

Grant Abstracts

Getting to Yes

The Regent's Commission's New Century Libraries report calls for public votes on library budgets. Libraries in the Mid-Hudson Valley are facing a critical time when they require public support more than ever. With ever increasing operational costs, the need for new and improved buildings, the costs of doing business continually rising, and the expectations of patrons regularly increasing, it is imperative that they bring their budgets to a public vote. Parallel to this are rising concerns over local taxes and strong community groups that resist higher taxes of any type. A majority of libraries are unprepared for these political struggles, lacking the tools to build support. Libraries must create strategies for broadening their support base, develop skills to navigate the political arena, and recognize the value of targeted marketing tactics. This project will develop tools and resources to assist member libraries in building up and increasing the turnout of yes voters in their communities. Specific objectives of the program will include:

- Educating member libraries on the benefits of bringing their budget to a public vote.
- Answers to the question – “What convinces people to support library budgets?”
- Creation of a toolkit containing resources that demonstrate the value of service and return on investment made by the public, including best-practice scenarios and other practical suggestions, and strategies for building future support.
- A workshop series based on the most critical needs identified during the project.
- Identifying target groups that can be converted to library supporters.
- Identifying campaign tactics and media strategies for library votes.
- Consultation with library boards on tools and strategies.

Requested amount: Year 1 = \$72,853
 Year 2 = \$64,008
 \$136,861

Local Names Index

Libraries in each county of the Mid-Hudson Library System hold invaluable archival newspapers, but there is no online access and no index to the information most requested – information on local people. Technology has changed people's expectations about the kind of information libraries should offer, since the public is now able to find a wealth of information without using the library. Libraries need provide information that cannot be found anywhere else and is not published in traditional ways – local information is an ideal candidate for this. In the Marist Poll ranking America's Priorities for Public Library Services, indexing of local newspapers was the only item not already being performed by MHLS libraries. This project will combine genealogy with technology and establish an unprecedented library-created resource for local history information that is relevant to today's needs.

Specific outcomes of this system-wide project will include:

- The creation of a user-friendly searchable web resource configured to include local obituaries, births and marriages.
- Coordinated data entry efforts to fill the database from local resources including those kept by local history associations.
- Member libraries and, in the second year, local history associations with the ability to build the database on an on-going basis.

Requested amount: Year 1 = \$22,000
 Year 2 = \$22,000
 \$44,000

