



The New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act provides \$125,000,000 for construction and renovation projects throughout the state of New Jersey if the voters approve it on the ballot on November 7. The program will be a 1:1 match of state and local dollars. The goals of the bond act are to upgrade public library facilities to meet community needs and to strengthen New Jersey's economy by creating job opportunities for New Jersey businesses.

New Jersey's public libraries play an invaluable role in the lives of their communities by providing educational, recreational and civic engagement opportunities for all residents. With a wide variety of services and programs libraries build communities throughout New Jersey.

This funding will:

- Provide much needed community infrastructure repairs and updates to library facilities, including bringing libraries into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, renovating library facilities and providing technology upgrades.
- Cost sharing program with state funds so construction projects are not dependent solely on local property taxes.
- Creates opportunities to invest in the New Jersey workforce and local businesses through jobs, construction and economic development.

This legislation was passed with strong bi-partisan support in both the NJ General Assembly and the NJ Senate and was signed into law by Governor Christie in July. It asks that the voters approve the state expenditure of funds with a ballot question on November 7.

What are the needs?

A survey conducted by the New Jersey Library Association found that library facilities:

- Are not fully ADA compliant (41.32%)
- In need of additional square footage (47.93%)
- In need of interior painting or new flooring (77.59%)
- In need of electrical upgrades (47.41%)
- Already planning for expansion, renovation or facility improvements in the near future (80.00%)

Why was the bond act proposed now?

New Jersey public libraries are continually transforming and adapting their services and programs to meet community needs. Because of the recent economic downturn in New Jersey many libraries were unable to meet the demands for capital improvements to their facilities or technology infrastructure. Many communities are in critical need to upgrade facilities now.

It was determined that it is essential to move forward in fixing these needs than to wait any longer. This bond program is an investment in the future of New Jersey. Although passage of the bond will add a small amount to New Jersey's current long term debt, it is believed that the immediate economic benefits of the program far outweigh the small increase in debt service. It is estimated that the program will cost approximately \$1 dollar a year per New Jersey resident for the next 35 years. The program will generate at least \$250 million in economic development and preliminary estimates are that the benefits will go much higher.

Who will determine how the funds are allocated

The law states that the NJ State Librarian and the President of Thomas Edison State University will develop a process for applying and distributing construction funds.

Who supports this initiative:

Many statewide groups have joined with the library community to raise the awareness of the critical ballot question. They include:

- The New Jersey League of Municipalities
- New Jersey Association of Counties
- NJ AFL-CIO
- Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce
- Art Pride NJ
- Southern New Jersey Development Council
- International Union of Painters and Allied Trades

Groups are continuing to voice their support for this bond program. Passage of the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act will provide opportunities for libraries to build communities for many years to come.

For more information or how you can help see:

<http://njlibrariesbuildcommunities.org>

