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## ***LIBRARY JOURNAL'S ANNUAL BUDGET SURVEY SHOWS SEVERE CUTS NATIONWIDE***

**New York, New York, January 11, 2011**—Last year was a hard one for libraries across the country and this year doesn't look much better, according to *Library Journal's* budget survey completed late in 2010. The survey was sent to a total of 3,036 U.S. public libraries; 647 responded.

In an article appearing in this month's *LJ*, Senior News Editor Michael Kelley reported that 72 percent of the respondents had their budgets cut, and 43 percent experienced staff reductions. Libraries that served populations over one million were hit even harder, with 86 percent reporting budget cuts and 93 percent reducing staff. They also showed a drop in service hours that was equal to about two branch closings.

Despite the grim FY10 statistics when budgets declined 1.3 percent, Kelley's article noted that 62 percent of the respondents said they were optimistic about the future; only 19 percent said they were pessimistic, and the rest were neutral. In fact, libraries are projecting that FY11 funding will increase 0.8 percent.

Librarians across the board were determined to remain relevant to their communities and embrace new technologies, such as ebooks and mobile phone apps, no matter how strained their budgets, according to Kelley.

"Technology is a big part of our future," wrote Cathy Ziegler, Director of the Plano Public Library, TX (pop. 209,000). "We need to reach and serve people where they are, and where they are is on handheld devices."

Libraries serving populations of 25,000 to 49,999 were the least hopeful about the future—30 percent considered their outlook were pessimistic.

No matter what the size of the population they served, respondents who said they were part of a library district, funded at least in part by a dedicated millage, or operated under a state "maintenance of effort" statute enjoyed some measure of financial stability. Some 28 percent of these respondents said they suffered no budget cuts in FY10.

"The library service district has a strong and diversified tax base," wrote Wendy A. Phillips of Carmel Clay Public Library in Carmel, IN (pop.80,000). "Revenue declines

may be projected in the future, but [they are] delayed because we started from a healthier position.”

A “strong and diversified tax base” is critical to all libraries. According to Kelley’s article, a too narrow tax base is a vital concern, especially to rural libraries trying to provide basic services.

“This lack of funding prevents [rural libraries] from having vital collections and from moving forward into electronic books and social media options for both services and library marketing,” warned Katherine Brown of the Sterling Municipal Library, TX (pop. 72,000). “Their users will move into more electronic uses and resources without the library maintaining relevance in their lives as a source of information.”

Increased advocacy will be the key to protecting library budgets, many survey respondents said. “Our Friends group practices strong advocacy in many ways. This year it took the lead to make fundraising for our new community library a priority,” wrote Carmen Martinez, the director of the Oakland Public Library (pop. 452,155). “It had never focused on just one issue before, and with its support we closed the \$3 million fundraising goal under deadline.”

Read Michael Kelley’s complete article online at <http://bit.ly/gpBKcL>.

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