

Every Michigan resident needs convenient and timely access to the world of information — print, digital and electronic. An educated society deserves access to unbiased, accurate information not always available on the “open Internet.” The statewide network of close to 400 library systems provides these services to Michigan’s residents.

To continue to provide the innovative and critical services their communities need and demand, Michigan libraries need broadened and secured strategic investments.

Public libraries in Michigan are generally funded through three primary sources of revenue: Penal fines, Millages and State Aid. While millages generally make up the largest percentage of a libraries budget, penal fines and state aid make up about 3-6% and they are critical sources of funds that contribute to the important work that libraries perform.

State aid is paid to public libraries each year under an appropriation of general funds determined by Michigan Legislation. The State Aid to Public Libraries Act 89 of 1977 was enacted to supplement local and federal funding sources for libraries in Michigan and each year about 98% of public libraries provide data to the Library of Michigan by participating in the Annual Report/State Aid Application. One third of the allocation goes directly to public libraries for staff salaries, programs, purchases and other activities. Another third goes to the 11 library cooperatives. The final third also goes to the cooperatives that use those funds for collaborative projects/purchases for their regional members.

In 2019, the legislature appropriated Twelve Million, Sixty seven thousand, seven hundred dollars which equaled about 35.5 cents per capita.

In 2020, MLA and our library champions, were instrumental in advocating for an increase of \$1 Million for distribution in 2021. The new total – about \$13.1 Million dollars -- equals 43 cents per capita. While we are getting closer to the allotted 50 cents per capita that Act 89 of 1977 specified, we are still a long way away and must continue to advocate for the resources that make our libraries innovative and essential in today’s world. But it must be noted that with these recent increases, our legislators, on both sides of the aisle, absolutely know the importance and value of libraries in their communities.

As the state budget is developed, we are expecting another challenging few years due to the continuing pandemic and economic challenges. It will be even more critical to keep the Governor and our legislators informed of what you are doing, how this increase has helped you, and what your library means to your community.

First and foremost, thank your legislators for their support. Then...steadfastly continue to advocate for increases to state aid as this helps libraries continue their mission to provide education, training and resources to Michigan residents.