



Wisconsin Educational Media Association  
2005-2006 Legislative Session  
Issue: Funding of Statewide Library Contracts

WEMA supports full funding for the four statewide resource contracts: Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS), Milwaukee Public Library/Interlibrary Loan (MPL), Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC).

These contracts provide specialized library materials and information to a unique customer base that cannot be served through the public libraries or the Reference and Loan Library. The specialties represented save monies throughout the state and create a network among the states' libraries - all types of libraries - public, academic, school, and special.

- Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS) enhances the ability of libraries to stretch budgets and enhances libraries' ability to deliver services to their patrons. Cooperative purchasing, electronic document delivery, shared cataloging through OCLC and a variety of other services are all part of WiLS.
- The Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) also lends materials to all parts of the state in response to requests that cannot be filled at the system level or by the Reference and Loan Library. The contracts with WiLS and MPL ensure access to the major collections and unique materials held by these libraries for patrons statewide. Funds are used to pay for staff to locate, ship and shelve materials and for supplies and postage.
- The Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, located in the Milwaukee Public Library, fulfills a statutory mandate that the State Superintendent contract annually with a public library for the provision of library services to over 6500 physically handicapped persons, including the blind and physically handicapped, through 354 schools, libraries, hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions. The Regional library mails out an average of 1500 items per day.
- The Cooperative Children's Book Center is a repository of children's tradebooks used by children's librarians and teachers throughout the state. It also provides unique resources and services to educators and others concerning intellectual freedom and censorship issues.

The 2005-2007 biennial budget does not provide for any increase in funding for these contracts and perpetuates cuts instituted in the previous biennium. The Department of Public Instruction proposed an increase of \$154,800 over the base that would have restored contract funding to the 2003 level. Governor Doyle's budget, however, recommended "level funding" (nothing added or subtracted) for the contracts at the current budget amount of \$876,900. Given the reductions from the 2003-2005 biennial budget, flat funding is equivalent to another decrease.

WEMA supports funding these important statewide contracts so that services are maintained and not reduced, while recognizing cost increases and inflationary pressures.