

NYLA'S 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

- Advance legislation safeguarding intellectual freedom and combating censorship in all library settings.
- Support: Open Shelves Act – S.1100-A (May)/A.3119-B (Kelles)
- Support: Freedom to Read Act - S.8630 (May)/A.9537 (Simone)

EBOOK LICENSING REFORM

- Establish legal protections related to the licensing and purchase of electronic materials in library settings that prevent the inclusion of exploitative terms.
- Remove barriers to development of stable electronic collections.
- Support: A.3589 (Carroll)

MEDIA LITERACY

- Pursue legislation that expands Media Literacy education in New York schools and solidify the role of Certified Library Media Specialists as leaders in the discipline.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

- Develop and support legislative solutions to long-standing issues with civil service that negatively impact recruitment and retention of library workers.

NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION FY 2027 BUDGET REQUESTS



1

LIBRARY OPERATING AID: \$181.32M

Increased aid is needed to support the foundational framework of NYS libraries, improving the lives of residents of all ages, abilities and economic status. In FY 1992, NYS assessed the statutory need for Library Aid at \$76M. Adjusted for inflation, today that need is \$181.32M.

2

LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION AID: \$175M

Increased aid is needed to support the foundational framework of NYS libraries, improving the lives of residents of all ages, abilities and economic status. In FY 1992, NYS assessed the statutory need for Library Aid at \$76M. Adjusted for inflation, today that need is \$181.32M.

3

LIBRARY MATERIALS AID: \$11.33/PUPIL

Since 2007 the per pupil rate has remained flat at \$6.25. In recent years, the average cost of a hardcover book purchased by a school library was \$26.25. Current funding levels cover just one quarter of one new book per pupil.

4

NOVELNY: \$3.1M

A \$3.1 million allocation for the continuation of the NOVELny program would ensure equity of access to essential database and digital resources for all New Yorkers, from students in K-12 classrooms to life-long learners in the public setting.

5

CULTURAL EDUCATION FUNDING: \$12M

Immediate action is needed to stabilize funding for the New York State Office of Cultural Education, including the State Library, Archives, Museum, Summer School for the Arts, and Public Broadcasting Program. NYLA supports the \$12M appropriation proposed by the NYS Board of Regents in its FY 2027 priorities.

LIBRARY OPERATING AID

REQUEST: \$181.32M

What is Library Operating Aid?

Statutory funding for use by each library type and system. State aid is leveraged by regional library systems to support eBook access, interlibrary loan, delivery, continuing education, coordination of collection development, automation, and other resource sharing activities.

Why is it Important?

New York's library systems are almost wholly funded by state aid. Without adequate aid, systems will be unable to provide member libraries with the shared resources they rely on to deliver consistent patron experiences. Without these resources, many of our state's libraries would be incapable of independent operation.

Where Are We Now?

- **The FY 2027 Executive Budget proposes cutting aid by \$1.655M, from \$106.325M to \$104.67M, the minimum funding required under Ed Law for the coming fiscal year.**
- **Last year was the first since FY 2009 to meet this statutory requirement. A cut would subvert this progress and fail to address the more than \$155M in statutory State Library Aid has been withheld since FY 2007-2008, with over \$200M withheld since the formula's introduction in FY 1991-1992.**
- Persistent underfunding has disenfranchised millions of vulnerable New Yorkers who lack access to information resources and trusted, community-based professionals.
- Operational costs and patron needs for new services are growing far faster than existing budgets can accommodate – stagnant or reduced funding will render the ability of libraries and systems to serve their patrons at current levels virtually impossible

Where Should We Be?

\$181.32 million in State Aid for Libraries to shore-up existing operations, expand collections via subscriptions and e-titles, retain new staff, and create comprehensive programming for beginners and advanced learners during a time of uncertainty for federal library funding that our State Library relies on.

If fully funded, libraries and their staff can expand their reach to ensure that library materials, programs, and services match the rapidly evolving needs of New Yorkers and their communities.

LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION AID

REQUEST: \$175M

What is Library Construction Aid?

Funds that are allocated annually in the State Budget for the use of public libraries and systems for construction, renovation, rehabilitation, or acquisition of new space. Other eligible or unique projects include broadband installation, emergency generators, and security systems.

Why is it Important?

- The capital provided by Library Construction Aid enables individual libraries to effectively leverage local funds to fulfil critical infrastructure needs. In this way, the program facilitates the completion of projects that would often not be possible without the additional support that dedicated state dollars provide.
- Left unaddressed, construction needs compound and can ultimately threaten community access to library facilities. Whether a library requires funds for a new roof, an ADA compliant ramp, or broadband infrastructure the purpose of its project is to ensure the continued provision of high-quality services and materials to its patrons.

Where Are We Now?

- New York State's public library buildings are rapidly aging, with over half of our library facilities over 60 years old. The most recent available data provided by the New York State Education Department documents an existing \$1.75B in capital needs statewide between 2023 and 2027.
- The FY2026 enacted budget allocated only \$44 million for the State Aid for Library Construction Program, approximately 2.5% of current need. Funding has remained stagnant at the current level since FY2019, with a temporary dip to \$14 million in 2020.

Where Should We Be?

- The New York Library Association is requesting an allocation of \$175 million for Library Construction Aid in FY 2027. This represents 50% of one year of New York's statewide need, the leverage for libraries' local matches.
- Increased investment would allow public libraries to maintain and develop their physical infrastructure to ensure they are safe, accessible, and sustainable for everyone.
- Expanded budgets mean expanded spaces and possibilities that promote literacy, creativity, civic engagement and thriving communities.

LIBRARY MATERIALS AID

REQUEST: \$11.33/PUPIL

What is Library Materials Aid (LMA)?

- LMA is a category of Instructional Materials Aid, along with Textbook, Software, and Computer Hardware & Equipment Aid. It is intended to supplement local funds budgeted for school library program support.
- LMA is allocated to school districts via reimbursement, with a maximum award set by law as \$6.25 per public and non-public school student residing within a school district's boundaries.
- LMA, in conjunction with all categories of Instructional Materials Aid, is critical for reducing inequitable access to educational resources and technology.

What is LMA Used For?

- School library materials eligible for reimbursement include digital materials, audio/visual materials, and printed materials that are catalogued and processed as part of the school library or media center for use by elementary and/or secondary school children and teachers, are expected to last more than one year after use, and are ineligible for Textbook or Software Aid.
- Examples of materials eligible for aid include hard cover and paperback books, e-books, print and digital periodicals, print and digital published materials, and documents other than books, such as pamphlets, musical scores, videos, audio recordings, maps, charts, or globes.
- **When funded adequately, these resources ensure school library collections are modern, culturally responsive, reflect student interest, and meet the diverse educational needs of the students they serve.**

What Do We Need?

- **For FY2027, NYLA request an increase of the LMA per pupil rate from \$6.25 to \$11.33**
- The per-pupil allocation for **Library Materials Aid has remained flat since 2007 while costs have steadily increased.**
- When purchased by a school library, the average cost of a new hardcover title is \$26.25, meaning **current funding covers roughly just 1/4 of one new book per pupil.**
- For FY2023, New York State Board of Regents recommended increasing LMA to \$10.55/pupil and tying future adjustments to inflation.
- Chapter 571 of the Laws of 2023 expanded LMA to include digital materials. Without increasing funding existing aid will either be diluted or new allowances will go unutilized.
- Updating the per pupil allocation for each library materials aid to reflect inflation would benefit students in and out of the classroom.

NOVELNY

REQUEST: \$3.1M

What is NOVELny?

- Established in 2000 and facilitated by the New York State Library, NOVELny is a curated collection of databases and resources; offering access to hundreds of academic journals, magazines newspapers, maps, charts, research, and reference materials available to all New Yorkers free of charge.
- New York State residents may access the service using a public library card or via geolocation on the NOVELny website.
- Students may also access the NOVELny databases through their school or academic library.

By purchasing centrally via the New York State Library, each dollar spent on NOVELny provides \$97 worth of access for our state's residents and ensure continued statewide access.

Why is NOVELny Important?

All New Yorkers, regardless of age, socioeconomic standing, or local funding, deserve equitable access to reliable, reputable information resources that allow them to be lifelong learners and informed citizens.

- NOVELny is an embedded resource in school, public, and academic libraries, with over two decades of integration in lesson plans and curriculum maps in school districts statewide.
- Without the advantages offered by state contract rates and central purchasing, the cost of obtaining the resources provided by NOVELny would be prohibitive for a large portion of public, academic, and school libraries across our state. Particularly for libraries in high-need schools and economically distressed communities.
- Continuation of NOVELny is essential if we are to remain committed to the advancement of digital equity and the provision of robust education for all – not just those with the greatest financial means.

Where Are We Now?

- In FY 2025, the New York State Board of Regents requested \$3M for the continuation of NOVELny in its Budget and Legislative Priorities for the 2024-25 School Year.
- Both the Legislature and Governor Hochul advanced it in both FY 2025 and FY 2026, securing access to the platform for the last two years. This must continue in FY 2027.
- **The New York Library Association requests an allocation of \$3.1M in FY2027 to ensure the continuation of NOVELny without any price-increase related cuts to existing services.**

CULTURAL EDUCATION FUNDING

REQUEST: \$12M

What is the Office of Cultural Education (OCE)

The OCE is the steward of New York's knowledge and information resources, the OCE is charged with maintaining and strengthening the New York State Library (NYSL), State Archives, State Museum, Summer School of the Arts, and Public Broadcasting Program.

Why is it Important?

Without the vital work of the OCE and NYSL to empower and support local efforts, New York's libraries would be unable to deliver services to patrons at current levels. The NYSL administers state-level services for public libraries and library systems. In practical terms, this means ensuring essential funding for local libraries is efficiently disbursed, maximizing library construction aid via review and support for applications, providing technical assistance to New York's 762 public libraries, administering legislative and discretionary grant programs, processing public librarian certification, and overseeing trustee education.

Additionally, operation of the largest State Library in the nation and preservation of one of the largest library collections in the world, with over 20 million catalogued items.

Where Are We Now?

- The main source of operational funding for the New York State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education (OCE), is a one-time \$15 fee collected on Real Estate Deed Transfers. This fee has not increased since it was established in 2002.
- In the last 24 years, the resources required to operate the OCE have skyrocketed, with baseline costs like wages and associated benefits for OCE employees more than doubling since its inception. Additionally, in the wake of the 2008 housing market collapse the state diverted \$40M in accumulated revenues from the fee that was never restored.
- As such, the OCE and NYSL have run deficits in 15 of the past 17 years. Without reform, existing deficits are projected to reach between \$12M and \$18M in the coming years, threatening the ability of these institutions to deliver on their core missions.

Where Should We Be?

NYLA Supports the New York State Board of Regents' proposal for a \$12M general fund appropriation in FY 2027 to stabilize funding for the Office of Cultural Education.

This \$12M funding was included in FY 2027 Executive Budget.

HISTORY OF LIBRARY AID - FORMULA VS. ACTUAL FY1992 - FY2026

