

MLA Advocacy -February 23, 2017



The Budget Process Begins

Two weeks ago Governor Rick Snyder proposed his 2018 budget. Library funding remains unchanged from 2017 with the exception of a \$2 million reduction in Renaissance Zone Reimbursements. The decrease is due to the expiration of some zones. This is step one in the budget process. Both the House and Senate will make their own recommendations. Any differences between the chambers are decided in conference committee. The proposed budget then heads back to the governor for his signature.

The budget process gives us an opportunity to educate the new representatives about how libraries are funded. This week MLA and GCSI began a series of meetings with legislators. Recall that two years ago, we saw a \$1 million boost in State Aid to Libraries. Last year we maintained that progress. We hope to try to increase state aid this year. Presentations to the House and Senate subcommittees overseeing our budgets will be scheduled soon. We will explain libraries' value to their communities, Michigan residents and their positive economic impact throughout the state.

With dozens of new lawmakers in Lansing, it's important they learn about their local libraries from you now. Contact your representatives, invite them to the library for a tour, offer a space for their coffee hour. Explain to them how you help their constituency on a daily basis. There will be many organizations clamoring for their time and attention. The sooner you can educate your representative about your library, the more likely they will support funding and other library specific initiatives. If you need contact information visit [MLA's advocacy page](#) , and input your address.

Library Exemptions from Tax Capture

Some libraries are already seeing positive results of our new tax capture exemptions. Recently a library was contacted by their Downtown Development Authority for the first time in 20 years. The tax capture was planning once again to extend portions of the plan and decided to connect with the library for input. Dialogue, accountability and transparency are our goals and this hit the mark for all three. Work continues on a package of bills that will address some technical issues with the new laws.

Libraries were the only special millage to receive an exemption. After decades of hard work on this issue, the legislature and the governor recognized the importance of library funding. When you meet with your legislators, be sure to thank them again for their support.

Medical Campus Exempt from Property Tax

Recently Grand Rapids Township lost a lawsuit to Spectrum Health over their charitable, nonprofit status. The decision means Spectrum is considered a nonprofit exempt from property tax. The local library will be required to pay back \$27,000 because of this decision. This medical campus exemption could impact libraries and others' millage revenue across the state. We are talking with senators about the negative consequences for libraries.

MLA Partnering with National Insurance Services

Among the biggest concerns facing libraries today is managing skyrocketing health insurance premiums. Because of this, MLA has been working to provide a way for members to better manage these costs.

We are happy to announce that we are partnering with National Insurance Services (NIS) to provide much needed health insurance consulting for Michigan libraries. After being extensively vetted by the MLA office and the Michigan Library Association Board of Directors, NIS was selected to offer a new insurance management opportunity to MLA members. NIS will be reaching out to you in the weeks to come. Your library must be a current MLA organizational member to participate in the NIS program. For more information, please contact Brian Mitchell, Market Development in Michigan at bmitchell@nisbenefits.com , or call 269-569-4033.

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