

## What can I do to help?

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is facing critical funding issues, and budget reductions are having an impact. You can make a positive difference in your community -- here's how.

### Get the facts and start the conversation.

Help spread awareness. Stay informed about the risks to library funding, and share the facts in this brochure with friends, neighbors, and groups in which you are involved.

### Contact funding decision-makers.

Write, call, email or use social media to contact decision-makers before May 1, 2011. See inside to find out who you can talk to and what you can say.

### Give a financial gift.

All financial gifts are critically important, especially during these challenging times. Invite your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to support the Library.

All gifts will be used in the areas of greatest need including the purchase of new books and materials, educational programs for youth, and/or other areas where the Library has been a lifeline for the community.

» Go to [www.cmlibrary.org/DonateNow](http://www.cmlibrary.org/DonateNow)

### Join our team of volunteers.

Share your skills and experiences with your community by becoming a library volunteer. Our web site has information on current volunteer opportunities and how to apply.

» Go to [www.cmlibrary.org/Volunteer](http://www.cmlibrary.org/Volunteer)

Stay up-to-date on the Library's funding situation at [www.cmlibrary.org](http://www.cmlibrary.org).

# UNDERSTANDING THE LIBRARY BUDGET



Get the Facts and Learn  
How You Can  
Help

 Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

# Get the facts and start the conversation.

## Facts about Library funding.

### Q. Where does library funding come from?

The Library receives most of its operational funding from Mecklenburg County (approx.90%). Other funding sources, such as the State of North Carolina, the City of Charlotte, and the Mecklenburg ABC Board, make up a small portion of the Library's operational funding. Additionally, the Library receives private contributions throughout the year and applies for grants to help support library services for all ages and provide resource enhancements.

### Q. What's the relationship between the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Mecklenburg County Government?

The delivery of Library service is the result of a partnership between the Library and Mecklenburg County. The Library is the managing partner that *delivers* services, and the County is the funding partner that *provides the funding* for those services. Each partner serves their specific function; but when issues arise that significantly impact both the delivery of service and the cost of delivering service, both partners need to be consulted.

### Q. Is Mecklenburg County Government mandated to fund libraries?

No. County funding for libraries is not State mandated. Therefore, County funding for libraries can be reduced by any amount, at any time, by decision of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners.

### Q. When does the County's budget process begin?

Mecklenburg County begins budget preparations in February through a series of planning sessions. The preliminary budget is presented in mid-May, and the final budget is voted on by County Commissioners in mid-June.

### Q. Who administers the Library's budget? What is their role?

The Library's Board of Trustees administers the Library's approved budget, based on recommendations from the Library Director and staff. They are responsible for decisions that affect staffing, locations, and books and materials. However, the Library's Board of Trustees does not have the ability to tax, cannot borrow money, cannot charge residents a fee for basic services like library cards, and cannot carry over County funding from previous fiscal years.

### Q. Who appoints the Library Board?

As established by the State of North Carolina, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Board is composed of eleven members, of whom ten are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and one by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. Appointees are selected from public applicants.

## How is the Library planning for the future?

### Q. Is it possible that the Library will experience additional cuts?

As of the printing of this brochure, Mecklenburg County had not yet determined its preliminary budget for fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012). While the Library is hopeful for flat or increased funding (based on the fiscal year 2011 budget), there is a possibility the Library may receive decreased funding. If the Library receives decreased funding, the Board of Trustees will outline changes for the system that may include further cuts in staffing, hours, and locations.

### Q. Tell me about the Future of the Library Task Force. What are they responsible for?

The Future of the Library Task Force is a seventeen member, community-led group charged with gathering information, consulting with residents, and reporting ideas and recommendations for the sustainable future of the Library. The Task Force's recommendations will be presented to the County Commissioners and the Board of Trustees on March 21, 2011. After this, both parties will undertake a process to examine the recommendations and to implement those which are approved.

### Q. How is the Task Force funded?

The Task Force is primarily funded by a \$150,000 grant from the Foundation For The Carolinas Catalyst Fund. Additional funding totaling \$75,000, as well as in-kind services, have been provided by Mecklenburg County and the Library.

### Q. What else is the Library doing to plan for the future?

To position itself for the FY 2012 budget and the recommendations of the Task Force, the Library Board approved interim changes in the Library's executive management structure. Library Director Charles Brown has announced plans to leave the system at the end of the fiscal year in June. Vick Phillips, an experienced executive who once served as chief of staff for former Bank of America Chairman and CEO Hugh McColl, joined the Library as Chief Executive Officer during the transition. Phillips is playing a lead role in daily and strategic operations for the Library while he also guides the Library's budget planning process and prepares the organization for the Task Force's recommendations.

## Know who you can talk to and what you can say.

### Q. If I decide to call or write the Library Board, what can I say?

Library staff and trustees need your input. We know the need in our community is great, and we want to continue serving the community to the best of our ability. In the midst of these challenges, the most helpful things citizens can share are support and a willingness to work together to find solutions.

Information about contacting the Library is available at [www.cmlibrary.org](http://www.cmlibrary.org), or you can email Library Trustees directly at [libraryboard@cmlibrary.org](mailto:libraryboard@cmlibrary.org).

### Q. If I decide to call or write my commissioner, what can I say?

Any citizen may contact their County district and at-large commissioner. Information on contacting commissioners is available at [www.charmeck.org](http://www.charmeck.org). Here are some ideas to get you started, but feel free to say why libraries are important to YOU.

- *"Thank you for moving the Library up in your priority levels – I too value library services."*
- *"The Library is an important partner in improving literacy in our community."*
- *"The Library is an important resource for those seeking employment and professional opportunity."*
- *"A healthy library system improves quality of life and enhances economic opportunities."*

### Q. Who else can I talk to about libraries?

Many people are affected when library services are cut. You can talk about libraries to:

- State government representatives/officials (including the governor, members of the state legislatures and congress, state department heads)
- Federal government representatives /officials (including your members of the Senate and House of Representatives.)
- Neighbors and co-workers
- Business owners and business leaders
- Friends of the Library or other support groups
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Community leadership organizations