



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senator Webb Secures \$36,000 in State Funding for Libraries Across the Southern Tier

LEA WEBB March 1, 2024

| ISSUE: **LIBRARY FUNDING**



Binghamton, NY — In a significant boost for community resources and educational services, Senator Webb (SD52) held a press conference at the Broome County Public Library to announce \$36,000 in state funds that she has secured to support the work of eighteen local libraries from across the Southern Tier.

The libraries awarded funding include: Broome County Public Library, Cortland Free Library, Fenton Free Public Library, George F. Johnson Memorial Library, Groton Public Library, Kellogg Free Library, Lamont Memorial Free Library, Lansing Public Library, Lisle Free Library, Mary Wilcox Library, Newfield Public Library, Peck Memorial Library, Phillips Free Library, Southworth Library Association, Tompkins County Public Library, Ulysses Philomathic Library, Vestal Public Library, and Your Home Public Library.

Each library will receive \$2,000 to help enable them to expand programming, purchase essential supplies and equipment, and invest in technology upgrades and services that will benefit library-goers in our community. The investment in the Southern Tier's libraries will help to improve access to educational resources, support lifelong learning, and foster community engagement.

"Investing in our libraries means investing in our community's future," **said Senator Lea Webb.** "Libraries are the heartbeat of our community, where people access information, learn new skills, and connect with others. I am proud to be joined by representatives from our local libraries to announce the funding I've secured. This investment will help to enhance the services and programs that enrich our community's cultural and educational landscape every day."

Said Josias Bartram, Library Director at the Broome County Public Library, "On behalf of both the staff and Board of the Broome County Public Library, I'd like to thank Senator Webb for being a strong advocate for our local libraries and for providing us with this additional funding. We are fortunate to have political leaders in this region who understand that libraries like BCPL have become community hubs, providing free access to public resources and services for all, including our most vulnerable neighbors."

“From the informational challenges faced by residents during and in the wake of the pandemic; to the need for equitable access to digital infrastructure in rural, Upstate communities; to the importance of free, reliable, and balanced information in this age of misinformation and strained political discourse,” **said Jen Graney, Library Director of the Cortland Free Library.** “Libraries like the Cortland Free Library have proven themselves to be more vital and relevant to our communities than ever. This is why we’re so very appreciative of the support Senator Lea Webb is showing with this allocation of \$2,000!”

“Fenton Free Library is so grateful to Senator Webb for making this funding available to us,” **said Leslie Weigand, Executive Director at the Fenton Free Public Library in Binghamton.** “Our library is the heart of the community and we will use these funds to fun expand the programs we offer. Thank you Senator Webb!”

Said Erin Singleton, Head of Youth Services Department of the George F. Johnson Memorial Library in Endicott, “The Youth Services Department is planning to purchase an Early Literacy All-in-One Workstation from AWE Learning. This is a computer for our youngest patrons, which comes pre-loaded with STEM-aligned, multi-curricular content. The computer has educational titles in the areas of Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, Music, and Math aimed at children from ages 2 to 8. These games provide a fun and educational digital learning experience, which inspires an enthusiasm for education by supporting school readiness and literacy.

We currently have one of these machines for younger children and one comparable computer for older children. They are heavily used, but they are several years old. Having this new computer will allow more children in our community to benefit from these educational games, and it will give us access to newer software with a focus on learning in STEM areas. This computer and its necessary accessories will cost \$3,672, and the \$2,000 from Senator Webb will allow us to fit this purchase into our budget. We are incredibly grateful

for the Senator's continual support of libraries; her support is instrumental in helping us to provide for our patrons. We are looking forward to purchasing and installing our new Early Literacy Computer with this funding, so that we can provide further literacy and learning opportunities to the children of our community.”

Said Heather Cobb, Library Director at the Lamont Memorial Free Library in McGraw, “We at the Lamont Memorial Free Library are grateful for the support of Senator Webb. Our summer reading planning is underway. This funding will allow the library to provide more programs and special activities during the summer. The Library is the community center for our small village. Library staff provide exciting programs, activities, and library services for everyone in the community. Support from Senator Webb bolsters our efforts to meet the needs of our community.”

On behalf of the Lansing Community Library, I would like to thank Senator Webb, and her staff, for their dedication and support of our rural public libraries. All libraries are a lifeline for community residents and Senator Webb understands our importance.” **said Susie Gutenberger-Fitzpatrick, Director of the Lansing Community Library**

“The Lisle Free Library is beyond grateful for the \$2,000 secured by Senator Lea Webb!” **said Cheridan Douglas, Director of the Lisle Free Library.** “We are thrilled to use the funding to complete the renovation of our public-access computer stations and enhance our Summer Reading Program. Our Library strives to be an essential partner to Lisle and the surrounding communities, and receiving this funding allows us to further our mission of providing free programs and inspiring lifelong learners. More importantly, we are deeply appreciative for all of Senator Lea Webb’s time and energy in supporting libraries and the important work we do for our communities.”

“The Mary Wilcox Memorial Library was pleased to be informed of the monies allocated for our use by Senator Webb’s office,” **said Stephanie Champney, Library Director of the Mary Wilcox Library in Whitney Point.** “These funds will be utilized for our Summer Reading Program, enabling the Library to purchase supplies and hire performers/presenters during July and August 2024. This is a huge gift to our small community and will benefit children and adults alike.

Said Sue Chaffee, Library Director of the Newfield Public Library, “We thank Senator Webb for the \$2,000 funding allocation she secured for Newfield Public Library. Her support will make a big impact on our community by helping us expand our hands-on programming options. In 2021, we collaborated with the Newfield Historical Society to lease about 1,000 square feet next door to the library and opened the Newfield History and Activity Center. The project has had a positive impact in our community by improving the Main Street experience, bringing people together to further the study and understanding of the history of our community, state and nation, and providing hands-on cooking, nutrition, and food preservation classes for all ages. The combination of expanding our footprint and offering more after-hours programming without increasing our staffing level introduced the need for safety and accessibility improvements. With Senator Webb’s help, we will implement security cameras and improve our main entrance by reconfiguring our book drop. These improvements will effectively expand our hours of operation which gives us greater opportunity to deliver exceptional programs and services to our community. We are extremely grateful for her hard work and ongoing support of libraries.”

“Peck Memorial Library and the Marathon community are extremely grateful for the money that NYS Senator Webb was able to secure for us,” **said Mary Ann Frank, Library Director of the Peck Memorial Library in Marathon.** “We plan on using the money to purchase new items for our collection and to increase children's programming in our community. Thank you so

very much!"

Said Martsje Vanderschaaf-Riehlman, Library Director of the Phillips Free Library in Homer,

"The \$2,000 Bullet Aid grant helps to restore and improve Phillips Free Library's historic building. It will co-finance an interior painting job to repair water damage, and also improved lighting for our community meeting room."

Said Diane Pamel, Library Director of the Southworth Library Association, "We are thankful to Senator Webb for her support of our libraries. The Southworth Library plays such a vital role in our community, not only providing access to knowledge and resources, but also meeting technology needs and providing learning opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. Your investment in education, literacy, and community enrichment benefits everyone.

We have held over 24 Computer and internet training sessions in the last 4 months and had 99 people participate in the trainings. Our library has provided lunchtime learning opportunities every other week for adult lifelong learning with enthusiastic participations to learn about topics ranging from kelp forests, bees and beekeeping, the history of the Erie Canal and local author visits. We are finding that social engagement and resources are critical needs at this time. We also welcome the neurodiverse and 'other-abled' groups every week for library time and trainings.

As costs for compensation and technology needs rise, this support is critical. It will help to ensure our library staff can continue to provide high-quality services and support to library users. Additionally, keeping up with technological advancements is crucial in today's digital age, as it helps libraries remain relevant and accessible to their communities. We will be able to use your funding to support both the people who make libraries thrive and the tools they need to serve their patrons effectively."

“The Tompkins County Public Library is thrilled to receive funding allocations from Senator Webb, which is a testament to the vital role our Library plays in the community,” **said Leslie Tabor, Library Director of the Tompkins County Public Library in Ithaca.** “Library staff are committed to helping our community grow and thrive, which is why the \$2,000 from Senator Webb will go toward professional development for staff. TCPL values welcoming customer service, relevant collections, and engaging programs and will invest these funds in our staff so that we can invest in our patrons. Thanks again to Senator Webb for acknowledging our work and celebrating with us.”

“Ulysses Philomathic Library is thrilled to receive support from Senator Lea Webb,” **said Laura Mielenhausen, Library Director of the Ulysses Philomathic Library.** “We are a small but mighty rural library in Trumansburg focusing on celebrating the love of learning with our patrons of all ages. Senator Webb’s allocation will directly support our youth programming – we provide fun and free youth activities every weekday after school based on the interests of the youth in our community. Thank you Senator Webb!”

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