

## FLLS Fiscal Year 2025 – 2026 State Aid for Library Construction Guidelines NYS FY 2026

### I. NYS Eligibility Requirements:

Each application shall assure that:

- 1) When the construction project is completed, **adequate operating support and resources will be available to sustain an improved level of service** as reflected by the schedule of library open hours, the number of staff needed to provide such service, and the upgrading of the inventory of all types of library materials.
- 2) The non-State share of the cost (referred to as library share) of the project is available **at the time of application**.
- 3) The minimum allocation per project is \$2,500. There is no set maximum award allocation, although funds are limited by total availability.
- 4) If the building is not owned by the library, verification of a **minimum 10-year lease** must be provided.
- 5) If a library has applied for a construction project in the past, they must have expended all construction aid for each project within that grant's set time period, completed the project, and not returned any of the monies. If a library does not complete a granted project and returns State granted money, a ten-year prohibition from applying for a NY State construction grant through Finger Lakes Library System occurs.

In addition, New York State guidelines require that the project meet at least one of the **NYS Construction Grant Priorities**:

1. Increased effectiveness of library service 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/or
4. Provision of library services to geographically isolated or economically disadvantaged communities.

## II. Reduced Match Eligibility:

Public libraries located in an economically disadvantaged community are eligible to receive between 75 – 90% of their total approved project costs. To qualify for consideration for a reduced match award, the library must serve an area with **two** or more of the following economic indicators:

The library is in a county, town or village where:

- The unemployment rate is above the NYS average
- The median household income is below the NYS average
- The % of people below the poverty level is above the NYS average
- Where 30% of students are eligible for free and reduced school lunch for at least one month during the previous year.

The project application narrative must include **a statement demonstrating that two of the above criteria are met AND an explanation of how the project will address the service needs of the economically disadvantaged community.**

In accordance with state guidelines, FLLS will give particular attention to how the project addresses the library service needs of the economically disadvantaged communities when determining reduced match amounts. We also encourage libraries to **show library share funds as close to 50% (or more)** as possible in case the total award amount for eligible projects exceeds our allocated award amount.

If the funding match that the library has requested is not available, the library will be notified of the award amount that is available to them and will have **two weeks to inform FLLS of their intention to proceed with the project and provide verification of increased matching funds**, if they have not already done so. If a library determines during that two-week period that they cannot move forward with their project without the full match that they have requested in their application, their application will be withdrawn from consideration.

## III. Rankings Used When Applications Exceed Available Grant Funds:

Priority will first be given to projects that would correct an urgent safety or security concern or that focus on repairs to catastrophic damage (e.g. fire, flooding, etc.).

If all eligible projects meet the requirements listed in section I and the total award amount of all eligible projects exceeds the total amount of construction aid designated by NYS, FLLS will also use the following criteria to determine award amounts:

- The library submitted a complete and thorough application before the FLLS deadline.
- Over the past year, the library has submitted all reports tied to NYS funding to FLLS by the required deadlines (such as their Annual Report and Summer Reading Program Evaluation).
- The library currently meets New York State Minimum Standards.
- The library has demonstrated a pattern of efforts to increase local tax support over the last three years.

#### **IV. Non-completion Consequences for NYS Construction Grants:**

The availability of construction grants varies from year to year and is dependent on active, strategic advocacy with state legislators. The Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees reminds member libraries of the fiscal importance of completing library construction aid projects. If a member library does not complete a granted construction project in the State required time period and returns money to the State, the library will not be allowed to apply for a construction grant through the Finger Lakes Library System for a time period of ten years.