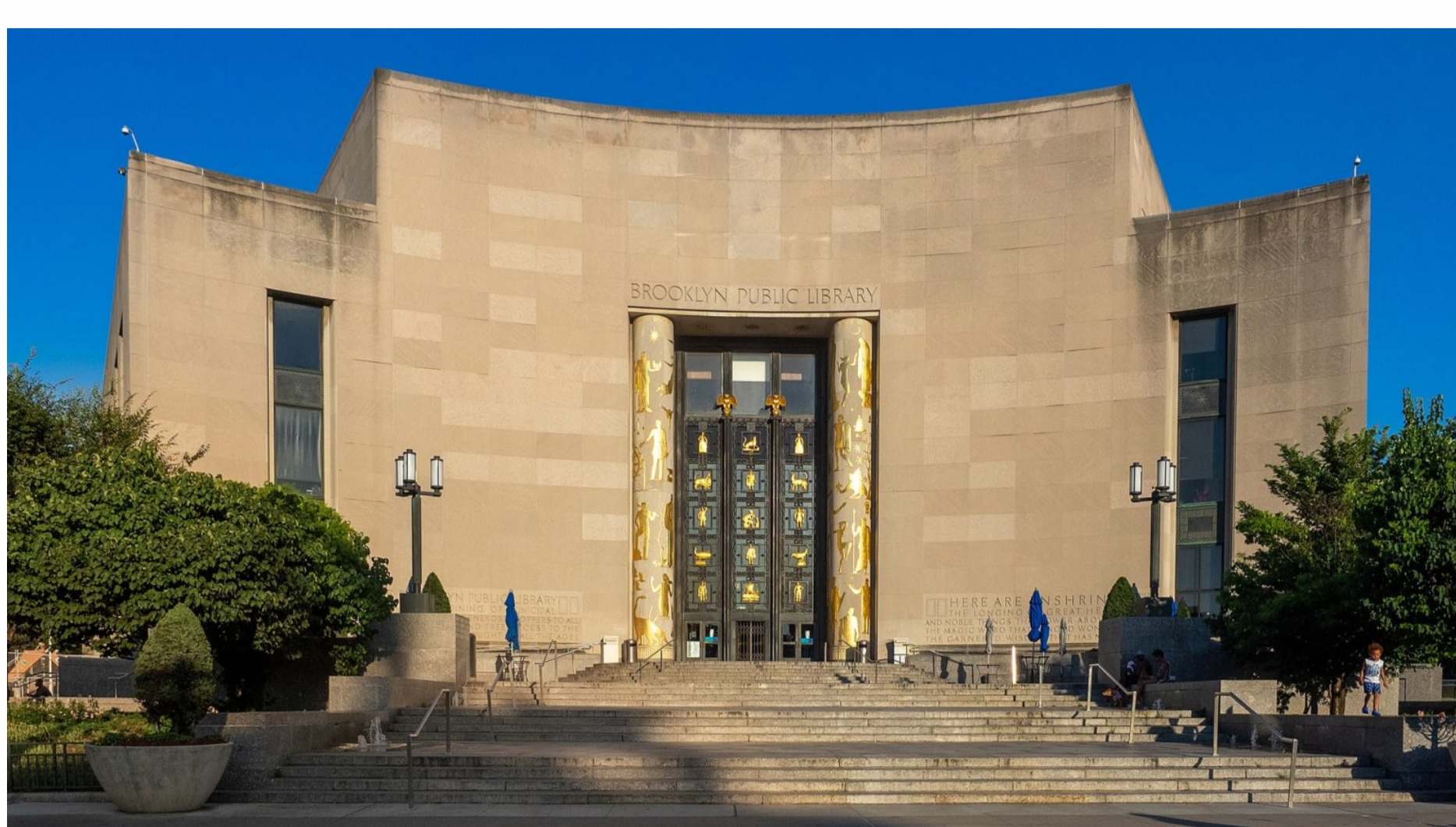


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\$3.5M secured in state funding for Brooklyn libraries

August 28, 2023 Brooklyn Eagle Staff

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The Central Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza. Wikimedia photo by Ajay Suresh

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An additional \$3.5 million in funding for much-needed renovations and upgrades to Brooklyn’s public libraries has been secured by State Senator Iwen Chu (D–NY) of Dyker Heights, South Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, Sunset Park, Borough Park, Bensonhurst and Gravesend.

According to The City, a local news consortium, as of June 2023, [Brooklyn has a \\$383 million capital shortfall for necessary repairs and maintenance of its buildings.](#)

With the new money allotted, the BPL system will receive \$3,522,392 — according to a press statement delivered to the Brooklyn Eagle from the office of Sen. Iwen Chu on Aug. 28 — the second highest among the 197 projects statewide funded by the State Aid for Library Construction Program this year in the 2023-24 state budget.

The project will renovate the Central library branch of Brooklyn Public Library by redistributing office space and providing new, upgraded spaces to the public.

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In FY23, Brooklyn Public Library welcomed 4,063,916 patrons into all branches, a 32% increase from 3,091,402 in FY22.

The funding comes from the aforementioned \$34 million secured in the state budget. The investment is divided across public libraries and systems throughout New York State to support construction and renovation projects.

Project activities eligible for grant awards from the state include financing broadband infrastructure projects, construction of additions to existing buildings, and the renovation or rehabilitation of existing space.

The projects can include roof replacement; the purchase and installation of alternative energy sources; new HVAC systems (like in Carroll Gardens); windows, doors and lighting systems; electrical upgrades; and the construction of new or the replacement of walkways and parking lots as well as stand-by generators and EV charging stations.

New furniture, shelving, and equipment, including computer equipment, can be purchased for new or newly renovated space through grant awards.

The funds help libraries construct new buildings, create additions, update electrical wiring and computer technology, improve broadband infrastructure, meet energy efficiency standards, renovate facilities to provide full accessibility to library users with disabilities, and provide meeting spaces to accommodate community needs.

BPL branches currently undergoing renovations include the Sunset Park library, the Red Hook library and the historic Carroll Gardens Library.

Both the Carroll Gardens and Red Hook libraries are currently closed, and the Sunset Park branch will undergo its interim construction stage beginning Sept. 1.

In Carroll gardens, the BPL library branch is of the 18 standing Carnegie libraries in Brooklyn built in the early 20th century, and it maintains historic architecture like barrel-vaulted ceilings and an expansive 14,000-square foot interior — [the Eagle reported on the Carroll Gardens branch interim closure in July 2023.](#) Among other things, the library is getting a new HVAC system to help with climate control during the summer and winter months.

“As Chair of the Libraries Committee, I’m proud to have secured funding for major renovation and upgrade projects across the public library system in New York State,” said State Senator Iwen Chu.

“With a growing dependency on technology and the Internet for our everyday lives, libraries must have the funding to stay up to date with current equipment to fulfill those needs,” Chu continued.

“We extend our sincere thanks to Senator Chu, chair of the Senate Libraries Committee and a champion for libraries not only in Brooklyn but across New York State,” said Linda E Johnson, President and CEO, Brooklyn Public Library.

“With her support, we are able to continue restoring and modernizing the Central Library while ensuring branches across the borough will have the books, programs and technology patrons rely on every day,” Johnson continued.

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