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State Education Department Announces $34 Million in State Aid for 232 Public Library Construction Projects Statewide

The State Education Department awarded $34 million in state aid to 232 public libraries statewide to support construction and renovation projects, Interim Commissioner Betty A. Rosa announced today. These funds help libraries construct new buildings, create additions, update electrical wiring and computer technology, improve broadband infrastructure, meet energy efficiency standards, renovate facilities to provide full accessibility to library users with disabilities, and provide meeting spaces to accommodate community needs.

"Libraries have always been critical to education, but their role is more important now than ever," said Board of Regents Vice Chancellor T. Andrew Brown. "Public libraries are taking innovative steps to ensure that families have the technology and digital skills they need to support students. These projects are necessary to accommodate these expanding resources."

"Libraries give entire communities the resources they need to thrive by providing access to broadband and are natural partners in education," Interim Commissioner Rosa said. "New Yorkers will also be able to use these updated resources for better access to healthcare, workforce resources, social services, financial institutions and goods and services."

A complete list of funded projects is available on the State Library's website.

Awards by region are below:

Awards by Region

Region	Total Award Amount
Region	**Total Award Amount**
Capital Region	$2,055,661

Region	Total Award Amount
Central New York	$1,702,157
Finger Lakes	$3,205,606
Mid-Hudson	$4,138,320
Long Island	$4,365,081
Mohawk Valley	$1,365,451
New York City	$10,864,217
North Country	$1,450,813
Southern Tier	$1,732,024
Western New York	$3,120,670

"COVID has made it clearer than ever that our public libraries are essential community centers and trusted sources of information. Throughout the pandemic, our libraries adapted and shifted their services online to remain essential centers for our communities," said Chairwoman of the New York State Senate Education Committee Shelley B. Mayer. "The capital funding announced today is essential for our libraries to remain the community centers they have become. I am so pleased that even in these tough times, these funds are now being allocated."

"As many families continue to work and learn from home, libraries play an increasingly important role in our society," said Assemblyman Sean Ryan, Chairman of the Assembly Libraries and Education Technology Committee. "Libraries have continued to grow in communities across our state, and we've seen them expand technology and programming into spaces that aren't designed for the needs of modern users. This Construction Aid Funding will ensure that libraries can make critical upgrades that will allow them to increase accessibility, enhance technological services and better facilitate existing programs. Libraries provide an environment for lifelong learning and I'm proud to work with my colleagues in government to secure funding for these important facilities."

Eligible Projects

Project activities eligible for awards include financing construction of new library buildings, construction of additions to existing buildings, and the renovation or rehabilitation of existing space. The projects can include roof replacement, purchase and installation of alternative energy sources and new HVAC systems, windows, doors, and lighting systems, electrical upgrades, and construction of new or replacement of old walkways and parking lots. New furniture, shelving and equipment, including computer equipment, can be purchased for new or newly renovated space. Broadband infrastructure projects are also eligible. Renovations designed to provide accessibility for patrons with disabilities is a high priority. Priority is also given to projects that will extend library services to people residing in geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged communities.

Construction funds are allocated to New York State's 23 public library systems based on formulas in Education Law. Member libraries apply for the State funds allocated to their public library system. Each library system's governing Board of Trustees then prioritizes the projects and sends approved project applications with recommended project awards to the State Library. After State Library review, applications are then sent to the Dormitory Authority of New York State (DASNY) for final review and approval.

The state funds are from $34 million in capital funds for State Aid for Library Construction provided in the 2019-20 State Budget. In the 2020-21 State Budget, $14 million was provided for projects that will be announced in summer 2021. The deadline for submitting an application to the New York State Library was October 6, 2020.

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