



**FY 2023 – 2025 State Budget Priorities
State Aid to Public Library Systems**

State aid to public library systems benefits all residents of Wisconsin by expanding access to library resources well beyond what is funded with local investments. Regional public library systems are the backbone for resource sharing among the 381 public libraries across Wisconsin. Public library systems create cost efficiencies and collaborations that help local libraries innovate and deliver essential services, programs, and collections. State aid in recent years has been used to support information technology projects, expand delivery of materials residents to rural areas, and fund innovation grants to local libraries. **The increase to state aid requested by WLA for 2023 – 2025 will be targeted to three key areas: 1) workforce and economic development, 2) information technology, and 3) reading proficiency and life-long learning.**

Workforce & Economic Development: Wisconsin public libraries provide valuable resources and services which **support residents seeking to improve their skills, change careers, and apply for jobs**; as well as resources that remote workers, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and start-ups need for 21st century business development. Libraries are also **an important resource for employers seeking candidates**, hosting job fairs and providing free meeting spaces. An increase in state aid will **expand online courses** and in-person assistance allowing libraries to **offer resume and interview coaching, technology training, and financial/business plan development.**

Information Technology: Wisconsin public libraries are key strategic partners in the delivery of electronic access and resources to Wisconsin residents. Cyber threats are an increased risk for public libraries. **Public library systems are the first line of defense to protect information and data.** Funds will be used to strengthen protections against attacks and increase staff training. Many families cannot afford internet access at home. With additional funds libraries will improve internet access including wireless beyond the library building and Wi-Fi hotspots for home use. Increased funds will also be directed toward **digitization services, coding initiatives, in-person technology training, information literacy, and expanding digital content.**

Reading Proficiency and Lifelong Learning: Public libraries serve residents in all stages of life, and increased funds will address age-specific needs. **Early literacy programs** help young brains develop and prepare kids for school. Increased library resources, learning opportunities, and summer reading programs boost **reading proficiency** and **prevent the “summer slide”** among elementary school students. Public libraries are important partners for school libraries and the **primary library for homeschooled children.** **STEM programs** for youth encourage students to consider science, technology, and engineering careers. **Creative learning labs** provide opportunities for all ages to learn robotics, 3D modeling, sewing, website design, film editing and more. Libraries, in partnership with agencies such as the Alzheimer’s Association, offer **memory cafes to provide social networks and help preserve cognitive function** for the state’s growing population of seniors.

Public Library System Aid Request (2023-2025)

This budget request increases the ability of public library systems to efficiently distribute targeted resources enabling local libraries to best meet the unique needs of their communities.

	2023-24 Request	2024-25 Request
Requested Funding	\$22,013,100	\$24,013,100
Less Base	\$20,013,100	\$20,013,100
Requested Change	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000