

Testimony
Almy Landauer

“Library services for specific segments of the Vermont population, including senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, youths and children, immigrant and migrant communities, and people living in poverty;”

Public Libraries in Vermont need a significant increase in funding - that is not based on local property taxes - in order to adequately provide both materials and services such as ESL classes, public computer access, support and training, inclusive and diverse programs, and outreach to the populations listed above. Just as the funding for schools is increased to support serving these populations in schools!

“The role that libraries play in emergency preparedness, cultural diversity and inclusion, public health and safety, community identity and resiliency, economic development, and access to public programs and services; and”

Emergency preparedness: Many libraries are town/city partners in emergency planning. This is a role that increases the workload of library staff.

Public Safety: Libraries often provide safe spaces, warm/cool places.

Economic Development: Libraries provide bulletin boards, racks of brochures, often digital listings of community/regional/state-wide, contacts and resources, resume and job application assistance, access to the Internet for unemployment benefits and applications, and that oh-so-important but intangible community space where people meet and talk and network.

All these things require funding. Libraries could do so much more with better state funding. Starting with staff numbers and better pay for library staff. Because who makes all this happen? Trained library staff of course!

“The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on library operations and services.”

Libraries did a tremendous job continuing to serve their communities during the worst of Covid. We did this mainly with no extra funding - in fact some budgets were cut, some staffing was cut. We were a literal and figurative lifeline for many.

I could go on but that's all I have time for 😊
Thank you for listening!