

REPORT FROM THE ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY
October 12, 2011

Funding delays will continue to figure prominently into cash flow challenges for all State Library grantees between now and the end of this calendar year. The Illinois General Assembly has extended the period during which payments from last fiscal year can be made until December 31, 2011. FY12 payments will not begin until after all FY11 payments have been made.

Fortunately, we have been able to maintain state grant funding for libraries (e.g., public library per capita, school district, literacy and construction grants) when other states have experienced much more severe cuts. Grants also have been secured from sources new to the State Library, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. These grants have provided much needed materials and services to libraries to support direct patron needs.

In addition, three strategically located public libraries have been chosen for new videoconference packages: the Helen Matthes Library in Effingham, the Galesburg Public Library, and the Quincy Public Library. These packages will ease communication challenges brought about by the recent regional library system mergers.

Secretary White and the staff of the State Library remain steadfast in our commitment to support Illinois libraries and library systems. Our three foremost priorities continue to be delivery, automated consortial catalogs and Talking Book programs.

To fulfill this goal, the State Library is again suspending offerings traditionally supported by federal LSTA funding, specifically competitive grant programs, scholarships and continuing education programs such as Synergy, the Small Public Library Management Institute and the Institute for School and Public Librarians. The ILEAD U program is supported by a separate grant until 2012.

The FY 13 budget process for the fiscal year that begins next July 1 has already begun for us. Our fiscal officer has been working with the library's several divisions to put dollar amounts on our operational needs for the coming year since the start of FY 12 last July. All of that work is in preparation of the submittal of the State Library's FY 13 budget request to the SOS budget office later this month. Included in that request will be a recommendation of funding amounts for the grant programs the State Library administers.

We have been very pleased with the system mergers that took effect July 1. Last month the State Library hosted a meeting of the boards of directors of the two new systems and Chicago Public Library. Board members learned about their powers and responsibilities, and each system shared with us their priority services.

We were pleased to report to the two systems last week that Secretary White has authorized them to begin the process of replacing aging vehicles that deliver books and other materials to library users. We will replace 13 delivery vehicles in total that have mileage including and in excess of 200,000.

The 12th annual Try-it! Illinois free database trial is now underway and runs through November 30. Try-It! Illinois offers library staff and users an excellent opportunity to survey and evaluate a wide variety of electronic resources. Thanks to partnerships between the Illinois State Library and the participating electronic resource vendors, there is no charge for accessing these databases during Try-It! Illinois.

###