



## Library Construction Bond Referendum

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

*Question 1 on the November 7 general election ballot will let voters decide on the NJ Library Construction Bond Act, which would provide matching grants for renovation and construction projects for public libraries.*

#### **1) What exactly is a bond referendum?**

A bond referendum is a vote by the general public that would authorize the State of New Jersey to issue bonds, generating revenue for a specific project.

#### **2) How will this bond referendum work?**

If voters approve the New Jersey Construction Bond Act, the state will issue \$125 million in bonds. Revenue from the bond sales will be used to provide grants to public libraries that will cover 50% of the cost for construction and renovation projects. The state will repay the bonds out of state revenues, and not through local property taxes.

#### **3) What types of projects will these grants fund?**

- New construction projects
- Building repairs and renovations
- ADA compliance improvements
- Technology infrastructure upgrades that support increased internet access

#### **4) How might this bond referendum benefit my community?**

- By helping libraries meet high-priority needs relating to **accessibility, infrastructure, and innovation**
- By creating **opportunities to invest** in the NJ workforce and local businesses through jobs, construction, and substantial economic development
- By **providing communities across the state** with enhanced, state-of-the-art public libraries

#### **5) Why is this funding needed now?**

The state has not funded capital projects for its public libraries in almost 20 years. During that time, public libraries have become even more crucial to their communities. Libraries need the ability to make investments in their facilities to continue service and plan for future needs.

#### **6) Are libraries needed in the age of ebooks and the internet?**

Libraries are thriving. On an average day, over 120,000 people visit New Jersey libraries and our librarians assist the public with over 20,000 questions. We also provide internet access for almost 27,000 people a day.

Libraries respond to the needs of their communities through services that foster early literacy, provide job seeking assistance, and computer instruction. Informational seminars on Medicare and the Affordable Care Act, GED and ESL classes, after-school homework help, and family storytimes are just some examples of how libraries reach out to all age groups in their communities.

New Jersey's public libraries provide vital resources. Often they are the only source of quality information and technology many residents have. As access to government services, banking, and job-seeking shift online, libraries are a mainstay for those that find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide.

### **7) What is the tax impact?**

The issuance of bonds by the state will not raise property taxes. By bonding for construction funds, the state will be able to provide a 50% match on enhancement projects, making essential improvements possible by cutting costs for local governments.

The positive economic impact of this investment is broad. Not only will New Jersey residents be able to utilize state-of-the-art facilities at the heart of their communities, but projects will create jobs for local construction, design, and technology firms.

### **8) How will the question appear on the ballot?**

Voters will have the chance to respond Yes or No to this question:

*Do you approve the "New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act"? This bond act authorizes the State to issue bonds in the aggregate principal amount of \$125 million. The proceeds of the bonds will be used to provide grants to public libraries. The grants will be used to build, equip, and expand public libraries to increase capacity and serve the public.*

*INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT Approval of this bond act will allow the State to sell \$125 million in State general obligation bonds. Proceeds from the bonds will be used to provide grants to construct, expand, and equip public libraries. Municipalities or counties that fund public libraries will match the grant amount. The municipality or county may solicit private funding to support its match. The State Librarian, in consultation with the President of Thomas Edison State University, will set eligibility criteria for the grants.*

### **9) What can library supporters do to help?**

Inform friends and neighbors about the referendum and promote the benefits of public libraries in communities. Share this information on social media. Write letters to local papers regarding this issue. Most importantly, don't forget to vote.