

Southern Adirondack Library System 25 (Library) 75 (State) Construction Match

Background:

This year, as in past years, New York State has approved a grant aid program for library construction. SALS is allocated approximately \$ 962,584 each year under this program, and the allocation is anticipated to be similar for the cycle commencing with grant applications due in Fall 2023.

In the past, a 50/50 match has been the maximum allowable award. Due to changes in the law legislating these funds, Library Systems Boards of Trustees are permitted to approve a 25 (Library) 75 (State) match for eligible projects located in economically disadvantaged communities (as defined by the Library System's Board of Trustees), if program funds are available after reviewing all eligible projects.

SALS has been unable to disburse all the grant monies in the past due to the lack of construction applications from the membership, primarily because many of the libraries could not afford to contribute the required 50% match. These changes in the criteria aim to increase participation by libraries that might not otherwise have applied. The SALS Board of Trustees is developing the standards by which some projects may be awarded a 25/75 match if program funding is available after all applications have been reviewed.

If funds are available, the SALS Board of Trustees will award a 25/75 match if Free/Reduced lunches are 30% or higher.

Law:

The system will need "to provide documentation where such an application requests state aid in an amount greater than fifty 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," and the law also states, "geographically isolated or economically disadvantaged communities."

In approving any application that would receive state aid beyond fifty percent of the total project-supported costs, the board of trustees of the library system shall give particular attention to addressing the library service needs of economically disadvantaged communities as provided for in paragraph e of subdivision two of this section.

Chapter 381 of the Laws of 2019 amended Education Law 273-a to allow for additional State funding up to 90% of the total project costs for a library serving economically distressed communities. The law was amended again by *Chapter 672 of the Laws of*

2021. These amendments allocate a limited amount of funding to each library system to support such projects (funding is capped at 50% of the library system's construction aid allocation.) If SALS selects a library's application for State funding above 75%, the entire award of the library's project application must come from this cap system allotment of 50%. If a system does not use the whole 50% allotment to fund projects requesting over 75%, those State funds may be used to support other library projects.

Libraries serving economically distressed communities must first meet the poverty-level requirements to receive State funding at the 75% level:

Justification:

Looking at the communities and counties, if funds were available, it would be possible to justify that all libraries are in areas with people living at the poverty level and large numbers of children receiving free lunches. Please see the chart:

Library	Poverty	Unemployment Rates by County	Free/reduced lunch	Per capita local support
Ballston Spa	7.3	2.5	31%	\$40
Cambridge	11.6	2.7	43%	\$47
Clifton Park-Halfmoon	3% and 3.8%	2.5	17% and 41%	\$77
Lake Pleasant	8.3%	3	37%	\$107
Salem	14.3%	2.7	50%	\$27
Schuylerville	6.3%	2.5	29%	\$34
Stillwater	11.5%	2.5	30%	\$40

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