



Mid York
LIBRARY SYSTEM

Mid-York Library System

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Testimony To Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology Regarding
Funding Public Libraries and Public Library Systems in New York State
Bob Reilly, Chair
At Albany, NY on November 29, 2012

By Wanda R. Bruchis, Executive Director, Mid York Library System

Chairman Reilly and esteemed Assembly Members who also serve on this Committee: Assemblyman Abinanti, Assemblyman Boyle, Assemblywoman Clark, Assemblywoman Meng, Assemblyman Palmesano, Assemblyman Roberts, Assemblyman Walter, and Assemblyman Zabrowski, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on the impact the 2012-13 state budget has had on the Mid York Library System and its 43 member libraries.

As a result of the 4.95% increase in state aid for libraries, Mid York received \$30,692 which enabled us to *maintain* and *retain* our current level of services. Additionally, the increased funding allowed us to develop our new Strategic Plan of Service in alignment with the Regents Advisory Council's 2020 Vision Plan.

Examples of programs and services we provide to our libraries and their local communities include:

- Expertise of library consultants and other professional staff
- Universal system-wide borrowing using a common Integrated Library System
- System-wide delivery services of library material-chartered to serve 369,337 people (2000 census) in a 3,280 square mile area
- Interlibrary Loan (ILL) using OCLC's Resource Sharing Module
- System-wide licensing of Overdrive for downloadable audiobooks and e-books
- MyInfoQuest (Text-a-Librarian) and AskUs 24/7 Virtual Reference Service
- Electronic databases-system-wide licenses to compliment the NOVELNY suite
- Summer Reading Program
- Movie Licensing consortia pricing
- Periodical ILL through collaboration with CLRC
- Back-up reference and information services
- Professional development, training, and workshops for member library personnel and the public
- IT support- maintaining a complex and secure computer network including 372 public access computers
- Wi-Fi access at all libraries
- System-wide e-mail service
- Outreach services to nursing homes and correctional facilities and other agencies
- Collaborative participation with community partners in the Madison and the Herkimer/Oneida Literacy Coalitions
- Collaborative and technology-based trustee training with 7 other public library systems(NYLTO)
- Facilitate the \$14M New York State Public Library Construction Grant



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Through collaboration and technology, our cooperative system has been able to provide an outstanding level of library service to the public in each community within Mid York's service area consisting of Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Counties. The Mid York Library System makes it possible for the public to access many services too costly for the member libraries to provide on their own. As local funding diminishes, our libraries turn to the System more and more to assist them in continuing to provide essential programs and services. While each library is autonomous and their budgets are small, they and Mid York work together to ensure that tax dollars are invested in our communities in the most effective ways possible.

Besides giving testimony regarding the impact of the current budget, another aspect of this hearing is to determine the future needs of public library systems and public libraries. Restoration of funding to statutory levels will permit the Mid York Library System to fully realize and implement the goals and objectives of our 2013-2016 Strategic Plan of Service.

Also, a significant increase in the New York State Public Library Construction Grant amount would help systems and libraries construct 21st century broadband infrastructure to meet the rapidly changing needs and demand of an increasingly technology-driven society.

It is clearly evident that the future information needs of the residents of New York State as delivered by public libraries and public library systems can only be met through a stable funding stream. Public libraries are always evolving, driven by the communities they serve. Public library systems are always evolving, driven by the needs of the libraries they serve. The capabilities created by our collaboration has created a way of providing equal access to knowledge resources along with assisting and training people in retrieving and using them.

Providing cost effective ways for our member libraries to deliver essential services that they cannot afford to supply independently is what we, the systems, do. Public libraries are community and information centers, guarantors of equity of access to information-a cornerstone of our democracy. Together, we promote and support our communities.

Thank you for your consideration and all of your past support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wanda R. Bruchis
Executive Director