ensure that every New Yorker has reliable access to vital library services.
- **Administering Legislative and Discretionary Grant Programs:** Including initiatives like Conservation and Preservation Grants for libraries and cultural institutions and priorities of the legislature, such as Dolly Parton Imagination Library Participation Grants.
- **Processing Public Librarian Certification and Overseeing Trustee Education:** Enabling job placements of recent graduates and ensuring library boards receive necessary trustee training to fulfill their responsibilities.

Stewardship of the New York State Library's Research Library and Special Collections

Threats to this institution are a threat to the State's history and the fundamental principles of democracy, which rely on an informed public and the free access of information.

- **Operating a Historic Institution:** The New York State Library, established in 1818 is renowned for its extensive collections and is the largest state library in the nation.
- **Caring for the 20 Million Library Items:** Our collections document the history of New York and the nation, including treasures like George Washington's original draft of his Farewell Address and the handwritten draft of Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

- **Providing Expert Research Assistance:** Through digitization efforts and reference services, we provide access to a wealth of information for researchers worldwide.

Support Services for Libraries and Communities Across the State

The landscape of library services is continuously evolving. The State Library provides the leadership and resources necessary to meet these changing needs. Even state-funded initiatives rely on federal funding for effective administration.

- **Ready to Read at New York's Libraries:** Leading early literacy initiatives to ensure that every child has access to evidence-based learning opportunities in their local library.
- **Social Work and Libraries:** Addressing the needs of vulnerable community members by convening library workers to develop effective support strategies.
- **Summer Reading at New York Libraries:** A cherished tradition that funds learning opportunities for children year-long, entirely funded by federal support.
- **Administration of the New York Electronic Virtual Library (NOVELny):** Offering essential research databases to schools and libraries, ensuring equitable access to information literacy skills for all students, regardless of their district's wealth.
- **Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY):** Supporting libraries and cultural institutions in preserving documents that safeguard New York's community histories.
- **Professional Development and Training:** Providing continuing education opportunities for librarians, trustees, and educators to enhance their skills, ensuring that New York's libraries can thrive.

And More...

Without the State Library, there is no organization to establish the policies and priorities that guide our libraries, leaving them exposed to threats that could undermine their very existence. Libraries are not merely symbols of equity, access, and opportunity; they are the driving force behind those values in every community across our state. The State Library is unwavering in its commitment to this mission, diligently supporting libraries through every facet of its work—whether through essential administrative functions or ambitious statewide initiatives.