

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS

Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) 2017-2019 State Budget Priorities

BACKGROUND BRIEFING PAPER FOR LIBRARY SUPPORTERS

THE STATE BUDGET PROCESS: Crafting the biennial Wisconsin State Budget occurs in the odd-numbered year of each two-year legislative session. It begins during the previous summer when the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) which oversees state library funding joins other state agencies in submitting budget requests to Governor's Office for administration review leading to the introduction of the Governor's Budget Request as a legislative bill in January or early February. The Joint Finance Committee (8 Senators and 8 Assembly Representatives, now 12 Republicans and 4 Democrats) holds hearings and submits a modified version of the budget bill to both legislative houses with the final product returned to the Governor by June 30, subject to his vetoes before signing.

CREATING KEY RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATIVE RESULTS: During the last two budget cycles, WLA has focused on building relationships with legislators and the Governor to share stories about the value of libraries to Wisconsin citizens. In the 2015-2016 legislative session, library supporters not only successfully promoted maintenance of state library budget items but also partnered with legislators to pass three bills to improve library services to Wisconsin residents. The 2016 *Libraries Transform!* poster campaign featuring photos of the Governor, Lt. Governor and legislators promoting library use raised visibility of Wisconsin's effective, efficient and accountable network of hometown libraries.

LIBRARY FUNDING IN THE 2017-2019 BUDGET: WLA is now well positioned to seek a modest increase in public library system aids in the next biennial budget while maintaining state support of core library services. In 2016, the WLA Library Development & Legislation Committee collaborated with the System and Resource Library Administrator's Association (SRLAAW) to develop and present a budget proposal to the Governor's Office for consideration. **A team of WLA representatives met with a Senior Policy Analyst on December 1 to discuss an increase of \$1.5 million for public library systems.** The attached document describes how additional funding would be used to support Governor Walker's priorities of workforce development, broadband access, and lifelong learning.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: Now is the time to talk to legislators who can help influence the budget process and include increased funding for public library system aids, as well as maintain other core state library services. **You can help by talking to your Senator and Assembly Representative, especially if your legislators are members of the Joint Finance Committee!**

Members of the 2017-2018 Joint Finance Committee

Senate: Co-Chair Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), Vice-Chair Senator Luther Olsen (R-Ripon), Senator Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls), Senator Leah Vukmir (R-Brookfield), Senator Marklein (R-Spring Green), Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Little Rice), Senator John Erpenbach (D-Madison) and Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee). **Assembly:** Co-Chair Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette), Vice-Chair Rep. Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield), Rep. Mary (Czaja) Felzkowski (R-Irma), Rep. Amy Loudenberg (R-Clinton), Rep. Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam), Rep. Mike Rohrkaste (R-Neenah), Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) and Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point).

Wisconsin Elected Officials website: <http://www.wisconsin.gov/Pages/electedOfficials.aspx>

TELLING THE LIBRARY STORY

WHY ARE WLA'S STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES IMPORTANT TO YOUR LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY?

Request for Modest Funding Increase to Public Library System Aid

- *WLA seeks an increase of \$1,500,000 SEG in FY18, for an ongoing annual allocation of \$16,531,000.*
- Increased resources dedicated to supporting workforce development, children with limited broadband access, and lifelong learning

TELL YOUR LIBRARY STORY: What public library system does your county belong to? How do public library system services strengthen your local library? How does your local public library support community members seeking to improve their employment skills, change careers and apply for jobs? Or provide citizens of all ages who have no reliable home Internet access with vital broadband for homework assignments, government services, and online courses? Or offer lifelong learning opportunities from early literacy programs that help young brains get ready for school to programs for the elderly that help preserve cognitive function and build important social networks?

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND: A network of library systems serves 381 local public libraries across the state. Public library systems coordinate high-speed telecommunications networks, management of automated shared catalogs and inter-library loan delivery for their member libraries, providing effective, efficient and accountable services and resources which individual libraries cannot afford on their own. System support rarely steps out from behind the curtain in the public consciousness; it is designed to allow local libraries to occupy center stage and make the most of local resources when meeting the unique needs of individual communities.

Distribution of state aid to public library systems is based on a formula in the manner of federal block grants. This allows local control and best decision making, tailoring a wide range of state-funded system services to meet different regional needs across Wisconsin. Public Library system services evolve and respond as changes in society, resources and technology create new demands and opportunities in local communities.

Current law (43.24 (6), Wis. Stats.) requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Division for Libraries and Technology to set public library systems funding at a 13% index level of the previous year's local and county library expenditures in its biennial budget request. Public library system funding has been frozen since 2012 after sustaining a 10% cut in 2011. Current funding is at a 6.3% index level.

Maintain Core State Library Services

Library Service Contracts between DPI and the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, the Cooperative Children's Book Center, Milwaukee Public Library and UW-Madison provide access to specialized library materials and information not available in local public libraries. **Newsline for the Blind** and **BadgerLink** database resources are provided exclusively for use by all Wisconsin residents via the Internet and are not available through regular search engines such as Google. The "cost to continue" request is to maintain these contracts and services at current levels.

Request for Statutory Change to WISEdash and WISEdata (no funding change)

Expenditure from the WISEdash and WISEdata systems administered by the Department of Public Instruction is currently restricted to collecting data for pupils in public, independent charter and private schools. The request is to change statutory language to also allow expenditure for public library related collections and data maintenance.

NEED MORE INFORMATION? Contact WLA Library Development & Legislation Committee Co-Chairs:
Kathy Pletcher, Trustee, Nicolet Federated Library System klletcher@gmail.com
Connie Meyer, Director, Bridges Library System cmeyer@bridgeslibrarysystem.org



Wisconsin Library Association 2017-2019 State Budget Priorities

Request for Modest Funding Increase to Public Library Systems

Increased Funding Resources Dedicated to Children with Limited Broadband Access

Many rural areas of Wisconsin lack access to technology services and the internet. Similarly, homeschool children or children of lower income families are not able to access the internet for homework assignments. Increased funding for Public Library System Aids would be directed to expand technology services such as wireless hotspots for home use. An increased investment in Public Library System Aids benefits the 381 local public libraries and their communities across the state, providing new technology resources which individual libraries currently cannot budget based on the previous state allocations. Improved access for libraries is improved access for citizens.

Increased Funding Resources Dedicated to Workforce Development

Wisconsin's public libraries have long provided valuable support to residents seeking to improve their career skills, change careers, and apply for jobs. The requested funds for the 2017-2019 budget will be directed towards online courses and technology training that help people with new careers and mid-career changes resulting from layoffs or industry changes. For many people, the public library is the only gateway to advanced learning at technical colleges and universities leading to higher paying jobs and start-up businesses that grow Wisconsin's economy.

Increased Funding for Lifelong Learning

Public libraries are a gateway to a better life through lifelong learning. The library is the only institution that serves residents in all stages of life. Early literacy programs help young brains develop and get kids ready for school. Public libraries are the only library for homeschool children. Summer reading programs increase literacy achievement over the summer gap. STEM programs for young adults encourage students to consider careers in science, technology, and engineering—much needed for Wisconsin's economic development. Online courses and in-house technology training assists workers with mid-career changes and are especially important to citizens who lack basic technology skills. Public library resources and programs for the elderly help preserve cognitive function and provide social networks-- important in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Budget Increase Requested

- **WLA seeks an increase of \$1,500,000 SEG in FY18, for an ongoing annual allocation of \$16,531,000**
- Previous Budget annual base appropriation: \$15,031,000
(Note: DPI requested an increase of \$16,377,100 SEG in FY18 and \$17,004,900 SEG in FY19)
- Public library system funding was cut by 10% in 2011 and has not been increased since

Maintain Core State Library Services

- **BadgerLink:** no change in funding request
- **Library Service Contracts:** DPI requests an increase of \$3,200 SEG in FY18 and \$7,100 SEG in FY19 to fund the estimated costs of the library service contracts
- **Newsline for the Blind:** DPI requests an increase of \$16,900 SEG in FY18 and \$35,300 SEG in FY19 to maintain the current level of services for Newsline for the Blind

Extend WISEdata and WISEdash appropriation to public libraries as well as schools (no funding change)

WLA supports a statutory change to allow appropriations under s. 20.255 (1) (e), Wis. Stats. (Student information system, or "WISEdata"), and under s. 20.255 (1) (ek), Wis. Stats. (Longitudinal data system, or "WISEdash") to be used for public library as well as school information systems.