



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## Senator Webb Announces Nearly \$900,000 In State Aid For Library Construction Funding Across Senate District 52

LEA WEBB August 16, 2023

| ISSUE: **LIBRARIES**



**ENDICOTT, NY** – In a significant step towards enhancing community resources and infrastructure, Senator Lea Webb stood alongside representatives from libraries across Senate District 52 today to reveal a substantial allocation of nearly \$900,000 in state aid dedicated to library construction projects. These funds will empower local libraries to undertake essential structural enhancements that will further elevate their services and impact.

The allocation is derived from the \$34 million in capital funds designated for public library construction and broadband infrastructure initiatives within the FY 2022-2023 State Budget. The State Aid for Library Construction Program facilitates a diverse range of eligible project activities, including the construction of new library buildings, augmentations to existing structures, and comprehensive renovation or rehabilitation of existing spaces.

This crucial financial support is poised to be distributed across Senate District 52 as follows:

- **Cortland Free Library, Cortland:** An allocation of \$601,750 will be directed towards the replacement of parapet sections, expansion of elevator capacity, reconfiguration of the Main reading room, installation of HVAC systems, and the addition of exterior signage.
- **Broome County Public Library, Binghamton:** A sum of \$157,447 is designated for the establishment of a new security office, repositioning and renewal of the Youth Services desk, and the replacement of both front entrance door sets.
- **Mary Wilcox Memorial Library, Whitney Point:** A funding infusion of \$110,808 will facilitate the execution of Phases 2 and 3, culminating in the completion of the Library Addition and Breezeway projects.
- **George F. Johnson Memorial Library, Endicott:** An allocation of \$27,250 is earmarked for the transformation of an existing space on the library's main floor into a community meeting room, enhancing opportunities for communal engagement.

"I am thrilled to announce this substantial allocation of \$897,255 in state aid for library construction, which will bring about transformative improvements to our local libraries in Senate District 52," **said Senator Lea Webb.** "These funds represent New York State's commitment to fostering vibrant community spaces that facilitate learning, collaboration, and accessibility. Our libraries are not just buildings; they are spaces for education, innovation, and inclusivity. As we invest in the continued development of these libraries, we

are investing in the future of our communities. I am proud to stand alongside our library representatives as we take this pivotal step toward creating modern, welcoming spaces that will benefit generations to come."

"Libraries are important parts of the community, increasingly offering services that extend far beyond their traditional role. Many library buildings, however, are aging and in need of critical upgrades. I am pleased that two libraries in my district, the Broome County Public Library and the George F. Johnson Library in Endicott, are receiving support the Governor and the Legislature were able to provide," **said Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo.**

**Assemblymember Anna Kelles stated,** "Libraries are the lifeblood of every community. In particular, libraries have been indispensable through the pandemic and through our post-pandemic adjustment to a new normal. Libraries have provided education and tutoring, access to the internet, job training, and in some cases, sites for food pantries and shelter from the storms of life. Last year we fought hard to increase capital funding for libraries in the budget, and it is so exciting to see the additional \$34 million we secured being put into action. Over \$600,000 to the Cortland Free library means that deferred maintenance and reconfiguration needs can move forward to ensure the library is truly accessible to all Cortland residents. A huge congratulations to the hardworking staff of the library for their great work every day for us all!"

"We are grateful for the efforts of Senator Webb, Assemblymember Lupardo, and all of the legislators that supported the Public Library Construction Aid Program. This program has been an essential tool for our local libraries to address the critical needs of their buildings. Local projects have included accessible ramps, roofs, HVACs, additions, and important safety measures. This investment in library infrastructure allows us to get more work done more quickly, all while putting local contractors to work," **stated Steve Bachman, Executive Director of the Four County Library System.**

“S. R. Ranganathan's five laws of library science emphasize the use of books, individual access, matching books with readers, saving readers' time, and the library's evolving nature. Cortland Free Library's awarded funding will drive growth and improvement, including elevator expansion for accessibility, Main Reading Room renovations, and HVAC upgrades. Given the many challenges we face in the library world, it's so validating to be supported in this way. Grateful for the support of Senator Lea Webb, Assemblymember Anna Kelles, and fellow library advocates in these challenging times. We're excited to roll up our sleeves and get started on what we expect to be a multi-year project,” **stated Jen Graney, Library Director at Cortland Free Library.**

"Our Library buildings are one of the only spaces in our community that are open to everyone and as a result we serve the community's most vulnerable residents on a daily basis," **said Josias Bartram, Library Director at Broome County Public Library.** “In addition to providing traditional library services like story time for families and developmentally disabled adults and access to books and computers, the Broome County Public Library provides peer support for our neighbors who are struggling with mental health, addiction and homelessness, access to innovative technology for those who would not otherwise have access, free locally grown produce, and meeting rooms for community organizations. All of these services require that we maintain and update our facilities, and we are grateful that Senator Webb and Assemblymember Lupardo have been such strong advocates for this invaluable funding."

“Thank you everyone for coming and for allowing us to host this event today. It's not every day that we get to recognize the efforts of our legislators which help us serve our community. With the use of the grant funds that were awarded to us, our library has been able to create additional meeting room space for our patrons, enhancing opportunities for communal engagement. In anticipation of the funds, we already completed construction on the rooms and have seen them heavily utilized by community groups and individual patrons.

Lastly, I want to thank our representatives for the recent passage of bills S3594 and A5266, which will allow for a more equitable path to funding for Town of Union libraries," **stated Seth Jacobus, Library Director at the George F. Johnson Memorial Library.**

####