

Maryland Board of Public Works Approves Funding for Seven Library Projects

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BALTIMORE – The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is pleased to announce the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) recently approved more than \$15.1 million in grants to help fund seven public library capital improvement projects across the state. The grants were made possible by MSLA’s County Library Capital Grant program, which was established in 2008 and has since provided annual, mandated State funding totaling more than \$101.8 million for projects in each of Maryland’s 24 public library systems. The funding approved for Fiscal 2025 will support library construction, renovation and expansion projects in Anne Arundel, Garrett, Montgomery, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties, as well as Baltimore City.

“We are grateful to Governor Wes Moore, the Board of Public Works and the Maryland General Assembly for their continued support of public libraries from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore,” said Maryland State Librarian Irene M. Padilla. “Public libraries play an important role in the success of our communities, so it’s imperative we continue to provide them with the funding they need to help Marylanders thrive in the 21st century.”

The State’s annual funding mandate, increased from \$5 million to \$7.5 million in 2023, gives Maryland’s public library systems critical support to address their capital improvement needs. Since its inception, the County Library Capital Grant program has supported the construction of 21 new public libraries and leveraged approximately \$375 million in local matching funds.

A November 2023 Statewide Facilities Assessment conducted by MSLA found that more than half of the state’s 192 public libraries are more than 25 years old. Fifty-four facilities require general renovations while another 18 buildings have been identified for replacement.

The \$15.1 million in grants approved this month by the Board of Public Works includes \$7,954,000 in mandated and supplemental State funding along with funds from previous authorizations for projects that were canceled or delayed. Additional information on the latest round of projects can be found below.

- **Anne Arundel** - \$1,398,000 to construct a new 40,838-square-foot facility to replace the 56-year-old Glen Burnie Library building. The project will provide a new, modern 33,068-square-foot Glen Burnie Library with meeting rooms and additional space to support more computers and Internet services. It also will include a 7,700-plus-square-foot Archeology and Cultural Resources facility. The county match totals \$1,398,000.
- **Baltimore City** - \$3,218,000 to renovate and expand the 7,400-square-foot Forest Park Branch. The branch was constructed in 1910, expanded in 1964 and last renovated in 1987. The project

will completely renovate and modernize the building with new mechanical, electrical, and safety systems. It will address significant water intrusion issues and add a new ADA entry point, including the addition of an elevator providing access to the main library on the first floor and an existing public meeting room in the basement. The renovated and expanded branch will total 9,700 square feet. Baltimore City is contributing \$6,350,000 for the project.

- **Garrett** - \$2,655,000 to construct a new 4,500-square-foot Friendsville Library to replace the existing 2,800-square-foot building, originally erected as a temporary metal structure in 1970. The current facility is inadequate in terms of insulation, ADA access, electrical infrastructure and size, and lacks a meeting room for community events. Previous funding was used for site acquisition and design. The funds approved by the Board of Public Works will be used to start construction and furnish the new library. Additional funds to complete the project will be requested next year. Garrett County will provide \$200,000 while the library system will provide \$95,000 in matching funds.
- **Montgomery** - \$957,000 to renovate the 16,400-square-foot Damascus Library. The building opened in 1990 and is a shared county facility with the Damascus Senior Center. This project will include replacement of the library roof, windows, lighting, storefront doors, part of the HVAC system and waterproofing the foundation. ADA issues and the functionality of the library spaces also will be addressed. Adding collaboration spaces, a lactation room, a single service desk, a gender neutral bathroom, electrical outlets and renovating existing bathrooms will make the Damascus Library more functional and responsive to community needs. Montgomery County will provide \$957,000 in matching funds.
- **Talbot** - \$2,803,000 to renovate and expand the existing 7,716-square-foot St. Michaels Library, constructed in 1981. The project will add 3,071 square feet, a 40-percent increase in size, and result in a fully-renovated 10,787-square-foot facility that will become the new hub of the community. With the exception of an expansion completed 17 years ago, much of the original facility's infrastructure is over 40 years old and includes a pre-engineered metal garage from which the library was first built. The project will provide sufficient space for large community meetings, children, teens, collections, and study, and make the facility ADA-compliant. Previous funding was used for design and to begin construction. The Board of Public Works approval includes funds to complete the project. Talbot County is providing \$2,803,000 in matching funds.
- **Wicomico** - \$131,000 to replace five outdated, inefficient, and malfunctioning components of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system at Wicomico Public Library's flagship Paul S. Sarbanes Branch in Downtown Salisbury. These components were installed in 1979 and are at the end of their lifespan. With the proposed improvements, the HVAC system will serve the needs of the library for at least the next 15 years. Previous funds were used to replace a portion of the HVAC system. This project will complete the system upgrade. Wicomico County will provide \$16,520 for the project and the library will provide \$6,480 in matching funds.
- **Worcester** - \$3,999,000 to construct a new 12,000-square-foot facility to replace the existing Pocomoke Branch Library. The current building is 6,700 square feet and opened in 1970. The library's facility plan identified many necessary infrastructure replacements including the need for a new roof, new HVAC equipment and increased electrical service. Additional space is needed to support current and future functions. A new library will support active learning and expand the library's ability to offer programming. Previous funding for construction was deferred to this year due to a change in location and environmental concerns at the site. The funding approved by the Board of Public Works includes supplemental funds for construction. Additional funds will be requested next year to complete construction and furnish the facility. Worcester County is providing \$3,999,000 in matching funds.

About the Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is an independent agency providing strategic leadership and guidance to Maryland's public libraries. MSLA promotes the planning and implementation of library programs, supports staff and career development through education and training, and facilitates resource sharing among libraries. MSLA oversees the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, Maryland's Public Libraries, the State Library Network, the Public Library Capital Grants Program, and the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library.

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