



Advocacy Talking Points

- Library Aid should not be targeted for disproportionate cuts. The Governor has proposed a 10% cut in Library Aid compared to a 7.3% cut in school aid and a 2% cut in municipal aid (AIM). Library funding should be treated in an equitable manner. Libraries were among the last to receive increases during good economic times, going 8 years (1998-2006) without an increase and yet are the first to receive cuts when economic conditions worsen.
- Library Aid has already been cut five times in the last three years, declining from \$102 million in 2008 to \$84.45 million in 2010 (a combined 18% or \$18 million reduction). The latest proposed cut would reduce funding to \$76 million or below 1994 levels. These combined cuts will result in a reduction of over \$3 million in federal LSTA funds for NYS.
- Library usage is up across the country and state. Visits to libraries have increased by 11% from 2005 to 2009 from 107 million to 120 million. Circulation has also grown from 142 million items in 2005 to 160 million in 2009. (12% increase). Even though NYS population only grew by 1.3% between 2005 and 2009.
- As more and more Americans look for employment, libraries help level the playing field for job seekers. Fewer than 44 percent of the top 100 U.S. retailers accept in-store paper applications. The unemployed are turning to library computers and Internet access to find work, apply for jobs online, type and print resumes, and open email accounts (according to U.S. Census Bureau – 38% of Americans still do not have internet access at home).
- Libraries are also providing education and training programs that help people acquire the knowledge needed to obtain jobs or advance in their careers, like computer and GED classes, resume writing and interview skills, etc.
- A 2011 survey of New York libraries reported 98% of libraries have helped someone search for a job and another 85% reported they helped a patron access public assistance.
- Families are also using the library to save money – by borrowing books, CDs, and DVDs, reading newspapers and magazines, and attending cultural, literacy and tax preparation programs. Inter-library loan provided 9.2 million items saving libraries and taxpayers over \$185 million in 2009.
- According to the NYS Library, over the past three years 97% of public library budgets have been approved by their voters, showing that New Yorkers overwhelmingly support funding for library services.
- Library Aid makes up less than 1/10 of 1% of the state budget, yet libraries serve 57% of the state's population (10.6 million library card holders) or 75% of New York households.
- Cuts in Library Aid fall heaviest upon library systems – which serve as the backbone of our information infrastructure, and provide the cost-sharing, shared services and collaborative approach that save libraries and their patrons money. Library systems ensure equitable access for all New Yorkers no matter what the size of or the resources available at their public, school or college library.

