



Legislative Agenda

Don't Close the Book on Libraries

Every difficult moment is both an opportunity and a challenge. For the Commonwealth's libraries the economic turbulence has been just that. Our residents have turned to their libraries in record numbers and libraries have responded to their needs by helping them with online job applications, GED classes, financial workshops and of course free books, DVDs, and programming for every generation and interest. In these tough times, our libraries are offering hope, opportunity, inspiration...and saving our residents money.

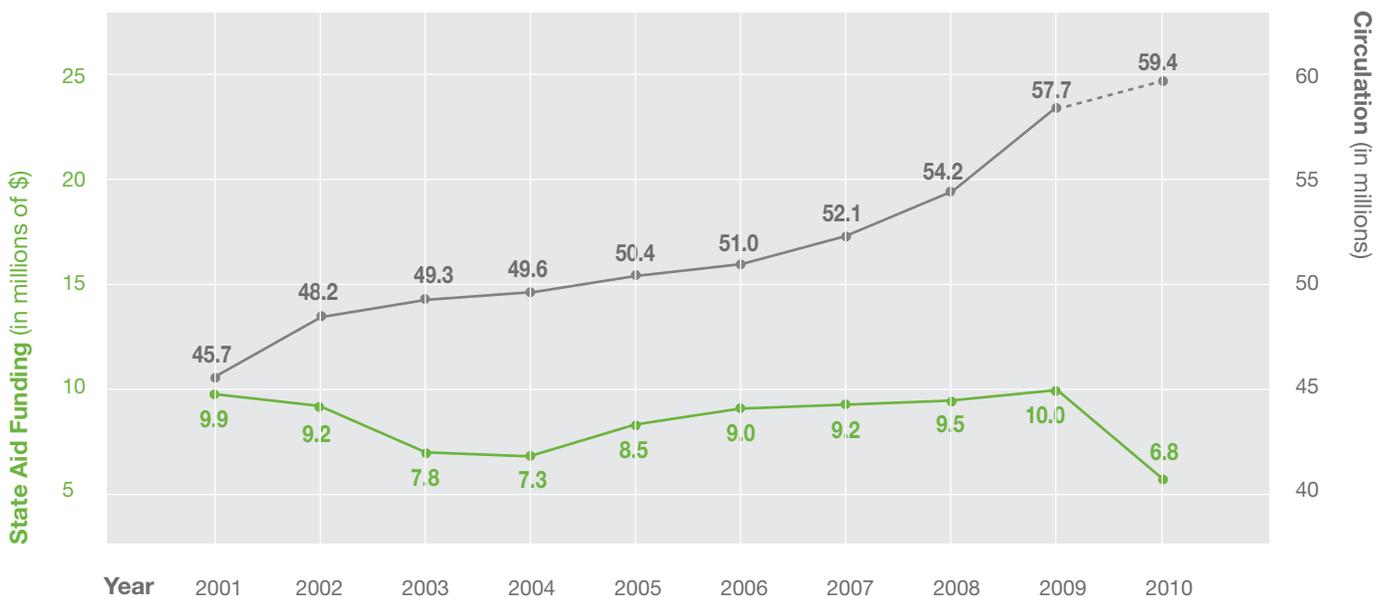
In FY2009 Massachusetts residents borrowed over 57 million books, DVDs, and other materials. If the average cost of each item was \$10, public libraries saved residents an astounding \$570,000,000.

The challenge for libraries comes as local and state budget cuts to libraries jeopardize the very services that residents are using more than ever. In order to help libraries continue these services the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners presents a FY2011 Legislative Agenda that considers the current economic reality and requests funding that will maintain core services.

“
Our family uses the library frequently. We are a one income, one vehicle family, so all of the resources we can get free from the library help us immensely...
– Central Region resident
”

Library Usage Outpaces Library Funding

State Aid funding to libraries amounts to \$1.05 per resident.



In FY2009, library circulation increased for the 10th year in a row with residents borrowing over 57 million items. State Aid to Public Libraries funding has not kept pace with the increased demand for library services. FY2010 circulation figure is an estimate based on past experience.

FY2011 Funding to Maintain Statewide Library Services

Account 7000-9101 Board of Library Commissioners

Previous High \$1,229,472 (FY2001) FY2010 Budget \$938,042 **FY2011 Target \$1,100,000**

- Requested increase funds for a full-time Library Building Consultant and a Deputy Director, positions lost in FY2010.
- The public library construction program requires two consultants to manage a new application round, to assist libraries in applying, and to support ongoing and new projects.
- The Deputy Director is essential to the administration of special projects ranging from leadership institutes to the Gates Foundation broadband grant.
- Staffing shortages have a direct negative impact on the agency's ability to carry out its statutory mandate to improve library services for all of the residents of the Commonwealth.

Account 7000-9401 State Aid to Regional Libraries and Library of Last Recourse

Previous High \$17,623,954 (FY2002) FY2010 Budget \$12,327,160 **FY2011 Target \$14,800,000**

- Time after time residents tell us how much they rely on regional services such as delivery, interlibrary loan, and online electronic content (magazines, newspapers and reference information) for access to library materials for education, self-improvement and lifelong learning.
- Regional and Library of Last Recourse services make every library better than it could be on its own.
- The regional library systems are a model of what can be accomplished with limited state dollars to dramatically improve a local service.

Account 7000-9402 Talking Book Library (Worcester)

Previous High \$440,000 (FY2009) FY2010 Budget \$421,143 **FY2011 Target \$440,000**

Account 7000-9406 Talking Book & Machine Lending Agency (Perkins)

Previous High \$2,341,359 (FY2009) FY2010 Budget \$2,241,016 **FY2011 Target \$2,341,359**

- As the "public libraries" for residents who are blind, legally blind, or physically unable to use printed books these programs work in tandem to provide a lifeline service of talking books, magazines and newspapers; machines to read talking books; large print books; described videos; and specialized reference and children's services.
- Worcester and Perkins are in the midst of a historic transition of talking books from cassette tape to digital media that requires extra effort by staff to work with users who are anxious to get new machines and the new digital talking books.
- There are 22,000 active users from every community in the state, but at least 150,000 people could be users if funding permitted.

Account 7000-9501 State Aid to Public Libraries

Previous High \$9,989,844 (FY2009) FY2010 Budget \$6,823,657 **FY2011 Target \$9,949,804**

- State Aid to Public Libraries funding directly impacts local library services and is used by individual libraries to meet the needs specific to their communities. Many have recently added job seeker programs and services.
- This funding helps libraries meet the increase in demand for library services. An all time high of over 57 million books, CDs, DVDs and other materials were borrowed in FY2009 (the 10th straight year of increase) and over 2 million people attended programs in public libraries.
- The library's role as the only place in a community one can count on for free access to computers and the Internet is more crucial than ever as residents cancel home access to save money and use their library's free Internet to apply for jobs and use eGovt applications.
- Certification in the State Aid to Public Libraries program strengthens the Commonwealth's entire library system and is vital to providing residents with quality library services. Libraries and their communities are working hard to stay certified while facing difficult budget decisions.

Account 7000-9506 Library Technology and Resource Sharing

Previous High \$4,420,235 (FY2001) FY2010 Budget \$1,929,238 **FY2011 Target \$4,420,235**

- In FY09 the automated library networks made possible the sharing of 6.3 million items, nearly an 11% increase over 2008 and a 190% increase from 2002. Residents consistently rank this one of their most valued library services.
- Under-funding of this account passes costs of library networking back to cities and towns, denies residents (especially students) access to essential electronic research materials to support education and economic development, and relegates residents of small towns mostly in the western part of the state to second class status when it comes to accessing the state's library resources.
- Restored funding will fund automated networks and enhance the electronic content offered to libraries and residents statewide to provide greater equity of access to resources for all residents of the Commonwealth.

State funding to support libraries represents less than **1/10 of 1%** of the state's total budget.

A Day in the Life

On a typical DAY in FY2009, Massachusetts public libraries:

- Held **277** programs for children, young adults and adults
- Circulated **157,998** items
- Answered **13,911** reference questions
- Were visited by **86,250** people
- Hosted **22,973** Internet sessions
- Lent **29,620** items to people who used libraries outside of their hometown

While library patrons:

- Spent **182,043** hours searching Board-funded online resources
- Retrieved over **24,657** full-text articles from online library resources

And Talking Book Libraries:

- Circulated over **1,600** items for residents who are blind or disabled through Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library and Worcester Talking Book Library



Libraries are the only community space to provide free computers with Internet access. Many residents use their libraries' computers to fill out online job applications.

I would certainly credit the library's program for helping me rejoin the workforce, which was no easy task given these difficult economic times,

– Southeastern MA resident

Especially in these hard economic times...I depend on the library's computers for my personal communications as well as creation of professional documents. In my almost daily use, I encounter people from all walks of life...

– Metrowest resident

The SAILS Network makes it possible for me to have access to and get many items that I would otherwise not have access to or would have to pay for in stores. With the economy's current condition, lack of SAILS services would significantly impact many, many, people in a negative way.

– Dartmouth resident

Notable Library Circulation Increases in the State

(FY2009 as compared to FY2008)

Great Barrington: 59%

Chesterfield: 52%

Clinton: 51%

Millville and Groveland: 35%

Hopedale and Provincetown: 30%

Lancaster: 27%

Lynn: 23%

Dracut and Marshfield: 21%

Middleborough: 17%

North Adams, Somerville and Woburn: 16%

Chelsea and Watertown: 15%

Needham: 14%

Note: Statewide circulation increased more than 6%. Data does not include new or renovated libraries that completed their first full fiscal year in 2009.

Don't Close the Book on Libraries

- Libraries are centers of hope, opportunity and inspiration in every community
- Well funded libraries support economic recovery by helping small businesses grow, helping people find jobs and by providing access to government assistance
- Libraries are the other half of education serving the needs of all residents and supporting learning for students of all ages
- Libraries are used more than ever. For the 10th consecutive year, public library borrowing reached an all time high. The increase from FY2008 to FY2009 was 6.2%!
- The library is the only place in every community where residents are assured free access to computers, productivity software and the Internet

Restoring Our Communities

When the national and state economies turn the corner, libraries are ready to help restore our communities by supporting entrepreneurs and small business owners who will create the jobs that put people back to work, partnering with schools to offer the resources students need to succeed, offering programs that focus on community development, providing resources that enhance the quality of life for all residents, and sustaining the free flow of information that is critical to our democracy.

The agenda for Restoring Our Communities includes:

- **A State Aid to Public Libraries program** (\$15,000,000) with a real incentive for communities to support their public libraries
- **Regional services** (\$23,235,420) that meet the needs of libraries and residents alike
- **Talking book programs** that are available to all who can't use print books (Worcester \$484,000 and Perkins \$2,575,485)
- **Electronic resources** available to all residents statewide (\$7,400,000)
- **A fully staffed Board of Library Commissioners** (\$1,437,249) to lead and coordinate

In FY2009 close to 100,000 kids, teens, and adults participated in public library summer reading programs. The programs are made possible through the Massachusetts Regional Library Systems.



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