



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-7116

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Contact: Andrew Doba
(212) 788-7120 or (646) 263-1877
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SIX-DAY LIBRARY SERVICE REINSTATED CITYWIDE

Extended Hours will Improve Access to Library Services for Thousands of New Yorkers

NEW YORK, NY – Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, together with Libraries Subcommittee Chair Vincent J. Gentile, Cultural Affairs Chair Domenic Recchia and Council Members Helen Sears, Bill de Blasio and Alan Gerson, toured three branches of the public library system to announce the launch of full-day, citywide, six-day library service. Six-day library service, a top budget priority for the Speaker and the City Council, received \$42.7 million this year in baselined city funding.

The adopted FY 08 budget contained a total of \$320 million in funding for the City's three library systems. In extending the hours of operation, libraries will be able to increase access to vital services like improving literacy programs, providing career development, and increasing access to technology.

The tour included stops in the Jackson Heights Branch in Queens, the Windsor Terrace Branch in Brooklyn, and the Chatham Square Branch in Manhattan.

The Benefits of Additional Funding

“Libraries are not only places of learning; they are places where you can explore the furthest corners of the globe, regardless of your economic background. Increasing service to six, full days will give our kids the chance to take a giant leap toward their future, through enhanced access to summer and after school programs. It will also allow more hard working New Yorkers to improve their careers by making services more readily available,” **said Speaker Quinn**. “I want to thank the Administration and my colleagues in the Council for securing this funding and for demonstrating just how vital a role libraries play in our communities.”

“As elected officials, we recognize and understand how crucial libraries are to our communities,” **said Council Member Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.** “They serve such an important role from being used as a place for homework help to learning how to read. I have heard from communities

across New York City that they want their libraries open more and it is such a great pleasure to be able to tell them that all our public libraries are now open six days a week.”

“New York City has a library in nearly every neighborhood, but these libraries are no good unless they are open. After touring libraries in all five boroughs, the message I hear at each and every branch is loud and clear – keep the libraries open,” **said Council Member Vincent J. Gentile**. “As Chair of the Council's Subcommittee on Libraries, I have been pushing for \$43 million to restore six-day service for all public libraries in this budget. Council Speaker Christine Quinn made it her priority to support New York City's libraries, and she really has come through. I applaud her leadership, and the leadership of the Cultural Affairs Committee Chair Domenic Recchia for making this happen. I am so pleased that the Mayor and the City Council could agree on a budget that included six-day service for New York City Libraries. It is a great day when we can announce that we will keep the doors of our local library open for a full six days.”

“As a working parent I know how crucial it is to have public libraries open on Saturdays,” **said Council Member Bill de Blasio**. “Extending the hours of operation from 5 to 6 days a week will enable all residents to take advantage of valuable programs offered at the library. I applaud Speaker Quinn for her persistence on this important issue.”

“Offering six-day library service will give more New Yorkers the chance to take full advantage of the resources available to them in the New York Public Library System,” **said Council Member Helen Sears**. “If we are going to give people a better chance to compete in today’s hyper-competitive job market, we must make sure that our libraries are as accessible as possible. I commend Speaker Quinn for her commitment to improving the future of all New Yorkers who take advantage of the extended library service.”

“Brooklyn Public Library would like to express our collective thanks to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Library Committee Chair Vincent Gentile, Cultural Affairs Committee Chair Domenic Recchia, Jr. and the members of the Brooklyn delegation to the New York City Council for their steadfast support for public libraries and generous budget increase to better serve our patrons across Brooklyn,” **said Dionne Mack-Harvin, Executive Director of Brooklyn Public Library**. “BPL will use this funding to provide more service than ever before. From Coney Island to Greenpoint, New Lots to Bay Ridge, we will provide Brooklyn's 2.5 million residents with more hours of service across the borough.”

“I would like to thank Speaker Quinn and the entire City Council for the commitment and dedication to restoring six-day library service to every neighborhood in Queens,” **said Thomas W. Galante, Director of the Queens Borough Public Library**. “Speaker Quinn told us that libraries were among her top priorities and we are thrilled and grateful that she delivered on her promise to fully fund libraries across New York City.”

“We are immensely grateful to Mayor Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Quinn, and all the members of the City Council for expanding access to the essential resources provided by our public libraries,” **said New York Public Library President Paul LeClerc**. “We are delighted that the doors to all our libraries will now be open to everyone at least six days per week.”

Background

Last year the City Council baselined funding for City libraries. This year's budget goes even further, providing guaranteed service levels to libraries, instead of leaving them at the whim of a fluctuating annual budget process.

The national average for library service is 47 hours per week. Before the extension of service to six days, New York City's libraries averaged only 39 hours per week, which meant that many branches were forced to close for an entire weekday or for multiple mornings in order to provide service on Saturdays. The extended hours will bring the City's average up to 45 hours. The new level of funding will allow our libraries to meet the need for electronic materials, foreign language books, youth programming, higher education and job placement assistance, and other community functions.

New York City's five boroughs are served by three independent library systems: the New York Public Library, which serves the boroughs of Manhattan, Staten Island and the Bronx, the Queens Borough Public Library and the Brooklyn Public Library. The three library systems operate a total of four research libraries and over 200 local library branches, which provide over 65 million books, periodicals and other items to New Yorkers.

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