

MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | April 2022

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

1. Delivery Services

- a. We continue to **monitor the volume of items** moving through delivery and compare data to pre-pandemic times. Currently the levels and trend lines are steady with slight variations. We will continue to monitor with a goal to anticipate the need to resize the delivery routes if circulation begins to increase sharply.
- b. We have increased **our supply of bins** and continue to work with our vendor, Valley Courier, and member libraries to ensure enough bins are left for sorting and in general for each individual library's volume. If you have any concerns, please contact Tom Finnigan, Delivery Operations Manager at tfinnigan@midhudson.org or x244.

2. Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services

- a. **The Vega Pilot** has been expanded to include Patterson, Marlboro, Highland and Kingston libraries. Each library will be testing for inconsistencies, integration with OverDrive and Hoopla as well as to share observations and provide feedback to help guide the consortia development. Innovative has also implemented a new monthly consortia meeting that will bring all consortia members together to discuss the options and make decisions on features that need to manage the unique needs of a consortia environment.
- b. **The Sierra servers** made the move to the ProQuest hosting facility on schedule with very little incident. In some cases, the move revealed issues that were unrelated to the move. We found links to resources no longer subscribed to, links that were broken, and also vendors who had new IP addresses that were not in place for authentication. We believe we have corrected most of these. We also have a really good understanding of the services that we are currently authenticating and will be looking to create a policy for managing that in the future.
- c. **E-commerce** is becoming more secure! Credit card payments in Encore are managed through a PayPal PayFlow Pro transaction where information is gathered through web forms that are currently stored with our Sierra services by Innovative. These forms are the conduit for credit card information passing through to our merchant account. We are moving this process to be completely processed through forms hosted at PayPal. The credit card information will no longer be passed from Sierra webforms to PayPal. Instead, the payment portion will be managed entirely by PayPal. Once the transaction is complete, APIs will be used to update the patron account in real time.
- d. This year the **Innovative Users Group (IUG) conference** was again presented as a virtual event. While it is always very useful to meet and mingle with peers, the virtual event has the advantage of being less expensive and more accessible to our staff. We took advantage of the situation and enrolled the entire Technology Operations Team at MHLS. Each person was asked to attend a minimum number of webinars. We each have a very broad interest in technology and library services, and many of us have specific expertise. We were able to introduce our newer staff members to the Innovative Users community for higher level engagement and to elevate our understanding as a team to evolve our

implementations and develop new tools.

Here are some takeaways:

- Everyone gets Vega Connect
 - Patron registration and anniversary reminders.
 - Inventory control can work again with Offline Circulation as a conduit instead of FTP.
 - Highlighting your collection in Vega and on your website with showcases
 - Staff Picks – booklists & Showcases
 - New items / new orders
 - NYT bestseller
 - Book club lists
 - Marketing/event themes
 - Creating subject collection development in SQL (Used for EDI - with access to queries!).
 - Regular Sierra data cleanup and maintenance tasks.
 - Learning cataloging practices from other organizations
 - Using Sierra tools like URL checker and headings reports to improve access.
 - Adding alternative vocabularies to offer more inclusive subject headings.
- e. **The MHLS Sierra Users Group** meets on May 19th. Our focus will be on the Vega Discover public access catalog bringing everyone up to date. We will also be taking a look at the new developments for Sierra. As always, we look to you and the staff of your libraries to make this a true user experience.

Are there ways that your library utilizes tools in Sierra that others might benefit?

Do you have projects or questions that we might discuss as a group?

Please send an email to ls hedrick@midhudson.org, and we can discuss how use our meeting to share and discuss. Register to attend at <https://midhudson.org/calendar/>

3. Coordinated IT Services

- a. We are watching the **computer and equipment pricing** very closely, hoping to see reductions. Our pricing is still currently about 30% higher than it was before and even early on in the pandemic. We will update [the Hardware and Equipment](#) web page as information changes.
- b. **Shields Up** - Russia's invasion of Ukraine could impact organizations both within and beyond the region, to include malicious cyber activity against the U.S. homeland, including as a response to the unprecedented economic costs imposed on Russia by the U.S. and our allies and partners. The Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency has compiled free cybersecurity services and tools from government partners, and industry to assist with managing the recommended measures. More information can be found at <https://www.cisa.gov/shields-up>

Being smart and safe about cybersecurity includes smaller steps that can help protect our personal information as well the data and information entrusted to us. This includes:

- **Good password practice**, including creating and updating passwords and not reusing passwords, keeps accounts secure.
- **Keeping software and equipment up to date** can keep malware and ransomware out of systems. Maintenance of inventories and records as well as disposition of user accounts and equipment ensures only those people authorized to access information can do so.

- **Securing and backing up important files and data** can help in the event of disaster or ransomware attacks.
- **Training and education for staff and trustees** on cybersecurity can help make cybersecurity best practice commonplace.
- **Policies and procedure that promote cybersecurity** will also help ensure the protection of sensitive personal and financial information managed by the library.

The MHLS Tech Ops Team maintains a [Security Checklist page](#) with resources and recommendations for MHLS member libraries.

- c. **Beyond the Library WiFi Access Project:** We are still waiting a final shipment of integral equipment before our implementation process begins. We will be reaching out as soon as we have that last piece to deploy units at the 43 libraries who will be receiving units. We will have a very brief window to complete installation. The units must be operational and producing statistical data before June 30th.

4. Professional Development & Continuing Education

- a. **Applying for Funds Through the State Aid for Library Construction Program | [April 19](#)**
 - i. This webinar is designed for Mid-Hudson Library System member library directors and trustees who would like an introduction to the New York State Aid for Public Library Construction Grant Program and an orientation for how to take the first step to apply in the new grant cycle – the submission of the MHLS Action Memo reporting a library’s construction needs and intent to apply for a grant.

- b. **Trustee Education**
 - i. **Trustee Handbook Book Club in 2022**
 - 1. Upcoming Dates
 - a. April 19: [Ethics & Conflicts of Interest + Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Privacy](#)
 - b. May 3: [Planning & Evaluation](#)
 - c. June 14: [PR & Advocacy](#)
 - 2. Archive of recordings: <https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/>
 - 3. DIY Kits: After each session the recording is posted at the link above and a document is coupled with it to help you facilitate a conversation at the local board level.
 - ii. **Trustee Education Spring 2022**
 - 1. Upcoming Dates
 - a. May 17: [Trustee Essentials](#)
 - i. Particularly for new board members, but open to all. Library board members looking for essential, basic information to increase their effectiveness in serving on a library board will benefit from attending this session.
 - b. May 20: [Trustee Essentials](#)
 - i. Particularly for new board members, but open to all. Library board members looking for essential, basic information to increase their effectiveness in serving on a library board will benefit from attending this session.
 - c. June 2: [Core Values & Ethics](#)

- i. Trustees have enormous influence in creating libraries that are relevant and responsive to community needs. From policymaking and fiduciary responsibility to strategic planning and advocacy work, the board needs a strong sense of the core values of librarianship and a commitment to ethical governance to support patrons’ rights to access to information and resources while creating a viable, vital and visible library that their community is proud of.
- d. June 16: [Pathways to Sustainable Funding](#)
 - i. One of the primary responsibilities of a library trustee is to secure adequate funding for the library. This requires both an honest assessment of the true costs to run a viable, vital, and visible library as well as a strong understanding of the legal funding mechanisms for libraries in New York State. At this session we will provide an overview of key areas impacting library budgets as well as introduce the new toolkit released this year from the New York State Library, the Public Library District Toolkit: Strategies to Assure Your Library’s Legal and Financial Stability.

c. MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Libraries Series

- i. Upcoming Dates
 - 1. April 28: [NYS Talking Book and Braille Library Informational Session](#)
 - 2. May 19: [From Diversity to Inclusion: How to Audit Your Collection and Why](#)

d. Library Sustainability Series

- i. Upcoming Dates
 - 1. April 21: [Esports in Libraries](#)

5. Consulting & Development

a. Open Meetings Law

- i. The authority to hold remote meetings is extended through April 15th.
- ii. Reminders:
 - 1. As of October 2021: records to be discussed at a meeting must be made available, upon request and posted online, **at least 24-hours** before the meeting. Records that will be discussed have been required to be made available at meetings/upon request since 2021, what changed was the 24-hour minimum.
 - 2. As of November 2021: draft minutes of open meetings must be posted to your library’s website within two weeks of the date of the meeting. For further information read the [Committee on Open Government’s memo](#).
- iii. “Hybrid Meetings” Advice: We have received several inquiries as to how libraries can accommodate trustees who want to attend meetings remotely once the pandemic-era adjustments to the Open Meetings Law sunset. Here is a [recent advisory opinion](#) issued by the Committee on Open Government that explains this:

“As a prerequisite for a member of a public body to participate and/or vote by videoconference, the OML requires that the public be provided with “an opportunity to attend, listen and observe at any site at which a member participates.” OML § 103(c). For this reason, the statutory notice of the open

meeting must include all of the locations of the meeting at which any member is participating, including the location(s) of the member(s) participating by videoconference:

If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, public notice for the meeting shall inform the public that videoconferencing will be used, identify the locations for the meeting and **state that the public has the right to attend the meeting at any of the locations.**

Id. § 104(4) (emphasis added). This is true even if members of the public body are participating by videoconference from a “private” location such as a private home or while on vacation.

In summary, now that Executive Order 202.1 is no longer in effect, the meeting notice must again include the following when the public body is using videoconferencing:

- A statement that videoconferencing will be used;
- The exact location from which every member of the public body is participating; and
- Statement that the public has the right to attend the meeting at any location from which a member of the public body is participating.

Members of the public body who are participating by videoconferencing also have the right to attend, participate, and vote in executive session.

It is important to note that the requirements of the OML relating to the use of videoconferencing only apply to members of the public body. There is nothing in the OML which would prohibit a public body from offering the public the additional option to view a meeting through the use of livestreaming, broadcasting, videoconferencing, or other remote access means, as long as the statutory requirements relating to the right to in-person attendance have been met. Moreover, the OML does not prohibit a public body from permitting invited guests (i.e., anyone who is not a member of the public body, but who has been asked to actively participate in the meeting) to speak or testify³ using a remote access platform.”

b. Public Library District Toolkit

- i. The New York State Library has issued a new resource for public libraries, [Public Library District Toolkit: Strategies to Assure Your Library’s Legal and Financial Stability.](#)

State Library staff worked with co-authors of the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State* Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Director and Jerry Nichols to produce this new toolkit. Available on the State Library’s website, and as a printable/downloadable PDF, the new toolkit conveys the technical aspects of stabilizing library funding and governance structures, and provides guidance and empowerment to help the library leaders of today ensure access to local library services for the communities of tomorrow. This new resource will assist library leaders in exploring options to stabilize a library’s future using strategies that have a proven track record in New York State. The new Public Library District Toolkit explains the various options available in detail and provides information on the steps necessary to achieve long-term success.

Highlights include:

Introduction of Consolidated Legislative District Model
Updated handbook on using the Municipal Ballot Option
Answers to Questions about the NYS Property Tax Cap
Sample legislation, petitions, and answers to FAQs

- ii. Questions about this new resource may be directed to Library Development Specialist Frank Rees, Program Manager for Public Library System Services, Division of Library Development, New York State Library at Francis.Rees@nysed.gov.

c. Transition from DUNS Number to Unique Entity Identifier

- i. Starting on April 4, 2022, the Integrated Award Environment (IAE) systems (i.e., SAM.gov, FPDS, eSRS, FSRS, FAPIIS, and CPARS) will comply with the Federal Government's requirement to end use of the DUNS Number for Federal award management.¹ The U.S. Department of Education's Grants Management System (G5) will also implement this transition on April 4, 2022. If your organization is currently registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) with either an active or inactive registration, you have already been assigned a UEI. Your UEI is viewable on your entity's registration record in SAM.gov. To learn how to view your UEI, see this guide: [How can I view my unique entity identifier \(UEI\)?](#) For more information see [Transition from DUNS Number to Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\) Fact Sheet](#) from U.S. Department of Education Office of Acquisition and Grants Administration Grants Policy and Training Division

- d. **414 Meetups:** MHLS is hosting regular online meetup events for libraries engaging in 414 vote campaigns in 2022. At these meetups, libraries get support from MHLS for meeting deadlines and completing administrative tasks necessary for a successful 414 effort and share tips and ask questions about best practices for winning at the ballot.

Upcoming Dates

- a. [May 5](#)
- b. [September 8](#)
- c. [October 12](#)

- e. **Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley:** Digital Navigators are now up and running in 24 MHLS member libraries to connect community members with affordable broadband and devices and free digital literacy training. Navigators will be meeting twice monthly to share their experiences in engaging and supporting community members to bridge the digital divide through June 15, 2022. See the full list of participating libraries and organizations at <https://hvconnected.org/>. More info about the DNHV program is available at <https://libguides.senylrc.org/DigitalNavigators/about>
- f. **The Great Give Back 2022 will be held on Saturday, October 15:** The mission of [the Great Give Back](#) is to provide a day of opportunities for the patrons of the Public Libraries of New York State to participate in meaningful, service-oriented experiences. GGB programs have included collections for local people and animals in need, pet adoption and cleanup events, blood drives, and more.
- g. **[Library of Local \(LoL\):](#)** Year 2 of the LoL is now underway, and participating libraries will soon have their seed and media collections in place. Programming addressing climate change and solutions is in place, and libraries are working to build connections with Climate Smart Community leaders and other local individuals to help realize local solutions to address climate change. Participating libraries in year 2 include: Claverack Free Library, New Lebanon, Philmont Public Library, Roe Jan, Clinton Community Library, Millbrook Free Library, Northeast Millerton Library, Julia L. Butterfield Library, Elting Memorial Library, Woodstock Public Library District, Howland Public Library, Kingston Library, Hudson Area Library, Mountain Top Library. LoL programming in 2022 will feature programs that will be broadcast for

all MHLS member libraries to offer to patrons.

- h. **Turning Outward Cohort:** Libraries in the 2022 MHLS TO Cohort have now begun the process of turning outward and engaging with community members to understand their aspirations and build a long-range plan based on that input. This year's cohort includes: Kent Public Library, Blodgett Memorial Library, Elting Memorial Library, and Chatham Public Library.
- i. **LGS-1 Update April 2022:** The [Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records \(LGS-1\)](#) has been updated as of April 1, 2022. For more details [register](#) for the NYS Archives' *Ask Us Anything About Updates to the Local Government Retention Schedule* workshop Wednesday April 13th, 10-11am. This free live webinar will discuss changes made to the Schedule and provide attendees an opportunity to ask questions. The latest complete version of LGS-1 as well as a document with revised replacement pages is available at the [NYS Archives' LGS-1 webpage](#).
- j. **Sexual Harassment Prevention Law Updates:** On March 16, 2022, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed three bills into law that effectively amend the New York Human Rights Law (HRL) to increase sexual harassment protections for employees in New York. One bill amends the definition of "employer" under the HRL to explicitly include the State and all public employers. The new law will take effect immediately and be deemed to have been in full force and effect as of the effective date of Chapter 161 of the laws of 2019. The second bill amends the HRL to include the release of an employee's personnel file because the employee opposed any practices forbidden under the HRL or because the employee filed a complaint, testified, or assisted in any proceeding to possibly constitute "retaliation" prohibited under law. The new law will take effect immediately. The third bill amends the HRL to require that the New York State Division of Human Rights establish a toll-free confidential hot line for complainants of workplace sexual harassment. The new law will take effect in 120 days.

6. Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access

- a. **Our Reciprocal Lending Agreement with Upper Hudson Library System(UHLS) has begun in OverDrive.** In our first to two weeks of access, we hosted 155 unique visitors from UHLS who checked out 236 ebooks. In that same period MHLS cardholders had 514 checkouts from the UHLS platform. You will notice that we have a new tab on the OverDrive monthly report. It will break down those checkouts by ptype, so you can see how your patrons are using RLA.

As a reminder, the [OverDrive page on our Knowledge Base](#) includes information on the RLA in OverDrive. There is an FAQ that covers most things that staff and patrons will want to know and there are marketing materials to help you get the word out.

7. Awareness & Advocacy

- a. **At this time of this report, the state budget was still not finalized.** We'll have the latest information for you at the DA meeting. In the meantime, we'd like to thank all member library directors for your support of Advocacy Week. Turnout at our meetings was great and points of contact through the Online

Advocacy Center were impressive. Thank you for your attention to state level advocacy efforts!

- b. **County Funding Advocacy Meeting** 05.06.2022 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 - i. This is an annual event to share best practices when advocating for county funds for libraries. We find this works best when at least one representative from each county plan to attend this meeting to share best practices for county-level advocacy. [Register here](#).
- c. **2022 Summer Reading posters** supplied by NYS will be sent to each member library through the MHLS delivery by the end of April. Each library building will receive one [Oceans of Possibilities poster](#).

8. Interlibrary Loan Services

- a. **Delivery turnaround time to the Greene Correctional Facility** was delayed due to COVID-19 related lockdowns and staffing at this facility, which also brought to light that we need to be able to expand and contract delivery volume. While we are beyond the crisis, we will be more agile to manage it in the future with additional locked bins coming soon.

9. [Construction Program Services](#)

- a. **2021 State Aid for Library Construction Applications:** Applications submitted in August of 2021 have been reviewed by DLD and are now in the process of being reviewed by DASNY. 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 between June 2022 and October 2022.
- b. The [Construction Needs Update & Intent to Apply for State Aid for Library Construction Action Memo](#) was sent to the MHLS-Notice list on April 5th. This will be the first step to apply in the next funding round. All directors are asked to please fill out the survey found at <https://mhls.wufoo.com/forms/mhls-action-memo-2202/> (Yes, even if you do not plan to apply for a construction grant this year. Thank you!) Submissions are due by May 24th.
- c. **DUNS & SAM Update:** See item Transition from DUNS Number to Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Fact Sheet under Consulting & Development
- 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.*
- e. **2022 Construction Grant Timeline**
 - i. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Casey Conlin, to discuss potential projects well ahead of any due dates.
 1. **April 5** – [Construction Needs/Intent to Apply MHLS Action Memo](#) Released
 2. **April 19** – [Applying for Funds Through the State Aid for Library Construction Program Webinar](#)
 3. **May** – [Construction Grant Office Hours by Appointment](#)
 4. **Late May** – Construction Needs/Intent to Apply MHLS Action Memo Due
 5. **Early June** – Construction Grant Portal Opens

6. **June** – [Construction Grant Office Hours by Appointment](#)
7. **June 21** – [Construction Grant Technical Assistance Workshop](#)
8. **July** – [Construction Grant Office Hours by Appointment](#)
9. **August 12** – **Grant Application due to MHLS**
10. **September 29** – MHLS Board of Trustees Reviews Applications
11. **Mid October** – Applications are due to DLD from MHLS
12. **June – October, 2023** – Libraries receive confirmation of Grant awards from DLD

10. Communications Among Member Libraries

- a. The deadline to submit job openings to be included in the MHLS Bulletin is Thursday, 4:00 pm of the week prior to publication – the MHLS Bulletin is published every Tuesday. Please send job ads to 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 contact [Alexa Stroh](#), MHLS Library Sustainability Associate.

11. Special Populations

- a. **The MHLS Early Literacy Cohort** began in March. This four-month program includes participants of MHLS member library staff who work with families and young children age birth-5 who work together in a small cohort designed to help libraries strengthen their capacity to provide early literacy services in their community through member library peer support sessions and training on early literacy best practices including: Community Asset Analysis, Strategies for Partnerships, Planning Programs and Communication Strategies. This year's cohort includes: D.R. Evarts Library, Brewster Public Library, Catskill Public Library, Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library, Town of Esopus Library, Hurley Library, Millbrook Library, Elting Memorial Library, Patterson Library, Putnam Valley Free Library and Tivoli Free Library.
- b. **Correctional Facilities Update:** The Downstate Correctional Facility has been closed. Two delivery stops per week will be dropped for this facility, and one stop per week will be added for the Hudson Correctional Facility once a librarian has been hired for that facility.

12. Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems

- a. *See above items such as the RLA OverDrive agreement with Upper Hudson Library System and the Trustee Handbook Book Club.*

13. Administrative

- a. **Annual Report to the State:** Annual Reports for all member libraries as well as the library system have been submitted to the Division of Library Development. MHLS staff will contact library directors with updates and clarifications requested by the DLD as they are released.
- b. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Efforts**
 - i. Over the course of the first quarter of 2022, all MHLS Staff have participated in a discussions series around the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion video series available on demand to all members at <https://midhudson.org/edi/> Staff were asked to consider what they were viewing/learning and how it intersected with:

1. Their own experience
 2. Their interactions with co-workers
 3. Their work with member libraries
- ii. 100% of MHLS staff and trustees participated in an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Assessment administered by the Michigan Nonprofit Association thanks to underwriting from the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. As a result, an EDI Action Plan has been developed for staff and board committees. Actions include items related to board education, personnel policy and practice development, facilities assessment, and more.
 - iii. MHLS Staff are planning a mini-conference for later this year devoted to topics that intersect with equity, diversity, and inclusion work in libraries.
- c. **We have two open positions at MHLS:** Bookkeeper and Administrative Assistant. The job ads are available [here](#). If you know anyone who may be a good fit for either position, please send them our way!