



Monday, September 11, 2017



# "Need to Know" Legislative Newsletter for Library Leaders

...from Wisconsin Library Association

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## 2017-2019 State Budget Update



The 2017-2019 biennial state budget process has extended past the July 1 deadline, while the current state budget remains in place. On September 6, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) completed its review and approved changes to the Governor's budget introduced last February, clearing the way for Senate and Assembly floor action as early as this week.

Here's where we stand on parts of the budget proposal pertinent to WLA's legislative agenda as it is referred to the legislature for final review and passage:

**An extra \$1.5 million in state aid to public library systems was approved May 31 by the JFC on a unanimous vote.** If approved by the legislature and Governor Walker, Wisconsin's 16 public library systems will share an additional \$500,000 in FY18 and \$1 million in FY19.

**Support is maintained at DPI requested levels for core library services as included in the Governor's budget,** 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).

JFC approved \$875,000 in both 2017-18 and 2018-19 “for a contract with a single provider of **information technology education for public school pupils in grades 6-12, technical college students, and library patrons.**” The program is required to operate in 225 sites, *including 16 public libraries*, with funding awarded as a competitive grant following a RFP process. **More details on this will be forthcoming.**

Added to the budget document by JFC was **deletion of the current law requiring DPI to include in its biennial budget request an amount for public library system aid equal to 13% of the prior year operating expenditures from local and county sources.** WLA took no position on this change.



**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 doubled the line item in DPI’s 2017-2019 request to the Governor’s office – has not only denied DPI flexibility in requesting system aid reflecting fiscal and political reality, but it has also been a tough sell at face value for library advocates for three decades. WLA’s modest initiative to secure \$1.5 million in additional state aid for public library systems was well received by JFC and legislative leadership. The request allowed library supporters 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. To quote Elsa in *Frozen*, it’s time to “let it go” so we can continue to request realistic funding in this area.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: No advocacy push regarding legislative budget passage on behalf of library related items is needed at this time. Alerts will go out requesting contact with the Governor’s office when appropriate. Keep calm and sit tight.**

### **Budget Postscript: Unfinished Business**

Wisconsin Library Association had supported a DPI budget request for a small statutory language change to allow public libraries as well as schools to make use of appropriations for **WISEdash and WISEdata information systems**. This was **not** included in the Governor’s budget. Rep. Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma) could not add it to the JFC version of the budget, due more to a procedural issue than because there was any objection to the change by either side. However, Rep. Felzkowski has indicated she will be happy to work with WLA on a stand-alone bill to make this change outside of the budget process. **Stay tuned for more information.**

### **Federal Budget Update**



**Federal funding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which includes Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants to states has been approved at maintenance of current levels for FY18 by the US House Appropriations Committee.**

US Senate Appropriations work should begin this month. Timing of budget consideration by the full House or Senate is increasingly uncertain. IMLS funding for Wisconsin under the Grants to States program is very important to the maintenance and coordination of state services. Further updates will direct appropriate contacts with US Senators and US Representatives as needed.

## Cross-County Library Payments

The LD&L Cross-County Payments Working Group has created a new handout to explain county payments for library services under Wisconsin Statute 43.12. While the most recent data available at this time is from 2014, we will update the data and redistribute the document as soon as it can be revised. Meanwhile, please feel free to share it with library boards, county and municipal officials. Side 1 is the “elevator speech” side which is to be shared with someone who just needs the high-level info. Side 2 is the “in the weeds” detail that explains more about how things work.

**County Payments for Library Services** [COLOR VERSION](#) and [BLACK & WHITE VERSION](#)

Kathy Klager, the chair of the cross-county LD&L workgroup, is the primary designer of this document and is leading our education effort. Many thanks to Kathy and her staff for their diligent effort to create this piece. Other work group members are Kathy Pletcher, Mark Arend, Kris Adams Wendt.

Counties are essential funding partners for libraries in our state. County funding for operations allows libraries to properly serve their community service population which is (almost always) greater than the municipal population. It sets up a structure that includes a distribution of costs ensuring that taxpayers in one area are not being asked to unfairly subsidize use by residents in another. It should be noted that libraries located close to county lines generally rely on cross-county funding as a major source of their operating budget. WLA supports the current law that offers a solution for residents who may live an underserved area by opening the doors of libraries in adjacent counties.

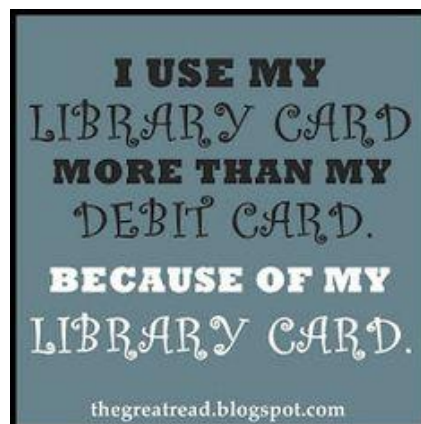
It’s worth noting that Wisconsin does not have an “unserved” population where public libraries are concerned. Information about [county library planning, funding and related issues](#) may be accessed on the DPI/DLT website.

## Hurricane Relief Funds for Damaged Libraries

With Hurricane Irma’s assault following hard on the heels of historic flooding due to Hurricane Harvey, the links below will not be at all complete. But it’s a place to start. Recovering communities need their libraries!

- [ALA, library community work to support Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts](#)
- [Texas Library Association’s Disaster Relief Fund](#)

## Concluding Thought



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