

February 13, 2013

To: New York State Assembly Westchester Delegation  
Re: 2/14/13 Public Hearing

This year, libraries across New York State are requesting the restoration of Library Aid to \$102 million (as stipulated in education law) in the 2013-14 NYS Budget. This \$102 million allocation of Library Aid would amount to less than 1/10 of 1% of the NYS Budget and restore funding to 2007 levels. These additional funds would fund vital services provided by libraries and library systems to over 14 million New Yorkers.

Today's libraries are busier than ever helping individuals to find and apply for jobs, change careers, advance their education, and expand their knowledge of their community and the world around them. With the restoration of Library Aid to \$102 million in the NYS Budget, WLS could potentially receive an additional \$527,000. Additional funding would allow WLS to expand library services in education support, workforce development and senior adult programming. Here are a few examples:

- ❖ Career and Educational Counseling Services programs targeting individuals aged 55 or older who are making career changes. In 2012, approximately 2,700 individuals attended career counseling workshops and individual counseling seminars held at 25 libraries. Most programs have waiting lists and additional funds would enable WLS to better serve today's aging workforce.
- ❖ *GED Connect!* is a technology-based, volunteer driven project that helps adult learners obtain their GED. Additional funding would help build a more robust online learning portal, expand recruitment and training of GED tutors, and allow the program to grow to meet the current demand.
- ❖ Senior Benefits Information Centers help residents aged 60 and older to understand and apply for Medicare and other benefits that help them lead healthier and happier lives.
- ❖ Creative Aging programs in the libraries employ professional teaching artists to develop visual, performing or literary arts projects for seniors that provide opportunities for new learning and social engagement, two vital components of positive aging. These instructive programs create jobs in the local community and improve quality of life for participants.
- ❖ Family Literacy activities foster the development of supportive home learning environments for children and their parents/caregivers. Additional funding would allow the programs to incorporate digital literacy and Common Core standards to enhance existing K-12 programs.

Restoration of Library Aid to \$102 million is a good investment because it helps people achieve their dreams and goals. I encourage you to support this restoration through your words and actions. Help us build a stronger local and state economy and a more knowledgeable, literate and positively engaged citizenship.

Please contact me if I can provide you with any additional information about WLS. Thank you again for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,



Terry L. Kirchner, PhD  
Executive Director