



STATE AID FOR LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION POLICY

PURPOSE

The OWWL Library System (the System) has adopted this Construction Aid Policy to establish guidelines, procedures, and best practices for administering the State Aid for Library Construction Program through New York State Library's Division of Library Development (DLD) in accordance with Education Law §273-a.

The primary goals of the System's Construction Aid Policy are to:

- Assist OWWL Libraries in securing funds for capital improvement projects
- Support OWWL Libraries' Board approved Facilities Plans
- Further the OWWL Libraries' efforts to ensure their facilities are accessible to all community members

ELIGIBILITY

Institutional Eligibility

Any public or association library chartered by the Regents of the State of New York or established by an act of the New York State Legislature is eligible to apply for State Aid for Library Construction, including the 42 OWWL Libraries serving Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming, and Livingston Counties, as specified in Education Law §273-a(1).

Project Eligibility

Projects must increase services, access, and/or sustainability.

Costs eligible for State Aid for Library Construction are outlined in New York Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 8 – Education §90.12.

Examples of Eligible Components

- Site acquisition
- New construction
- Renovation and rehabilitation
- Emergency generators

- Outdoor signage
- Assistive technologies
- Broadband installations and upgrades

Examples of Ineligible Components:

- Speculative architectural and engineering plans and feasibility studies
- Building consultant studies
- Interest or carrying charges on bonds financing the project
- Purchase of books and other library materials
- Repairs incidental to larger construction activities
- Landscaping that is not a component of an eligible project
- Routine repair and maintenance

APPLICATION PROCESS

The System establishes an annual timeline for each State Aid for Library Construction cycle. Libraries must adhere to all deadlines to be considered for funding.

Project Cycles and Funding Periods

State Aid for Library Construction operates on a 6-year project cycle running from July 1 to June 30. Important timeline considerations include:

- Only expenses incurred after July 1 of the application year may be paid with award funds
- Expenses incurred between January 1 and June 30 of the application year may be used as library share funds
- Library projects may not be complete before the System application deadline of the application year

Intent to Apply

Libraries must submit an Intent to Apply form as the first step in the application process. This preliminary submission helps the System's Construction Aid Award Committee assess project eligibility and make initial funding recommendations.

The Intent to Apply requirements include:

- Brief project description
- Approximate project timeline
- Contractor quote(s) with total project costs
- Documentation confirming available funds to complete the project

Libraries should not begin work on the full application until their Intent to Apply has been reviewed and deemed eligible by the System's Board of Trustees at the funding level recommended by the Construction Aid Award Committee.

Timely and complete submissions are required. Incomplete or inaccurate submissions may result in ineligibility for that year's Construction Aid.

Award Determination

In accordance with Education Law §273-a(2)(a-e), State Aid for Library Construction projects may be awarded as follows:

- Up to 90% of total approved project costs for projects serving economically disadvantaged communities
- Up to 75% of approved project costs for all other projects
- Up to 50% of approved project costs for Public Library Systems

The Construction Aid Award Committee determines recommended funding levels based on:

- Available funds
- Number of eligible applications received
- Project eligibility
- The applying library's three-year construction aid award history

The Committee reviews all applications and determines funding recommendations. Libraries will be notified of their preliminary award amounts immediately following the Committee's determination, pending final approval by the System's Board of Trustees. Notified libraries will have one week to confirm their intent to proceed with the project. The Committee will then present confirmed recommendations to the System's Board of Trustees for final approval at their next meeting.

Note: In years with high demand, final award percentages may fall below the maximum levels. Award levels are subject to the total funding allocated by the State and overall demand within the System.

REDUCED MATCH ELIGIBILITY

In accordance with Education Law §273-a(2)(e) and Commissioner's Regulation §90.12, libraries located in economically disadvantaged communities may be eligible for up to 90% funding of total approved project costs.

To qualify for consideration for the reduced match option, libraries in the System must be located in a community that meets at least two of the following criteria:

- The unemployment rate is above the New York State average
- The median household income is below the New York State average
- The percentage of people below the poverty level is above the New York State average
- The percentage of high school graduates is below the New York State average
- The percentage of people with a Bachelor's Degree or higher education is below the New York State average

The most recent United States Census data available will be used to evaluate the service area of the applying library. Should there be more than one possible Census area, the level that brings the library closer to qualifying for reduced match will be used.

Libraries interested in this level of funding should consult with program administrators early in the planning process.

FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The System will establish a deadline for completing the full State Aid for Library Construction Application in the online portal. Libraries must complete the application in its entirety by this deadline to remain eligible for the current aid cycle.

The complete timeline and application process overview will be made available to library Directors at the beginning of each Construction Aid cycle when the application portal opens.

Note: Library projects may not be completed before the application deadline to the System.

Final Approval Process

Following submission of the full application, both the Division of Library Development (DLD) and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) must approve all applications prior to funding approval and distribution as required by Education Law §273-a.

*Amended: May 14, 2025
Adopted: February 9, 2022*