

**DRAFT 1/29/04**  
**NEW CENTURY LIBRARIES**  
**Questions and Answers for the Public**

**Q. Given the current fiscal crisis, why are you asking for additional funding through the *New Century Libraries* proposal?**

**A.** We need libraries now more than ever. Libraries are essential to New York's economic recovery. If New York is to take a competitive lead in the 21st century, our libraries must become a priority. *New Century Libraries* will provide the means of delivering needed high-quality library services to all New Yorkers:

- Entrepreneurs and businesses depend on libraries as they plan and expand, find financial resources, and ultimately increase employment and prosperity in their communities.
- Libraries educate the workforce; studies of schools across the U.S. show that strong school libraries are positively correlated with higher levels of student achievement.
- New Yorkers depend on access to high-quality, reliable electronic information through NOVEL, New York's statewide virtual library, available through 4,600 school, public, and academic libraries.

**Q. Why are you putting so much emphasis on NOVEL?**

**A.** The benefits of NOVEL are very far-reaching for New Yorkers:

- NOVEL gives many businesses their only means of access to vital resources, e.g., Business & Company Resource Center and a wide variety of up-to-date global business information, including 300,000 company profiles.
- NOVEL enhances education by ensuring that students at all levels have full computer access to a powerful online library, e.g., thousands of top-quality and age-appropriate journals as well as resources to support K–12 teachers and curricula.
- NOVEL provides great economies of scale:
  - ✓ For every \$1 dollar the State Library invests in NOVEL, local libraries would need to spend \$30 to obtain the same resources.
  - ✓ The resources purchased by the State Library would cost localities as much as \$72 million to purchase on their own.

- ✓ The cost of online journals and databases is prohibitive to most individuals and small businesses.
- NOVEL depends on *New Century Libraries* to continue and grow:
  - ✓ It currently depends entirely on temporary federal funding through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which must be appropriated each year.
  - ✓ Because LSTA funds are based on population, New York is likely to lose some federal funding.
  - ✓ Costs of commercial databases are likely to rise; without ongoing state funding for NOVEL, we may need to eliminate databases.

**Q. What would be the impact of the proposed 5-percent cut in library aid and the 15-percent cut in The New York Public Library's special programs?**

**A.** The proposed cuts will have a broad negative impact:

- The 5-percent cut in aid will trigger an automatic 5-percent cut in federal LSTA funds for New York State.
- Library aid has received no incremental increases since 1998.
- Use of libraries has increased more than 20 percent since 2001; cuts will put even more pressure on overstrained local libraries when people need them most.
- Some school library systems may close their doors, while others will be forced to cut back on services.