



Thursday, June 17, 2021



"Need to Know" Legislative Newsletter for Library Leaders

...from Wisconsin Library Association

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Biennial Budget Update

Joint Finance Committee approves state library aid increase!



The legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) voted on the Department of Public Instruction portion of the Governor's executive budget request on May 27. An [omnibus motion](#) including full funding at the amount for the state library aid items requested by DPI and the Governor's Executive Budget passed on a party line vote, with the four minority members who supported the Governor's higher investment in K-12 education initiatives voting "no" for that reason. There was no discussion of the library items on May 27. However, recognition of the importance of public library services was mentioned in remarks delivered by both JFC Co-Chairs, 17th District Senator Howard Marklein and 39th Assembly District Representative Mark Born.

Public Library System Aid – Approved an additional \$2,500,000 in 2021-11 and \$4,000,000 in 2022-23 above base level funding of \$16,013,100.

Library Service Contracts – Approved the cost-to-continue request for \$12,900 in 2021-22 and \$23,300 in 2022-23 above base level funding of \$1,342,400 to fully fund the library service resource contracts for specialized services from the Cooperative Children's Book Center and Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library and inter-loan services from Milwaukee Public Library and UW-Madison.

NOTE: Since the 2009-2011 state budget, revenue support for public library system aid and the resource contracts has come entirely from the segregated Universal Service Fund via a telecommunications service surcharge administered under the Wisconsin Public Service Commission. No general purpose revenue (GPR) is appropriated for these state library aid line items.

Because every member of the majority party present voted to approve the single omnibus motion addressing many aspects of the entire DPI budget request, as well as library system aid and resource contract funding, no changes to the library items are anticipated when the committee's final version of the budget goes to the floor of both houses of the legislature and on to the Governor's desk for signature.

Recollection Wisconsin – The WLA LD&L budget team has worked tirelessly since January to ensure that items from the DPI section of the Governor's Executive Budget supported by WLA were included in the JFC version of the budget. That included support for the addition of Recollection Wisconsin to the biennial budget as a new line item. Despite considerable interest in the mission and accomplishments of Recollection Wisconsin during our meetings with JFC members and legislative leaders, this was unfortunately not the year to secure any new programs. We will continue to support the pursuit of additional funding for this worthy endeavor.

ACTION ITEM: It's Thank You Note Writing Time!



It is important that all 16 members of the Joint Finance Committee receive thank you notes from WLA members for being a friend to Wisconsin libraries. *We need to keep our messaging positive, as JFC members have yet to wrap up their work and their finished product needs to make its way through both houses of the legislature and across the Governor's desk. Everyone is our friend!*

For this assignment, whether or not you are a constituent of any of these legislators does not matter. The whole state benefits, therefore we are ALL their constituents. If any JFC members are YOUR legislators, please also include recognition for their hard-working staff. Special recognition goes to 12th District Senator **Mary Felzkowski** (R-Irma) who championed the library system aid increase, as well as to 31st Assembly District Rep. **Amy Loudenbeck** (R-Canton) for timely assistance on the Assembly side.

Handwritten thank you notes are recommended. Doing a mail merge to all 16 JFC members using one short letter on library letterhead is acceptable if a short handwritten note appears under your signature at the bottom. **Please do not email.** Receiving an appreciative note delivered by U.S. Mail is a Big Event in legislative offices at any time of the year. It is especially remembered by JFC members and their staff during times when other snail and e-mail is frequently unhappy or contentious. Handwritten thank you notes are a WLA brand.

[Members of the Joint Finance Committee are listed here.](#) **Address for all State Senators:** P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882. **Addresses for Assembly**

Representatives: LAST NAMES A-L: P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708-8952
LAST NAMES M-Z: P.O. Box 8953, Madison, WI 53708-8953.

It is also appropriate to thank Governor Tony Evers for his support at this juncture. Mail to 115 East State Capitol, P.O. Box 7863, Madison WI 53702.

The success that WLA achieved in this year's budget deliberations is the culmination of a robust ongoing and incremental relationship building process throughout the last four biennial budget cycles since 2015. **Please thank yourselves** for your efforts during the past 6 years, and – finally – invest one more stamp to **thank WLA Government Relations Advisor Steve "Coach" Conway** for his guidance and considerable efforts on our behalf. **Write to Steve** at The Conway Consulting Group LLC, CEO, 25 West Main Street, Fl 5, Madison Wisconsin 53703.

Joint Finance Committee Public Hearings Report

A huge THANK YOU goes out to library supporters who attended and literally stood up for libraries to testify at three in-person Joint Finance Committee public hearings around the state! The links below lead to 2-minute video clips of our member's testimony. Beloit Public Library Director Nick Dimassis and Oconomowoc Public Library Director Betsy Bleck covered [JFC - Whitewater](#) on April 9. Northern Waters Library Service Director Sherry Machones and Mercer Public Library Director Teresa Schmidt covered [JFC - Rhinelander](#) on April 21. River Falls Public Library Adult Services & Circulation Librarian Heather Johnson and IFLS Library System Director John Thompson covered [JFC - Menomonie](#) on April 22.

Save the Date! **2022 Library Legislative Day is February 8**

Preliminary information about Library Legislative Day 2022 in Madison is posted on the WLA Legislative Day page for those who wish to make early reservations at the Concourse Hotel. <https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/library-legislative-day>

Concluding Thought

*"The key to success is action and the essential in action is perseverance."
–Sun Yat Sen*

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The Wisconsin Library Association engages, inspires and advocates for library workers and supporters to improve and promote library services for the people of Wisconsin. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about us and how you can get involved.



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