

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Library of the Chathams Secures \$2.45M State Grant to Modernize and Renovate Building

Chatham, NJ – The Library of the Chathams is very pleased to announce that the State Legislature’s Joint Budget Oversight Committee (JBOC) today voted to approve **\$2.45 million** to support the library's project to modernize its spaces and renovate critical infrastructure. The funding will help transform the library with an improved children’s room, new meeting rooms, a new business center, a new STEM room, better ventilation, heating and cooling, and much more, which will benefit every person in Chatham and its neighboring communities.

“This is a win for all Chatham residents,” said Karen Brodsky, Director of the Library of the Chathams. "This project is about ensuring the library remains a vibrant, safe, and accessible 'Space for Everyone' in our community. Seeing this state investment finally come to fruition is a testament to the persistence of our board, staff, and partners."

With nearly 200,000 library visits last year, and hosting more than 800 community meetings with nearly 8,000 attendees, the library building – more than 100 years old in parts – is in critical need of HVAC and electrical upgrades. Also, public surveys and focus groups show that new and reimagined spaces are needed.

The funding culminates a years-long, highly competitive process under the 2017 New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act, and results from the dedicated efforts of Ms. Brodsky, the library staff, and the Library Board of Trustees led by President Andy Hollander and many Trustees present and past.

The Library is grateful for the effective efforts of Assemblyman Andrew Macurdy, who immediately upon taking office two months ago advocated successfully for the release of the funds, which had been awaiting a vote in Trenton for over a year. “I am so happy that we were able to help the Library of the Chathams obtain these long-awaited funds,” he said. “The library is an institutional anchor of the community and this investment will pay dividends to the people of Chatham and beyond.”

The Library extends thanks to State Librarian Jennifer Nelson and the New Jersey State Library for their ongoing support and guidance throughout this process. Thanks are owed to so many who believe in the library’s vision of a next-level library including Library Director Karen Brodsky and library staff, the Library Board of Trustees members both present and past, and Municipal Leaders including Mayor Carolyn Dempsey of Chatham Borough, and Mayor Jen Rowland and Deputy Mayor Marty McHugh of Chatham Township, The Friends of the Library of the Chathams, the Chatham Library Foundation, every individual who has made a donation to the library, and last but not least the beloved community members.

Although the grant is a monumental "next step" that brings the project closer to its goal, the journey is not yet complete. It will be an essential building block of the multimillion-dollar "Space for Everyone" project, and the Library itself will contribute more than \$2 million based on savings and prior community donations. To fully realize the "Space for Everyone" modernization vision, added support including continued philanthropic contributions from private donors, as well as municipal funding, will be essential.

The Library of the Chathams is at the heart of the 20,000+ person community, enriching residents with knowledge, culture, and connection. It's where children choose their first stories, teens find a safe, supportive place to learn and grow, and visitors of all ages explore new ideas, try new hobbies, and build lasting connections. The Library is making significant strides and looks forward to continuing to serve the community.

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About Library of the Chathams

The Library of the Chathams is a joint public library serving the residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township, New Jersey. Dedicated to fostering a lifelong love of learning, the library provides a wide array of resources, including an extensive physical and digital collection, diverse educational programming for all ages, and versatile community meeting spaces. As a cornerstone of the Chathams for over a century, the library remains committed to evolving alongside its community, offering cutting-edge technology and a welcoming environment for discovery, connection, and growth. For more information, visit chathamlibrary.org.

For more Information

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