

NYS Budget and the New York State Library

On Monday, April 28th, Gov. Hochul and NYS lawmakers reached an agreement on a \$254 billion budget for the next fiscal year. The deal now heads to the Legislature for a full vote. As of this writing, a line-item budget detailing allocations has not been released.

Letitia James, NYS Attorney General, has joined 20 other states in suing the federal government to stop dismantling of the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) and other agencies. The ACLU and ALA have also filed lawsuits to stop actions against IMLS. On May 1, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia granted a temporary restraining order to block the Trump Administration's order to eliminate IMLS. This restraining order comes just days before the scheduled mass layoffs of all IMLS employees on May 4th.

While this is good news, it is only a temporary order put in place to give the court time to consider the merits of this case.

FLLS and member libraries are not funded through the federal government. However, federal grants and [E-rate](#) could be affected.

Referendum Reminders

The School Budget vote is Tuesday, May 20 and many of our member libraries are also [“on the ballot”](#) with their funding requests.

Some community members may not realize that the “library tax” is separate from the school budget. The school budget is simply a tax collecting mechanism already in place that libraries can use to ask their community for support. Learn more at <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/sdtaxes.htm>

DO'S

- Educate your community on referendum funding.
- Tell your community how your library will use the funds.
- Tell people to vote, location of vote, hours, etc.
- After the vote, please let FLLS know the results.

DON'TS

- Tell people to vote “yes” or “no”
- Use library funds on campaigns
- Forget to promote the value of your library and all the services and resources it provides for everyone in the Community!

Open Meetings Law: Voting Refresher

Recently, we received several questions about voting at board meetings. Libraries should refer to their bylaws where the process is defined for their organization. It is important that your board is transparent with its actions and follows [Open Meetings Law](#) (OML). Below are some general tips.

Election of New Trustees:

Your board should have a nominating committee and a process for adding people to the board. This may include interviewing, forms to fill out, etc. (FLLS has sample interview questions, position descriptions, and forms available.)

Association libraries typically elect new trustees at their annual meeting.

Municipal libraries have different requirements. The Board can seek new potential board members but the town/village/county has to approve.

Note: Boards can appoint people at any time to fill unexpected vacancies. NYSL follows this closely in your annual reports making it important to keep accurate records with dates.

Keep in mind:

- Boards should **not** be having private discussions about potential board members in [executive session](#). This violates OML. Discussions must be held in an open meeting, even if it may be awkward to discuss the person while they are present.
- [Quorum](#) is an absolute must when voting. Voting without the required number of trustees present makes any decision reached null and void. (And can potentially lead to problems down the road.)

Upcoming Workshops

- [Maintaining Nonviolent Communication in Challenging Interactions with Mike Bishop](#) Thursday, May 22 | 10:00am-11:30am
- [Welcoming Spaces for LGBTQ Library Patrons and Staff with Luca Maurer](#) Thursday, June 26 | 11:00am-12:30 pm
- [Trustee Handbook Book Club – Recruiting and Retaining Quality Staff](#) July 15, 2025 5:00-6:30PM

In-person: Board Bootcamp

Board Bootcamp with Cindy Wilcox (Human Services Coalition)

Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm In-person at the Tompkins County Public Library, FREE to attend - [pre-registration is requested](#)

This workshop reviews the essential roles and functions of governing boards using hands-on resources and case studies.