



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# STATE AID TO LIBRARIES OPERATING GRANT

### REQUEST

**\$27.4**  
MILLION

Restore statewide funding levels to \$27.4 million (FY 2014), and work towards the 2001 funding levels of \$33.4 million.

### ANALYSIS:

- This year's funding is \$22.3 million statewide.
- Lake County is estimated to receive \$200,000, a reduction of \$80,000 from FY 2014.

### BACKGROUND:

The State Aid to Libraries Operating Grant program is a continuing state grant program, authorized under Chapter 257, Florida Statutes. The State Aid Grants provide financial encouragement for all 67 counties to provide freely accessible public library services to those taxed for the service. It fosters the growth and innovation of new ideas to provide library and information services to the residents of Florida based on local service plans. The law authorizes a match of up to 25 cents on each dollar of local expenditure for library services. The state match reached a high of 11 cents on the dollar in FY 98/99 and has declined since then. After an increase to \$27,409,823 in FY 14/15, this year the appropriation for the entire state was reduced to \$22,298,834. This will result in a reduction in the allocation to Lake County from \$274,233 for FY 14/15 to an estimated \$195,419 for FY 15/16.

In Lake County the State Aid Grants are used to support system-wide technology infrastructure including public access computers, subscriptions to online reference databases for public use, and county-wide literacy programs. At the same time that citizens are in greater need of government services, public libraries are increasingly the "go to" places when Floridians need to access the internet and government services. This funding also supports education and reading, as libraries are a critical support for school-age children and a resource for life success for learners of all

ages. Public libraries also use State Aid Grants to help the local economy by providing economic development resources to small businesses and job seekers, and by implementing new technology and innovative solutions. Since the allocation for Lake County will be an estimated \$78,814 less than last year, this may mean a reduction in the amount of computers we are able to replace, reduced database access, or a reduction in some of the countywide services offered through libraries.

Additionally, an appropriation at the current level makes it possible for the state to receive approximately \$8 million in federal Library Services and Technology Act grants. This money funds many statewide services that directly affect local citizens, such as the Florida Electronic Library reference website and the 24/7 chat reference service.

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