



FY 2023 – 2025 State Budget Priorities

State Aid to Public Library Systems

State aid to public library systems benefits all residents of Wisconsin by expanding access to library resources well beyond what is funded with local investments. Regional public library systems are the backbone for resource sharing among the 381 public libraries across Wisconsin. Public library systems create cost efficiencies and collaborations that help local libraries innovate and deliver essential services, programs, and collections. State aid in recent years has been used to support information technology projects, expand delivery of materials residents to rural areas, and fund innovation grants to local libraries. **The increase to state aid requested by WLA for 2023 – 2025 will be targeted to three key areas: 1) workforce and economic development, 2) information technology, and 3) reading proficiency and life-long learning.**

Workforce & Economic Development: 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 remote workers, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and start-ups need for 21st century business development. Libraries are also **an important resource for employers seeking candidates**, hosting job fairs and providing free meeting spaces. An increase in state aid will **expand online courses** and in-person assistance allowing libraries to **offer resume and interview coaching, technology training, and financial/business plan development**.

Information Technology: Wisconsin public libraries are key strategic partners in the delivery of electronic access and resources to Wisconsin residents. Cyber threats are an increased risk for public libraries. **Public library systems are the first line of defense to protect information and data.** Funds will be used to strengthen protections against attacks and increase staff training. Many families cannot afford internet access at home. With additional funds libraries will improve internet access including wireless beyond the library building and Wi-Fi hotspots for home use. Increased funds will also be directed toward **digitization services, coding initiatives, in-person technology training, information literacy, and expanding digital content**.

Reading Proficiency and Lifelong Learning: Public libraries serve residents in all stages of life, and increased funds will address age-specific needs. Early literacy programs help young brains develop and prepare kids for school. Increased library resources, learning opportunities, and summer reading programs boost **reading proficiency** and prevent the “summer slide” among elementary school students. Public libraries are important partners for school libraries and the **primary library for homeschooled children**. STEM programs for youth encourage students to consider science, technology, and engineering careers. 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.

Public Library System Aid Request (2023-2025)

This budget request increases the ability of public library systems to efficiently distribute targeted resources enabling local libraries to best meet the unique needs of their communities.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$22,013,100	\$24,013,100
Less Base	\$20,013,100	\$20,013,100
Requested Change	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000



FY 2023 – 2025 State Budget Priorities Overview

State Aid to Public Library Systems

Increased funding of the state's public library systems creates more opportunities for shared efficiencies, helps local libraries innovate, and strengthens the ability of libraries to respond to urgent local needs. An increase in state aid will be targeted to workforce development, information technology, access to electronic content, early literacy, and lifelong learning. The funding request for state aid to library systems is shown below.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$22,013,100	\$24,013,100
Less Base	\$20,013,100	\$20,013,100
Requested Change	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000

Library Service Contracts

Increased funding of the DPI contracts with providers of specialty library services will maintain existing service levels and allow continuation of statewide access to valuable resources and services. The funding request for library service contracts is shown below.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$1,367,700	\$1,397,500
Less Base	\$1,367,700	\$1,367,700
Requested Change	\$0	\$29,800

BadgerLink and Newsline for the Blind

WLA supports DPI's request for an increase of \$104,000 in FY24 and \$203,000 in FY25 to cover costs to continue contracts with all current BadgerLink vendors and to maintain the current level of services through Newsline for the Blind.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$3,387,300	\$3,486,300
Less Base	\$3,283,300	\$3,283,300
Requested Change	\$104,000	\$203,000



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BadgerLink & Newsline for the Blind

What is BadgerLink?

BadgerLink is an online library which provides Wisconsin residents with **increased access to information resources** such as magazines, newspapers, scholarly articles, videos, images, and music in cooperation with the state's public, school, academic, and special libraries. Through economy of scale purchasing, these resources are used by libraries, schools, universities, and businesses at a **statewide savings of \$73-75 million**.

By the Numbers: BadgerLink vendors, such as Encyclopaedia Britannica, Wisconsin Newspaper Association, and TeachingBooks.net provide users with access to:

- Approximately 20,000 full-text magazines, journals, newspapers, reference materials, and other specialized information sources, including over 8,000 full text magazines and journals, over 1,500 newspapers and newswires, approximately 6,800 full textbooks, and 2,900 historical newspaper titles
- Automobile repair manuals, company profiles, country economic reports, industrial reports and yearbooks, biographies, primary historical documents, charts, images, schematics, maps, poems, essays, speeches, plays, short stories, author audio programs and book readings, author video programs, book reviews, and discussion guides
- WISCAT (the online catalog of Wisconsin library holdings), OCLC WorldCat (an international database of library holdings), directories of libraries, digitized library collections, and other essential reference information and full text resources not available through regular internet search engines

What is Newsline for the Blind?

Newsline for the Blind (Newsline) provides **daily access to newspapers for people who cannot read print newspapers**, using an automated electronic voice that can be accessed using a regular touch-tone telephone.

Newsline provides users with access to 14 Wisconsin newspapers and over 365 national newspapers, news wire services, and some national magazines.

Modest Funding Increase

WLA supports DPI's request for an increase of \$104,000 in 2023-2024 and \$203,000 in 2024-2025 to cover costs to continue contracts with all current BadgerLink vendors and to maintain the current level of services through Newsline for the Blind.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$3,387,300	\$3,486,300
Less Base	\$3,283,300	\$3,283,300
Requested Change	\$104,000	\$203,000



FY 2023 – 2025 State Budget Priorities

Library Service Contracts

WLA supports a request for an increase of \$29,800 in FY25 to fully fund the estimated costs of maintaining the existing service levels for four library service contracts.

DPI contracts with four providers: the Milwaukee Public Library (MPL), the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison), the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL), and the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) to provide access to unique resources and materials.

- The UW-Madison and MPL lend materials to residents living in all parts of the state in response to requests forwarded by the Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning staff or public library systems.
- WTBBL provides specialized services to certified blind and physically handicapped persons throughout the state. While the Library of Congress provides the recorded and braille materials (estimated annual value of \$376,700), the state is obligated to provide for processing, maintenance, and circulation.
- CCBC services extend beyond the UW-Madison campus to provide information, outreach, and continuing education opportunities for public and school librarians, teachers, and others throughout Wisconsin.

Increased funding of the DPI contracts with providers of specialty library services will maintain existing service levels and allow continuation of statewide access to valuable resources and services. The funding request for library service contracts is shown below.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$1,367,700	\$1,397,500
Less Base	\$1,367,700	\$1,367,700
Requested Change	\$0	\$29,800

Contract	FY23 Base	FY24 Projection	FY 25 Projection
UW Madison	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
MPL-ILL	\$72,200	\$186,900	\$192,100
MPL-WTBB	\$1,057,700	\$925,900	\$954,700
CCBC	\$157,800	\$165,700	\$170,700
Total Costs (Rounded)	\$1,367,700	\$1,358,500	\$1,397,500
Change to FY23 Base		-\$9,200	\$29,800
DPI Request		\$0	\$29,800