



Monday, July 24, 2017



"Need to Know" Legislative Newsletter for Library Leaders

...from Wisconsin Library Association

2017-2019 State Budget Finding Forward

When the State Budget Story was last bookmarked, the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) had



voted unanimously to add \$1.5 million in state aid for public library systems to the 2017-2019 biennial budget. That was on May 31. No JFC agenda has been posted since June 15. Although the majority party in both houses agree on most budget items, the process stalled past the July 1 deadline as Senate and Assembly leadership and the governor attempt to reconcile different approaches to the two largest pieces yet to be resolved – education and transportation funding. Consequently, the DPI budget has not yet been picked up by JFC in Executive Session and forward progress is on hold pending further negotiations.

Senate Republicans released their version of the budget on July 18 though it is too early to tell whether it will resolve differences with their Assembly counterparts.

NEED TO KNOW on Library Items in the July 18 Senate Budget Proposal:

- Support is maintained at requested levels for core library services including BadgerLink, Newslines for the Blind and the four statewide resource contracts (Cooperative Children's Book Center, Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, and inter-library loan access to Milwaukee Public Library and UW-Madison collections).
- The \$1.5 million increase in state aid for public library systems approved by JFC remains intact.

- The Senate version deletes current law (43.24 (6), Wis. Stats.) requiring DPI to include in its budget request for public library system aid an amount equal to 13% of the prior year operating expenditures from local and county sources.

CONTEXT NOTE: Public library system aid is currently hovering at an index around 6.3% of local and county expenditures. The 13% index mandate which essentially doubles the line item in DPI's 2017-2019 request to the Governor's office not only precludes DPI any flexibility reflecting fiscal and political reality, but is also a tough sell for library advocates at face value. WLA's (so far successful) initiative to secure a modest \$1.5 million in additional state aid for public library systems was well received by JFC and legislative leadership. It allowed us to tell the local library story while highlighting ways in which enhanced system aids could make a difference in the areas of broadband access, workforce development and lifelong learning. Background funding history of the 13% index is found starting on pdf page 96 of the [DPI 2017-2019 Agency Budget Request document](#).

For a news summary of the current budget process as of July 18, [GO HERE](#). If your librarian soul compels you to view the 660 page pdf document comparing the Governor's version, JFC version (so far) and Senate Republican version in its entirety, [GO HERE](#).

When a new budget is not passed by July 1, funding continues at the levels in the current budget until a new one is passed. Once the Senate and Assembly differences are resolved with the blessing of JFC, the bill goes to the Governor – who could still veto the extra \$1.5M that wasn't in the executive budget proposal he introduced in February.

What should you do? Keep calm and sit tight. WLA will keep you informed of next steps and messaging when appropriate. Meanwhile, remain positive and appreciative in all your dealings with legislators this summer.

Federal Budget Update – Good News!



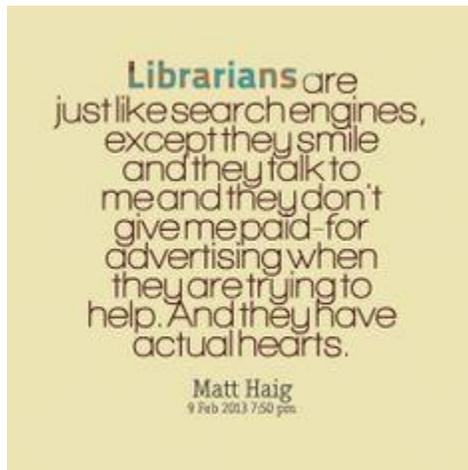
As previously reported, the FY18 White House budget called for eliminating the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS), the only federal agency charged with providing support to libraries and museums. Shutting down IMLS would have subtracted a total \$231 million (\$183 million of which are LSTA funds) from the three-legged stool of federal, state and local funding support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. 2016 [IMLS Grants to States Program allocated \\$2,670,703 to Wisconsin](#). The Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program appropriation of \$27 million was also marked for complete elimination.

PROGRESS! On Thursday, July 13, the House Appropriations subcommittee that deals with library funding (Labor, Health & Human Services, Education and Related Agencies) voted to recommend level funding in FY2018 for IMLS (\$231 million), including \$183 million for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), as well as \$27 million for IAL. **And after a session lasting well into the evening of July 19, the full House Appropriations Committee approved direct library funding language from the Labor-HHS spending bill which makes no cuts in IMLS, LSTA or IAL funding relative to last year's levels.**

The House Appropriations vote is one important step in the lengthy congressional appropriations process. The success so far shows that our elected officials are listening to us and recognize libraries' importance in the communities they represent.

We have not saved FY18 federal library funding, yet. Hurdles can arise at each stage of the appropriations process, which will continue into the fall. At this time, it appears unlikely that either the US House or US Senate will take up the Labor-HHS appropriations bill before September.

Concluding Thought



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About the WLA...

The Wisconsin Library Association engages, inspires and advocates for library workers and supporters to improve and promote library services for the people of Wisconsin.

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about us and how you can get involved.



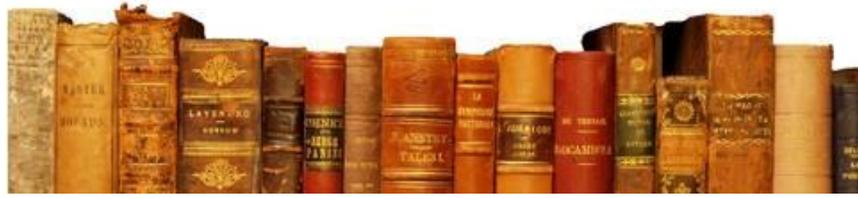
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