

Status Report to the
Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives on the
Implementation of the Laws of Florida 2001-263

**IMPROVING THE STATE AID TO LIBRARIES
GRANT PROGRAM**

**TO PROVIDE EQUAL AND SEAMLESS ACCESS TO QUALITY
PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE TO ALL FLORIDIANS**

December 17, 2001

Department of State
Division of Library and Information Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Status Report.....	1
Methodology	2
Findings	4
Recommendations	5
Recommended Statutory Changes to Chapter 257, F.S. with Explanatory Notes	5
Recommended Statutory Changes to Chapter 257, F.S.....	15

STATUS REPORT

The Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services, administers the State Aid to Libraries program which provides operating grants to public libraries under the provisions of sections 257.14-257.25, *Florida Statutes*. State operating grants are established by law at no more than 25 percent of local funds expended by eligible political subdivisions for the operation and maintenance of a public library. With the exception of the first year of grants in 1962-63, the appropriation has not been sufficient to meet the goal of the legislation. Available funds have been prorated among the eligible political subdivisions. The grant program, first enacted in 1961, is based on home rule and a state policy of encouraging the establishment and extension of library services to the residents of the state by providing an incentive grant program to counties. The Legislature reviewed and updated the State Aid to Libraries program in 1973, 1983 and 1992.

Leading up to the revisions of the State Aid program in 1992, the Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services conducted a thorough review of the state assistance program which, when enacted by the Legislature, made substantial improvements. First, changes in the funding formula aided rural areas with limited financial resources in supporting public library services for their residents. Secondly, provisions were enacted and rules amended that made it more attractive for independent municipal libraries to establish and form county public library cooperatives and for poorer counties to establish multicounty library programs.

As a result of these changes, all 67 counties now meet the requirements to receive State Aid to Libraries. However, there are still 26 municipal libraries that do not participate in county or multicounty libraries and therefore do not receive State Aid.

The 2001 Legislature passed CS/HB 337 (Chapter 2001-263, *Laws of Florida*) which required the Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services to review the State Aid to Libraries program and determine any revisions that may be needed to encourage and improve the delivery of free library service to the residents of the state. The Division was also directed to encourage and facilitate the exploration of the feasibility of forming a public library cooperative between the City of Hialeah and Miami-Dade County through interlocal agreements to extend library services to residents of both legal service areas.

To meet these requirements, Division staff worked with the directors of the Miami-Dade Public Library System and the Hialeah Public Libraries to explore the feasibility of forming a public library cooperative. In addition, the Division hired a consulting firm with expertise in statewide library development and state aid programs to assist the Division in reviewing Florida's State Aid to Libraries program. The consulting team worked extensively with all segments of the public library community. The consultants helped the library community reach a consensus on expansion of the program to meet the legislative mandate of encouraging and improving the delivery of free library service to residents of the state. The directors of the Miami-Dade Public Library System and the Hialeah Public Libraries found a number of ways of working together immediately and further agreed that if the proposed changes to the State Aid to Libraries program were realized, then an interlocal agreement to create a library cooperative would be unnecessary.

In accordance with Chapter 2001-263, Laws of Florida, the Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services and the public library community have come to consensus on improvements to the State Aid to Libraries program and have provided in this status report recommended language and funding recommendations which will establish a new milestone in striving to provide equal and seamless access to quality library services for all Floridians.

METHODOLOGY

The *Laws of Florida*, Chapter 2001-263, Section 2. (1) state:

The Division of Library and Information Services of the Department of State shall encourage and facilitate the exploration of the feasibility of forming public library cooperatives by municipalities and county-designated single administrative units through interlocal agreement in order to extend library service to residents of both legal service areas. A municipality and county-designated single administrative unit that explores the feasibility of extending library service to residents of both service areas shall submit recommendations on the progress made toward forming a cooperative to the Division of Library and Information Services by December 1, 2001. By January 2, 2002, the division shall submit a report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives which shall include a status report on the progress of

extending library services by these entities and shall make recommendations for any changes in law or funding as a result of the report. The report shall also include a review of the State Aid to Libraries program to determine what revisions, if any, need to be made to that program to encourage and improve the delivery of free library service to all residents of the state. Finally, the report shall provide recommendations for statutory and funding changes based upon the review.

To meet these requirements the Division:

- explored with the directors of the Miami-Dade Public Library System and the Hialeah Public Libraries the feasibility of forming a public library cooperative.
- hired a consulting firm to assist in gathering information from Florida's public library community and facilitate discussions leading to a consensus on proposed changes to the State Aid to Libraries program.

An extensive review was made of Florida law and rules regarding state aid, library statistical information, and governance of public libraries within Florida. Utilizing a carefully designed interview process, the consultants elicited input on issues concerning the State Aid Program from a representative group of 25 stakeholders. These stakeholders included representatives of independent municipal libraries, consolidated county libraries, county public library cooperatives and the municipal libraries that make up such cooperatives, multicounty libraries, special library districts, the Chair of the State Library Council, a county administrator, and one member of the Florida House of Representatives.

From a report on findings, the consultants conducted two focus groups to determine the degree of agreement between independent municipal library directors and directors from libraries that currently qualify for state aid. It was quickly determined that there was considerable agreement between the two groups. The consultants prepared a discussion paper summarizing these agreements. The paper was the focus of discussion during a two-hour session at the annual Library Director's Conference sponsored by the State Library, held in Tallahassee on October 10, 2001. The session involved small and large group discussions designed to help reach consensus.

To complete the review process a copy of the proposed changes to the law and rule was mailed to each public library administrator and to the State Library Council for review and comment.

FINDINGS

The Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services and the Florida public library community support:

- Direct operating grants to independent municipal libraries.
- Higher minimum standards to participate in the State Aid program.
- Joint planning within a county among all libraries receiving state aid.
- Requiring each library receiving state aid to provide the same level of free library service to the residents served by any other library receiving State Aid within the same county.
- Expansion of the current reciprocal borrowing program which includes over 53 percent of Florida's public libraries and a plan for the development of a statewide library card.

The directors of the Miami-Dade Public Library System and the Hialeah Public Libraries agreed that if the above changes are made to the State Aid to Libraries program, an interlocal agreement to create a library cooperative would be unnecessary.

There was also general agreement among all parties that these proposed changes should not undermine the success of the past decades in extending and strengthening public library service in Florida.

With regard to funding, the Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services and the Florida public library community recommend that the Secretary of State's Legislative Budget Request of \$35 million for State Aid to Libraries for FY 2002-03 be funded in order to maintain the current level of service provided in FY 2001-02. Both further recommend that the Legislature

work toward achieving the ultimate goal of full funding of the State Aid to Libraries program envisioned in Chapter 257, at 25 cents on each dollar of local expenditure, or approximately \$84,944,493.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this review, the Division and the public library community developed draft language to revise certain sections of Chapter 257, *Florida Statutes* which encompass the State Aid to Libraries program. These proposed changes will establish a new milestone in striving to provide equal and seamless access to quality library services for all Floridians.

These proposed and recommended changes are provided in two formats:
a) a side-by-side of the statutes with an explanation of the changes; and b) a text version of proposed changes to the statutes.

Recommended Statutory Changes To Chapter 257, F.S. With Explanatory Notes

Chapter 257 is amended to establish a new milestone in striving to provide equal and seamless access to quality library services for all Floridians

PROPOSED LANGUAGE

EXPLANATION

257.14 Division of Library and Information Services; rules. -- The Division of Library and Information Services has authority to adopt rules pursuant to ss.120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement the provisions of this chapter.

257.15 Division of Library and Information Services; standards. -- The Division of Library and Information Services shall establish reasonable and pertinent operating standards under which libraries will be eligible to receive state moneys.

257.16 Reports. -- Any library receiving grants under ss. 257.14-257.25 shall file with the Division of Library and Information Services on or before December 1 of each year a financial report on its operations and furnish the division with such other information as the division may require.

257.17 Operating grants. -- A political subdivision that has been designated by a county or municipality as the single library administrative unit is eligible to receive from the state an annual operating grant of not more than 25 percent of all local funds expended by that political subdivision during the second preceding fiscal year for the operation and maintenance of a library, under the following conditions:

This revision makes municipalities eligible to participate in the state aid program and directly receive state funds. County libraries currently participate in the program and operate in all 67 counties.

(1) Eligible political subdivisions include:

- (a) A county that establishes or maintains a library or that gives or receives free library service by contract with a municipality or nonprofit library corporation or association within such county;
- (b) A county that joins with one or more counties to establish or maintain a library or contracts with another county, a special district, a special tax district, or one or more municipalities in another county to receive free library service;
- (c) A special district or special tax district that establishes or maintains a library and provides free library service; or
- (d) A municipality ~~with a population of 200,000 or more~~ that establishes or maintains a library ~~and or that gives or receives free library service- by contract with a nonprofit library corporation or association within such municipality.~~

Adds municipalities to the list of political subdivisions eligible to receive state aid operating grants.

(2) The library established or maintained by such political subdivision shall:

- (a) Be operated under a single administrative head who has completed a library education program accredited by the American Library Association. The single administrative head shall have had at least two years of successful, full-time paid professional experience, after obtaining the degree, in a public library unit open to the public at least 40 hours per week; and Requires political subdivisions to employ a professional librarian as an eligibility requirement. Currently required by rule, this is one of several minimum standards county and municipal library directors agree should be required to receive state funds.
- (b) Expend its funds centrally;
- ~~(b) Have an operating budget of at least \$20,000 per year from local sources; and~~ Eliminates the requirement that a library have an annual operating budget of at least \$20,000 from local sources. Requirements for a professional administrator and that at least one outlet be open for at least 40 hours per week have the comparable effect as a minimum operating budget.
- (c) Give the same free library service provided to all its own residents of the county or residents of the special district or special tax district. to residents of all political subdivisions receiving operating grants in the same county; Requires each eligible political subdivision in a county that offers library service and receives operating grants to provide the same level of service to the residents of any other political subdivision in the county as a condition for grant eligibility. This supports the consensus among library directors that expanding library service to the residents of a county should be a condition for the receipt of state funds.
- (d) Have at least one library outlet open 40 hours or more each week; Requires at least one library outlet to be open for 40 hours or more each week. Currently required by rule, this is a minimum standard library directors agree should be required to receive state funds.
- (e) Have a long-range plan, annual plan of service and an annual budget; and Requires libraries to have a long-range plan, annual plan of service, and an annual budget as conditions for grant eligibility. These essential planning and administrative documents are

- (f) Engage in joint planning for coordination of library services with all other libraries within the county or multicounty that receive operating grants.

currently required by rule.

Requires that all libraries within a county that receive operating grants engage in joint planning for coordination of services. This supports consensus among library directors that coordination is needed among separate library entities within counties to improve services to all residents.

- (3) Any political subdivision establishing public library service for the first time shall submit a certified copy of its appropriation for library service, and its eligibility to receive an operating grant shall be based upon such appropriation.

- ~~(4) (a) A municipality with a population of 200,000 or more that establishes or maintains a library is eligible to receive from the state an annual operating grant of not more than 25 percent of all local funds expended by that municipality during the second preceding fiscal year for the operation and maintenance of a library, under the following conditions:~~

Repeals this section granting eligibility to municipalities with populations over 200,000. This is no longer needed since population is not a determinant of eligibility.

- ~~1. The municipal library is operated under a single administrative head and expends its funds centrally;~~
- ~~2. The municipal library has an operating budget of at least \$20,000 per year from local sources; and~~
- ~~3. The municipal library provides free library service to all residents of the municipality.~~

- ~~(b) This subsection is repealed on July 1, 2002.~~

Multicounty libraries.--Units of local government, as defined in s. 165.031(1), may establish a multicounty library. The Division of Library and Information Services may establish operating standards and rules under which a multicounty library is eligible to receive state moneys. For a multicounty library, a local government may pay moneys in advance in lump

sum from its public funds for the provision of library services only.

257.172 Multicounty library grants.--

- (1) The administrative unit of a multicounty library which serves a population of 50,000 or more, or has three or more counties, is eligible for an annual grant from the state. The grant funds are to be used for the support and extension of library service in participating counties. The grant must be computed by the division on a state matching basis up to \$1 million in local expenditures by all participating counties for operation and maintenance of a library during the second preceding year. The administrative unit of a multicounty library with:
 - (a) Two participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 5 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (b) Three participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 10 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (c) Four participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 15 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (d) Five participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 20 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (e) Six or more participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 25 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
- (2) In addition, the administrative unit of a multicounty library with three or more participating counties is eligible to receive a base grant of a minimum of \$250,000 to support multicounty library service. That amount may be adjusted by the division based on the percentage change in the state and local government price deflator for purchases of goods and services, all items, 1983 equals 100, or successor reports for

the preceding calendar year as initially reported by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the United States Department of Commerce, as certified by the Florida Consensus Estimating Conference.

- (3) For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

257.18 Equalization grants.--

- (1) Any county qualifying for an operating grant is eligible to receive an equalization grant when the value of 1 mill adjusted to reflect the average statewide level of assessment is below the median amount for all counties in the state and the per capita local funds expended for library support during the second preceding year is below the average for all counties. The equalization factor is computed by subtracting the value of 1 mill adjusted to reflect the average statewide level of assessment for each county from the average adjusted value of 1 mill for all counties and then dividing that amount by the average adjusted value of 1 mill for all counties. An equalization grant is computed by multiplying the equalization factor times the total local funds expended for library support by that county during the second preceding year and adding that amount to the actual total local funds expended for library support by that county during the second preceding year. The result is the adjusted value for the local funds expended for library service. The amount of the equalization grant is equal to 25 cents of the adjusted value of local funds expended for library service.
- (2) When the adjusted mill equivalent of actual local funds expended for library support by the county during the second preceding year is above the statewide average adjusted mill equivalent of actual local funds expended by all counties receiving operating grants, the amount of the equalization grant is equal to 50 cents of the adjusted value of local funds expended for library service.
- (3) The Division of Library and Information Services

shall calculate equalization grants based on the amount of local funds expended for library service the second preceding year as certified by the appropriate county officials and information on the level of assessment of property in each county and the taxable value of property in each county as reported by the state agency authorized by law, which shall certify the results of such determination to the division.

(4) For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

~~**257.19 Establishment grants.**—A grant for the establishment of library service may be paid for 1 year only to any county, any counties and municipalities entering into an interlocal agreement pursuant to chapter 163, a special district, or a special tax district, any of which qualifies for an operating grant. An establishment grant shall equal, and shall be in addition to, the total grant (operating and equalization); however, no establishment grant may exceed \$50,000. For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.~~

Eliminates grants that were provided to assist newly formed county systems meet non-reoccurring start-up costs. Since library service is available in all 67 counties, these grants are no longer needed

257.191 Construction grants. -- The Division of Library and Information Services may accept and administer library construction moneys appropriated to it and shall allocate such appropriation to municipal, county, and regional libraries in the form of library construction grants on a matching basis. The local matching portion shall be no less than 50 percent the grant amount, dollar for dollar, up to the maximum grant amount unless the matching requirement is waived by s 288.0656. The division shall adopt rules for the administration of library construction grants. For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

Revises current language, retaining the dollar for dollar local match requirement unless the requirement is waived for applicants from designated rural communities pursuant to s. 288.06561, F.S. This provides clarification to reflect that the required local match is dollar for dollar. Specified rural communities are exempted from state grant match requirements under legislation passed in the 2001 regular session. This revision is necessary to accommodate that exemption and will make it easier for rural libraries to build or expand facilities.

257.192 Program grants. -- The Division of Library and Information Services is authorized to accept and administer appropriations for library program grants and to make such grants in accordance with the

Florida long-range program for library services.

257.195 Revenue shortfalls; procedures.--In the event of revenue shortfalls which necessitate budget reductions during any fiscal year, the total appropriation for library grants from state sources shall have the same ratable reduction as that applied to the operating funds of the Division of Library and Information Services or such reduction shall be at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

257.21 Maximum grants allowable. -- Any reduction in grants because of insufficient funds shall be prorated on the basis of maximum grants allowable.

257.22 Division of Library and Information Services; allocation of funds. -- Any moneys that may be appropriated for use by a county, a municipality, a special district, or a special tax district for the maintenance of a library or library service shall be administered and allocated by the Division of Library and Information Services in the manner prescribed by law. On or before December 1 of each year, the division shall certify to the Comptroller the amount to be paid to each county, municipality, special district, or special tax district, and the Comptroller shall issue warrants to the ~~respective boards of county commissioners or chief municipal executive authorities for the amount so allocated~~ eligible political subdivisions.

Allows all eligible political subdivisions to receive warrants.

257.23 Application for grant.--

(4) The board of county commissioners of any county, chief municipal executive authority of any municipality, or governing body of a special district or special tax district desiring to receive a grant under the provisions of ss. 257.14-257.25 shall apply therefor to the Division of Library and Information Services on or before October 1 of each year on a form to be provided by the division. ~~The In the application, which~~ shall be signed by the chair of the board of county commissioners and attested by the clerk of the circuit court or the appropriate officer in a charter county, or by the chief municipal executive officer and attested by the city clerk for a municipality, or by the chair of the governing body and attested by the chief

Aligns the December 1 document submission date with political subdivision budget development timelines.

Clarifies appropriate authority responsible for signing the application.

financial officer for a special district or special tax district.; The county, municipality, special district or special tax district ~~the board of county commissioners~~ shall agree to observe the standards established by the division as authorized in s. 257.15; . On or before December, 1 the applicant shall certify the annual tax income and the rate of tax or the annual appropriation for the free library or free library service, and shall furnish such other pertinent information as the division may require.

~~(2) The chief municipal executive authority of any municipality desiring to receive a grant under the provisions of ss. 257.14-257.25 shall apply therefor to the Division of Library and Information Services on or before October 1 of each year on a form to be provided by the division. In the application, which shall be signed by the chief municipal executive officer and attested by the clerk of the circuit court, the chief municipal executive authority shall agree to observe the standards established by the division as authorized in s. 257.15 shall certify the annual tax income and the rate of tax or the annual appropriation for the free library, and shall furnish such other pertinent information as the division may require.~~

257.24 Use of funds. -- State funds allocated to libraries shall be expended only for library purposes in the manner prescribed by the Division of Library and Information Services. Such funds shall not be expended for the purchase or construction of a library building or library quarters, except such funds specifically appropriated for construction purposes as provided in this chapter.

257.25 Free library service. -- Free library service shall constitute as a minimum the free lending of library materials that are made available for circulation and the free provision of reference and information services.

Legislative intent. -- In enacting revisions to State Aid to Libraries law in s. 257.14-.25, the Legislature recognizes that the original intent of aiding and encouraging the establishment of free library service

This explains the legislative rationale for supporting public library service and explains Florida's public library development plan.

throughout the state, by grants to counties is succeeding with all counties of the State currently participating in the program. The Legislature now recognizes that a valuable contribution to the extension of the state's public library development plan rests with providing state aid to independent municipal libraries while supporting political subdivisions that are currently participating in the state aid program. The Legislature further recognizes that there is a need to utilize state aid to provide equalization of library services among communities, promote free library services benefiting all residents of the state, and promote coordination among public libraries for improved delivery of library services.

Recommended Statutory Changes To Chapter 257, F.S.

257.14 Division of Library and Information Services rules. -- The Division of Library and Information Services has authority to adopt rules pursuant to ss.120.536 (1) and 120.54 to implement the provisions of this chapter.

257.15 Division of Library and Information Services; standards. -- The Division of Library and Information Services shall establish reasonable and pertinent operating standards under which libraries will be eligible to receive state moneys.

257.16 Reports. -- Any library receiving grants under ss. 257.14-257.25 shall file with the Division of Library and Information Services on or before December 1 of each year a financial report on its operations and furnish the division with such other information as the division may require.

257.17 Operating grants. -- A political subdivision that has been designated by a county or municipality as the single library administrative unit is eligible to receive from the state an annual operating grant of not more than 25 percent of all local funds expended by that political subdivision during the second preceding fiscal year for the operation and maintenance of a library, under the following conditions:

(1) Eligible political subdivisions include:

- (a) A county that establishes or maintains a library or that gives or receives free library service by contract with a municipality or nonprofit library corporation or association within such county;
- (b) A county that joins with one or more counties to establish or maintain a library or contracts with another county, a special district, a special tax district, or one or more municipalities in another county to receive free library service;
- (c) A special district or special tax district that establishes or maintains a library and provides free library service; or
- (d) A municipality ~~with a population of 200,000 or more~~ that establishes or maintains a library ~~and~~ or that gives or receives free library service: by contract with a nonprofit library corporation or association within such municipality.

(2) The library established or maintained by such political subdivision shall:

- (a) Be operated under a single administrative head who has completed a library education program accredited by the American Library Association. The single administrative head shall have had at least two years of successful, full-time paid professional experience, after obtaining the degree, in a public library unit open to the public at least 40 hours per week; and

(b) ~~e~~Expend its funds centrally;

~~(b) Have an operating budget of at least \$20,000 per year from local sources; and~~

(c) Give the same free library service provided to all its own residents of the county or residents of the special district or special tax district. to residents of all political subdivisions receiving operating grants in the same county;

(d) Have at least one library outlet open 40 hours or more each week;

(e) Have a long-range plan, annual plan of service and an annual budget; and

(f) Engage in joint planning for coordination of library services with all other libraries within the county or multicounty that receive operating grants.

(3) Any political subdivision establishing public library service for the first time shall submit a certified copy of its appropriation for library service, and its eligibility to receive an operating grant shall be based upon such appropriation.

~~(4) (a) A municipality with a population of 200,000 or more that establishes or maintains a library is eligible to receive from the state an annual operating grant of not more than 25 percent of all local funds expended by that municipality during the second preceding fiscal year for the operation and maintenance of a library, under the following conditions:~~

~~1. The municipal library is operated under a single administrative head and expends its funds centrally;~~

~~2. The municipal library has an operating budget of at least \$20,000 per year from local sources; and~~

~~3. The municipal library provides free library service to all residents of the municipality.~~

~~(b) This subsection is repealed on July 1, 2002.~~

257.171 Multicounty libraries. -- Units of local government, as defined in s. 165.031(1), may establish a multicounty library. The Division of Library and Information Services may establish operating standards and rules under which a multicounty library is eligible to receive state moneys. For a multicounty library, a local government may pay moneys in advance in lump sum from its public funds for the provision of library services only.

257.172 Multicounty library grants. --

(1) The administrative unit of a multicounty library, which serves a population of 50,000 or more, or has three or more counties, is eligible for an annual grant from the state. The grant funds are to be used for the support and extension of library service in participating counties. The grant must be computed by the division on a state matching basis up to \$1 million in local expenditures by all participating counties for operation and maintenance of a library

during the second preceding year. The administrative unit of a multicounty library with:

- (a) Two participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 5 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (b) Three participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 10 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (c) Four participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 15 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (d) Five participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 20 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
 - (e) Six or more participating counties is eligible for a grant equal to 25 cents on each local dollar of expenditure.
- (2) In addition, the administrative unit of a multicounty library with three or more participating counties is eligible to receive a base grant of a minimum of \$250,000 to support multicounty library service. That amount may be adjusted by the division based on the percentage change in the state and local government price deflator for purchases of goods and services, all items, 1983 equals 100, or successor reports for the preceding calendar year as initially reported by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the United States Department of Commerce, as certified by the Florida Consensus Estimating Conference.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

257.18 Equalization grants. --

- (1) Any county qualifying for an operating grant is eligible to receive an equalization grant when the value of 1 mill adjusted to reflect the average statewide level of assessment is below the median amount for all counties in the state and the per capita local funds expended for library support during the second preceding year is below the average for all counties. The equalization factor is computed by subtracting the value of 1 mill adjusted to reflect the average statewide level of assessment for each county from the average adjusted value of 1 mill for all counties and then dividing that amount by the average adjusted value of 1 mill for all counties. An equalization grant is computed by multiplying the equalization factor times the total local funds expended for library support by that county during the second preceding year and adding that amount to the actual total local funds expended for library support by that county during the second preceding year. The result is the adjusted value for the local funds expended for library service. The amount of the equalization grant is equal to 25 cents of the adjusted value of local funds expended for library service.
- (2) When the adjusted mill equivalent of actual local funds expended for library support by the county during the second preceding year is above the statewide average adjusted mill equivalent of actual local funds expended by all counties receiving operating grants, the

amount of the equalization grant is equal to 50 cents of the adjusted value of local funds expended for library service.

- (3) The Division of Library and Information Services shall calculate equalization grants based on the amount of local funds expended for library service the second preceding year as certified by the appropriate county officials and information on the level of assessment of property in each county and the taxable value of property in each county as reported by the state agency authorized by law, which shall certify the results of such determination to the division.
- (4) For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

~~**257.19 Establishment grants.** A grant for the establishment of library service may be paid for 1-year only to any county, any counties and municipalities entering into an interlocal agreement pursuant to chapter 163, a special district, or a special tax district, any of which qualifies for an operating grant. An establishment grant shall equal, and shall be in addition to, the total grant (operating and equalization); however, no establishment grant may exceed \$50,000. For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.~~

257.191 Construction grants. -- The Division of Library and Information Services may accept and administer library construction moneys appropriated to it and shall allocate such appropriation to municipal, county, and regional libraries in the form of library construction grants on a matching basis. The local matching portion shall be no less than 50 percent the grant amount, dollar for dollar, up to the maximum grant award unless the match is waived by s. 288.0656. The division shall adopt rules for the administration of library construction grants. For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

257.192 Program Grants. -- The Division of Library and Information Services is authorized to accept and administer appropriations for library program grants and to make such grants in accordance with the Florida long-range program for library services.

257.195 Revenue shortfalls; procedures. -- In the event of revenue shortfalls which necessitate budget reductions during any fiscal year, the total appropriation for library grants from state sources shall have the same ratable reduction as that applied to the operating funds of the Division of Library and Information Services or such reduction shall be at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

257.21 Maximum grants allowable. -- Any reduction in grants because of insufficient funds shall be prorated on the basis of maximum grants allowable.

257.22 Division of Library and Information Services; allocation of funds. -- Any moneys that may be appropriated for use by a county, a municipality, a special district, or a special tax district for the maintenance of a library or library service shall be administered and allocated by the Division of Library and Information Services in the manner prescribed by law. On or before December 1 of each year, the division shall certify to the Comptroller the amount to be paid to each county, municipality, special district, or special tax district, and the Comptroller shall issue

warrants to the ~~respective boards of county commissioners or chief municipal executive authorities for the amount so allocated~~ eligible political subdivisions.

257.23 Application for grant. --

(1) The board of county commissioners of any county, chief municipal executive authority of any municipality, or governing body of a special district or special tax district desiring to receive a grant under the provisions of ss. 257.14-257.25 shall apply therefor to the Division of Library and Information Services on or before October 1 of each year on a form to be provided by the division. ~~The~~ In the application, which shall be signed by the chair of the board of county commissioners and attested by the clerk of the circuit court or the appropriate officer in a charter county; or by the chief municipal executive officer and attested by the city clerk for a municipality; or by the chair of the governing body and attested by the chief financial officer for a special district or special tax district. ~~The county, municipality, special district or special tax district the board of county commissioners shall agree to observe the standards established by the division as authorized in s. 257.15; . On or before December 1, the applicant shall certify the annual tax income and the rate of tax or the annual appropriation for the free library or free library service, and shall furnish such other pertinent information as the division may require.~~

~~(2) The chief municipal executive authority of any municipality desiring to receive a grant under the provisions of ss. 257.14-257.25 shall apply therefor to the Division of Library and Information Services on or before October 1 of each year on a form to be provided by the division. In the application, which shall be signed by the chief municipal executive officer and attested by the clerk, the chief municipal executive authority shall agree to observe the standards established by the division as authorized in s. 257.15, shall certify the annual tax income and the rate of tax or the annual appropriation for the free library, and shall furnish such other pertinent information as the division may require.~~

257.24 Use of funds. -- State funds allocated to libraries shall be expended only for library purposes in the manner prescribed by the Division of Library and Information Services. Such funds shall not be expended for the purchase or construction of a library building or library quarters, except such funds specifically appropriated for construction purposes as provided in this chapter.

257.25 Free library service. -- Free library service shall constitute as a minimum the free lending of library materials that are made available for circulation and the free provision of reference and information services.

257.251 Legislative intent. -- In enacting revisions to State Aid to Libraries law in s. 257.14-.25, the Legislature recognizes that the original intent of aiding and encouraging the establishment of free library service throughout the state, by grants to counties is succeeding with all counties of the State currently participating in the program. The Legislature now recognizes that a valuable contribution to the extension of the state's public library development plan rests with providing state aid to independent municipal libraries while supporting political subdivisions that are currently participating in the state aid program. The Legislature further recognizes that there is a need to utilize state aid to provide equalization of library services

among communities, promote free library services benefiting all residents of the state, and promote coordination among public libraries for improved delivery of library services.