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## **Delaware Library Stakeholders Endorse New State Standards Budget Level For Fiscal Year 2025**

The Delaware Library Association (DLA) and the Friends of Delaware Libraries (FODL) endorse a recommendation by the Delaware Council on Libraries (COL) to increase State Standards funding to public libraries for the fiscal year 2025. This increase is a crucial step towards aligning operational funding with the State's investment in Public Library Construction over the past decade. The proposed state budget outlines an increase of \$2,254,264 in order to bring the total State Standards budget to \$8,469,864.

While Delaware's commitment to library infrastructure has been commendable, operational funding has not kept pace, adversely affecting the ability to maximize the benefits of the new library facilities and services on behalf of Delawareans. Counties shoulder the majority of library operating costs, with their contributions growing in response to rising operational expenses. However, state contributions have not kept pace for more than a decade. To fully leverage the state's investments in facility improvements, an increase in state Library Standards funding, aligned with library construction investments, is overdue.

Delaware library construction, supported by Federal ARPA funds and state appropriations, is foundational to providing equitable services statewide. These services include Telehealth, workforce support, literacy programs, and much more. Libraries serve as community cornerstones, offering a plethora of programs and resources that cater to all ages, abilities, and interests.

DLA and FODL urge state officials, the legislature, and the governor to consider this increase to State Standards to sustain the libraries that play an indispensable role in community building and individual growth.

For additional details about the impact on this increase to state standards on libraries in Delaware, please contact Catherine Wimberly, Chair, DLA Legislative Action Committee, [catherinewimberly.dla@gmail.com](mailto:catherinewimberly.dla@gmail.com), and Kay Bowes, FODL Board, [kaybowes@gmail.com](mailto:kaybowes@gmail.com) for more information.

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