

Director's Report November 2007

County of Westchester Budget

County Executive Andrew Spano issued the Executive Operating Budget for the County of Westchester. Fortunately, the FY 2008 budget for the Westchester Library System remains fully intact including a nearly 3% inflationary increase. Since the County budget supports the delivery, cataloging as well as positions in the professional development and teen services area as well as the Health Advocacy Resource Centers, it is a critical funding source. Therefore, WLS is seeking advocates, trustees, staff and all other supporters to attend one of the County budget hearings at either the Mt. Kisco Elementary School on November 28th at 7 p.m. or the final budget hearing at the Michaelian Office Building on December 5th also starting at 7 p.m. WLS staff will also be encouraging supporters to write or visit their local county legislators to help advocate for the WLS budget.

New York State Budget Hearings

After meetings with the Governor's Director of Education Policy and the Division of Budget and recent pronouncements by Budget Director Paul Francis regarding the state's worsening fiscal situation, Kathy Miller, NYLA Legislative Committee Chair, and NYLA Executive Director Michael Borges are recommending letters be sent to the Governor providing examples of how WLS's share of the \$8 Million was spent. NYLA recommends that each letter copy Spitzer's Deputy Secretary for Education Manual Rivera to stress the importance of maintaining the \$8 Million in Library Aid for library systems and \$14 Million for public library construction in the Executive Budget. Given the fiscal climate, NYLA feels that libraryland's best strategy at this point is to have the Governor keep the funding level and then go to the Legislature for any increases.

In addition, the Governor and Division of Budget are holding Public Hearings on the Budget at various places in the State starting the weekend of November 17th. NYLA is encouraging library personnel and supporters make every effort to attend and register to speak about the importance of continuing funding at 2007/08 levels and what the funds have meant to libraries.

The hearing nearest WLS will take place on Friday, November 30th in Hauppauge at:
H. Lee Dennison County Office Building
100 Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788
Date: Friday, November 30, 2007
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Each registrant/speaker is expected to provide in-person testimony and are asked to please register in advance at:
<https://www.budget.state.ny.us/threg/registration.do;jsessionid=21083096B0D7FE10C0708FBADFE380A8>.

Participants wishing to comment who are not pre-registered will be accommodated, as time allows, on a first-come, first-served basis. Those individuals wishing to provide comments, but unable to attend one of the sessions, may send comments to BudgetHearing@budget.state.ny.us. The public will also be able to watch the proceedings via an internet web cast.

Health Advocacy Centers

The first of two Health Advocacy Resource Centers (HARC) opened on November 8th at the Grinton I. Will Branch Library in Yonkers. The opening event was attended by County Executive Andy Spano and representatives from our partner organizations: Medicare Rights Center, Sarah Lawrence College and Yonkers Public Library. Also present for the ribbon-cutting event was Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, who is the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Libraries and Technology, as well as Ben Craig who represented Congresswoman Nita Lowey, and County Legislator Ken Jenkins of Yonkers. The second Center will open in late January at the John C. Hart Memorial Library in Shrub Oak. Marleise Brosnan, the HARC Coordinator, has enclosed a report in the Board package.

Regent's Advisory Committee on Technology

WLS Director, Siobhan Reardon, has been appointed to the NYS Regent's Technology Advisory Committee.

"No Match Letter" Regulations

WLS has been advised by our labor attorneys, Jackson Lewis, to be keenly aware of the pending Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) "no match letter" regulations for letters issued by the Social Security Administration. The notification claims that the final rule outlines the steps employers should use when they receive such a letter which, prior to the issuance of the new rule, was of little concern to employers.

A "no match letter" is a notice sent by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to employers and employees to inform them that the employee name or Social Security number listed on an employee's W-2 does not match the SSA records. The letter is merely an administrative mechanism of the SSA to notify employers and employees of the discrepancy and to advise the employees that they are not receiving proper credit for their earnings, which could affect future retirement or disability benefits administered by the SSA.

However, the DHS has taken the "no-match letter" to a new level. If implemented, the regulation will require employers to take specific steps when receiving a Social Security Administration (SSA) no match letter to ensure compliance with legal hiring requirements. Under the rules, employers will be required to take steps to resolve any

SSA or immigration document discrepancies within 93 days. If a discrepancy cannot be resolved within this period of time, employers will be required to terminate the employment of affected employees or risk liability for "knowingly" hiring or continuing to employ individuals who are unauthorized to work in the United States.

On October 12, 2007, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction barring the DHS from implementing its "no match" regulation that was originally set to take effect on September 14, 2007. The preliminary injunction also halts SSA/DHS from issuing notices of the new regulation to 140,000 employers across the country.

Important Dates to Remember

ALA Midwinter Meeting – Philadelphia, January 11-16, 2008

Next Board Meeting: January 29, 2008

Respectfully submitted,



Siobhan A. Reardon
Director