

State Aid to Public Libraries 2013



Florida's public libraries depend on State Aid to Libraries funding, as well as associated federal funds, to serve the people of Florida.

We ask for your continued support to ensure these funds are appropriated and ideally, incrementally increased, during each annual legislative session.

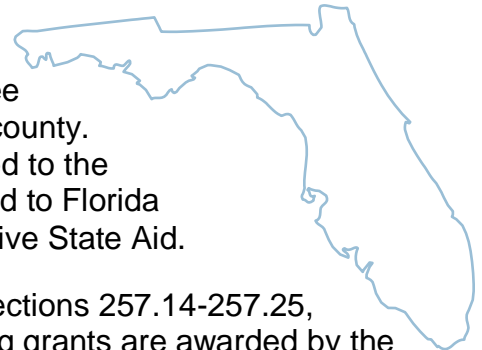
What is State Aid?

Enacted in 1961, the State Aid to Libraries grant program is a state-funded program comprised of three interrelated grants: Operating, Education, and Multicounty. The fiscal 2014 budget Governor Rick Scott submitted to the Florida Legislature included \$20.2 million for State Aid to Florida libraries; all 67 counties in Florida are eligible to receive State Aid.

State Aid is a continuing state grant authorized by Sections 257.14-257.25, Florida Statutes, for eligible library entities. Operating grants are awarded by the Florida Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services, Office of Community Development through an annual application process.

The purpose of State Aid is to assist local governments in maintaining and improving a vital program of free, professional library service for all Florida residents. It is also designed to provide an incentive for local governments to invest more in their libraries. As grant amounts are based largely on local funds invested in library service, more local money spent on library operations means more potential State Aid.

Unfortunately, State Aid funding has been cut by more than one-third, from \$33.4 million in FY 01 to \$21.3 million in FY 13. While the funding level has held steady for the past three years, State Aid must continue to keep pace with increasing operational expenses to maintain library services throughout the state. This is where your support is needed.



Why does State Aid to Libraries matter to your constituents?

Free, professional library services are critical to educational opportunities, economic development, and quality of life. Public demand for library services is at an all-time high. Last year alone, Floridians visited the library in person over 81 million times, borrowed over 125 million items and made over 92 million virtual visits.

During one of the most challenging economic periods in our state has faced in recent memory, many services your constituents need most are available at their public library. Thanks to State Aid funding, Floridians use libraries for:

Educational Success

- * Students of all ages comes to the library to learn to read, do homework, develop critical thinking skills, discover history and explore the future. They use educational materials, databases and other online resources to improve their academic standing and achieve their educational goals.
- Parents have access to age-appropriate resources to reinforce their child's skill-level and learning process in early literacy concepts, Common Core educational standards, home school curriculum and SAT preparation.

Economic Success

- * Job seekers use library services to find and apply for jobs. Many unemployed individuals lack access to the Internet, which is essential for completing most job applications.
- * Library programs and classes help individuals manage their finances or start and build small businesses.
- * Families rely on free books, DVDs and CDs to stretch limited household budgets.

Technological Success

- * Residents who need to apply for critical e-government services and benefits depend on computers and Internet service as well as help from library staff.
- * Constituents can easily access a wide range of e-materials.
- * Training classes help people learn to use computers and e-readers, to send e-mail or listen to podcasts.

Florida's library users thank you for your support!