

2024 Advocacy Guide



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WHY ADVOCACY MATTERS

Libraries are essential to New Yorkers! From digital inclusion to early literacy to workforce development to climate adaptation, New York's libraries are empowerment engines that make a BIG difference in the lives of citizens.

If you don't speak up for libraries who will? Legislators need to hear from their constituents, so they understand what matters to them. If no one speaks up to let legislators know that libraries are making a positive difference in our communities, and that library systems make a positive difference for libraries, they cannot justify spending their time advocating for library aid and legislation in Albany.

Modern, sustainable library service depends on state aid. State aid accounts for 75% of the Mid-Hudson Library System's operating budget. These are funds that are leveraged on behalf of the sixty-six (66) member libraries and therefore all communities in our region.

System services enable every library in the region to offer relevant, effective, and efficient services:

- 21st Century library services such as e-books, downloadable audiobooks, e-magazines, and online classes in addition to a shared online catalog that facilitates access for all patrons to over 3 million items
- A delivery service that saves libraries over \$4.5 million annually

2024 BUDGET PRIORITIES

According to the State Education Department (SED), **each dollar invested in the State Library Aid program returns seven dollars in local library services**; more than \$200 million in lost state funding has cost our communities **more than \$875 million in lost local library services**.

\$147.1 million for Library Operating Aid

- System services help make local library services affordable through resource and information sharing.
- Funding libraries is a smart investment in our communities improving the lives of residents of all ages, abilities, and economic status. Library services address digital inclusion, student success, workforce development, equitable access to information and building connections between neighbors.

\$69.4 million for State Aid for Library Construction

- Public libraries require immediate, significant state investment to accommodate **advances in technological infrastructure, investments in energy efficiency, and increased access to differently abled patrons.**
- The New York State Education Department's Division of Library Development (DLD) has identified **\$1.75 billion in capital needs statewide.**
- The State Aid for Library Construction program provides an immediate and efficient return on investment while boosting local economies; since 2007, state investment has leveraged more than \$500 million in local funding – a **5:1 return.**
- Funding for the State Aid for Library Construction Program remained **stagnant for a decade** prior to recent investment; the accumulated capital needs forced the sale of library buildings and has eroded operating funds for maintenance.

For more information: <https://www.nyla.org/2024-legislative-initiatives>

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Protection of Patron Access to Library Materials and Services | S6350-B (May) / A6873-B (O'Donnell) | S7677 (May) / A7843A (Kelles)

Additional Proposals Pending

Libraries across our state face rapidly expanding efforts to censor materials and programming they deem objectionable based on subjective personal sensibilities and partisan ideologies. We require legislation that empowers library professionals to exercise their expertise and ensure public access to materials, services, and programs that represent their interests.

Elimination of Library Construction Cap | S7093 (Chu)

Libraries serving economically distressed communities may be eligible for Library Construction Aid awards beyond 75%. However, the law currently only allows public library systems to award 50% of their total allocation to such projects.

This proposal would eliminate the 50% cap to ensure that libraries serving economically distressed communities and libraries in rural regions will be able to make use of the library construction aid intended to benefit these communities.

Association Library Retirement Opt-In Option | S4245 (Palumbo) / A4885 (Thiele)

This bill would allow association libraries that meet certain criteria the ability to join the New York State Retirement System upon approval of their board.

ADVOCACY CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Get to know your state legislators.** Keep reading for legislator profiles and visit <https://midhudson.org/mhls-legislators/> for more info.

- ☐ **Make sure you are connected with your state legislators:**
 - Annually invite them to your library
 - Introduce yourself at events
 - Add them to your library's mailing list
 - Follow them on social media (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter)
 - Subscribe to their mailing list

- ☐ **Sign up as a Library Advocate** with the New York Library Association: <https://www.nyla.org/>

- ☐ **Tell your legislators the story** of how your library and our system have supported your community throughout the pandemic.

- ☐ **Use Project Outcome to tell the story of your library:**
<https://projectoutcome.org/>

- ☐ **Write a letter to the editor** for your local newspaper explaining why your library is essential to your community.

- ☐ **Join us for Advocacy Meetings on Wednesday, February 7th.**

NYS LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS BY LIBRARY

Library	Senate District: Senator	Assembly District: Assemblymember
Adriance Memorial Library – Poughkeepsie Public Library District	39: Senator Robert Rolison	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Amenia Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Beekman Library	39: Senator Robert Rolison	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Blodgett Memorial Library (Fishkill)	39: Senator Robert Rolison	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Boardman Road Branch Library – Poughkeepsie Public Library District	39: Senator Robert Rolison	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Brewster Public Library	40: Senator Peter Harckham	94: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater
Cairo Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Canaan Branch of Chatham Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Catskill Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Chatham Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett; 107: Assemblymember Scott H. Bendett
Claverack Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Clinton Community Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
D.R. Evarts Library (Athens)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Desmond-Fish Public Library (Garrison)	39: Senator Robert Rolison	95: Assemblymember Dana Levenberg
Dover Plains Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.

Library	Senate District: Senator	Assembly District: Assemblymember
East Fishkill Public Library District	39: Senator Robert Rolison	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Elting Memorial Library (New Paltz)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Germantown Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Greenville Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Grinnell Public Library District (Wappingers)	39: Senator Robert Rolison	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Highland Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Howland Public Library	39: Senator Robert Rolison	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Hudson Area Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Hunter Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Hurley Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Hyde Park Library District	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library (Cold Spring)	39: Senator Robert Rolison	95: Assemblymember Dana Levenberg
Kent Public Library	40: Senator Peter Harckham	94: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater
Kinderhook Memorial Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	107: Assemblymember Scott H. Bendett
Kingston Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
LaGrange Association Library	39: Senator Robert Rolison	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Livingston Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Mahopac Public Library	40: Senator Peter Harckham	94: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater

Library	Senate District: Senator	Assembly District: Assemblymember
Marlboro Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Millbrook Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Morton Memorial Library (Pine Hill)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Morton Memorial Library and Community House (Rhinecliff)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Mountain Top Library (Tannersville)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
New Lebanon Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
North Chatham Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
NorthEast-Millerton Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Olive Free Library Association	51: Senator Peter Oberacker	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Palenville Branch of Catskill Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Patterson Library	40: Senator Peter Harckham	94: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater
Pawling Free Library	39: Senator Robert Rolison	105: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr.
Philmont Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Phoenicia Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Pine Plains Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Plattekill Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Pleasant Valley Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Putnam Valley Free Library	39: Senator Robert Rolison	94: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater
Red Hook Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha

Library	Senate District: Senator	Assembly District: Assemblymember
Reed Memorial Library (Carmel)	40: Senator Peter Harckham	94: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater
Roeliff Jansen Community Library (Ancram, Copake, Hillsdale)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Rosendale Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Branch Library – Poughkeepsie Public Library District	39: Senator Robert Rolison	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library (Milton)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	104: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson
Saugerties Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Staatsburg Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Stanford Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	106: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
Starr Library (Rhinebeck)	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Stone Ridge Library	51: Senator Peter Oberacker	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Tivoli Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Town of Esopus Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Town of Ulster Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Valatie Free Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	107: Assemblymember Scott H. Bendett
West Hurley Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha
Windham Public Library	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	102: Assemblymember Christopher Tague
Woodstock Public Library District	41: Senator Michelle Hinchey	103: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha

MEET OUR STATE SENATORS

39th District: Senator Robert Rolison (R)



Libraries Served:

- Beekman Library
- Blodgett Memorial Library (Fishkill)
- Desmond-Fish Public Library (Garrison)
- East Fishkill Public Library District
- Grinnell Public Library District (Wappingers)
- Howland Public Library (Beacon)
- Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library (Cold Spring)
- LaGrange Association Library
- Pawling Free Library
- Poughkeepsie Public Library District
 - Adriance Memorial Library
 - Boardman Road Branch Library
 - Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Branch Library
- Putnam Valley Free Library

Select Appointments:

- Children and Families
- Aging
- Cities 2

Learn more: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/rob-rolison>

40th District: Senator Peter Harckham (D)



Libraries Served:

- Brewster Public Library
- Kent Public Library
- Mahopac Public Library
- Patterson Library
- Reed Memorial Library (Carmel)

Select Appointments:

- Environmental Conservation, Chair
- Local Government

Learn More: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/pete-harckham>

41st District: Senator Michelle Hinchey (D)



Libraries Served:

- Amenia Free Library
- Cairo Public Library
- Catskill Public Library
 - Palenville Branch Library
- Chatham Public Library
 - Canaan Branch Library
- Claverack Free Library
- Clinton Community Library
- D.R. Evarts Library (Athens)
- Dover Plains Library
- Elting Memorial Library (New Paltz)
- Germantown Library
- Greenville Public Library
- Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie)
- Highland Public Library
- Hudson Area Library
- Hunter Public Library
- Hurley Library
- Hyde Park Library District
- Kinderhook Memorial Library
- Kingston Library
- Livingston Free Library
- Marlboro Free Library
- Millbrook Library
- Morton Memorial Library (Pine Hill)
- Morton Memorial Library and Community House (Rhinecliff)

Libraries Served cont.:

- Mountain Top Library (Tannersville)
- New Lebanon Library
- North Chatham Free Library
- NorthEast-Millerton Library
- Philmont Public Library
- Phoenicia Library
- Pine Plains Free Library
- Plattekill Public Library
- Pleasant Valley Library
- Red Hook Public Library
- Roeliff Jansen Community Library (Ancram, Copake, Hillsdale)
- Rosendale Library
- Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library (Milton)
- Saugerties Public Library
- Staatsburg Library
- Stanford Free Library
- Starr Library (Rhinebeck)
- Tivoli Free Library
- Town of Esopus Library
- Town of Ulster Public Library
- Valatie Free Library
- West Hurley Public Library
- Windham Public Library
- Woodstock Public Library District

Select Appointments:

- Agriculture, Chair
- Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation
- Energy and Telecommunications
- Environmental Conservation
- Select Majority Task Force on Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises
- Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

Learn More: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/michelle-hinchey>

51st District: Senator Peter Oberacker (R)



Libraries Served:

- Olive Free Library Association
- Stone Ridge Library

Select Appointments:

- Education
- Higher Education
- Alcoholism and Substance Use Disorders

Learn More: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/peter-oberacker>

MEET OUR STATE ASSEMBLYMEMBERS

94th District: Assemblymember Matthew J. Slater (R)



Libraries Served:

- Brewster Public Library
- Kent Public Library
- Mahopac Public Library
- Patterson Library
- Putnam Valley Free Library
- Reed Memorial Library (Carmel)

Select Appointments:

- Committee on Libraries and Education Technology
- Committee on Labor

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Matt-Slater>

95th District: Assemblymember Dana Levenberg (D)



Libraries Served:

- Desmond-Fish Public Library (Garrison)
- Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library (Cold Spring)

Select Appointments:

- Committee on Libraries and Education Technology
- Committee on Environmental Conservation

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Dana-Levenberg>

102nd District: Assemblymember Chris Tague (R)



Libraries Served:

- Cairo Public Library
- Catskill Public Library
 - Palenville Branch Library
- D.R. Evarts Library (Athens)
- Greenville Public Library
- Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie)
- Hunter Public Library
- Morton Memorial Library (Pine Hill)
- Mountain Top Library (Tannersville)
- Phoenicia Library
- Windham Public Library

Select Appointments:

- Committee on Environmental Conservation
- Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Chris-Tague>

103rd District: Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha (D)



Libraries Served:

- Elting Memorial Library (New Paltz)
- Hurley Library
- Kingston Library
- Morton Memorial Library and Community House (Rhinecliff)
- Olive Free Library Association
- Red Hook Public Library
- Rosendale Library
- Saugerties Public Library
- Starr Library
- Stone Ridge Library
- Tivoli Free Library
- Town of Esopus Library
- Town of Ulster Public Library
- West Hurley Public Library
- Woodstock Public Library District

Select Appointments:

- Committee on Aging
- Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Sarahana-Shrestha>

104th District: Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson (D)



Libraries Served:

- Highland Public Library
- Howland Public Library (Beacon)
- Marlboro Free Library
- Plattekill Public Library
- Poughkeepsie Public Library District*
 - Adirance Memorial Library
 - Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Branch Library
- Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library (Milton)

Select Appointments:

- Subcommittee on Election Day Operations and Voter Disenfranchisement, Chair
- Committee on Election Law

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Jonathan-G-Jacobson>

105th District: Assemblymember Anil Beephan Jr. (R)



Libraries Served:

- Amenia Free Library
- Beekman Library
- Blodgett Memorial Library (Fishkill)
- Dover Plains Library
- East Fishkill Public Library District
- Grinnell Public Library District (Wappingers)
- LaGrange Association Library
- Pawling Free Library

Select Appointments:

- Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry
- Committee on Social Services

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Anil-Beephan-Jr>

106th District: Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D)



Libraries Served:

- Chatham Public Library*
 - Canaan Branch Library
- Claverack Free Library
- Clinton Community Library
- Germantown Library
- Hudson Area Library
- Hyde Park Library District
- Livingston Free Library
- Millbrook Library
- New Lebanon Library
- North Chatham Free Library
- NorthEast-Millerton Library
- Philmont Public Library
- Pine Plains Free Library
- Pleasant Valley Library
- Poughkeepsie Public Library District*
 - Boardman Road Branch Library
- Roeliff Jansen Community Library (Ancram, Copake, Hillsdale)
- Staatsburg Library
- Stanford Free Library

Select Appointments:

- Chair, Committee on Energy
- Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development
- Committee on Environmental Conservation

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Didi-Barrett>

107th District: Assemblymember Scott H. Bendett (R)



Libraries Served:

- Chatham Public Library*
- Kinderhook Memorial Library
- Valatie Free Library

Select Appointments:

- Committee on Aging
- Committee on Small Business

Learn More: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Scott-Bendett>

**The service area of these libraries spans more than one legislative district.*

PROTOCOLS FOR MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

1. Be on Time and Be Prepared for Online Meetings

Legislators are busier than most folks and often have multiple priorities vying for their attention. Being prompt allows you more time with the legislator, or their staff, to get your points across. Being prepared is essential to getting your message across; rehearse ahead of time what you are going to say, bring information available from reliable sources that backs up your statements. If you have any questions about what to say or how to say it, please do not hesitate to email or call MHLS Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich:

rsmith@midhudson.org; 845.471.6060 ext. 239 or MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator Laura Crisci: lcisci@midhudson.org; 845.471.6060 ext. 260

2. First Impressions

The first thing you should say is “thank you” for being a library supporter. Most legislators are part of the silent majority that support libraries or have given special legislative grants to local libraries or supported increased funding for schools. The purpose of advocacy is to help them be an active and visible supporter of libraries, for example, encourage them to speak up in conference (meetings with their fellow senators or assemblymembers of the same political party) or ask them to write letters to their legislative leadership (i.e., the speaker or majority leader).

3. Roles of Advocates

MHLS staff will appoint a meeting facilitator, who speaks first, introduces folks, designates certain members to speak on particular issues of expertise and wraps up the meeting. If you want to be sure you get a chance to share your story, please reach out to MHLS Staff.

4. Meeting Tone

Advocates are there to educate legislators about the issues and not to berate or lecture them. You want to educate them about the lack of adequate state funding for libraries and what that means to the citizens of the district they represent. Never get belligerent or angry. You can express frustration and disappointment at the lack of proper funding for libraries, but do not get mad at the legislator.

5. Stay on Message

Many legislators like to talk about their involvement with libraries, or how they know someone involved in libraries, and that is fine and can be helpful if you are able to make a personal connection with the legislator. However, do not let too much of your limited meeting time be used to talk about these pleasantries. You need to bring the conversation politely back to your message of wanting the legislator to take action in support of library funding.

6. Leave on a Positive Note

As you wrap up the conversation, make sure you *repeat one last time* what action you hope the legislator will take and then thank them for meeting with you and their past support for libraries. Also make sure you leave them any written material you brought that backs up your point of view.

7. Follow-Up

Follow-up is key to successful grassroots advocacy efforts. The meeting facilitator will send a thank you note to the legislator for meeting with them and include any additional information the legislator requested but you should also reserve time to reach out with a follow up message to thank them for their time and to invite them to visit your library.

SAMPLE POST-MEETING THANK YOU LETTER

Date

Assemblymember/Senator

Room 123 LOB

Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblymember/Senator,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with our group of library supporters. We appreciate the interest and the feedback that you were able to provide.

We know that you understand that libraries are essential for all New Yorkers for the work they do every day in employment assistance, small business support, early childhood education, and connecting all New Yorkers to the digital world. We know that you appreciate that library systems are the foundation of the network that connects all New York's libraries to all New Yorkers. We need your help to ensure that libraries and library systems are able to continue to serve as models of resource sharing and collaboration, and that they are supported at realistic and appropriate funding levels.

We urge the Assembly/Senate to demonstrate that they value New York's libraries by advocating for an increase in library aid to \$147.1 million and an increase of Library Construction Aid to \$69.4 million. We look forward to supporting you and your Assembly/Senate colleagues in making a positive difference for libraries in this year's budget negotiations.

If you have questions or would like to visit our library to witness for yourself the transformative work being done in your district every day, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to make those connections for you.

Thank you for your caring and committed service to your constituents and most of all thank you for your support in our efforts to keep libraries and library systems working for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

ADVOCACY RESOURCES

- **Mid-Hudson Library System's Advocacy Page:**

<https://midhudson.org/advocacy/>

- **Online Advocacy Center** [New York Library Association]:

<https://www.nyla.org/advocacy>

- **Advocacy University** [American Library Association]:

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/advocacy-public-policy>

- **Project Outcome** [Public Library Association]:

<https://projectoutcome.org/>

