



VT Department of Libraries Capital Fund Grants Proposal

2022 Session of the Vermont Legislature

Bradford Public Library, Bradford, VT



VTLIB Proposal:

\$15,900,000 for construction/renovation/repairs for Vermont public libraries:

\$15,000,000 for grants, \$900,000 for 2 limited service administrative positions over 4.5 year duration. Positions will evaluate grants, handle reporting requirements, and other administrative functions.

Grants will be for repairs, renovation, and construction, favoring proposals that increase accessibility and better adherence to ADA regulations.



Rationale:

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) became the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) on Oct. 1, 1996. In the past 26 years no federal or state funds for library construction needs have been allocated specifically for this purpose, to our knowledge.

Vermont Public libraries are overwhelmingly housed in antique buildings that need constant upkeep and often have historic building regulations. There is a *dire need* for repair and construction funds at Vermont's public libraries. Towns and library boards do their best to maintain these buildings, but they are literally falling apart in some cases.

VTLIB has surveyed public libraries twice in the past year, including this month, regarding construction priorities. Over 69% of respondents stated that their greatest construction need would help them meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Open and accessible means open and accessible to *everyone*.

Rationale, continued:

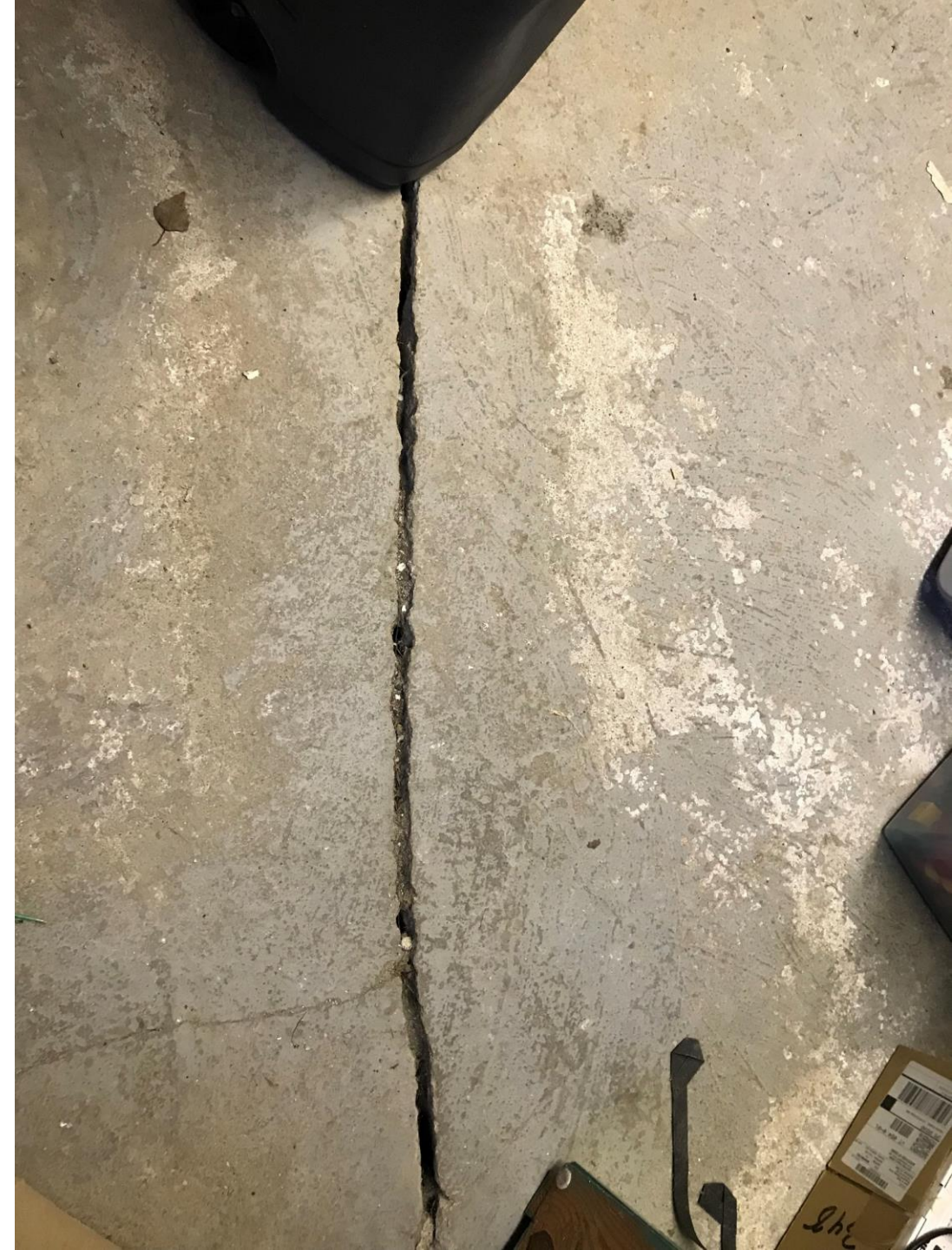
[US Treasury Guidance for the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund](#)

specifically names libraries in their eligibility statement:

"Projects to construct or improve libraries that provide public access to the internet for purposes including work, education, and health monitoring such as offering digital skills programs and support for community members engaging in virtual learning." All Vermont public libraries provide access to the internet for their communities. This is the only internet access for many Vermonters.

Treasury guidelines state that eligible costs include "Personnel costs including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants required for carrying out a Capital Project (such as project managers, program directors, subject matter experts, equity consultants, grant administrators, financial analysts, accountants, and attorneys)." The two limited service positions would be funded through this mechanism.

Cracked floor at Westford Public Library,
Westford, VT





Critical structural rot and pedestal damage supporting the roof at the Weathersfield Proctor Library, Weathersfield, VT

Construction Needs Survey data:

January 2022 the Department of Libraries survey of public libraries asks the top three needs for public libraries. Survey is ongoing. Data so far:

- ADA improvements were cited in 73 of the 157 top needs. ADA was passed in 1990, just six years before federal construction funds dried up for libraries.
- Mold/moisture mitigation and repairs, bathroom renovations or additions are critical needs. At least two VT public libraries do not have bathrooms or indoor bathrooms.
- HVAC issues—a primary concern during COVID—are top needs as well.



Suspicious looking mold and cracked glass at Arvin A Brown Library, Richford, VT.

Construction Needs Survey data, continued:

Many libraries responded that they need more space. Public libraries function on the front line of services for many Vermonters. Meeting rooms for parent-child contact (supervised visitation), privacy for medical appointments, job interviews, business meetings, and general community meetings are needed in every community.

Libraries are the center of the community in most towns in Vermont. Space to fulfill this mission is vital.

NEWS

Ilsley leaders hoping boiler will hold on

January 20, 2022

By John Flowers



THIS BOILER IS part of an aging heating system at Middlebury's Ilsley Library that officials hope to replace in the near future.

Photo courtesy Ilsley Library

MIDDLEBURY — Ilsley Public Library officials are withdrawing their request for a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system for the building at

75 Main Street, in view of a major rise in project cost estimates and the conundrum of where to relocate services while the work is being done.

The latest draft of the Middlebury Town Meeting warning includes a proposed \$1,043,000 bond issue to upgrade the Ilsley's aging HVAC system, which has become increasingly unreliable, according to library officials. Based on Ilsley Library Director Dana Hart's research, the building's boiler is around 24 years old and its air conditioning system — which doesn't use heat pump technology — is about 20 years old.

"There are days when we come in and the heat doesn't turn on, which results in a service call," Hart said. "Twice this year, the boiler has flooded, necessitating a service call. And it heats the building unevenly, so we have cold pockets."

“We're dealing with typical end-of-life maintenance issues.”
— Ilsley Library Director Dana Hart

Need is not limited:

The January 20th issue of the Addison County Independent featured a story about how Middlebury's Ilsley Library is fighting to keep its aging boiler going.

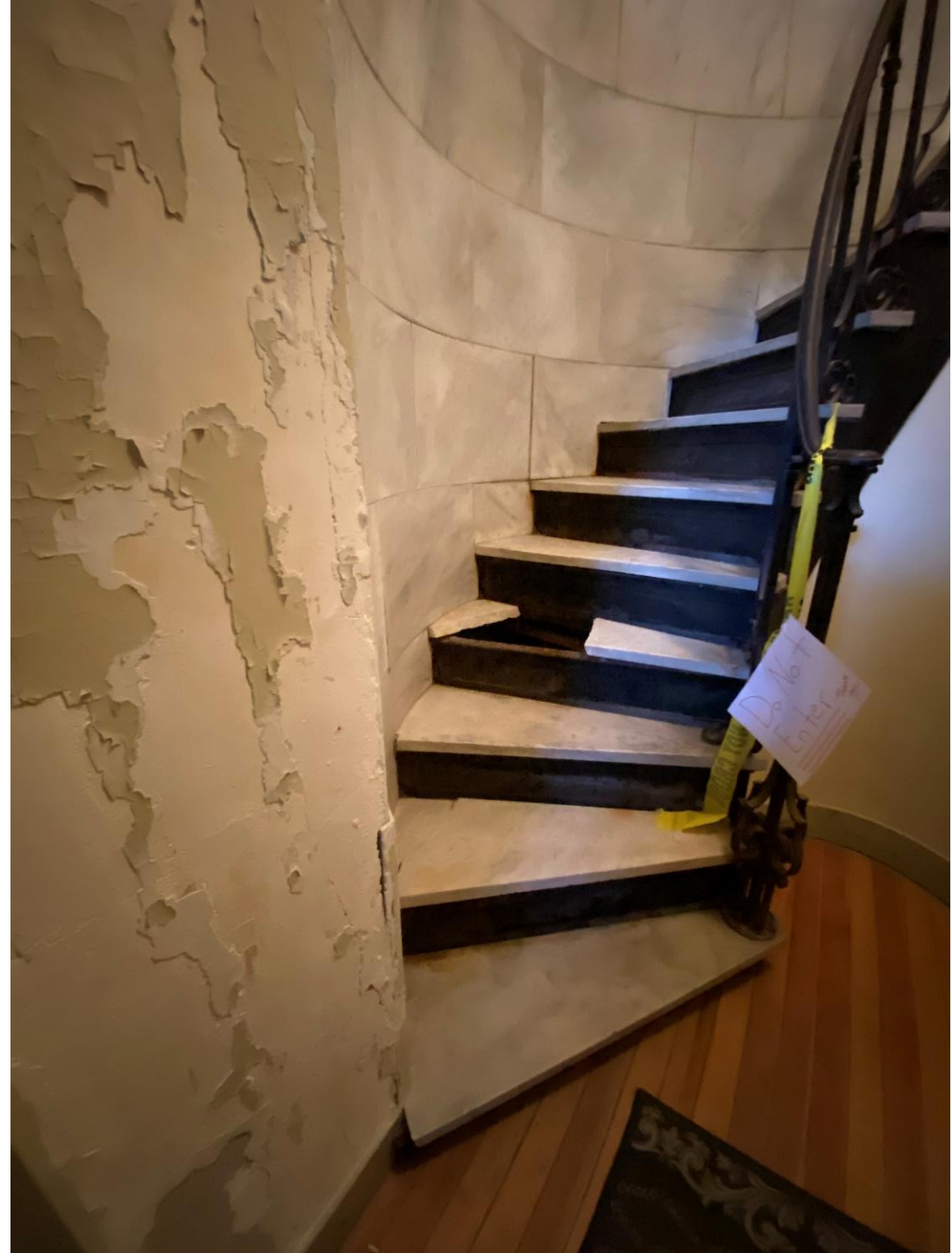
Need for capital funds is not limited to rural libraries.

Need:

Broken, worn out, moisture damaged, or simply inaccessible is part of everyday life at many libraries.

This staircase at the Fletcher Memorial Library in Ludlow is hazardous, unusable, and taped off.

“Do Not Enter”





This proposal will provide sorely needed funds for libraries. This request is directly in line with the US Treasury Guidelines for this money.

Libraries are a great investment and return every dollar invested in them multifold to their communities.

Libraries cannot thrive on goodwill alone. It is time to invest in these institutions that are so vital to the quality of life in Vermont.

Only some children can access the children's room via this staircase at the Windsor Library, Windsor, VT