MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | April 2025

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

1. **Delivery Services**
   a. MHLS will be sending out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to allow for a structured comparison of delivery vendor offerings and solutions based on cost, experience, and capabilities to best fit the needs of MHLS, member libraries, and correctional facilities. The working schedule of this RFP is as follows:
      - April/May 2025; Review past three-year (2022,2023,2024) average member circulation data and make adjustments to stops that are determined necessary
      - May/June 2025; Notify libraries of any adjustments to stops
      - June/July 2025; Generate RFP
      - July/August 2025; Send out RFP
      - August/September 2025; Review RFP responses
      - September 2025; Select vendor in the best interest of MHLS
      - December 31, 2025; Current MHLS & Valley Courier Agreement ends
      - January 1, 2026; New Agreement begins

   b. MHLS will be re-signing a one-year contract with Empire State Library Network (ESLN) for Empire Library Delivery (ELD) for the period of July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. Delivery and pickup of ELD materials to MHLS will continue to be Tuesday and Friday. Empire Library Delivery improves statewide delivery, making resource sharing connections among all types of libraries affordable and streamlined. ELD provides return on investment for libraries by providing a convenient, affordable, and tailored delivery service to institutions, thereby supporting increased statewide resource sharing among ELD participants. By bundling shipments of library materials, ELD assists libraries in quickly getting items into the hands of users. The ELD Advisory Council includes representatives from the IDS project, SUNY and CUNY Libraries and other institutions to ensure an efficient, cost-effective exchange of materials among participating libraries. ELD is overseen by the Executive Directors of ESLN's nine Reference and Research Library Resource Councils.

   c. Delivery Operations understands that route delays due to weather, post-holiday/snow day volume, detours, and unforeseen circumstances can impact delivery on occasion. We continue to be appreciative of your patience and understanding when these situations occur.

2. **Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services**
   a. Going Mobile!:
      - **Launch:** Two-thirds of our members have taken training and have access to edit their library profiles. We need to be 100% ready to launch by next month, so if you have not yet started open a ticket by emailing techsupport@midhudson.org . A survey sent in the last week of march has indicated that most libraries are on track for a May 1st public launch, so that is our target date at this time. **Please Update the Survey** to indicate your readiness status when it changes. We will continue to monitor this survey and contact members who appear to need assistance. We are looking for 100% participation by mid-April.
      - **Barcodes not displaying:** When staff type in barcodes to create a patron record, they often insert a space because the numeric digits on many are displayed in a format that separates

the code into segments. Our Sierra system is designed to ignore the spaces, but, our mobile app is not designed to ignore the spaces when rendering the patron barcode display in the app. For now, you can correct the display issue by removing the spaces in the barcode field of the patron's record in Sierra. We have over 55,000 patron records with spaces, so this will continue to pop up. We hope to manage this with a code change in the app, but it could be that we need to remove all spaces in the patron records to correct this.

- **Help is on the way!**: MHLS is working on building a help button for patrons within the app, with brief tutorials and topics to navigate the feature. The help "Content" will be created and connected to a button in each profile. The button can be removed or hidden if the site wishes to not make the help button available.

- **Updates-(1ˢᵗ major update early April)** As software should, the app will continue to improve. Some improvements are simply pushed through the app, but when a major release is expected the app will require an update through the App Store(s). This is a common mobile app experience. Our April upgrade required an update through the App store.
    1. Patrons with automatic updates enabled will receive the update automatically to their device. Patrons without, will need to manually update the app through the appropriate App Store.
    2. No down time for the library or patron.
    3. Requires an updated Apple Developer Account-MHLS completes this.

- Our Mobile app has been updated to release 2025.1, the first significant change in nearly 2 years. The update will automatically apply to apps where auto updates are turned on, otherwise an update can be retrieved from the app store of choice. The update took place around 7pm on 4/15, so any apps added prior to that date may need to be updated
    1. Stack Map integration for libraries who subscribe (must be turned on by MHLS)
    2. Hoopla integration- The Patron Mobile App will integrate with hoopla Digital, enabling patrons to browse and borrow hoopla's extensive collection directly within the app. This update enhances discoverability by allowing patrons to search for audiobooks, eBooks, comics, manga, music, movies, TV shows, and BingePass content within the library catalog. With the increasing demand for digital content, this integration ensures a streamlined experience, making it easier for patrons to find and borrow titles on the go. Libraries using the Solus app can now provide direct access to Hoopla's millions of titles, improving user engagement and accessibility.

    To see the full list of features and enhancements included, please view the Knowledge Base post [– Patron Mobile Release Info](#) (there are way to many to include here!).

b. **Cleaning up items that have been suppressed for more than 7 years**. The idea was more difficult to carry out than we thought based on record data. We will soon be sending excel spreadsheets to each library with a shelf list-ordered list of records that are Billed. You will have 4 weeks to do whatever you would like to do with these records and then they will be deleted. The Billed records alone, represent over 21,000 items. The next group we will tackle will be the "in transit".

c. Innovative Phone Alerts (IPA) will replace our Itiva phone system for outgoing circulation notifications. The new system will move the telephone notifications into a cloud environment, eliminating equipment maintenance and replacement. We are in the early stages of the project, working with Innovative on configuration and parameters. The transition should be seamless for members, with a transition from

one system to the other in an overnight process.   Patrons may notice a change in the incoming phone number as we will not be porting our number in order to have both systems in place for testing and a transition without downtime.

d. **Text Service Upgrade**: This summer we will begin work with Innovative to roll out their latest text messaging service which is part of the Vega Interact product Line. Once installed we will be able to include the patron Opt. In within our Discover catalog.

e. **Creepy Crawlers Banned:** We have partnered with Innovative to pilot a new process to keep crawlers and bots from overwhelming our catalog and database. In February we experienced an overwhelming brute force attack by Meta's AI crawlers. The attack included over 600,000 requests within an hour's time across each of our 3 publicly accessible catalogs. Those requests overwhelmed the resources of our ILS database server, which in turn affected all Sierra processes, effectively shutting us down. While crawlers and bots are not new, and we have already taken measures to block countries known for hosting bad actors, this attack was from within the US, and it was the most impactful. So far, we are testing one solution from Linux called Fail2Ban, which has a 2-part process for banning intruders based on the volume of requests, with a time out. Once the initial time out ban has elapsed, repeat attacks will land the IP on a full ban list that is blocked by all Fail2Ban subscribers.   So far, this seems to be effectively keeping us from being overrun with bots.

f. **Authority Control:** Backstage Library Works has now completed the initial import and updates to our shared catalog records for authority control processing. In addition to keeping our name and subject authorities up-to-date, enhancements including Accelerated Reader and Lexile scores have been added to many of our records. This Knowledge Base article shows how staff can use these fields to find materials in create lists: https://kb.midhudson.org/using-create-lists-for-lexile-measures-and-accelerated-reader/

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the equity, diversity and inclusion of our shared catalog, many alternate subject headings have been appended to our records, in addition to the established terms used by the Library of Congress. These added terms offer more ways for users to connect with relevant material.

Backstage offers some established vocabularies that have been added to our records as applicable:

- Indigenous subject headings (these can be identified by the field "|2indig" at the end of the heading) Ex: Alaska Natives|vJuvenile fiction.|2indig
- Homosaurus crosswalk to for LGBTQ+ terminology (these can be identified by the field "|2homoit" at the end of the heading) Ex: LGBTQ+ comics.|2homoit

The MHLS cataloging department has also built a local list of over 1,100 other subject headings (these can be identified by the field "|2local" at the end of the heading) Ex: Video recordings with descriptive audio tracks.|2local

Ongoing maintenance will consist of quarterly deliveries of any changes that occur with our existing authorities, and monthly submissions of any newly added records to be processed.

g. **Hoopla Update:** The March delivery of hoopla MARC records contained a much larger than usual removal file, in which many summaries and other low-quality titles were removed from their collection. The MHLS catalog has been updated accordingly.

Since then, folks at Hoopla have also been working with the MHLS cataloging department to deliver better quality MARC records with more frequent updates of new and removed titles. We received a complete refresh of our existing records, including many corrections and improvements for our older records.

h. **Updates to Discover Catalog**
   - **Accessibility Improvements**
     1. Enhanced color contrast and font sizes across My Bookshelf for better readability.
     2. The "View All Available Bookmarks" link now matches the "View All" link on the home page for consistency.
     3. Improved color contrast for the All/Available buttons.
   - **Sharing to social media now includes the Author name information.**
   - **Workflow changes to my bookshelf will now keep the for later showcase minimized as you move items to another tab, open a bookmark list, and close the bookshelf to run a search. A maximize button is available to return to the maximized view.**
   - **Bookmark Count Accuracy fixed:** Item counts now update accurately on both the main bookmarks page and individual bookmark pages.
   - **Search Enhancements**
     1. Changing the drop-down search filter now automatically reruns the search for faster results.
     2. Improved keyboard navigation for search and filter functions.
     3. The All/Available filter now correctly updates the item counts on both the main page and individual booklists.
     4. **Performance Upgrade**
     5. Significantly improved load times for My Bookshelf availability, ensuring a smoother browsing experience.

   If you have any questions about these new features reach out to us at techsupport@midhudson.org. We are still waiting for the announcement of more enhancements to the full record display and edition display.

3. **Coordinated IT Services**
   a. **Budget for your Wi-Fi Access Point Renewal for 2026!** Time flies and we are already 4 years into the external Wi-Fi access Points that were installed using the ARPA grant in 2021. The units had a 5-year license agreement. The current price is $450 per unit. This is the amount we recommend your budget includes for the coming year. Access points are eligible for E-rate, but they must be Extreme Networks to be included in our monitored system.

4. **Professional Development & Continuing Education**
   a. **The Sierra User Group is meeting on May 1 is in person!** This is an opportunity for staff to get together with peers to get caught up and connect with all things related to our ILS. Coming together in person will be a great opportunity for staff to hear from peers in other libraries about what they are doing as well as to share ideas, solutions and frustrations. We have had a great deal of change in the last year

and there is more to come, so give your staff the encouragement and the time to attend this meeting.

b. **MHLS Sustainable Funding Series** – upcoming events:

- **April**
    1. **Understanding Sustainable Funding Options for Association and Municipal Public Libraries** Thursday, April 3 | [Recording is available in the MHLS Trustee Academy](#).
    2. **414 Votes – Kick-off Meeting** Tuesday, April 29 | 10:00am – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)

- **May**
    1. **Winning at the Polls: Building Your Library's Win Margin** Monday, May 12 | 5:00-6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
    2. **Finance for Directors** Wednesday, May 14 | 10:00am – 2:00pm | IN PERSON: MHLS Auditorium | [Register here](#)
    3. **414 Vote Teams – Monthly Meet-up** Thursday, May 22 | 10:00 – 11:00am | Online | [Register here](#)
    4. **The Basics of Insurance Coverage for Your Library** Friday, May 30 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)

- **June**
    1. **Two-Part Finance Series for Trustees**
        a. *Part 1:* **Finance for Trustees**
            i. IN PERSON: Tuesday, June 3 | 5:00 – 7:00pm | MHLS Auditorium | [Register here](#)
            ii. ONLINE: Tuesday, June 17 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | [Register here](#)
        b. *Part 2:* **Multi-Year Financial Planning**
            i. ONLINE: Tuesday, June 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
            ii. IN PERSON: Wednesday, August 13 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | Roeliff Jansen Community Library | [Register here](#)
        c. **414 Vote Teams – Monthly Meet-up** Tuesday, June 17 | 2:00 – 3:00pm | Online | [Register here](#)
    2. **Strengthening the Future of Your Library by Investing in Your Staff** (Salaries & Benefits) with Guest Speaker: Brian Hildreth, Executive Director, Southern Tier Library System Wednesday, June 25 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)

- **July**
    1. **414 Vote Teams – Monthly Meet-up** Wednesday, July 16 | 10:00 – 11:00am | Online | [Register here](#)

- **August**
    1. **Introduction to E-rate** with MHLS Assistant Director & Technology Operations Manager, Laurie Shedrick Tuesday, August 5 | 10:00am – 12:00pm | Online | [Register here](#)
    2. **414 Vote Teams – Monthly Meet-up** Thursday, August 14 | 2:00 – 3:00pm | Online | [Register here](#)
    3. **Facilities for the Future: Evaluation, Planning, Operations and Renovation/Construction** Friday, August 15 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)

- **September**
    1. **414 Vote Teams – Monthly Meet-up** Monday, September 15 | 2:00 – 3:00pm | Online | [Register here](#)

- **October**
  1. **The Collection Life Cycle: Collection Management in Action** with Guest Speaker Kristi Chadwick Friday, October 3 | 2:00 – 3:15pm | Online | Register [here](#)
  2. **Budgeting for the Future of Physical & Digital Collections** Panel Discussion with Dee Ann Campbell, Director of the Pine Plains Library; Stephanie Harrison, Director of the Patterson Library, and Daniela Pulice, Director of the Pleasant Valley Library Friday, October 10 | 10:00 - 11:30am | Online | Register [here](#)
  3. **414 Vote Teams – Monthly Meet-up** Thursday, October 9 | 2:00 - 3:00pm | Online | [Register here](#)

c. **Trustee Education Series & Trustee Handbook Book Club Dates:**

- ## April
  1. **Trustee Handbook Book Club: Board Development – Recruitment, Orientation, Education and Evaluation** Wednesday, April 30 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

- ## May
  1. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Trustee Essentials** Thursday, May 15 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

- ## June
  1. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Legal Basics (intermediate-level)** Monday, June 16 | 6:00 – 8:00 | IN PERSON: Town of Esopus Library | [Register here](#)

- ## July
  1. **Trustee Handbook Book Club: Recruiting & Retaining Quality Staff** Tuesday, July 15 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
  2. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Policies 101 (essentials level)** Thursday, July 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

- ## September
  1. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Boards (advanced level)** Tuesday, September 16 | 6:00-8:00pm | IN PERSON: Mahopac Library | [Register Here](#)
  2. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Trustee Essentials (essentials level)** Wednesday, September 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
  3. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Board Development – Recruitment, Orientation, Education and Evaluation (advanced level)** Thursday, September 25 | 6:00 – 8:00pm | IN PERSON: Beekman Library | [Register here](#)
  4. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Policies 101 (essentials level)** Tuesday, September 30 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

- ## October
  1. **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Boards (advanced level)** Thursday, October 9 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | IN PERSON: Philmont Public Library | [Register here](#)

d. **MHLS Member Library Friends Groups Meetup** | Tuesday, April 29 | 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM | Cairo Public Library - 15 Railroad Ave Cairo NY | [REGISTER](#)

Join Mid-Hudson Library System member library Friends Groups for sharing and discussion at the Cairo Public Library sponsored by Friends of the Cairo Library. All MHLS member library Friends Groups interested in sharing their experiences, questions, and concerns for building and sustaining a Friends Group are welcome to attend. Bring your best ideas and questions!

e. **Supporting LGBTQIA+ Families in Your Library** | Tuesday, May 20 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM | Online | REGISTER
Join two current co-chairs of the Long Island Library Pride Alliance (LILPA) to learn how to celebrate and support your LGBTQIA+ families, patrons, staff, and more. This presentation/panel will leave you with information on collection development, programming ideas, community outreach, and more!

f. **Safe Zone Training** | Wednesday, May 28 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM | MHLS Auditorium - 105 Market St Poughkeepsie NY | REGISTER
Safe Zone trainings are opportunities to learn about LGBTQIA+ identities and examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege to help create inclusive and supportive environments for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their allies by promoting understanding, raising awareness, and providing resources. **This training is a two-hour interactive, in-person session. There are limited seats for this event.** The curriculum for this workshop is provided by the Safe Zone Project and facilitated by MHLS Outreach & EDI Specialist, Kerstin Cruger.

g. **SAVE THE DATE – Building Civic Engagement** | June 10 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM | Online
This presentation will cover how libraries can build civic engagement in their communities. Presented by Jerrie Grantham, Assistant Director of Civic Engagement at Queens Public Library. Program description and registration coming soon!

5. **Consulting & Development**
   a. **If your library is going for a 259 vote or a 414 vote** this year please let us know: rsmith@midhudson.org and lcrisci@midhudson.org

   b. **For member libraries who are municipal public libraries, school district public libraries, or special district public libraries,** I wanted to be sure you knew that the NY HELPs - Civil Service program (New York Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide) is not just for state positions, it can also help with filling local positions and is in place until at least June 2026. HELPS is a temporary program authorized by NYS to allow for hiring without examination for titles that typically have exams. Selected candidates must still meet minimum qualifications set by the local civil service agency. This is a limited time opportunity to hire candidates without the more complicated examination process; a chance to hire long-term provisional employees; create a wider candidate pool; and simplify the hiring process. Some key things to note:
      - Each individual title has to be requested for inclusion in HELPS separately by each local civil service agency
      - If the local agency uses promotional exams for titles, HELPS hires may not be eligible to take those promotional exams until the program ends (Talk to your local agency)
      - Requires conversations between the libraries and the civil service agency
      - **This program is scheduled to sunset in June 2026**
      - If a current list exists, it needs to expire or be broken before HELPS hire can be approved

To find out more check to see which titles are already included under the HELPS program under your local civil service agencies: https://www.cs.ny.gov/extdocs/pdf/local-help-titles.pdf and check for library titles for your civil service agency, then call your local civil service agency and talk about HELPS for library titles Libraries and library employees should contact their own civil service agency for assistance, if your civil service commission is unfamiliar with this, suggest they reach out to Hannah Black of Albany County Civil Service who is making herself available to other civil service agencies to answer questions.

c. Visions Human Resources Services discount pricing is available to MHLS Member Libraries, if you missed the introductory webinar and would like to see the recording please reach out to Rebekkah at rsmith@midhudson.org.

6. **Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access**
    a. **Hoopla Response:** The March delivery of hoopla MARC records contained a much larger than usual removal file, in which many summaries and other low-quality titles were removed from their collection. The MHLS Catalog has been updated accordingly. The folks at Hoopla have also been working with the MHLS cataloging department to deliver better quality MARC records with more frequent updates of new and removed titles. In the next week or so, we are expecting a complete refresh of our existing records, including many corrections and improvements for our older records.

7. **Awareness & Advocacy Services**
    a. We will provide a **state budget** update at the meeting.

    b. We will provide an update on the attempt to dismantle the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** at the meeting.

    c. Thank you to all who participated in the **County Funding Advocacy Group** last month. The report from that meeting has been emailed to all directors, if you need a copy please contact Laura: lcrisci@midhudson.org

    d. **MHLS Road Trip**
       - **Timeline**:
           1. April: Publicity items will be shared
           2. May:
               a. Maps and souvenir items delivered to your library
               b. Staff training
           3. June 6: Kick off
           4. October 18 (same date as The Great Give Back): end date
       - Souvenir Levels tied to # of visits:
           1. 10: sticker
           2. All in a county: magnet
           3. Half: tote bag
           4. All: custom designed library card
       - **Getting Ready:**
           1. **Make sure your library's Google Business Profile** (formerly Google My Business) **is up-to-date** with your hours and any other pertinent info a visitor may be looking for. This is

key because the new MHLS Mobile App will have a Road Trip feature that uses Google Maps to help residents chart their course among member libraries. A Google Business Profile is free.

2. **Each library will receive a Road Trip-branded "artifact"** to place in the library building for visitor to find and snap a photo with for social media. Think about where a good spot might be to have that. A place that isn't too hard to find but helps folks explore your building a bit.

3. Double check that **how to get a library card** is easy to find on your library's web site.

4. **If the entrance or restroom facilities of your library building are not fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** please think through how someone with mobility issues will be accommodated for this program. For example, if someone cannot get into your building, can you create a curbside solution? This is a good reminder that if your building is not fully compliant with ADA, your board needs to pass a policy acknowledging this and allowing for accommodations to ensure folks of all abilities have a good user experience and can access all services offered to the public. Not sure if your building is ADA compliant? Here is a [DIY checklist](#) to figure that out.

5. **We are preparing an Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) list** for library workers and for those participating in the program. If you've got some you think would be good additions, please send those to Stephanie Werskey, MHLS Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist at swerskey@midhudson.org

e. **Spring on the Hill: Advocacy for Every Season** | Tuesday, May 20th | 8:00am - 5:00pm | Albany Capital Center | 55 Eagle Street Albany, NY 12207 | [REGISTER](#)
Join NYLA this May in Albany for a full day of educational programming focused on advocacy, which is vital in every season! There will be a wide array of presentations and something for everyone – even our most experienced advocates. This year we are thrilled to be partnering with The Moth for a keynote to help you take your advocacy stories to the next level. Lunch will be served, and there will be plenty of opportunities for professional networking during this one-day mini-conference. Don't miss the chance to develop your advocacy skills and help to strengthen the library profession's grassroots efforts.

f. **The New York Library Association (NYLA) open renewal period launched on April 15.** Members will have approx. 45 days to renew in the system and should renew by the May 31st membership expiration date. Profiles will remain in an active membership status until this date. If you are not currently a member of NYLA this would be the ideal time to join. For more information visit https://www.nyla.org/member-renewal-faqs.

8. **Interlibrary Loan Services: Inter-Library Loan (ILL) Overview**
   a. On March 19th, Inter-Library Loan specialist, Rebecca Hagan presented an in depth overview of the OCLC Inter Library Loan Process. The session, which documents the OCLC loan process in Sierra from start to finish was recorded and has been added to [MHLS Training on Demand: Technology.](#)
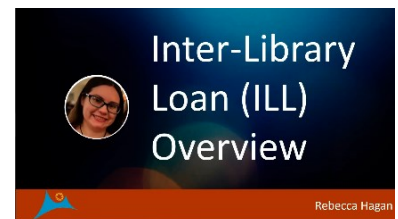
9. **Construction Program Services**

a. Despite concerns surrounding federal budget cuts, we want to reassure you that, as of now, **there have been no official changes to the State Aid for Library Construction program**.

While we understand that there may be some uncertainty around the timing of funding through this program, we are confident that this opportunity will remain available. We encourage you to prepare now so you can apply as soon as the grant opens. With the application period fast approaching, being ready will give you the best chance to secure the funding your project needs.

What you can do now:
- Make sure your facility plan is up to date, and board approved
- Review the Division of Library Development's [State Aid for Library Construction webpage](#)
- Complete Action Memo #25-01 Construction Needs Update & Intent to Apply for State Aid for Library Construction
- Make sure you have a SAM.gov account (if you have a registered account with SAM.gov, make sure the registration is up to date.

If your library needs to address a construction project, this is an opportunity you don't want to miss, and we're here to support you through the application process. Don't let uncertainty hold you back – start preparing today!

b. 2025 State Aid for Library Construction Applications: All MHLS **applications submitted in August of 2024** have been reviewed by DLD. Once DLD has finalized their review of applications from all systems, they will be submitted to DASNY for review. MHLS staff will be in contact with applying libraries for clarifications and updates as requested by DLD and DASNY. Official announcement from the state for award funds for this round of projects is expected by October 2025.

c. **Getting Ready for the Next Application Round (2026-2027)**
- **The Construction Needs Update & Intent to Apply for State Aid for Library Construction Action Memo was sent to the MHLS-Notice list on April 145th.** This will be the first step to apply in the next funding round. All directors are asked to please fill out [this survey](#) (Yes, even if you do not plan to apply for a construction grant this year.) Submissions are **due by May 23**.
- **Introduction to the State Aid for Library Construction Program Webinar**| Wednesday, May 7th | 2:00 – 3:30 pm | [Register](#)
- **Construction Grant Technical Assistance Workshop** | Wednesday, June 18th | 2:00-3:30 pm | Online | [Register](#)

d. **Definition of Economically Disadvantaged Community Updated.** The new definition: *A political subdivision within which the percentage of the population living in poverty is equal to or greater than the New York State average as demonstrated by federal Census data or a chartered service area which is fully or partially within a "[Potential Environmental Justice Area](#)" as defined by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.*

10. **Communications Among Member Libraries**
    a. Keep an eye out for ACTION MEMO #25-02 Library Information Update: To effectively communicate with our members the Mid-Hudson Library System maintains a database of contact information for our member libraries. Once a year we request an update of this information, to keep our records accurate.

An email will be sent to each member library director with instructions on how to complete the update, we anticipate this going out by the end of the month.

11. **Special Populations**
    a. **Outreach Mini Grants:** Please refer to Section 13a.

    b. **Talking Book and Braille Library:** The NYS Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) has updated applications. The new application for individuals and institutions needs to be completed and submitted even if your patron or library is already registered. Please help spread the word to your patrons about this change. You can access the new institutional applications and the individual applications in English and Spanish here.

       Every public library should register as an institution with TBBL to keep up to date with important free resources for your community. If you have questions about this service you can view the informational session on the MHLS Training on Demand platform in the Library Sustainability Academy, reach out to Laurenne Teachout Senior Librarian/Outreach Talking Book and Braille Library at Laurenne.Teachout@nysed.gov or contact kcruger@midhudson.org.

    c. **Social Security:** MHLS is establishing connections with county Offices for the Aging. County chairs will receive information about how to connect and create opportunities for partnerships. Libraries in Representative Pat Ryan's district can sign up to host the CARES Van at their library. CARES Van information will be sent directly to libraries within Ryan's district. Due to the recent and frequent changes to Social Security we will update information as it becomes available. To access the latest information including partnerships, resources, locations and updates please bookmark this document.

    d. **Immigration Services**: We do not currently have a ship date from the Division of Library Development regarding the Know Your Rights Cards. If your library requested cards we will email you directly with any updated shipping information. To access the latest information including partnerships, resources, and updates please bookmark this document.

    e. **Rural Minds** is the only national 501c3 nonprofit focused on advocating for rural mental health equity, promoting mental wellness, and providing information and resources to confront rural mental health challenges and the stigma that surrounds mental illness. They serve the 46 million people living in farming, ranching, and agriculture communities, small towns, and isolated areas in the country across rural America. Free resources and programs for your community are available at Rural Minds.

    f. **Outreach Council:** MHLS is looking for recommendations of local agencies who work with underserved populations and literacy groups in your community to invite to a mini bringing agencies together session. Please send any recommendations to kcruger@midhudson.org.

    g. **Encyclopedias**: If any member libraries are updating their hard copy encyclopedias and would be willing to donate the old volumes, 2022-2024 to our correctional facilities please contact kcruger@midhudson.org.

h. **Mexican Consulate:** The Poughkeepsie Public Library District in partnership with the Mid-Hudson Library System and Revolucion Radio Online hosted the Consulate on Wheels in the Mid-Hudson Library System Auditorium from Tuesday, April 8th through Saturday, April 12th. The Mexican Consulate was able to assist 923 people with passports, renewals, dual citizenship and birth certificates, many of them for children. The Mexican Consulate will be back in June. Promotional materials will be available in May.

12. **Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems**

a. **Digital Navigators**: The Digital Navigator Lite program is running through June 30. The lite version of the program is for trained and experienced Digital Navigators. You can apply any time between January 1, 2025, and June 30, 2025. However, you must meet the requirements by July 15, 2025. For the list of requirements and to access the application visit https://www.senylrc.org/services/digitalnavigators/.

b. **Fall Into Books – SAVE THE DATE:** The 26th annual Fall into Books Conference is scheduled to take place in-person on October 23, 2025 at The Venue Uptown in Kingston, NY. This conference is for library staff serving youth to read and discuss titles with their peers around the Hudson Valley. For updates about this event, https://fallintobooks.org/.

13. **Administrative**

a. Given the delay of the passage of the NYS Budget and the uncertainties around federal funding for the Division of Library Development:

- MHLS will need to be extremely fiscally conservative. We may be delaying some activities or postponing them indefinitely to ensure we are not overextended.
- We will proceed with the process for the State Aid for Library Construction Program as per usual (see Laura's report under #9). That being said, if you are ready to close out a project, please do so ASAP in case staffing levels at DLD are compromised by the IMLS funding issue to ensure timely payment of your final 10%.

b. ALA Announced the Top Ten Most Challenged Titles in 2024 during National Library Week. All titles are available through the MHLS Debra Wilcox Klein Book Haven Collection via the Discover Catalog in both print and eBook format.

c. **Amazon Business Free Prime Program:** If you missed the webinar or need the instructions for converting to the free account please reach out to costaky@amazon.com for assistance.

d. **Mid-Hudson Libraries Tempestry Collection**

- For answers to Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.tempestryproject.com/mid-hudson-libraries-tempestry-collection-faq/
- The order form for kits: https://www.tempestryproject.com/product/mid-hudson-libraries-tempestry-collection-kits/
- To contact Emily at Asy at The Tempestry Project: tempestryproject@gmail.com