

BOARD ACADEMY



This publication shares information of interest to public library boards. Links to the resources and full content can be found in the e-newsletter version.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE ECOSYSTEM? INFORMATION ON CURRENT TOPICS AFFECTING OUR LIBRARIES

STATE BUDGET

The first look at the proposed State budget (2025-2026) comes with a budget address from the Governor. We anticipate an announcement in the near future stating when Governor Shapiro will provide his budget to the General Assembly with his priorities and highlights as well as the dates for House and Senate Appropriation meetings. These meetings are with specific departments so representatives and senators can ask questions and gather more information.

Appropriations meetings which we watch closely are the the ones involving the Department of Education, which facilitates four line items related to libraries:

- State Library: Funding for the State Library and Office of Commonwealth Libraries
- **Public Library Subsidy: State aid for libraries, systems, districts, and state resource libraries**
- Library Services for the Visually Impaired and Disabled: Funding to Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Free Library of Philadelphia for resources available to any PA resident such as mylamp.org
- Library Access: Funding toward statewide services like HSLC (SHAREit, AccessPA, POWER Library, digital collections, etc.)

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

As of December 31, 2024, any open legislation not signed into law fell off the table and a new slate of legislation began this January. Starting in December, legislators submitted numerous co-sponsorship memoranda of varying priorities. To view what your representative or senator is prioritizing, find the memos attached to their name through the [House Co-Sponsorship Memoranda](#) and [Senate Co-Sponsorship Memoranda](#) available on the respective chamber sites: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>



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OFFICE OF COMMONWEALTH LIBRARIES UPDATES

These updates come from representatives of the Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL):

- State aid from the current 2024-2025 Public Library Subsidy line was disbursed to independent libraries, federated systems, and County Coordination Aid libraries this week.
- As of the last updates we've received, OCL plans on starting the year introducing themselves to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) and providing their draft of the updated Regulations in early 2025. This would initiate the process for the IRRC and start the clock (year-and-a-half) to review the draft and release it for public comment. Public comment does not necessarily mean changes to the final version, but it does allow for folks to share their thoughts. Watch the Compendium for more updates.
- Applications for the Keystone Grants for Public Library Facilities are in the review process with awards slated to be announced in March. There were 12 applications requesting approximately \$5.3 million.

TIMELY TOPICS

Annual Reports (And no, not the ones submitted to OCL)

Business and nonprofit entities in PA must be a registered entity and file an annual report form acknowledging that it's still in existence and any updates to general information as well as board officers. For nonprofits, the filing fee is \$0 (watch out for scams that charge). All other entities are \$7. Other fees may apply (change of registered office, change of registered agent, etc.)

To be compliant, nonprofit organizations must file by June 30. For more information and the how-to guide for filing, visit [the Annual Reports in Pennsylvania page](#). Keep in mind that your library may have a different name than when it was filed in the past. If you can't find your library, use the Contact Us options at the bottom of the [Business page](#) to reach out to someone who can help. If your library's status or situation is unclear, it may need to seek legal guidance.

You can also run an entity search for your library and click on the filing button there to be prompted to login.

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ADVOCACY TIPS BUILDING UP THE ADVOCACY TOOLBOX

NEW YEAR, (SOME) NEW FOLKS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New Representative or Senator?

Whether your legislator is new to the scene or in for another term, check to see that you have their name and contact information on file. Not sure who it is? Use the map feature on the General Assembly's website to search by county then find your library's municipalities. Visit their individual pages to learn more about their interests and committee work. Take note of these as these points are priorities to them, giving your library perspective on what and how to tailor messaging about what the community needs and what your library has to offer.

Find Your Legislator:

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/#county>

For your convenience and ours, we track legislation related to libraries on the [2025-2026 Legislative Session](#) page on snoelibraries.org:

<https://snoelibraries.org/2025-legislative-session/>

Reach Out

Send your representative(s) and senator(s) a message using their contact forms, email, sending mail to their local office, or stopping by and introducing your library. It is critical to build relationships BEFORE need to make asks for funding or support.



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SPOTLIGHT ON LEARNING BUILDING AND REINFORCING STRONG LIBRARY FOUNDATIONS WITH CURRENT AND CLARIFYING INFORMATION

A lot has changed over the past few years: turnover in staff, director, and board positions; community makeups; the political and economic climate for libraries; and more. These changes have led to uncertainty in knowing where libraries are and where they are going. For Board Academy, we aim to provide information that may help to fill in knowledge gaps, correct any misinformation or changed guidance, and answer questions. We look forward to covering a lot of topics in upcoming publications. (See the Self-Assessment Section below for a glimpse at the categories we'll cover.) If you have other board members who are interested in receiving this in their inbox, please forward this to them so they can sign up at <https://snoe-ba-contentinterest-jan2025.paperform.co/>

WHERE TO START: THE WHY

Why are you here? Why are you in the role that you are in, serving your library and your community? Sometimes, in the weeds of day-to-day struggles or wondering where funding will come from to cover payroll or a leaky roof, it's easy to forget the reason why you chose to support your organization. What tugs at your heartstrings?

If you're not sure quite of your why, here are a few different perspectives that may help you reconnect. Different perspectives may resonate with different folks. (See the Digital PDF or email for links to content.)

- Video: "Start with why – how great leaders inspire action" with Simon Sinek
- Video: "Know Your Why" with Michael Jr.
- Video: "5 Core Beliefs of Every Great Nonprofit Board Member" with Joan Garry
- Article: "Serve on a Nonprofit Board" from BoardSource

So, the big question: What is YOUR why?

Bonus: At your next board meeting, pose the question to your fellow board members. Share your thoughts and experiences, but also take the time to hear why other people have chosen to be active members of the team.

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LIBRARY SELF-ASSESSMENTS

The SNOE Region team researched and developed self-assessment surveys for various topics that are essential to library success. These are self-assessments for organizations, meaning your library isn't graded nor do responses affect State aid or district support. By taking the self-assessments, though, libraries can gauge how they think they're doing and be better equipped to look at all of pieces that go into the big picture puzzle. What topics are covered with these self-assessments?

Administration, Advocacy, Collections
Facilities & Maintenance, Finances
Governance, Library Services, Personnel
Policy, Programs & Community Relations, and Technology

If there are any that pique your interest, dive in. Work as a group to answer the questions. If not at this time, that's okay—we'll introduce them throughout the upcoming Board Academy publications alongside related content. You can also take the self-assessments multiple times, so you're not locked into a one-and-done scenario. By submitting your responses through the forms online, your district consultant will be notified and can work with you through questions or topics of interest.



FEEDBACK SURVEY

We have a lot of information to share with you in the coming months. More importantly, we'd love to hear about what YOU want to hear more about. Let us know what you'd like to see in a future Board Academy publication:

<https://snoe-ba-feedback.paperform.co/>

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SNOE REGION

We've been hearing from board members that they would like to learn more about their role on the board, within the library, and library-related information from across the State. So, we're coming to you with a new publication: Board Academy. This will be distributed by e-mail about 4 times a year, with special editions to cover major breaking news. There will also be a PDF version available to print for distribution to other members of your board. While SNOE had previously put energy into the SNOEBall Advocacy e-newsletters, those resources will be converted to a webpage soon for on-demand access.

The SNOE Region is a cooperative initiative of the Seneca, New Castle, Oil Creek, and Erie & Crawford Library Districts to help develop and strengthen the libraries in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

This information is provided to the best of our knowledge as of the date provided. Information is subject to change without notice. While authoritative, it is not guaranteed for accuracy or legalities. If there are questions, please reach out to your district consultant, who may encourage your library to ask a local solicitor/lawyer for further guidance.

If you have any questions about this publication or previous editions' content, feel free to reach out to all of the SNOE Region's District Consultants at consultant@snoelibraries.org. If you have questions on any topics related to board governance, duties, advocacy, or libraries, please feel free to reach out to your library's District Consultant:

Leslie LaBarte, Seneca Library District: districtconsultant@senecadistrictlibraries.org

Barbara McGary, New Castle Library District: bmcgary@ncdlc.org

Erin Joyce, Oil Creek Library District: consultant@oilcreek.org

Jessica Church, Northwest Library District: jchurch@eriecountypa.gov
(formerly known as the Erie & Crawford Library District)