



**Wisconsin  
Library  
Association**

## **2021-2023 State Budget Priorities State Aid to Public Library Systems**

An increased investment in public library system aid benefits **all residents of Wisconsin** by improving the ability of the state's 380 public libraries to provide critical programs and resources customized to **the greatest needs of their communities**.

State aid to public library systems is a vital investment that yields significant value. It generates **expanded access** to library resources well beyond what is funded with local investments. In addition to serving as the backbone for resource sharing throughout Wisconsin, public library systems create important opportunities for efficiencies and collaborations, help local libraries innovate, and strengthen libraries' abilities to offer essential services, programs, and collections. Increased funding for library systems is especially crucial when Wisconsin's public libraries—supported primarily with limited or shrinking local funds—must respond to urgent and intensifying local and regional needs.

### **Develop Wisconsin's Workforce & Economy**

Wisconsin public libraries provide valuable resources and services which support residents seeking to improve their skills, change careers, and apply for jobs; as well as resources that small businesses, entrepreneurs, and start-ups need to rebuild and improve Wisconsin's economy. An increase in state aid will make possible additional **online courses** and in-person assistance allowing libraries to offer **resume and interview coaching, technology training, and financial/business plan development**.

### **Improve Access to Information through Technology**

Wisconsin public libraries are key strategic partners in the delivery of electronic access and resources to Wisconsin residents. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the ongoing urgent need for robust Internet access and online content. Children are particularly at risk when they are unable to access information they need to learn. Many families still cannot afford internet access at home. Increased funds will be directed toward **improving technology services and cybersecurity**; offering **Wi-Fi hotspots** for home use, **digitization services, coding initiatives**, in-person **technology training**; improving **Internet access, information literacy**; and expanding **digital content**.

### **Stimulate Lifelong Learning**

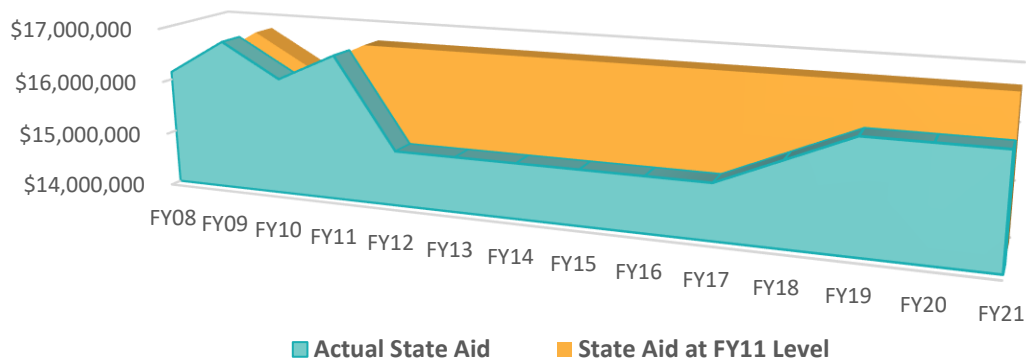
Wisconsin public libraries support and promote lifelong learning, which improves the ability of people to adapt in a fast-changing world, opens doors to higher-paying jobs, and leads to more enriching and fulfilling lives. The library is the only learning institution that serves residents in all stages of life. Increased funds will better address age-specific needs. **Early literacy programs** help young brains develop and prepare kids for school, while increased resources and learning opportunities are necessary for school-age children to **regain learning lost due to school closures**. Public libraries are important partners for school libraries, greatly extending their resources, and are generally the sole library for homeschooled children. **STEM programs** for youth encourage students to consider science, technology and engineering careers much needed for Wisconsin's future economic development. **Creative learning labs** provide opportunities for all ages to learn robotics, 3D modeling, sewing, website design, film editing and more. Libraries, in partnership with agencies such as the Alzheimer's Association, offer **Memory cafes** to provide social networks and help preserve cognitive function for the state's growing population of seniors.

## Historic State Aid to Public Library Systems

Library System funding was reduced by 10% in 2011 and has not been fully restored. The chart below shows the reduced level of funding in the budget for every year since. A net loss of \$13,181,000 over that period has resulted in a significantly reduced ability for library systems to carry out critical operations that allow libraries to help Wisconsin residents succeed.

| State Fiscal Year                   | Appropriation        | Change from Prior Year | State Aid at FY11 level (pre-2012 cut) | Difference           |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| FY08                                | \$16,138,000         | 4.0%                   |  |                      |
| FY09                                | \$16,783,500         | 4.0%                   |  |                      |
| FY10                                | \$16,165,400         | -3.7%                  |  |                      |
| FY11                                | \$16,681,200         | 3.2%                   |  |                      |
| FY12                                | \$15,013,100         | -10.0%                 | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,668,100         |
| FY13                                | \$15,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,668,100         |
| FY14                                | \$15,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,668,100         |
| FY15                                | \$15,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,668,100         |
| FY16                                | \$15,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,668,100         |
| FY17                                | \$15,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,668,100         |
| FY18                                | \$15,513,100         | 3.3%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$1,168,100         |
| FY19                                | \$16,013,100         | 3.2%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$668,100           |
| FY20                                | \$16,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$668,100           |
| FY21                                | \$16,013,100         | 0.0%                   | \$16,681,200                           | -\$668,100           |
| <b>Total Aid, FY12 through FY21</b> | <b>\$155,131,000</b> |                        | <b>\$166,812,000</b>                   | <b>-\$13,181,000</b> |

Public Library System Aid FY08-FY21



## Public Library System Aid Request (2021-2023)

This budget request increases the ability of public library systems to efficiently distribute targeted resources which enable local libraries to best meet the unique needs of their communities during challenging economic and societal conditions.

| FISCAL YEAR            | FY22                | FY23                |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Base Amount            | \$16,013,100        | \$16,013,100        |
| Requested Increase     | \$2,500,000         | \$4,000,000         |
| <b>Total State Aid</b> | <b>\$18,513,100</b> | <b>\$20,013,100</b> |

| INCREASE DETAILS                       | FY22               | FY23               |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Additional aid from previous year      | \$2,500,000        | \$1,500,000        |
| Requested increase from base each year | <b>\$2,500,000</b> | <b>\$4,000,000</b> |