



MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

Sustainable Library Certification

Final Report of the Mid-Hudson Library System | October 2022

Introduction



Our Mission:

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) is a **cooperative** library system chartered by the New York Board of Regents dedicated to strengthening local library service while saving local tax dollars.

Since 1959 MHLS has worked with its [member libraries](#) to insure:

- the public's right to free access
- economical resource sharing
- professional library services



MHLS At-a-Glance:

- Our service area includes
5 counties: Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam & Ulster Counties
- We have **66 member libraries, 21 staff and a board of 15 citizens**
- We help serve over **660,000 residents of the Hudson Valley**
- We have two primary funders: New York State and our member libraries.
- We have **two facilities**, an office building and an auditorium, located in Poughkeepsie, NY.



Board- Approved Sustainability Policy



Sustainability Policy

The Board of the Mid-Hudson Library System believes that in order to fulfill our mission, our organization must adopt the "Triple Bottom Line" mindset of sustainability as defined by the American Library Association's Resolution for the Adoption of Sustainability as a Core Value of Librarianship¹: "To be truly sustainable an organization or community must embody practices that are environmentally sound AND economically feasible AND socially equitable."

VENN DIAGRAM DEPICTING THE DEFINITION OF THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE



Source: Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring Your Library's Future in an Uncertain World [ALA Editions]

<https://bit.ly/3AkwgJP>

Part 1:

Environmental Stewardship



We did our
homework!



To learn more about this program members of the MHLS Sustainability Initiative Team visited with certified GBP organizations.

Shown above: Chris Herron, MHLS Facilities Manager; Joan Kay, MHLS Financial Assistant, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Director; Jill Davis, HHFL Director; Linda Vittone, MHLS Financial Manager & Personnel Officer; and Ric Swierat, MHLS Trustee and retired director of The ARC in Westchester.

Our Staff Survey showed us we were ready!

- **100%** of the staff considered themselves environmentally conscientious
- **95%** considered our workplace to be environmentally friendly
- **100%** thought it worthwhile for MHLS to investigate ways to be more environmentally responsible

GBP Training



Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Director; **Kerstin Cruger**, MHLS Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Specialist; **Casey Conlin**, former MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator attended the GBP Intern Training in Westchester County.

Staff Engagement

We felt it was critical to our success to have early staff buy-in and a strong communication strategy

- **Orientation for All Staff**
 - Why we are pursuing this certification:
 - To demonstrate leadership on a topic of critical importance to our member libraries;
 - Collaborative project of MHLS staff and trustees;
 - Potential to reduce long-term operating costs; and
 - Help make the world a better place!
- **Staff Survey**
- **Staff Events**
 - Lunch & Learn
 - Earth Day Events
 - Fall Clean Up Day
- **Sustainability Section on the Staff web page**
- **Sustainability Initiative Bulletin Board in the Break Room**
- **Monthly eCommunication with Staff**
- **Regular reports at Supervisor meetings, staff meetings and board meetings**

Top Areas of Focus *as identified by Staff*

- Energy Use
- Green Purchasing
- Waste/Recycling
- Employee Awareness

Earth Day Events



Lunch & Learns

At our first Lunch & Learn with MHLS Technology Operations Manager Laurie Shedrick we learned that:



- **MHLS saves over \$1,600 a year** through energy usage reduction just by purchasing ENERGY STAR rated computers and monitors.
- **MHLS Tech Staff** adjusted all desktop computer energy settings in the building to minimize energy consumption.
- **MHLS Facilities Staff** goes the extra mile when disposing of e-waste and ensure that (1) recycling facilities are on file with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and (2) companies that haul away our e-waste are third-party certified.

Fall Clean Ups

60 years of stuff!

Reusable?

Recyclable?

Reducible in the future?



Policymaking & Procedures

- Sustainability Policy Approved by the MHLS Board
- Job Descriptions & Job Performance Appraisals Upgraded
- Move to Centralized Purchasing
- Technology Order Form Upgraded to Explain Vendor Choices
- Recycling & Composting Rules Posted
- Event Planning & Hospitality Procedures Analyzed and Improved
- Signage Upgraded and Made Consistent
- Green Cleaning Improvements
- “No idling” clause added to our delivery service contract



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VENN DIAGRAM DEPICTING THE DEFINITION OF THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE



(Source: Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring Your Library's Future in an Uncertain World (Jack Edmonds))

Environmentally Sound

MHLS is committed to reducing our environmental footprint and promoting environmental stewardship at all levels of our organization. Our goal is to minimize our organization's impact and maximize future generations' ability to live, work, and play in our shared natural environment, with equal access to clean air, clean water,



Signage

- Consistent look
- Branded
- Humor helps!



Benchmarking

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory
- Waste Audits
- Energy Audit
- Technology Audit

Research & Analysis

- Lighting Options
- Cleaning Practices & Products
- Recycling & Composting
- Technology Purchases
- Food and Beverage Purchases
- Office Supplies

LED vs. LFL T8 4' Tube Lights

Example of a cost-benefit analysis with
return on investment calculation by
MHLS Facilities Manager Chris Herron.

LFL: T8 4' Phillips 32 watt used for this comparison.

Fluorescent T8 tube life: 30,000 hours

Fluorescent tube cost: \$2.80

Bulb wattage: 32

MHLS lighting hours: 10 hrs/day

1000 watts = 1 kWh

MHLS cost for 1 kWh from CH is \$.15 (based on 2017 avg.)

32 watts x 10 hrs/day = 320 watt divided by 1000 watts = .32 kWh

.32 kWh x \$.15/kWh = \$.05/day

\$.05/day x 250 MHLS operating days = \$12.5/year to run one 32 watt LFL

The cost to run one T8 LFL for its' expected life would be \$152.80 (12 years)

LED: HyperSelect T8 LED Light Tube 18 watt (40 watt equivalent) used for this comparison.

LED T8 tube life: 45,000 hours

LED tube cost: \$6.66

Bulb wattage: 18 (40 equivalent)

MHLS lighting hours: 10 hrs/day

1000 watts = 1 kWh

MHLS cost for 1 kWh from CH is \$.15 (based on 2017 avg.)

18 watts x 10 hrs/day = 180 watt divided by 1000 watts = .18 kWh

.18 kWh x \$.15/kWh = \$.03/day

\$.03/day x 250 MHLS operating days = \$7.50/year to run one 18 watt LED

The cost to run one T8 LED for its' expected life would be \$141.66 (18 years)

Summary

Based on the comparison above the LED replacement would pay for the difference in initial cost with energy savings in 11 months. LED's are environmentally friendly containing no hazardous gasses, such as mercury in fluorescents, and don't require recycling (although they can be) and the cost associated with that recycling. Considering all information presented it is my recommendation that MHLS transition to LED light tubes when in use T8 LFL's fail.

Local Food, Local Businesses



Our Earth Day Events have featured foods **sourced locally** and a cost-benefit analysis of catering choices indicated that using a **local business** was an affordable choice for future MHLS Events!



Upcycled Decorations

@Annual
Luncheon with
Member Library
Directors



Sustainable Choices on the Road



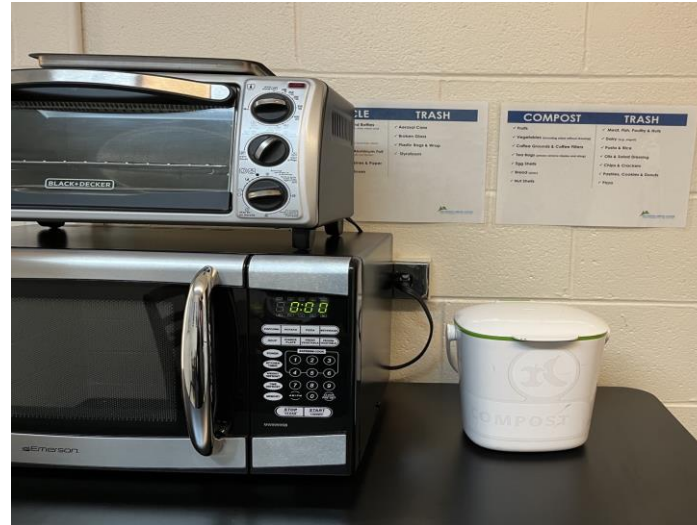
No more plastic water bottles
on the bus to Albany for Library
Advocacy Day!

Thanks to donations from area
Friends Groups, we purchased a
product which comes in a **paper-
based bottle with a cap made
from sugarcane**. The water is
responsibly sourced and bottled
in Glens Falls, NY.

Spreading the Word



In August 2018 we partnered with **Sustainable Hudson Valley** and the **Green Business Partnership** to introduce the certification program in Dutchess County. Attendees included: **Assistant County Executive** for Economic Development, **Dutchess County legislators**, the CEO of **Think Dutchess**, representatives from **Dutchess Tourism**, **Dutchess County Planning & Development**, **Dutchess County IDA/LDC**, **Cornell Cooperative Extension**, **Dutchess County Community College** and the **Council of Industry**!



Composting Introduced to the Workplace

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations

Thanks to funding from the [EV Make-Ready Program](#), 42% of our project costs were subsidized for this project to install four charging stations on our property in 2022.



Regional Impact

- **Eight of our member libraries are now also pursuing certification!**
 - Desmond-Fish Library (Garrison)
 - Town of Esopus Library
 - Highland Public Library
 - Mahopac Library
 - Millbrook Library
 - Phoenicia Library
 - Saugerties Public Library
 - Town of Ulster Public Library



Highland Public Library Certified!





<https://www.libraryoflocal.org/>

- Tool Lending
- Seed Library
- Special Collections
 - Food Security (Y1)
 - Climate Solutions (Y2)
- Programming
- Alignment with NYS Climate Smart Communities



Key Takeaways:

- Many **MHLS employees** had already been making good choices on behalf of our organization, thanks to this process **our organization** is now purposefully making better choices and has a new culture of **deliberate evaluation** of our choices.
- **Sustainability is a journey**, not a destination.
- **We are a stronger team** thanks to this experience.

Part 2:

Social Equity



MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM
SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group

MHLS Board

- In 2020, in response to the murder of George Floyd, and resulting racial reckoning across the country, an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group of our Board was formed:
 - Richard Swierat, MHLS Board President
 - Mark Wilson, MHLS Treasurer, Columbia County
 - Rajene Hardeman, MHLS Trustee, Dutchess County
 - Debra Klein, MHLS Trustee, Greene County
 - Priscilla Goldfarb, MHLS Trustee, Putnam County
 - Stuart Auchincloss, MHLS Trustee, Ulster County
- **Purpose Statement:** To review MHLS policies, procedures and practices in the areas of governance, human resources and system service design and recommend new approaches; In a way that promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion as a core value of the institution; So that MHLS is authentically improving its commitment to racial and social equity and serving as a model for our member libraries.

At the Board Table

- Publicly Stated Board Priority in 2020, 2021 & 2022
- Mission, Vision & Values Statements
- Board Education (10-minute orientations)
- Board Recruitment Process
- EDI & Sustainability Policies Approved
- Policy Analysis Framework Created
- EDI Assessment with staff and board
- Committee Charges Amended
- ADA Checklist for MHLS Facilities
- Board Self-Evaluation Process

Policy Analysis Framework

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy & Procedure Analysis Framework

This resource is meant to serve as a guide for trustees when reviewing or crafting policy for our organization. Consideration of the questions should allow an individual the opportunity to consider a policy or procedure from different points of view and build in objectivity.

1. How does the policy increase opportunity and/or access for those who historically have been excluded?
2. Can you identify a specific group who benefits from and/or who is harmed by the policy?
3. Is this policy based on assumptions that are not objective but that are based on stereotypes, prejudices, implicit or explicit biases, pre-existing and unexamined beliefs? Can you identify an area where bias might have influenced your language or decision?
4. Is the language of this policy gender-neutral? Are all identity nouns and pronouns neutral? (e.g. using “them” instead of “him” or “her”) Are there words or terms that a member of an historically excluded group might find objectionable?
5. Is this policy too ambiguous, leaving too much room for bias to influence the realization of the goals of this policy? Is there an opportunity to appeal a decision in the area of personnel policy?
6. In creating this policy/procedure, have you done everything you could to forward the goal of MHLS to become an inclusive, diverse, anti-racist and ethical organization that treats all humans with dignity and respect?

For the Staff

- Personnel Policy Amendments
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Team Discussions
- Staff eNewsletter

➡ *Example of an article in staff newsletter: "Pause"*

PAUSE...

Our recent conversations about justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) helped us understand the need to "pause." Jumping to conclusions can cause misunderstandings or even lead to offensive comments.

Steps you can take that may help:

- **Check the facts.** Gather information before making a judgement or decision.
- **Challenge your thinking.** If you find yourself making assumptions, actively challenge your conclusions. Is there another explanation that would also make sense?
- **Ask questions.** Before you jump to conclusions about what someone may be thinking, just try asking. Communicating your concerns and getting a direct answer can eliminate a lot of confusion.
- **Take another perspective.** What would an outsider think? How might they interpret the situation? What information would they need to reach an accurate conclusion?

New Plan of Service (2022-2026)

- Outreach & EDI Specialist Position
- EDI Resource Page: <https://midhudson.org/edi/>
- Initial Continuing Education Offerings:
 - “When Anti-Racist Reading Lists Aren’t Enough” with Dr. Nicole Cooke
 - “Oh, The Places You’ll Go: The Intersection of Intellectual Freedom & EDI” with Deborah Caldwell-Stone and Dr. Emily Knox
 - Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI) On Demand Training
- Analysis of Cataloging Practices
 - [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement](#) linked to the online catalog
 - Cataloging Terms
 - Authority Control work prioritized for the first time in 20+ years

2022: Outward-Facing EDI Efforts

- ADA Checklist for MHLS Facilities
- Accessibility Statement & ReciteMe added to midhudson.org
- Accessibility & Continuing Education
- OverDrive Carousels



- New EDI Series created; first offerings included:
 - From Diversity to Inclusion: How to Audit Your Collection and Why
 - Introduction to the Talking Book & Braille Library
 - A Review of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Justice at Work Cohort
- Safe Zone Training
- Board Diversity Working Group
- EDI Mini-Conference: Friday, October 7, 2022

EDI Mini-Conference for Members

October 2022

Registration is now open for the MHLS Mini Conference on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) taking place Friday, October 7th, 2022, from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm. This free online event will highlight trends and best practices in creating more inclusive and more equitable library spaces through keynotes from recognized leaders in EDI initiatives as well as panel discussions of practitioners from local MHLS member libraries.

[Morning Session: 9:30 am – 12:15 pm | REGISTER](#)

This morning session is designed for library board members, directors, and administrators, but all are welcome to attend.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Freddimir García, Co-Founder & Program Advisor for [The Board Institute](#), Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress

Freddimir García is the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Officer for the Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS® (HGAR), a not-for-profit trade association representing over 13,000 real estate professionals doing business in The Bronx, Manhattan, Orange, Putnam, Rockland & Westchester Counties. It is the second largest REALTOR® Association in New York, and one of the largest in the country. In this newly created role, Freddy leads the Association's efforts in developing and executing

HGAR's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

An active member of the community, Freddy is currently serving on various boards across the region including Family Services, Inc., RUPCO, Inc., Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, and Rhinebeck Bank. He also works with various organizations in the Hudson Valley on the development, understanding, and implementation of DEI strategies to help create environments of inclusion and accountability. He is also the co-founder and Program Advisor of The Board Institute designed to diversify boards across the Hudson Valley by equipping people of color with the knowledge, support, and tools to serve.

He is a two-time Marist College graduate with a Masters in Business Administration and holds a Diversity & Inclusion Certificate from Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

[Topic: Inclusive Leadership | Unmanaged Bias Limits Leadership](#)

We will be taking an excursion to understand the practical practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion while also identifying the key elements of an inclusive leader as a board member. We will challenge ourselves to also recognize the power of our minds and together, discover the functions and impacts of bias in our approach to governance decisions and board recruitment.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Members of the Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees EDI Working Group will share their experiences and resources developed over the last two years. Facilitated by MHLS Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich.

[Afternoon Session 12:45 pm – 3:30 pm | REGISTER](#)

This afternoon session is designed for library staff and directors, but all are welcome to attend.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Maria Estrella, Founder of [Young Diverse Readers](#)

Maria F. Estrella (she/her/hers/ella) earned a Master of Communication and Information in Library and Information Science from Kent State University, two Bachelors of Arts and Sciences in Social Work and Spanish from Cleveland State University and received Diversity and Inclusion certification from Cornell University. She also holds two decades of library experience working in a five-star rated urban-research library system, including eight years working as a Children's/Teen Librarian and a Youth Services Subject Department Librarian. Maria similarly has thirteen years of significant knowledge advocating, promoting, and providing services to youth and caregivers. She served on national committees, juries, and task forces, whose primary goal is to provide diverse literacy and technological resources/services to enhance the lives of young readers and encourage them to become life-long scholars.

Maria is actively a REFORMA (National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking) Executive Board Member, the Children, and Young Adults Services Committee Chair, and a REFORMA liaison to the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). Maria was honored with the 2021 REFORMA Dr. Arnulfo D. Trejo Librarian of the Year Award and was recognized as a 100+ Latinos Cleveland Must Know, 2021 Edition. She will begin her 2022-2025 term as an American Library Association Councilor-at-Large as well as a Board Member of the Association of Library Services for Children.

Topic: Flourishing Institutions: Best Practices for Inclusive and Equitable Library Spaces

It's crucial for libraries to successfully foster and continue a culture where diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI) are at the center of every library initiative. During this presentation, attendees will be introduced to basic EDI concepts, theories, and terminology key for establishing and continuing inclusive and equitable library spaces.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Representatives from three member libraries will talk about their experiences in implementing practices and programs at the local level to help engage their communities in conversations around diversity and employing hiring practices to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

Please register for each session you would like to attend.

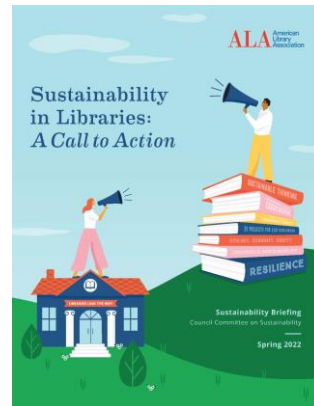
Certificates of attendance will be sent to participants after the event.

Questions? Please contact MHLS Outreach & EDI Specialist, [Kerstin Cruger](#).

Collaborations/Collective Impact Efforts

Connecting with New Residents & Non-Users

- Outreach Mini-Grants: **37 libraries awarded funds**
- Turning Outward Cohort: **4 libraries**
- **The Library of Local Project** (Year 2): **12 new locations**
- Sustainable Library Certification Program Cohort: **11 libraries**
- Going Fine Free Support: **41 libraries are now fine free**
- National Voter Registration Day (September 20th)
- Support for The Great Give Back 2022 (October 15th)



THE
GREAT
GIVE
BACK



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**



Keynote Topic: *From Disaster Preparedness to Community Resilience: The Long and Short of It*

Michele Stricker is the Deputy State Librarian of Library Development at the New Jersey State Library where she is responsible for library trustee and director education and training, strategic planning, disaster preparedness, and community resiliency. In addition to an MLIS from Rutgers University, she has an MFA in Museum Studies from Syracuse University, and an MA in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania. She received her certification in Preservation Management from the Rutgers School of Professional Development and has taught Preservation of Library & Archival Materials for the Rutgers Graduate School of Communication & Information.

2022 Annual Membership Meeting Keynote

2022 Staff Discussions: Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

- Team-Based Discussions around the videos found at <https://midhudson.org/edi/>
- Goal: to have us all think about the intersection of the topics with:
 - Our personal experiences
 - How we interact with co-workers
 - How these topics impact the work we do at MHLS with our member libraries

Debrief Notes from EDI Discussions

Key Finding:

The need for empathy for the life experiences of others in all interactions.

Key Best Practice:

Pause. Treat people the way you want to be treated. Shorthand: Be kind.

Key Challenge:

Ensure efforts in this area are ongoing and that practice follows policy.
This should not be a “one-off” discussion in our workplace.

Part 3:

Economic Feasibility



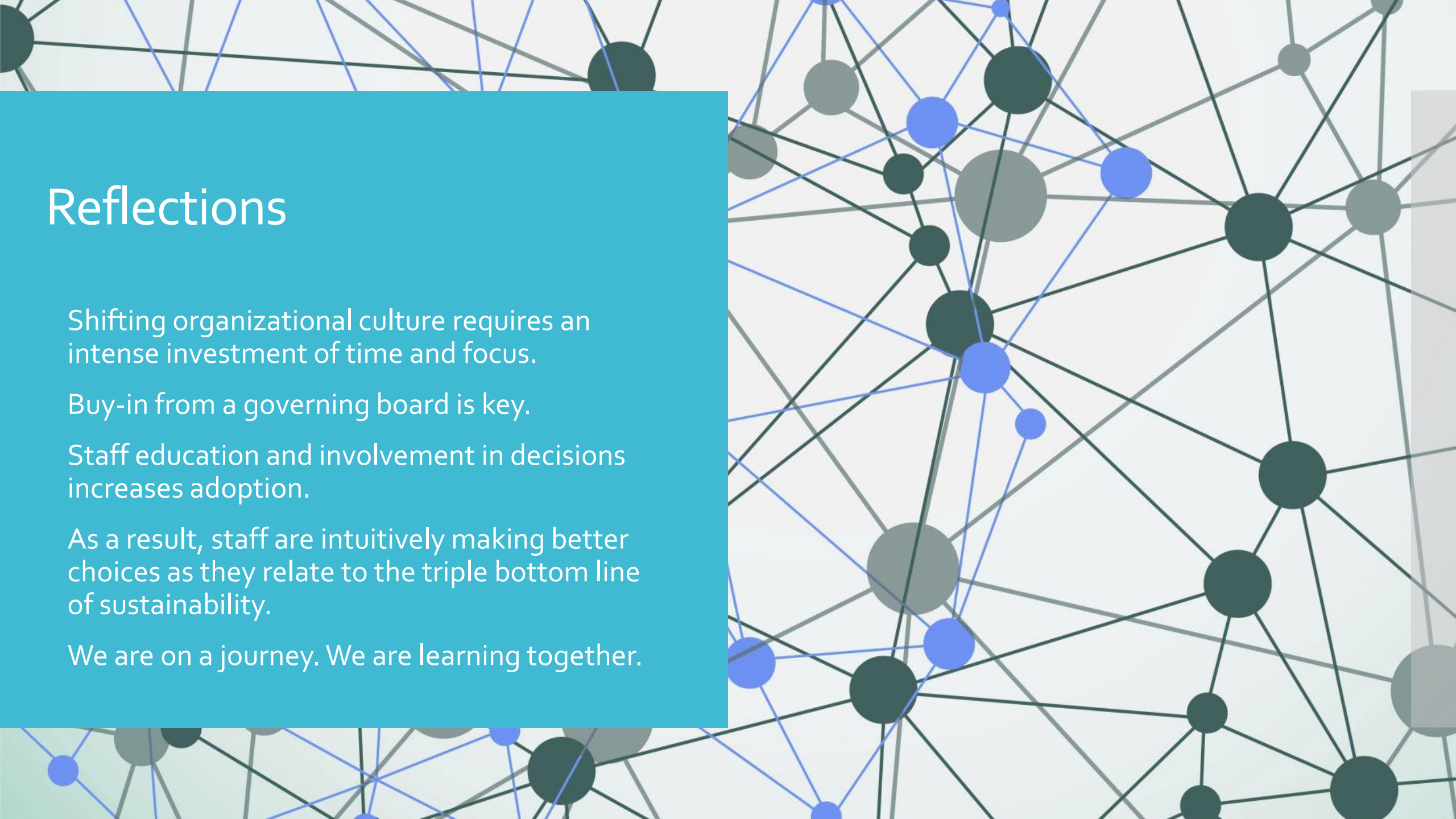
MHLS Board Actions

- Overhaul of our Reserve Fund Strategy including adjusting reserve limits based on recent volatility of state aid.
- Addition of a new reserve policy to strengthen our financial safety net by covering the liabilities incurred by employee accrued time payouts.
- Updated Facility Plan to ensure good stewardship and ability to financially plan for upcoming costs.
- Formation of a Government & Community Relations Working Group to better position MHLS as an investment opportunity by elected officials, grant makers and private donors.

Return on Investment (ROI)

1:10

Return on Investment Calculations for members indicate a 1:10 ROI: for every \$1 invested in MHLS, members and their constituents receive \$10 worth of services.

A background graphic featuring a complex network of interconnected nodes and lines. The nodes are represented by circles of varying sizes in dark grey, light grey, and blue. The lines are thin and grey, creating a web-like structure across the entire slide. A solid teal rectangle is positioned on the left side, containing the title and text.

Reflections

Shifting organizational culture requires an intense investment of time and focus.

Buy-in from a governing board is key.

Staff education and involvement in decisions increases adoption.

As a result, staff are intuitively making better choices as they relate to the triple bottom line of sustainability.

We are on a journey. We are learning together.

Gratitude

- The Mid-Hudson Library System would like to thank the **volunteers, staff, partners and investors** of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative for their support and encouragement.
- Your efforts have helped our library system make better decisions for our **stakeholders, the environment, and future generations.**



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**