



Finger Lakes Library System

Kimberly A. Iraci
Executive Director

Finger Lakes Library System serves five counties and 33 public libraries in Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, Tioga and Tompkins counties. The System covers 2,513 square miles from Lake Ontario to the Pennsylvania border and connects 33 rural libraries and their patrons with services, technology and support that our member libraries could not afford on their own. Finger Lakes Library System provides daily delivery of library materials via two routes to our 33 public member library patrons. Our drivers travel over 100,000 miles per year and the cost of delivery is less than a \$.50 per item – a cost that could not be matched by FedEx or US Post. This service is essential --stretching local library collection dollars and ensuring a job seeker or student in Fair Haven, NY on Lake Ontario has the same access to materials as a patron in Nichols, NY on the Pennsylvania border.

Over the past five years state funding cuts have taken their toll on the System. Finger Lakes Library System has had a reduction in over \$400,000 in state aid. In order to absorb this loss, Finger Lakes Library System has not filled three positions, frozen salaries, renegotiated with vendors and used reserve funds to meet ongoing expenses. At the same time utility, fuel and overhead costs have grown significantly. The System is currently stretched thin. If we were to take on additional cuts in state aid we are at the point where layoffs and greater service cuts would have to be made. The above comes at a time when our member libraries are facing their own local funding challenges due to the 2% property tax cap. In Cayuga County- our nine public library members are facing up to a 50% cut in 2012 county funding due to the property tax cap. We have heard similar discussions across our five counties at the local level during this budget season. These cuts come at a time when our members are seeing a surge in local use – from job seekers who use System supported computers and high-speed internet connections, to families who have cut cable and computer access, to senior citizens who have turned back thermostats and visit the library daily to read and stay warm. Our libraries are community life lines and in our rural communities often the only gathering spot in town.

Finger Lakes Library System provides consolidation of services and economy of scale to our member libraries. We are the hub and connector that brings our 33 member libraries and their collections together offering technology support, delivery of materials, e-Books and audio books, continuing education and shared resources that our member libraries on budgets as low as \$40,000 a year could not provide on their own. Your support ensures that all New Yorkers regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status have access to information and technology via their local libraries and Systems. Your support is vital to Systems, member libraries and the patrons we serve. Thank you.

119 East Green Street, Ithaca, NY 14850-4279 • Tel. (607) 273*4074, Ext. 222 • Fax (607) 272-7475
Cooperating Libraries in Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, Tioga and Tompkins Counties