

# MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | November

The format of this report is based on the MHLS service priorities as determined by MHLS stakeholders.

## 1. Delivery Services

- a. The delivery service began a new era in leadership in September after the retirement of Tom Finnigan. **Chris Herron, Operations Manager, and Dave Haspel, Assistant Operations Manager**, have been focusing on maintaining the high level of service already being provided with an eye to the future and what improvements can be made. Please don't hesitate to contact Chris or Dave with any questions or concerns. Delivery service contacts:

**Chris Herron**, Operations Manager  
c. 845.750.5995, o. 845.471.6060 x247  
[cherron@midhudson.org](mailto:cherron@midhudson.org)

**Dave Haspel**, Assistant Operations Manager  
o. 845.471.6060 x 248  
[dhaspel@midhudson.org](mailto:dhaspel@midhudson.org)

- b. **RFP update:** The MHLS Board of Trustees met on September 12<sup>th</sup> and approved the recommendation of signing a delivery service agreement with Valley Courier and Delivery Service, Inc. This new agreement will continue our relationship with Valley Courier, the current delivery vendor, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2028. We will be able to provide current service levels to members through the summer of 2026 when circulation numbers and funding considerations will be reevaluated to ensure delivery is right sized and providing the best service possible.
- c. MHLS Operations recently worked with the **Woodstock Public Library District** with a hold on delivery, provided storage of items, and the delivery of holds for their patrons to the West Hurley library. We will be supporting **Marlboro Free Library** in a similar way as they continue their construction project this fall. Let us know if you have or need any special delivery requests during renovations, construction, or emergency situations.
- d. The **Olive Free Library successfully added a branch location, Shokan**, in September. MHLS Operations worked with Shokan to facilitate delivery at the new location providing service two days a week. The delivery service now provides service to 71 member locations.
- e. MHLS has **four holidays coming up in November and December** where there will be no delivery service:
  - Veterans Day: Tuesday 11/11
  - Thanksgiving Day: Thursday 11/27
  - Day After Thanksgiving: Friday 11/28
  - Christmas Day: Thursday 12/25

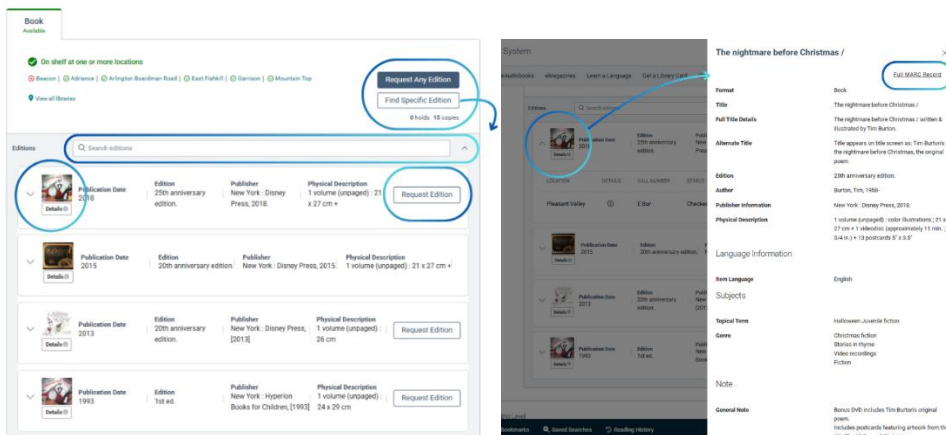
MHLS will send an email to the notice list prior to any holiday reminding members to adjust their presorting to account for the holiday. Delivery routes by day and library can be found at <https://midhudson.org/topics/resource-sharing/delivery/>

- f. Geoff Joray started in September as a new primary driver for MHLS delivery vendor, Valley Courier. **Geoff is driving route 5** Monday and Tuesday and will serve as a substitute driver Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

- g. **Winter is coming** to the Hudson Valley which can impact your delivery service. MHLS and our delivery vendor, Valley Courier, work together during inclement weather events to discuss the best strategy regarding the delivery service. This includes options for night delivery, delayed delivery, or the cancelation of delivery. The drivers are independent contractors and make the decision of whether conditions allow for the safe completion of their routes. We will communicate any route or schedule changes with an email to the notice list. Also, members can be a big help by clearing their parking lots and sidewalks as early as possible to allow for safe and easy access to your library.
- h. Our partnership with Central Hudson on the Central Hudson HomeBoost Energy Efficiency Program continues. If your library is participating in this program and you need **additional Weatherization Kits** please contact Chris Herron.

## 2. Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services

- a. **Baker & Taylor Aftermath:** Established in 1828 and the largest supplier of books to libraries, Baker & Taylor announced closure in January of 2026 after a failure to sell creating a huge disruption to the way our libraries do business. The MHLS Cataloging Team has recently been working with member libraries that have set up new accounts with other vendors to help with MARC record configuration for their orders. MHLS staff have been able to work with records from Ingram, Brodart, Abdo Books and Amazon Business. Those interested in setting up on-order records with any of these vendors, or even other vendors not listed, please open a ticket with [cataloging@midhudson.org](mailto:cataloging@midhudson.org)
- b. **Discover Updates:** You asked for it....We now have more bibliographic information in the record display, including full MARC records. As long as there's a requestable item, you will now see two request buttons on a resource card: **Request Any Edition and Find Specific Edition**. The latter will open and take you to the Editions table, where the expand/collapse arrow has now moved to the right and the search box has also been enlarged. In the editions list, you will see cover images for every edition, when available. The Details button has been moved under the cover image and turned into a more obvious button. Click on the cover image or the Details button to see more bibliographic information, much of which was not previously available in Discover. This can be useful for finding track listings of music albums, additional contributors like audiobook narrators and film actors, technical specifications, additional notes fields, and more. From there, the full MARC record can be viewed with the link in the top right of the display.



- c. **Innovative Phone Alerts Launch:** Innovative Phone Alerts launched on Thursday October 30<sup>th</sup>. This service is a subscription service used by roughly two thirds of our member libraries to make automated calls to patrons with overdue items or items to be picked up.

What you can expect:

- **You can expect a faster turnaround on calls**  
The new system is not limited to 2 outgoing lines and can make more simultaneous calls
- **We expect that the reporting in Sierra will be more informative for staff**  
The calls will be documented in the patron record by clicking View/Teleforms. The status, number of attempts and time stamp will be updated.
- **Cloud based service without interruption**  
The service is in the cloud and monitored for continuity-not affected by power or internet loss at MHLS
- Improved AI generated voice quality
- Patron names are not announced in the call
- No duplication of calling to the same household/number

Any library who would like to add this service should open a ticket by emailing [techsupport@midhudson.org](mailto:techsupport@midhudson.org)

- d. **New Text messaging coming soon** (Vega Interact). We are in the early stages of setting up basecamp with Innovative for this next and last implementation from our 2024 contract. The current SMS texting service is compatible with Discover and was not able to produce enrollment reports or usage statistics. The new service is part of the Vega LX suite and expected to have reporting in the analytics which is now under development. We can also expect to see opt in options coming soon to the Discover catalog as well as the ability for staff to see activity in LX admin module.

- e. **Preparing for Internet or Sierra Downtime:** On October 20<sup>th</sup>, the Northeast experienced a significant disruption of services hosted in the Amazon Web Services Cloud. While we were fortunate not to feel this disruption in our Sierra and other related services, which are hosted in the cloud with Amazon, and it begs the question, "Is your staff ready for Internet disruption?"

- Do you have the offline client downloaded and set up correctly for your location?  
[Instructions and Links to download and setup the offline client](#)
- Are staff able to launch and use the offline client?  
[Documentation](#)
- Are staff familiar with uploading transactions once the internet is restored?  
Is someone at the library authorized to process the files?  
[Documentation](#)

**We also offer:** [Training on Demand/Technology: Intro to Sierra Offline Client](#)

- f. **MHLS Catalogers breaking records and barriers!:** Nina Acosta leads the MHLS Cataloging Team, which also includes full time cataloger BJ Vickery and Rebecca Hagan, who splits her time between Cataloging and ILL. Essentially, we have 2.5 full time FTE assigned to the task of importing, updating, and removing the bibliographic data that supports our catalog and ILS. This work also includes maintaining a dizzying array of indexes within our Authorities file for authors, subjects, locations, etc. that support searching. There is also the work of providing support to members with their local collections and items, as well as

the documentation of workflows and continuing education for staff. By the way, the cataloging team fields more ticket requests than any other service area covered by Technology Operations because of the day-to-day nature of loading records and managing local collections.

- While pulling together statistical data for the annual report, we couldn't help but be floored by the increase in workload this year for the cataloging team. By the end of October of this year, with over 500,000 records added, the catalogers had surpassed the number of records managed in the previous year by 138,000. Every record gets reviewed. If more information is needed, they seek it out using other resources or by requesting details, images or the actual item from member libraries.
- In addition to the sheer volume of records the complexity has also moved beyond simple MARC structure for standalone bibliographic records. Our catalogers need to ensure that our data not only meets MARC standards but also must be able to work within our Bibframe environment where records have relationships beyond indexing and must roll into a single view for efficient browsing in Discover.
- Additional attention to authorities is also applied to ensure we represent the diversity of the communities we serve through local subject headings and authority work.

Cataloging is team effort, and it also relies on the member libraries too. We look to you and to your staff to report discrepancies that you notice between the record and the physical item (which our team rarely sees). We appreciate your input on local subjects and suggestions to improve findability. Lastly, we are your partners in gearing your staff up to the task of adding your items to the collection. If you have ideas, projects, or questions related to cataloging, please do drop an email (which opens a ticket) to [Cataloging@midhudson.org](mailto:Cataloging@midhudson.org)

### 3. Coordinated IT Services

- a. We will soon be distributing the **2026 contracts for websites and support**. We give you the information early to provide you with the renewal before we invoice, so that you can share it with your boards. Your response confirming your renewal helps us to plan for the coming year if we understand the workload. While you will note the cost of your contract, **please do not send a check at this time**. We will invoice your library in January.
- b. The new rules on accessibility of Web content requirements will take effect April 24, 2026 for any state and local government with 50,000 or more people. All sites will need to comply by April 26, 2027. <https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/>. Libraries are responsible for the accessibility of the content added to hosted websites. To better highlight possible issues, we will be rolling out the WP Accessibility plugin to hosted sites. This can be used to quickly check color contrast levels and will highlight images that are missing alt text.

We have hosted a web series on Web Accessibility with other Library Systems and DLD. The recordings of the first two are available on YouTube. The 3rd part will be on Thursday Nov 13th at 10am.

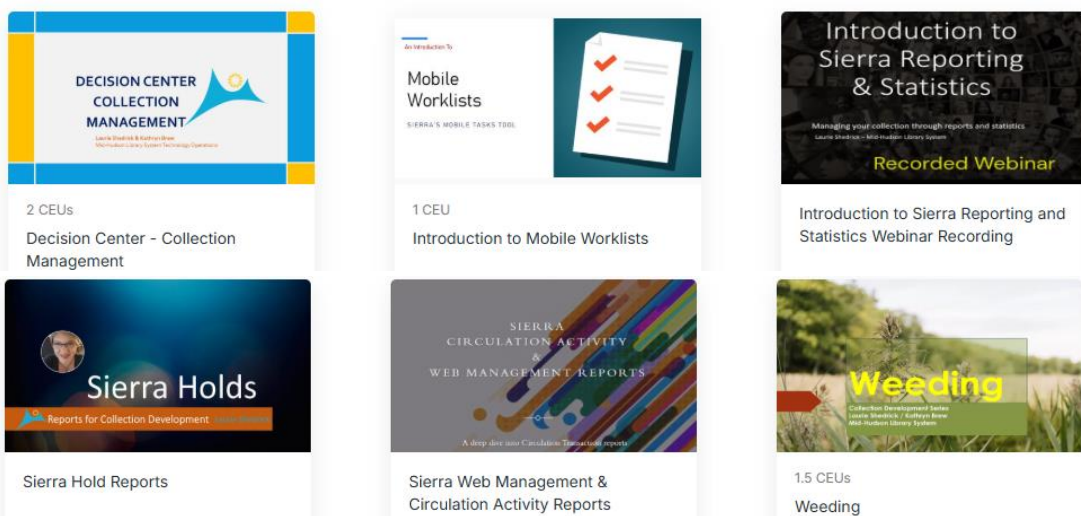
- Web Accessibility Series #1: Web Accessibility Overview: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines & ADA Title II [https://youtu.be/9y5HwMEj\\_4g](https://youtu.be/9y5HwMEj_4g)
- Web Accessibility Series #2: Creating Accessible Documents and PDFs <https://youtu.be/Hf8D2hL7Y8M>

- Web Accessibility Series #3: Web Accessibility for Social Media and Multimedia Content  
<https://stls.libcal.com/calendar/events/web-accessibility-series-3>

#### 4. Professional Development & Continuing Education

- Create List webinars:** Elevate your reporting with two consecutive webinars on Sierra’s Create lists. The create list feature of Sierra allows you to gather records with specific field values for reporting or bulk updating. It is a foundational tool for understanding your collection and to manage record edits and corrections. Used with patron records, it can help you to gain understanding about the community you serve. Beginners (November 20<sup>th</sup>) - [Register](#) | Create List Advanced (December 11<sup>th</sup>)- [Register](#)
- Training on Demand: Technology has a new category for Reports & statistics plus additions to and modifications to the Create List series.**  
[Reports & Statistics.](#) This is where you will find the 2025 Collection Development Series tutorials shown below. In addition to this, we are revamping the Create List tutorials in this section as we gear up for [Create List](#) tutorials have been revamped. The New Create List tutorials will provide a general introduction to Create Lists, the forms and the toolbars. Each record type also has its own tutorial filled with lessons on specific reports, ranging from easy to advanced. We think this new organization will help staff navigate to find support and direction on specific features and functions or the report they need in the moment.  
 As always...Your feedback on training needs is welcome.

##### Reports and Statistics: 6



- SEAL 101 training with Kelsey Milner (SENYLRC)**

Presented by Kelsey Milner from the Southeastern NY Library Resources Council. This webinar will provide basic training on all aspects of the SEAL resource sharing system, managed by Southeastern NY Library Resources Council. SEAL connects libraries of all types in the Southeastern region (covering Columbia, Greene, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, Putnam, and Rockland counties) and allows them to easily share books, DVDs, and other resources. [Register](#)

#### d. Trustee Education

- **Two more live Trustee Education events this year:**
  1. Trustee Handbook Book Club: **Next Level Trusteeship: Building an Effective and Impactful Board with Dr. Terry Kirschner** | Tuesday, November 18 | 5-6:30pm | online | Register [here](#)
  2. MHLS Trustee Education Series: **Board Development – Recruitment, Orientation, Education, and Evaluation** with Rebekkah Smith Aldrich | Thursday, December 4 | 6-8pm | Beekman Library, 11 Town Center Blvd., Hopewell Junction, NY | Register [here](#)
- **The 2025 MHLS [Sustainable Funding Series sessions](#) have been added to Training on Demand**

#### e. Save the Dates! NYS Online Summer Reading Program Planning Workshops:

- Children - Monday, February 9 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
- Teens - Wednesday, March 11 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

#### 5. Consulting & Development

- a. **A new edition of the [Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State](#)** by MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, is now available. This edition has been endorsed by the Public Library Section (PLS) and the Leadership & Management Section (LAMS) of the New York Library Association. The new edition is greatly expanded from the 2010 edition and includes new resources. Highlights include:
  - New chapters on Director-Board Relationship, Budget & Finance, Risk Management, Facilities, and Planning & Evaluation.
  - Updated checklists to use in your first days, weeks, and months on the job. These checklists are also available in an MS Word doc format so you can edit them and take notes.
  - A starter kit for building a compliance calendar for your library
  - A new “Facilities Walk Through Checklist” to help you expedite getting to know your facility and identifying issues that need attention.
  - Updated sections on Minimum Standards for Public and Association Libraries, NYS Open Meetings Law, and the Trustee Education Law.
- b. This is a reminder that all NYS employees and trustees must complete sexual harassment prevention training annually. For guidance on making sure your Library’s sexual harassment prevention policy and training meeting the requirements of the law, view [the MHLS webpage on this topic](#).
- c. **Property Tax Cap Forms Due:** Libraries with calendar fiscal years (January-December), who have their own board and have ever held a public vote on their budget are required to submit the online Property Tax Cap form prior to the adoption of your 2026 budget. For more info: [New York State's property tax cap \(ny.gov\)](#)

6. **Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access** – no report this month, if you have any questions in this area of our work please contact Laurie Shedrick, MHLS Assistant Director & Technology Operations Manager: [lshedrick@midhudson.org](mailto:lshedrick@midhudson.org)

## 7. Awareness & Advocacy Services

- a. **The MHLS Advocacy Ambassadors program** will kick off on Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. We thank the library boards who have identified their Ambassador for 2025-2026! If you haven't had a chance to do this year, please identify your Ambassador by November 30.
- b. **NYLA Library Advocacy Day will be on Tuesday, February 3 in Albany.** Please reserve the date and plan to wear purple!

Our priorities:

- Budget
  1. **\$181.3 million in Library Operating Aid** – this aid is critical to MHLS operations, making up 80% of our revenue. This includes Central Library Services Aid, which helps to underwrite the shared OverDrive/Libby collection; Coordinated Outreach Aid, which supplies the Outreach Mini-Grants and so much more; and the Correctional Facility Aid program administered by MHLS.
  2. **\$175 million for Library Construction Aid** – this aid program is critical for member library construction/renovation/resilience projects. Need among our member libraries currently outpaces our segment of this aid program annually.
  3. **\$3.1 million for [NOVELny](#)** – without this aid, NOVELny goes away.
  4. **Increase of the Cultural Education Fee to \$30** - The primary source of operational funding for the New York State Office of Cultural Education, including the New York State Library, State Archives, State Museum, Summer School of the Arts, and Public Broadcasting Program, is the Cultural Education Account. The account is funded by the **Cultural Education Fee**, a one-time fee collected by county clerks and clerks for the City of New York for the recording, entering, indexing, or endorsing certain instruments. The current fee of \$15 was set in 2002 and has not increased in 23 years, despite core costs like wages and employee benefits more than doubling in that period. As such, the account runs a chronic deficit, forcing the state to offload responsibility for 55 of the NYSL's 84 positions to funding received via the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grants to States program. We support increasing the Cultural Education Fee to \$30 per transaction as a way to stabilize the Office of Cultural Education and maintain a fully operational State Library, both now and in the future.
- Legislative Policy:
  1. **Open Shelves Act** (S.1100-A (May) / A.3119-B (Kelles) – We have helped to write this legislation and in its present form, this law would add a requirement that libraries adopt policies and procedures that ensure library staff are able to curate and develop collections, services, and programming in a manner consistent with the values and

protections established under the Human Rights Law under Article Fifteen of the Executive Law and the Equal Rights Amendment to the State Constitution. Read the [NYLA Memo of Support](#)

2. **eBooks Licensing Reform** (A.3589 (Carroll)) This bill would require that any contract between libraries and publishers who offer electronic books (eBooks and eAudiobooks) be governed by the laws of New York State under its authority to regulate intrastate commerce. Additionally, it would establish a list of provisions prohibited from inclusion in said contracts, thereby affording library patrons across our state equitable access to the content they seek. Please note: if passed this bill would trigger the enactment of the Connecticut ebook licensing bill passed earlier this year. Read the [NYLA Memo of Support](#) RSA note: There is some concern that this bill is not strong enough to achieve the goals of the library community as is under review by the new New York eBook Working Group and NYLA Legislative Committee.
3. **Media Literacy in New York State** (no bill number)
4. **Civil Service Reform** (no bill number)

#### c. Road Trip

- **Feedback Surveys**

In addition to the data survey we sent to Library Directors, we are asking anyone who participated in the 2025 MHLS Road Trip Challenge to complete [this evaluation survey](#). This survey is open to anyone who attempted to complete the challenge, regardless of the progress they made. This includes member library staff that participated. **Anyone completing the survey can choose to be entered into a drawing to win 1 of 10 coupons for a free car wash at Foam & Wash.** Please help us get the word out about this survey – we’ve created a flyer you can post to encourage participants to respond. [View/Download Participant Survey Flyer](#).

#### **Staff Suggestions/Feedback Welcome!**

We *also* want to know about your experiences with this program as a *library worker*. Please take a few minutes to complete this [staff feedback survey](#). This feedback will be used to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this program and may possibly shape future programs. We'll use the findings to help the advisory committee analyze the effectiveness of the program.

**ALL RESPONSES ARE ANONYMOUS. Both surveys will close November 19.**

- **Souvenirs**

We are working hard to fill souvenir requests. We experienced a backlog due to supply issues. We appreciate everyone’s patience as we catch up. If you wish to check on the status of a request, feel free to email [engage@midhudson.org](mailto:engage@midhudson.org).

## 8. Interlibrary Loan Services

- a. Reminder: **Not all items requested via SEAL can be sent back via Mid-Hudson couriers. Only items going to libraries that participate in Empire Delivery can be, and items going to other libraries should be sent via UPS, USPS or similar method.** The libraries that participate in Empire Delivery can change so make sure to double check the list of Empire Delivery libraries. Mount Saint Mary College which previously utilized Empire stopped doing so in June of 2025 so items from that library should now be mailed back to their library and not sent to Mid-Hudson's ILL department for return. The libraries that participate in Empire Delivery can be at [PUBLIC ELD ROSTER \(USE THIS ONLY\) - Google Sheets](#)

## 9. Construction Program Services

- a. At the time of preparing this report there has been no official award announcements regarding the State Aid for Library Construction projects applied for last summer (applications with project numbers starting with 0386-25). We anticipate the awards will be announced soon.

Here is a reminder of the process:

1. MHLS receives word from the Division of Library Development that an announcement is going out to the legislators.
  - a. Libraries will be notified about this step via an email from Laura Crisci, however ***Libraries are required to wait a period (usually 5 days) before talking publicly about the award.*** This is to give legislators time to be the first to break the news to their districts.
2. *The announcement starts the clock on the 180 days* - by law libraries must start work within 180 days of the award announcement (some libraries may have already started the work, & that is okay).
3. *Libraries will be directed to print (single-sided) and sign (in blue ink) (3) copies of the FS-10 form and send them via the delivery bins to Laura Crisci.*
  - a. Those forms start the process for releasing payment of 90% of the award to the library.
  - b. Payment happens through the Statewide Financial System and the timing depends on what is in their work queue. If your library requires a paper check, this will delay things. It is best to **make sure the library is set up with EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) or ACH (Automatic Clearing House) in Statewide Financial System (SFS).**

## 10. Communications Among Member Libraries

- a. The deadline to submit job openings to be included in the MHLS Bulletin is Wednesday, 4:00 pm of the week prior to publication. The MHLS Bulletin is published every Tuesday. Please send job ads to [bulletin@midhudson.org](mailto:bulletin@midhudson.org)
- b. MHLS is always looking for member spotlights to share in the Bulletin. If you have a program, partnership, grant, collection, etc. that you would like to share with your peers, please let us know, [bulletin@midhudson.org](mailto:bulletin@midhudson.org).

## 11. Special Populations

- a. **Community Services:** Please use the following links to get the most up to date information including partner organizations for your region:

- [Community Services](#): Social Care Network, SNAP, Survivor Access Financial Empowerment (SAFE), Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) etc.
  - [Immigration Services](#)
  - [Social Security](#)
- b. **Know Your Rights Cards**: MHLS still has a small supply of Know Your Rights cards provided by the New York State Library (NYSL) and the New York Immigration Coalition in an assortment of languages. Please contact [Kerstin Cruger](#) if you would like to receive additional cards. Please include the preferred amount and the languages you would like to receive in your email request.

A second round of printing was offered by the NYSL and MHLS placed an order for the most requested languages from our first order. When the supplies arrive, MHLS will offer cards to our members through an on-demand request form.

- c. Start a free [Girls Who Code Club](#) and help students build confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of belonging through coding. Clubs meet just 1–2 hours per week and can fit into your existing schedule—after school, during lunch, or online. When you start a Club, you’ll receive free access to our curriculum for grades 3–12, plus training and resources to support facilitators every step of the way.

Ready to get started? Complete the Clubs Application at [girlswhocode.com/clubsapply](https://girlswhocode.com/clubsapply) and affiliate with our Community Partnership to unlock exclusive benefits and swag. The Mid-Hudson Library System is a [Girls Who Code](#) Community Partner! Check out the perks when you start a club at your library.

- d. **2026 Summer Reading Program Manual** is now available. Each public library in NY state has access to the CSLP manual online. The CSLP manual is an idea book of programs, booklists, printables, artwork and other resources that you may use in planning and delivering your summer library program. It also includes a collection of posters, banners, art spots, and other graphic files to accompany the **Unearth a Story™** theme. The 2026 CSLP manual also features a chapter on **Celebrating America 250™** with program ideas for ALL ages.

**To access the CSLP manual:**

- Use the direct link at <https://programs.csllpreads.org/> and then click on Learn More! beneath the poster image. You'll be prompted to enter your access code here.
- Go to the [CSLP homepage](#), navigate to "Manual Downloads" in the top menu bar, and click on "2026 Unearth a Story." Then click on Learn More! to enter the access code. The access code was shared via the MHLS-Notice and MHLS-Programming Lists and emailed to the staff member who completed the 2025 Summer Reading Program Final Report.

CSLP membership and manuals are provided at no cost to New York state public libraries. This service is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services LSTA funds granted through the New York State Library. New York state public libraries may use these themes and materials to plan summer library programs and for programming throughout the year. Keep in mind that public libraries are not required to use CSLP themes or materials, but the materials are readily available to all public libraries and are provided by the NY State Library.

[The CSLP shop](#) is open for 2026. You may also browse the product line in the [Unearth a Story™ product catalog](#) (PDF). In addition to publicity items, décor, incentives, and t-shirts, the CSLP manual is available

for purchase in print format. Purchases from the CSLP online store are at each library's discretion and are the library's responsibility.

## 12. Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems

- a. There is still time to **submit proposals for the 2026 Banned Books Symposium: Proactive, Reactive, Supportive** taking place in the morning on Saturday, May 16, 2026, on the campus of Dutchess BOCES in Poughkeepsie, NY. This half-day conference will feature presentations in all capacities of banned and challenged books and programs from public, school and academic librarians.

[If you are interested in presenting at this conference, please submit your proposal using this form.](#)

Sessions will be formatted in 50-minute blocks (including time for Q&A). Topic suggestions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Using challenged/banned books in the classroom
- Policies and procedures when a book is challenged
- Personal experiences with books being challenged/banned
- Programs surrounding banned books
- Other relevant topics

This Symposium is in partnership with Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Mid-Hudson Library System, Mount Saint Mary College, SUNY New Paltz and BOCES School Library Systems of Dutchess and Ulster.

Presentation proposals accepted until November 15, 2025.

Accepted proposals will receive notification by December 8, 2025.

Questions regarding the proposals may be directed towards Jen Park, Government Relations Specialist at Ramapo Catskill Library System, at [jen@rcls.org](mailto:jen@rcls.org)

- b. **Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley:** [Applications are open](#) to Mid-Hudson Library System member libraries. You must be currently employed or have regular volunteer hours and have the support of your institution.

Digital Navigators will train with staff from National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) and staff from Southeastern NY Library Resources Council, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Mid-Hudson Library System, and Westchester Library System. This training will focus on the digital inclusion ecosystem and the fundamentals of providing technical assistance to clients. We will provide updates on current programs, services, and resources to support a robust Digital Navigator program within your organization. Once trained, Navigators will meet with clients and provide data on those interactions via intake and exit forms. Navigators meet twice a month as a group and maintain an active listserv.

Navigators who meet the requirements by the deadline will receive a \$500 investment incentive, payable to their organization. All meetings and training sessions will be held online via Zoom. Training will begin on Tuesday, December 2, 2025. Please see the [website](#) for the full schedule of meetings.

**Applications are due by Wednesday, November 26 at 12:00 pm.** Participation is limited, and a complete application does not guarantee approval for the program.

Questions can be directed to Kerstin Cruger, Mid-Hudson Library System, [kcruger@midhudson.org](mailto:kcruger@midhudson.org)

- c. **Path to Belonging:** If you missed one of the introductory sessions this fall for the [Path to Belonging](#), an initiative designed for small and rural libraries to work with their communities to create places of belonging, where everyone is not only welcome, but invested in the organization's success please contact MHLS Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Specialist [Kerstin Cruger](#) to learn more. The Path to Belonging is a collaborative initiative between the Outreach Coordinators of eight New York library systems and the Division of Library Development.

### 13. Administrative

- a. **2025 Annual Report to the State:** Baker & Taylor owned the software that powers the Annual Report to the State. With the imminent closure of B&T, the State Library has issued a directive to ensure that you have downloaded your data from the software no later than the end of the year. As to how the annual report data will be collected in 2026, the State Library does not have an answer yet but has advised that there will be an annual report to the state mandated for all member libraries and MHLS therefore we will proceed as usual in producing reports to help you complete this report as well as be at the ready to provide training to new directors once the State Library shares their solution. *Please note:* compliance with the submission deadline of the annual report is tied to state aid being released to MHLS which impacts our ability to serve you, in addition to cash from the Local Library Services Aid program that comes directly to your library. We thank you for your conscientious respect of the deadlines issues by the State Library and MHLS to facilitate this process.
- b. MHLS is currently advertising for candidates for the **Administrative Assistant position**. This is a part-time position that supports the Executive Director and MHLS Business Office. If you know of someone who may be a good fit for this position, please [share the job ad with them](#).
- c. **Development of the 2027-2031 MHLS Plan of Service:** During 2026 we will conduct a series of activities to help inform the development of the next 5-year Plan of Service for the MHLS in order to comply with the rules from NYS as to how we go about producing this Plan. This process has been vetted by the System Services Advisory Committee, Central Library / Collection Development Advisory Committee, and the MHLS Board and follows the same development path as the current Plan of Service which was approved by NYS. Component activities will include:
- **Ranking of the system's Service Priorities** as described by New York State
  - **Focus Groups with each county library association.** We encourage you to explore these questions with your board and staff before the focus group are convened in the first quarter of 2026.
    1. What **goals** do you have for your library in the coming years?
    2. Why is that **important** to you?
    3. **How is that different** from how you see your library now?
    4. What are some of the **things that need to happen to create that kind of change?**

- **Convening of a Free Direct Access Plan Task Force** to recommend an updated Free Direct Access Plan for MHLS. Please note: this plan will need to be approved by your local library board in addition to approval votes at the DA and the MHLS Board so the development plan for this component piece will have a strict timeline. This is a component piece of the MHLS Plan of Service. If you are interested in serving on this task force please let Rebekkah know.
- **The Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee** will draft an updated Central Library Services Plan to recommend to the DA and the MHLS Board. This is a component piece of the MHLS Plan of Service.