

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

May 20, 2017



STATE BUDGET The Governor's Executive Budget Proposal for 2017-19 was introduced to the legislature in February as twin finance bills AB64 and SB30 and assigned to the powerful Joint Finance Committee where the legislative review process begins. JFC public hearings were scheduled in Platteville, West Allis and Berlin, Spooner, Ellsworth and Marinette in April WLA's legislative committee organized library advocacy testimony at all six hearings.



Ten librarians and trustees from WVLS and NWLS attended the fourth public hearing on the state budget conducted by JFC at Spooner High School on April 18. **Thorp Public Library Director Julie Beloungy** testified in support of a modest increase of \$1.5 million to public library system aids in 2017-2019 budget. Marla Sepnanski and Kris Adams Wendt represented WVLS.

Spooner JFC hearing video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lth_Rp33u3E
Library testimony starts at 00:50:00

NEXT STEPS: An amendment to the budget bill raising the allocation to public library systems by the requested \$1.5 million has been drafted by 35th District Rep. Mary Felzkowski. The JFC will hold Executive Sessions on specific agency budgets in the weeks to come. The Department of Public Instruction budget is generally one of the last to be reviewed. (In 2015, consideration of DPI came on May 19 with an omnibus motion covering many changes adopted on May 20.)

ACTION ITEMS: Send "Thank you for being a Library Champion" notes to Rep. Mary Felzkowski, P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708-8952. Send "Thank you for your past support of libraries and please endorse Rep. Felzkowski's budget amendment for a modest \$1.5 million increase to public library systems" notes to fellow JFC member Sen. Tom Tiffany, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882.



FEDERAL BUDGET The White House budget calls for eliminating the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS), the only federal agency charged with providing support to libraries and museums. Shutting down IMLS would subtract a total \$231 million (\$183 million of which are LSTA funds) from the three-legged stool of federal, state and local funding support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums.

The IMLS Grants to States program allocated \$2,670,703 to Wisconsin in 2016. LSTA funding pays for 65% of the 20.8 FTE DPI staff members responsible for leadership and coordination of Wisconsin library services statewide. Potential impact includes, but is not limited to: management of BadgerLink and WISCAT, consultation to public libraries and public library systems, early literacy and youth services, the Coordinated Summer Library Program, inclusive services for all ages, Growing Wisconsin Readers, and Wisconsin's Digital Archives.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: The push for US House members to sign FY18 letters of support for IMLS (as well as Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL), a smaller program that has been the primary source for federal funding of school libraries) garnered signatures from one-third of the entire House of Representatives. Backing came mainly from the minority party, but was sufficient to be noticed. The FY17 omnibus spending bill approved on May 3 includes an extra \$1 million to IMLS.

ACTION ITEMS: Ask Wisconsin Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson to support federal library funding at <http://cgrcengage.com/ala/?4> Please continue to seek opportunities for messaging US Representative Duffy about IMLS and LSTA grants importance to states and local libraries. <https://duffy.house.gov/contact/offices>

April 18, 2017

To Senator Alberta Darling (Co-Chair), Representative John Nygren (Co-Chair) and members of the Joint Committee on Finance;

Thank you for supporting Wisconsin libraries during the last legislative session, both through maintenance of state funding, and by co-sponsoring legislation such as the Return of Library Materials bill. I am the Director of the small rural Thorp Public Library in Clark County. I look forward to testifying before the committee at Spooner High School to urge you to support a modest increase of \$1.5 million in state aid to Wisconsin's 16 public library systems. There has been no increase to system funding since the statewide appropriation was cut 10% in 2011.

The Thorp Public Library is a member of Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) headquartered in Wausau. WVLS serves 25 libraries in Clark, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon and Taylor Counties. The Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) headquartered in Ashland serves 30 libraries in eight northwest Wisconsin counties. Public library system services run in the background as an underlying operating structure, like Windows 10, while our citizens only see their local library as the screen face of hometown service. Most libraries in our two library systems are small like mine, with similar challenges.

During the 10 years I have directed programs and services at the Thorp Public Library, our budget has stretched tighter and tighter to cover the cost of daily operations. We have cut staff, purchased fewer items for our collection, trimmed our programming budget, and scaled back on updating computers and investing in new technologies. We could not function without WVLS support, particularly the technical expertise and shared foundation it provides for networked interlibrary loan services and computer infrastructure. Thorp Public Library is the only place in our community that offers computer access with fast Internet connection. I wish I could personally show you all the ways public library systems help tiny libraries like mine provide reliable broadband access, support workforce development, and are a resource for lifelong learning.

Let me close by introducing you to just a few familiar faces at Thorp Public Library:

- **Sally** came to the library to watch an online video course necessary for job training at a local business. She doesn't have cell phone reception at her rural home, much less the bandwidth to do her training.
- **Mary** is a person with a disability. She found employment with help from a representative of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, who uses our community room as his office once a month.
- **George and Fred** need library computers for video trainings required by their fast food restaurant employer because neither one can afford home Internet access.
- **James** wanted to apply for a job at a manufacturing company that did not accept paper applications. He had never used a computer. We helped him create a resume and apply online.
- **Jennifer** is a mother of two who returned to school in the process of changing careers. Neither she nor our library could afford to purchase the reading materials she required for her classes, but we found them **all** through inter-library loan. Thanks to WVLS, we can offer lifelong learning for both Jennifer and her children so they realize their dreams.

Your thoughtful approval of an additional \$1.5 million for Public Library System aid in the next state budget will be much appreciated.

Thank you!



Julie Beloungy, Director



April 18, 2017 – Spooner Public Hearing

To Senator Alberta Darling (Co-Chair), Representative John Nygren (Co-Chair) and members of the Joint Committee on Finance;

Written testimony submitted from the Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) and Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) represented by:

- Julie Beloungy, Thorp Public Library Director
- Jocelyn Ford, NWLS Trustee/Washburn Co. Supervisor
- Sandy Mackie, NWLS Trustee
- Sherry Machones, NWLS Director, Wisconsin Library Association Legislative Committee
- Patti Meyer, Larsen Family Library Director (Webster)
- Marla Sepnafski, WVLS Director
- Michael Sheehan, NWLS Assistant Director
- Amy Stormberg, Shell Lake Public Library Director
- Kris Adams Wendt, WVLS Youth and Inclusive Services, Wisconsin Library Association Legislative Committee

We are here today on behalf of the citizens who use and value public library services at the 55 (mostly rural) public libraries that open their doors to just under a half million registered borrowers from 15 counties in northwestern Wisconsin. NWLS and WVLS coordinate effective, efficient and accountable shared services and resources which individual libraries cannot afford on their own.

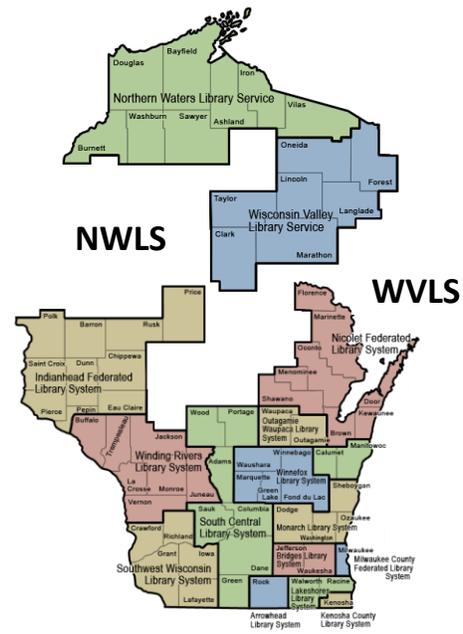
We respectfully request a modest increase to Public Library System Aid of \$1,500,000 SEG in FY18, for an ongoing annual allocation of \$16,513,100. System funding has remained flat since a 10% cut in 2011. Additional state aid will enhance public library system support of local library programs and services such as:

Reliable high speed broadband access: Many of our rural public libraries are the sole providers of reliable high-speed Internet access in their communities. Seasonal visitors, who often double library service populations, depend upon library computers linking them to business and professional work places.

Workforce development support: Public libraries provide essential linkage to information and career guidance, especially where there are no DWD Job Centers. Public library systems coordinate career databases and online courses for local libraries, encouraging start-up businesses and growing Wisconsin’s economy.

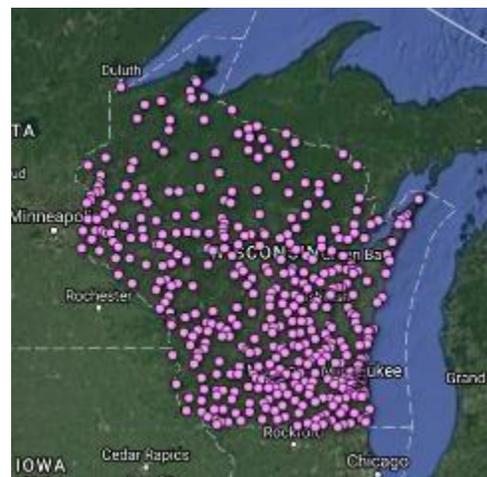
Gateway to lifelong learning: Public library systems support multi-age local programs from early childhood literacy to memory cafes.

Northern Waters Library Service & Wisconsin Valley Library Service



[Wisconsin Public Library System Directory](#)

We are two of 16 public library systems serving 381 public libraries statewide with 3,359,910 registered users...



[Job Center of WI library locations map](#)

... and ensuring every community and individual in the state of Wisconsin has equitable access to library services.

- **Reliable high speed broadband access**
- **Workforce development support**
- **Gateway to lifelong learning**