

# Michigan Library Advocacy Day 2026



## LIBRARIES LIGHT THE WAY

### STATE AID TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Michigan libraries need stable funding to provide the innovative and indispensable services our communities both need and demand.

In 1977, the State Aid to Public Libraries Act was enacted to provide for the establishment of library cooperatives and to provide State Aid for both public libraries and cooperatives. While the intended full funding level was established at \$0.50 per capita in 1977, the annual state budget determines how much money is appropriated each year. It wasn't until 2023, 46 years later, that State Aid reached \$0.50 per capita. Based on the rate of inflation, \$0.50 per capita in 1977 is equivalent to approximately \$2.75 per capita in 2026.

One third of the State Aid allocation goes directly to public libraries for any library expenditure, including salaries, operations, and materials. The second third goes to the state's 11 library cooperatives to fund their operations. The final third goes to cooperatives to subsidize shared projects, programs, and services that benefit their member libraries, such as statewide interlibrary loan through the Michigan Electronic Library Catalog. The Library of Michigan, housed in the Department of Education, administers State Aid.

For FY26, the legislature adopted flat funding for State Aid at \$16.5 million, identical to the FY25 appropriation. These dollars make up approximately 5-10% of a public library's revenue. For smaller library systems, State Aid is a lifeline, as it makes up a disproportionate amount of their revenue. It allows rural communities to keep their libraries open, staffed, and available to meet the needs of their residents. For larger systems, cuts to State Aid or continued flat funding translate to fewer books on the shelf and fewer resources for early literacy programming or job skills training.

State Aid helps our library systems continue their mission to provide education, training, and resources to Michigan residents. Every Michigander needs convenient and timely access to the world of information – print, digital, and electronic. Public libraries are a lifeline when the cost of living is climbing, providing free access to essential services, technology, and educational resources that help Michiganders make ends meet. It is time to increase the state's financial investment to keep our nearly 400 public library systems viable and strong in each of our communities.

**ASK: We respectfully request a \$500,000 increase in State Aid to Libraries for FY27.**