Assembly Standing Committee

Libraries and Education Technology

Public Hearing on Funding of Public Libraries

New York Public Library
November 6, 2015

Written statement submitted to the Committee on Libraries and Education Technology by Thomas C. Bindeman, Executive Director of the Nioga Library System.

On behalf of the Boards of Trustees and Directors of member libraries of the Nioga Library System I want to thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit a written statement in support of state funding for public libraries within New York state.

The Nioga Library System serves a three county area (Niagara, Orleans and Genesee) with a population of 319,000. There are 21 member libraries in the library system.

As you know state aid for libraries and library systems increased 5.7% in 2015. The increase for the Nioga Library System was just over $53,000. This increase and the continued funding allowed the library system to continue to provide needed services to our member libraries.

These funds were specifically used to support the following services:

- **Mobile Computer Training Lab Program.** A librarian delivers a mobile computer training lab to member libraries, job training centers, employment agencies and senior centers. This program has created new alliances among various local agencies that are dedicated to improving the local economy. Computer training classes offered to participants range from basic computer skills to how to

apply for jobs via the Internet. In 2014 sixteen hundred citizens attended these classes.

- **Summer Reading Program.** Support the 2015 *"Every story has a hero"* themed summer reading program. Over **8,500** children participated in the 2015 *Every Story has a Hero* Summer Reading Program. System grants were made to all member libraries to help support their individual programs.

- **Management Training Program for Library Administrators.** This program was specifically designed to train library director in 21st century management techniques. ·

- **State Construction Public Library Grant Program.** This program helped fund over $657,660 in much needed additions and renovations of member library buildings.

We are still struggling to restore services that were either reduced or eliminated because of the slash in state funding from 2008 to 2010. If funding is restored to pre-2008 levels the following services would be restored or enhanced:

- Restoration of a Youth Services Department. Full time staff would be hired to provide services in this vital area.
- Restoration of funds to purchase juvenile and young adult materials.
- Increase the capability of our telecommunications network. An immediate upgrade in our broadband and equipment is needed to provide our constituents with 21st century electronic services.
- Expansion of our mobile computer training lab program. The delivery vehicle needs to be replaced and the computer equipment needs to be upgraded.

Many of the 23 public library systems have been in existence for over 50 years. Many of our systems cross into various geographical and political boundaries, promoting cooperation among dissimilar agencies. We often

band together to make group purchases of print and electronic materials, telecommunication services and computers.

Please help us to continue to provide cost effective, essential library services to our communities and your constituents.

Thank you.