

Justification Guidelines for NYS Construction Aid

Background:

OCPL has been allocated \$1,388,257 for the FY2026-2032 NYS Construction Aid program. The law currently provides for a lower share of 10% from the library with state aid possibly funding 90% of total project approved costs for public libraries that are located in economically disadvantaged communities.

OCPL has developed criteria for approving awards above the 75% share based on an aggregate of three key benchmarks of economic disadvantaged defined by the state (below poverty level, unemployment and free/reduced lunch).

NYS instructions for Construction Aid criteria includes the following guidance:

Impact of Project: Describe how the project will address one or more of the following Public Library Construction Aid Program priorities:

1. Increased effectiveness of library services due to increased and/or improved building space and capacity.
2. More efficient utilization of the building in such areas as energy conservation and increased staff efficiency.
3. Improved access to and use of building services by all library users, including those with physical disabilities; and
4. Provision of library services to geographically isolated or economically disadvantaged communities.

2022-2026 Plan of Service, Element 10 – Construction: OCPL will facilitate member libraries' applications by:

- Notifying member directors of the availability of funds in a timely manner.
- Providing assistance in completing applications as needed.
- Reviewing applications for completeness.
- Reviewing applications at administrative level and making recommendations to the OCPL Board based on aid guidelines; every effort will be made to move all eligible projects forward within the available funding level.
- Submitting application documents to DLD, OCPL will support completed library building projects that result (in order of preference) in:
 1. Building improvements to address physical safety issues.
 2. Improved access to and use of building services by all library users, including persons with physical disabilities.
 3. More efficient utilization of library buildings and the resources needed to support them, resulting in such economies as increased energy conservation and increased staff efficiency.
 4. More effective library service to the library's service area, as evidenced by new library programs and user accommodations resulting from the increased and improved building space and capacity

Law:

The system will need to provide “documentation, where such an application requests state aid in an amount greater than seventy-five percent, demonstrating how the project will address the service needs of one or more economically disadvantaged communities. Such documentation may demonstrate need through poverty rates, concentrations of English language learners, low high school graduation rates, limited fiscal capacity or other relevant factors”

Justification:

Regardless of how many libraries are eligible for a 90% award, if the number and aggregate funding amount of applications submitted exceeds the system's annual allocation, OCPL may decide to fund at a lower award than 90%, or even below 50%. Preliminary construction aid information sent to members include this reminder.

The data below indicates that all the libraries in Onondaga County are in areas that include people living below poverty level, high unemployment rates, and large numbers of children eligible for the free/reduced lunch program.

Source: Census Data Tables DP03 and S1701 from 5-Year American Community Survey Data:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

NYS Education Dept. - http://portal.nysed.gov/pls/cn_port/mel3_pkg.elig_enroll_query

Library	Below poverty	Unemployment Rate	Free/reduced lunch	Aggregate % of criteria
OCPL City	29.60	8.60	100.00	138.20
Solvay	13.80	5.50	97.70	117.00
Jordan	13.30	3.70	100.00	117.00
Elbridge	6.10	7.00	100.00	113.10
Salina	10.40	5.00	91.90	107.30
Minoa	4.30	13.10	66.20	83.60
Liverpool	9.50	4.40	65.70	79.60
East Syracuse	10.20	1.60	66.20	78.00
LaFayette	3.50	3.20	67.10	73.80
NOPL Libraries	7.20	4.23	60.60	72.03
Maxwell	13.30	5.90	41.80	61.00
Tully	6.50	3.50	50.70	60.70
Baldwinsville	7.00	3.90	41.50	52.40
Fairmount	4.70	2.75	41.80	49.25
Jamesville/DeWitt	7.50	4.70	34.00	46.20
Marcellus	5.90	7.70	20.60	34.20
Onondaga Free	3.60	2.80	26.90	33.30
Manlius	8.60	5.80	16.60	31.00
Fayetteville	5.00	2.60	16.60	24.20
Skaneateles	5.22	3.49	12.80	21.51

Funding Guidelines:

The libraries with an aggregate percentage of 15% or higher will be considered for the lower library share. If the collective requested funding amounts of applications in any given year exceeds the system's annual allocation, additional weight for share allocation will be given to those libraries with a higher percentage of standard economic disadvantage criteria based on aggregate economically disadvantaged indicators.