

Dear Librarian,

The WVLA Legislative Committee is providing these talking points to help you in talking with your Legislator. They are not designed to be given to the Senators and Delegates.

We have three goals this year that were approved by the WVLA Executive Board and these goals should receive the emphasis, but we will point out some additional items that may be discussed with your Legislators.

The first goal is to increase Grants-in-Aid by \$452,838 to bring the total for that line item in the Library Commission's budget to \$9,801,722. The Governor did not include this increase in his proposed budget to the Legislature. However, there are some discretionary funds in his budget for the Legislature to distribute and the funding could come from those funds. The Legislators are concerned with the above mentioned total dollars but generally we speak of per capita because that is the way these funds are distributed. Without this increase the per capita funding will decrease from \$4.62 (2011-2012 level) to \$4.51. With many of the counties losing population their per capita will decrease substantially. Lincoln County will lose \$3,895 without the increase; with the increase they will gain \$1,101. For Clay County without the increase they will lose \$5,267 but with the increase they will lose only \$3,109. Each county and library will lose or gain based on the population they serve but the utility bills, and cost of books and salaries will not go down just because they are serving fewer people. Libraries in the smaller counties do not have extra staff to terminate without cutting services.

The second goal is for a new line item in the Library Commission's budget for \$1,500,000 for library construction and/or renovation. These funds would be used on a matching basis with local libraries and would help libraries seeking grants and funding from other sources. Sometimes libraries need only a few thousand dollars to complete a project. Sometimes buildings built in the 1970's and 1980's need repair that costs several thousand dollars and local budgets cannot handle that large expenditure. There is no funding for construction/renovation in the federal budget because LSCA (Library Services and Construction Act) was replaced with LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act). Libraries in West Virginia benefit from the funds in LSTA to defray the cost of maintaining the servers for the computer networks and the cost of high speed internet lines but there is no funding for construction/renovation. Many libraries have had the new fiber optic lines run to the libraries but there is not enough federal money to pay for the monthly fees associated with these so they are unused.

The third goal is to require school libraries and librarians in every school. At present, school librarians are not part of the state-aid formula. They need to be included with teachers so that some incentive is given to local school boards to hire librarians and let them be in the libraries rather than teaching classes. Many counties are using the school librarian to teach classes all day long so they have no time to be the librarian. School libraries have been proven to improve student learning and achievement, and we need to support them.

Other items to consider if you have opportunity are as follows:

1. There is a need to emphasize that the WVLA supports funding for ALL types of libraries. If college and university budgets are cut then their library funding also will be cut. We encourage support of academic and school libraries.
2. The state grant-in-aid funding is the line item that pays salaries, utility bills, and in general keeps libraries open. It is generally seen as stable on-going funding that can be counted on year after year. It is extremely important to libraries in counties which do not have special laws to fund the libraries.
3. Stable local funding for all libraries is still a great need in West Virginia. Many libraries do not know what they will have for operation from one year to the next. We need some means to require local funding of libraries. We have some options being considered by the WVLA Legislative Committee but none are ready to be introduced this session.
However, we want to remind the Legislators that this is still a GREAT NEED!!
4. The case before the Supreme Court against the local law which supports Kanawha County Public Library is very important to all libraries in West Virginia. If the law is declared unconstitutional then eleven of our better funded libraries that serve 70 per cent of our state's population are without stable funding. And, without stable funding for them, the bottom will drop out of funding for public libraries in West Virginia. Since we already rank next to last in the nation in our per capita funding, we will in all likelihood be at the bottom of total per capita funding for libraries.
5. Keep in mind local needs of each library and let your legislators know how important libraries are to the communities they serve. If you have any "library stories" of how your services have made a difference in someone's life or business that would be good to tell. People remember stories better than statistics.