



Leadership. Advocacy. Communication

## ***Public Libraries Are Important to Florida***

***The Need for State Funding for Public Libraries Is Just Like the Need for Public Education!*** – There is no question that the state has an interest in public education and should help fund it. The state also has an interest in ensuring that all Floridians have access to at least a minimum level of public library service. The state should help fund libraries too.

### ***Public Libraries Are Community Anchor Institutions and Provide Essential Services!***

- ***Help for Job Searchers*** – The biggest challenge facing Florida is getting folks back to work, and libraries are at the forefront of that effort. Libraries play a big role in helping job searchers prepare resumes, identify jobs online and submit applications. Libraries provide training in computer use and other important skills.
- ***Help Florida Business!*** – All libraries offer business reference material, service, and support for job seekers. Some provide extensive web-based resources selected specifically to meet business community needs. Some libraries partner with local Chambers of Commerce to provide business and investment information and programs. Some offer business assistance centers with extensive resources and staff specializing in business support.
- ***Support for E-Government Services*** – Libraries help Floridians use computers and provide free access to the Internet to apply for essential government services and transact their business with government agencies. Almost all federal, state, and local agencies encourage the public to transact business electronically and have reduced direct customer service. In many areas the library is a resident's only source for computers and skilled assistance with services including those provided by the Department of Children and Families, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the IRS, just to name a few.
- ***Support K-12 Students!*** – The public library is where students read for enjoyment, get help from library homework help programs and tutors, and do research in the afternoon, on weekends, and evenings. Public libraries are also where kids go during the summer and research shows that young people who participate in library summer reading programs do not suffer summer learning loss. Teens benefit from a safe place for reading, computers, games and supervised socializing.

### ***State Aid to Public Libraries Program***

As we look forward to new legislators entering the legislature and the 2011 legislative session, the Florida Library Association encourages those who care about Florida's libraries to communicate with all legislators about the importance of funding State Aid to Public Libraries. Public library funding has received strong support from the Florida legislature in the past and the Florida library community appreciates those legislators and leaders who have stepped up to support library service for their communities.

**Background** – The State Aid to Libraries program was established in 1961 (F.S. 257) to aid and encourage the establishment of free library service statewide. The program is administered by the Florida Department of State Division of Library and Information Services.

- **How It Works** –State Aid dollars are divided among libraries based on their communities' tax base, local support, and participation in a multicounty system. In 2008, thirty county libraries received over 25% of their funding from State Aid. Your library's estimated 2010-11 funding can be found at [http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/bld/grants/StateAid/Estimate2010-2011at\\$21253978.pdf](http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/bld/grants/StateAid/Estimate2010-2011at$21253978.pdf)
- **The Current Appropriation & Amount Needed for 2011-12 is \$21.2 Million**– Funding has been cut already by 1/3 over the past nine years from \$33.4 million in 2001!
- **\$21.2 Million makes Florida eligible to receive \$9 Million in Federal Library Funding** – The federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program provides Florida with about \$9 million annually to provide innovative and forward-thinking programs. The state's Maintenance of Effort level required to receive those dollars is \$21.2 million.
- **Taxpayer Return on Investment (ROI) in Public Libraries is \$8.32!** – For every dollar received in 2008, Florida public libraries provided \$8.32 in value. - *2010 State Library & Archives of Florida study*. Public libraries make good business sense in Florida.

***Thank You for Spreading the Word about the Value of Florida Libraries!***

***Please Keep It Positive!***