



Boston Public Library Public Service Impact of Proposal to Reduce State Funding

Libraries have never been more important than they are today.

Demand for Boston Public Library services is rising at the same time funds are shrinking. Today's financial challenges are the result of back-to-back years of reduced revenues.

The FY11 Budget

The current FY11 state budget includes \$2.4 million for the Boston Public Library, an amount that has been reduced 73% from its FY09 \$8.9 million level. The proposed FY11 \$1.8 million Library of Last Recourse funding provides direct public reference and research services to all residents of the Commonwealth. In addition, the Boston Public Library is scheduled to receive \$530,000 in State Aid to Libraries, funding used to support core infrastructure operating costs.

Including the estimated \$2.4 million from the State, the total projected budget for FY11 is \$38.9 million. The current FY11 budget gap is approximately \$3.3 million. In order to balance the budget, the Boston Public Library has already made significant reductions negatively impacting public service including:

- Elimination of up to 70 positions at the Central Library and system-wide administrative support resulting in reductions in public service, Sunday hours, and cleaning and maintenance
- Elimination of up to 21 positions in branches resulting in the closure of four branches
- Reduction and elimination of services contracts (HVAC, vehicle leases, grounds care, etc.) and other non-personnel expenses.

Decisions on the FY11 budget were based on careful study and public participation including positioning the Boston Public Library for future financial sustainability and stability, while providing a system-wide approach to continuing to deliver services to people of all ages and from all walks of life.

Amendments and Potential Impact

Amendments 616 and 617 require that all 4 branches scheduled to close in FY11 remain open in order for the Boston Public Library to receive \$2.4 million in state funding.

If all 26 branches were to remain open, even with the \$2.4M in State funding remaining in the budget:

- 18 branches would have to be paired, with a shared staff, and hours would have to be reduced by approximately 50-85%, a loss of an estimated 470 hours each week (note: City will impact bargain the hours reduction). Nine lead libraries would remain open at current operating levels (eight branches plus Copley Square Central Library).
- Most branches would be open 1-3 days per week
- Saturday hours would be lost in most branches
- Staff could work at up to 3 different locations
- No pick-up of reserved materials at most branches
- Inconsistent homework assistance and summer reading activities for youth
- Full facility maintenance costs required, but facility use minimal
- Programming reduced due to decreased staff capacity

Outreach Services

Keeping 22 branches open, plus Copley Square Central Library, and closing four branches will mean open libraries will keep their existing hours and popular library services in the four neighborhoods with closures will be delivered in partnership with community organizations. These services include, as examples, homework assistance, early literacy/story times, book clubs, computer classes and other in-demand services.

Impact of Additional Loss in State Funding per Amendments 616 & 617

If an additional \$2.4 million is cut (\$530,000 from State Aid and \$1.8 million from the Library of Last Recourse), the City of Boston would have to cover essential operating expenses that are now covered by the Commonwealth. These costs include a portion of utility expenses system-wide, maintenance, service contracts, and critical information technology costs.

As a result, the Boston Public Library would possibly have to incur more layoffs to meet the budget gap, including the potential of additional branch closures.

Without State funding, the Boston Public Library will not be part of the State Certification for Public Libraries program. The library will not be eligible to participate in any state grant programs and Boston residents will not be able to borrow books from libraries in other communities.

Impact of a further reduction of \$2.4 million could also mean:

- Loss of up to 31 additional positions, with the potential for further reductions to public service hours. Central Library hours of service, especially in research departments, could be curtailed to an estimated 40 hours per week (down from 64), with the possible loss of night and weekend hours; all interlibrary loan services (the borrowing of books from other libraries for Boston Public Library customers) could cease. (estimated \$1.6 million)
- A reduction in the purchase of new books, such as novels, travel guides, atlases, how-to books, best sellers and award winning titles, CDs, DVDs for the Central Library and branches (estimated \$250,000)
- Commercially-licensed databases and highly popular digital downloadable books, music, and video used throughout the state by students of all ages, the business community, and the general public, are likely to be further reduced and limited in use to Boston residents (estimated \$125,000)
- The potential for ending the digitization efforts, which have made more than 20,000 historical titles of interest to students, genealogists, and historians accessible via the internet (estimated \$350,000)

Note: This document is for discussion purposes only. Significant modifications in the Boston Public Library FY11 operating budget would be reviewed and approved by the BPL Trustees and forwarded to the City of Boston for final approval.

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