

As a Delaware library supporter, you can make a difference in conveying the impact of library programs and services in your communities to our state legislators. Without your help and voice, your state Representative or Senator may not realize the efforts libraries provide to support jobs, engage kids in school, and change lives in your district. You have the power to educate them about the importance of libraries and librarians in your community and to engage them on important issues relating to library involvement with literacy, equity of access to non-partisan information, jobs, lifelong learning, community partnerships, and more.



The Delaware Library Association wants to make it easy for you to take action, build relationships with your representative's office, and highlight the advocacy work you are doing for our libraries.

Resources for Action

Want to take action but aren't sure where to begin? We've put together some sample resources for you to customize and start advocating today! Below, you'll find three easy ways to get in touch with your State of Delaware legislator.

1. Who is your legislator? Find out now!
[Click here for the State of Delaware General Assembly page](#). On the upper right corner, you can enter your address or simply your zip code to find out who represents you and how to contact that important person.
 - a. For a list of State Senators, [click here](#).
 - b. For a list of State Representatives, [click here](#).
2. Is your legislator on the Joint Finance Committee (see the list below, with links to each legislator's contact page)? Right now, we need to target as much communication as possible with the members of the Joint Finance Committee.

Joint Finance Committee Membership Info

Chair: [Melanie George Smith](#) | Co-Chair: [Harris B. McDowell](#)

5 Senators:

- [Brian J. Bushweller](#)
- [Bruce C. Ennis](#)
- [Nicole Poore](#)
- [Catherine Cloutier](#)
- [Dave G. Lawson](#)

If your Representative and/or Senator is on the 2017 Joint Finance Committee list shown here, it is vital that you let your Representative or Senator hear from you now and through June regarding the importance of ample funding for Delaware libraries.

Below is a sample letter you can use.

5 Representatives:

- [James Johnson](#)
- [Debra Heffernan](#)
- [William J. Carson](#)
- [Michael Ramone](#)
- [Harvey R. Kenton](#)

From: <http://legis.delaware.gov/Committee/JointFinance>

Sample Letter

Dear _____,

As your constituent, I am writing to let you know how important it is that you show your support for our state's libraries.

I understand how challenging it is for you and other Delaware State legislators while considering our state's budget. Our Governor has proposed both increases in taxes and reductions in state services and resources to help meet this \$400,000,000 deficit. Delawareans have heard of arguments for and against many of these ideas, but two stand out above all: It is imperative that our libraries receive the requested amounts to continue its current level for fiscal year 2018.

The funds at risk are:

- Library Standards Funding – This is currently funded at \$4.3 million. The proposed cut of \$250,000 would significantly set libraries back since our state funding has been flat for many years. Our State Librarian Dr. Annie Norman remarked, "...a cut would be a hardship for libraries to maintain services."
- Library Technology & Infrastructure – Funded at \$635,000 for FY17. The proposed cut is \$585,000. Such a cut would prevent the replacement of computing hardware and software for our public libraries and would eliminate Newsline for the Blind.

We need your help. Delaware's public libraries have not seen much financial increase in the last ten years, yet our state's population has had significant growth so demand for library services has steadily escalated. Library staff and administrators have risen to the need for "doing more with less" for so long that any cut to funding would result in reduced services, staffing, and/or hours of operation. Our beloved state cannot afford this.

We need your commitment. Libraries have provided exceptional services that are unique to any other institution regarding literacy and language skills, job seeking assistance, entrepreneurship, serving the underserved, homework help, lifelong learning resources and events, information seeking, and more. Our Delaware libraries partner with community agencies to bring resources, information and services to Delaware's neighborhoods. Libraries introduce new technologies to children, youth and adults that may not otherwise be viewed or tried, and help open minds to new ideas and possibilities. Libraries provide a welcoming place for all, no matter a person's race, religion, income, age, and education level.

Library supporters like you can and have made a difference. Delaware's libraries are incredible and effective in helping to transform lives. Delaware's libraries are exceptional places for our residents.

I ask you to please continue to fully fund our libraries. The return on investment has shown many times over how valuable libraries are to our Delaware communities. We hope you will openly defend libraries to your colleagues as a Delaware Library Champion for all.

Thank you,

[your name]

[address]

[optional: phone, email]

Other ways to advocate

Want to meet with your legislator in person? Here is a link to "Planning a Visit" <https://legis.delaware.gov/Resources/PlanningAVisit>

The legislative calendars will also help you.

- Here is a link to the calendar showing committee meetings: <https://legis.delaware.gov/CommitteeMeetings>
- Here is the General Assembly's calendar showing when they are in session: <https://legis.delaware.gov/SessionCalendar>

Here are a few more resources to help you with your talking points and to enhance your letters:

1. The Delaware Library Catalog Consortium:
 - a. Our shared purpose: <http://lib.de.us/about-us/about/>
 - b. Our mission: <http://libraries.delaware.gov/aboutagency.shtml>
 - c. Our dream: <http://lib.de.us/about-us/delaware-dream/>
 - d. Our community partners: <http://guides.lib.de.us/departners>
2. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DelawareLibraries/> - and also your library's Facebook page will tell you stories about what your library is doing right now.

Develop ongoing connections – keep it going!

1. Invite your legislator to visit your library; take him/her on a tour or arrange one.
2. If possible, invite your legislator to give some brief remarks at your library's next event.
3. Follow your legislator on Facebook and/or Twitter. Find out what interests him/her.
4. Throughout the year, thank your legislator for their time and for their continued support of our state's libraries.