

MHLS ACTION MEMO

#07-05

TO:	MHLS Member Library Directors
FROM:	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Coordinator of Member Information
DATE:	April 13, 2007
RE:	Construction Needs Update

Background

MHLS tracks information about member libraries' construction/expansion/renovation projects for use when advocating for NYS aid increases and allocating MHLS resources and consulting efforts. This year we will also use this information to assist in generating a local eligibility list for State Aid for Public Library Construction Grants.

Issue

In an effort to have the most accurate information about member library plans/projects we use a database that aids system staff in tracking building projects. To keep the database current we need your help. ***If you are planning to apply for State Aid for Public Library Construction funds later this year** (note: applications may be released as early as mid-May 2007) **you are required to submit the attached form to MHLS. If you do not, you will not be authorized to apply.**

Action

Please fill out and return the attached form. If your library is not currently planning a construction project simply fill in your library's name and check "No Project" under #2.

Deadline

Please fill out and return your completed questionnaire to *Rebekkah Smith Aldrich at MHLS* by **May 7th**.

If you have any questions please contact me: x39 or rsmith@midhudson.org.

Construction Needs Update (2007)

Library: _____

Contact Person (name & email address):

1. Please choose one or more of the following to describe the project:

- new building
- expansion
- renovation
- handicapped accessibility
- other: _____

1b. Briefly describe the project (3 sentences or less):

2. The approximate phase of the project:

- No project
- Phase I: talking to MHLS; evaluation of current building and needs; exploring options; full board buy-in
- Phase II: viewing other library buildings; RFP to architect, fundraising consultants
- Phase III: architectural plans are in place; solid funding plan in place; bid/quote documents in place
- Phase IV: funding plan in full swing; actual construction taking place
- Phase V: finishing touches on building; all funds needed are available

3. Total estimated project cost: \$_____

4. Do you intend to apply for State Aid for Public Library Construction funds this year (FY2007-2008)?

YES*

**If yes continue on to page 2.*

NO

If no, you are finished with the form.

Page 1

If you answered "Yes" to question 4 on page 1 continue on, if you answered "No" you are finished.

5. Eligibility Checklist:

Instructions:

-Go through the Checklist critically.

-If you cannot answer "Yes" to all of the items in the Checklist you may not apply.

Yes, our project falls within the defined eligible projects

(see page 3 of this memo re: eligible / ineligible projects)

Yes, we have a quote/bid estimate from a contractor or We will have a quote/bid estimate by May 31st.

(Please note: Cost estimates done by an architect are not acceptable.)

Yes, our total project costs equal at least \$5,000.

Yes, we have the required matching funds in hand[^].

Yes, our project could begin within 180 days of notification that we have received construction aid funds (estimated month of notification: December 2007).

Yes, our project will be finished by June 30, 2009.

Yes, our building will be used for library purposes for the next 20 years.

[^]State aid for public library construction can be provided for "up to fifty percent of the total project approved costs, excluding feasibility studies, plans or similar activities." Before applications are approved, applicants must provide evidence of the availability of funds to pay for the cost of the project, minus the amount awarded through the Construction Grant Program [Note: award amount may be less than fifty percent of the total project approved costs - RSA]. Verification must be in the form of bank or bond certification, an official document(s) signed by a financial authority connected with the applying institution, and/or such other evidentiary documents as necessary. [<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/construc/faq14m.htm#b07>]

**Please return to MHLS, attn: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
by May 7th, 2007**

Frequently Asked Questions: **Eligibility**

Q: What kinds of projects are eligible for funding under the construction program?

A: Costs eligible for approval include construction or acquisition of a library building, renovation or rehabilitation of a library building, or renovation or rehabilitation of leased property. The purchase and installation of equipment and furnishings are eligible costs within the context of a construction project application for a new building, building addition or renovated/rehabilitated space. Other eligible costs include site acquisition, site grading, and supervision of the construction, renovation, or rehabilitation. The program gives priority to projects that increase energy conservation, provide accommodation for computer equipment and new technologies, and bring libraries into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Priority is also given to projects that will extend library services to people residing in geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged communities.

Q: May a library buy computers and equipment and incorporate new technologies as part of a construction project?

A: Yes, a library or system may use the construction funds to purchase computers and equipment that will upgrade the library or system's technology capabilities-e.g., automated systems that permit library users to check out materials themselves, public access computers for a newly constructed computer lab. The purchase of new technologies must be within the context of a construction project for a new building, building addition, renovation or rehabilitation project. Requests for new computers that are not part of a larger construction/rehabilitation project are not eligible for funding from this program.

Q: Will a project that consists of building maintenance be eligible for funding under the \$14 million construction program?

A: No. Commissioner Regulations specifically exclude "routine maintenance," e.g., replacement of carpeting, roof repair, or repainting of walls, from eligible funding categories. Fundable projects include those that involve capital construction, site acquisition, renovation, or rehabilitation of owned or leased buildings used for library or library system purposes.

[Excerpted from the Division of Library Development's "\$14 Million Public Library Construction Grant Program FY2006-2007 Frequently Asked Questions": <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/construc/faq14m.htm>]

Q: What is ineligible?

A: "Applicants are reminded here that architectural and engineering plans, building consultant studies, and the purchase of books and other library materials are listed among those costs deemed ineligible. In addition, the purchase and installation of initial equipment and furnishings are eligible costs *only with respect to new or refurbished space*."

[From: Education law, Section 273-a, as amended by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2005 and Section 90.12 of the Commissioner's Regulations Law and Regulations]

Contact Rebekkah at 845.471.6060 x39 or rsmith@midhudson.org with any questions.