



## **Funding Increase and Formula Change Regional Public Library Systems Background/Talking Points**

**The Minnesota Library Association and Information (MLA) and Technology Educators of Minnesota (ITEM) support a \$4 million increase in funding for Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS), bringing the base to \$17,570,000 annually. They also endorse changes to the RLBSS distribution formula.**

While the need and demand for public library services have grown, state funding hasn't kept pace. State funding for Minnesota's regional public library systems increased only one time during the last 20 years, in 2007. In addition, the current RLBSS formula employed to distribute funding among the state's regional public library systems is volatile, resulting in significant year-to-year changes in how dollars are distributed statewide.

Each of the 12 Regional Public Library System Governing Boards endorse this proposal. The annual \$4 million increase will help each system meet the rising costs of services and address increasing service demands within our communities. The formula change will help reduce annual fluctuations in state funding, providing libraries more budget consistency as they plan the delivery of public services.

Minnesota's regional public library systems are an important part of statewide efforts addressing challenges like the achievement gap and the digital divide. In the last year Minnesota public libraries:

- Drew 23.3 million visitors, 3 million more than Walt Disney World, and nearly 7 out of 10 Minnesotans have a public library card!
- Prepared children for kindergarten with free literacy programs.
- Provided programs to help students retain literacy and critical thinking skills over the summer. Most included science, technology, art, math and history-focused activities.
- Enabled library patrons to log on to library computers – at no cost, nearly 11 million times. Libraries enabled 6,417,488 wireless sessions by users.
- Public libraries offered over 69,000 different library programs across the state with over 1.6 million citizens in attendance – a 34% increase since 2011.

### **State funding is essential to public library operations and promotes efficiency and effectiveness statewide.**

A \$4 million per year increase and a formula change, will result in the following:

- More equitable library services across the state.
- Funding stability from one year to the next.
- Library budgets based on actual state allocations, rather than estimates.
- More library materials to fill community demand.
- Innovative service and delivery methods for better meeting the needs of our community members.
- Increased training for library staff.
- **Improved quality of life for individuals across the state.**