



**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** Elizabeth R. Berlin *Elizabeth R. Berlin*

**SUBJECT:** Regents 2017-2018 State Budget Priorities

**DATE:** November 10, 2016

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Mary Ellen Elin*

**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Decision**

The Regents advance state budget priorities every year. At the October meeting, the relevant committees of the Board reviewed proposals to be advanced during the 2017-2018 budget cycle, other than State Aid to school districts and other Aid to Localities programs, which are handled separately through the Regents Subcommittee on State Aid. At the November meeting, the relevant committees of the Board will approve certain proposals to be advanced during the 2017-18 budget cycle.

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Regent's approval of certain 2016-2017 state budget priorities.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Regents approve budget priorities as follows:

Electronic Licensing System	\$4.3 million*
Public Library Construction	\$6 million
Statewide e-Book platform	\$ 2.5 million
Bridge to College & Careers Pilot Program	\$10.0 million
Independent Living Services	\$ 5.0 million

\*Spending authority for existing revenue



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## **Development of an Electronic Licensing and Document Management System to Improve Customer Service**

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### ***THE ISSUE:***

The Department's Office of the Professions (OP) is responsible for the review of applications for licensure and subsequent re-registration of over 50 professions, limited permits, registration and oversight of pharmacies, professional business entities, statutorily authorized corporate practice waivers, and providers of professional continuing education. OP also handles the investigation of complaints of professional misconduct and illegal practice of licensees, unlicensed individuals and professional entities as well as the oversight of the discipline process, which includes due process hearings, where action is taken when allegations are substantiated. OP is solely supported by the fees it collects.

In 2009, the Legislature and Executive enacted a law (Chapter 396 of the Laws of 2009) that authorized the increase of professional registration fees by 15% in order to allow OP to continue to successfully manage its responsibilities and improve customer service, which included implementing an electronic licensing and document management system through the replacement of a 35+ year old COBOL-based mainframe licensing system. This fee increase was supported by many state professional associations and organizations in order to continue this important work and enhance current processes.

After enactment of this law, the Department tried to achieve some of its process improvement goals by working within the Enterprise eLicensing initiative for all state agencies, which was intended to become a one-stop shop for all statewide licensing needs. Unfortunately, the project was not designed to deal with the complex and varied licensing requirements that are statutorily mandated for the over 50 professions, and ultimately the project could not meet the needs of the Department or its customers.

It is critical that development of a customized electronic licensing system move forward so that the Department can replace the old and outdated mainframe and enhance the customer experience for future and current professional licensees and entities, as well as deliver on the promise that was made when the 2009 legislation was enacted. This electronic system will be designed to include the following capabilities: provide online accounts so that an applicant can see where they are in the licensure process and what information required for licensure has been received by OP; allow institutions of higher education the option to electronically submit transcripts; allow supervisors overseeing experience requirements to submit their forms electronically; handle back-office application processing to improve customer service; and provide for electronic case management of disciplinary cases.

***2017-18 Budget Request – Authorize the Department, within Capital Appropriations, to utilize \$4.3 million of existing revenue this year to begin building a new electronic licensing and document management system***



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## State Aid for Library Construction

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### ***THE ISSUE:***

In FY 2016-2017, the state budget provided \$19 million in capital funds to support State Aid for Library Construction. The program is highly visible and has been very successful. During its first ten years in operation, the program supported a total of 1,803 construction and renovation projects for 689 unique public library and library system facilities.

The Regents have endorsed the concept that all public libraries should be able to accommodate new technologies and provide the knowledge resources New Yorkers need to be successful in an information-driven global environment. Despite the many successes of the current State Aid for Library Construction program, there is still a pressing need for state support.

*Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2015* amended Education Law to include broadband installation and infrastructure in addition to construction and renovation as approved project costs. The estimated need for new construction, expansion and renovation of existing library facilities to ensure that New York's libraries are accessible to all library users and can accommodate advances in technology, including improvements to broadband infrastructure is over \$1.7 billion for the next four years.

More than half of all public library buildings in New York are now over 60 years old, and more than a third are more than 30 years old. 2015 data indicates only 47 (out of 1062) public library buildings (4.4%) have a broadband connection greater than 100Mbps. These inadequate connections are distributed over multiple computers and also support wireless connectivity and teleconferencing services.

### ***2017-18 Budget Request –\$6 million in additional state funds***



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## Increased Access to e-Books

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### ***THE ISSUE:***

Chapter 459 of the Laws of 2015 required the State Education Department to conduct a study of public libraries and e-books in New York State and issue a report to the Legislature and Executive. The resulting report, *Electronic Books and Public Libraries in New York State: A Report to the Legislature and Executive* highlighted the continuing rise in public demand for e-books from local libraries and identified some of the major challenges facing the State's public libraries in meeting that growing demand. Four recommendations outline steps that the State can take to increase access to e-books for New Yorkers of all ages:

- Strive for equity of access to e-books and other e-content for New Yorkers of all ages, ensuring that all libraries in New York State have the resources and support necessary to subscribe to or purchase e-books and to provide the technology necessary to read them.
- Explore and invest in new technologies that may provide (a) more streamlined access to e-books, (b) access to enhanced free collections, (c) alternatives to existing e-platforms, and (d) sharing of e-book collections.
- Address the increasingly high demand for e-books by exploring possibilities for establishing cost-saving mechanisms at the State level.
- By 2020, provide all New Yorkers with free access to a minimum broadband speed of 100mbps at their local public library or neighborhood branch.

In order to achieve equity of access to e-books and other e-content for New Yorkers of all ages, the Regents propose the development of a statewide E-Book platform.

### ***2017-18 Budget Request – \$2.5 million in new state funds to support:***

The development of a statewide e-Book platform. The State Library would provide, in one easy-to-use location, at a cost-savings to local libraries, e-book collections in English and in other languages. All New Yorkers would be able to freely access this core collection of e-books from their local library and from home, work or school.



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## **Bridge to College & Careers Pilot Program**

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### ***THE ISSUE:***

According to US Census data, workers with a high school diploma or the equivalent earn 1.5 more per year than workers without these credentials earn, and workers with an associate's degree earn 2 times more. Bridge programs enable out of school youth and adults to obtain: critical basic skills, a High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma, industry-recognized credentials and preparation for postsecondary study and careers.

Program applicants would be a partnership between an adult education program and college or training provider of demonstrated effectiveness. Awards would range from \$150,000 to adapt and modify existing literacy programs to \$600,000 for the most comprehensive models, with the average award around \$330,000. Program costs would vary given the sector being targeted (i.e. health care or food services) and other funding that the proposals might leverage, including existing state (i.e. Employment Preparation Education or EPE) and federal funding (i.e. Title I workforce development). This proposal could pilot up to 30 Bridge programs which would be funded in each of the seven Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) regions of the state.

Proposals for these innovative approaches would include components such as:

- Career exploration and career assessment;
- Curricula and teaching models that provide instruction with co-teaching or dual enrollment in basic skills and occupational/career and technical education training with contextualized curriculum specific to a high demand sector matched to employer needs;
- Supplemental support from case managers or educational mentors/tutors to offer supplemental supports;
- Bridge coordination to proactively build strong relationships with employers, college and more advanced educational opportunities to connect participants with the next step in their career ladder;
- Apprenticeships/internships; and
- Job Placement, retention and advancement including sector-specific job coaches.

***2017-18 Budget Request – \$10 million in new state funding***



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## **Expanding Independent Living Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

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### ***THE ISSUE:***

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) provide an array of services that assist New Yorkers with disabilities in living fully integrated and self-directed lives. Assisting with all aspects of living, learning and earning, ILC's provide a wide range of services including information and referral, peer counseling, independent living skills training, and additional services based on local needs. They also identify and facilitate removal of architectural, communication and attitudinal barriers to full participation in local communities and beyond. ILCs are key advocates for people with disabilities in local communities across New York.

ILCs have indicated that their ability to meet the full spectrum of needs in their communities could be jeopardized if additional funding is not provided. For over a decade state support for ILC's remained flat at \$12.3 million each year. Though the ILC network received a \$1 million increase in 2015 to \$13.3 million, the impact was limited as existing programs received approximately \$10,000 in additional funds.

The State has an unprecedented opportunity to utilize New York's ILCs as part of ongoing health care redesign intended to increase quality and coordination and decrease costs. Data from the Department's ACCES-VR office shows that the work of ILCs to transition and divert people with disabilities from costly institutional placements back into the community has saved the State more than \$1.8 billion since 2001.

The Regents support an investment in independent living while enhancing transparency that demonstrates the service needs of individuals with disabilities are being met.

### ***2017-18 Budget Request – \$5 million in additional state funds to support:***

Expanding independent living services and supports that maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live and work in their communities.