

# MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | November 2021

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

## 1. Delivery Services

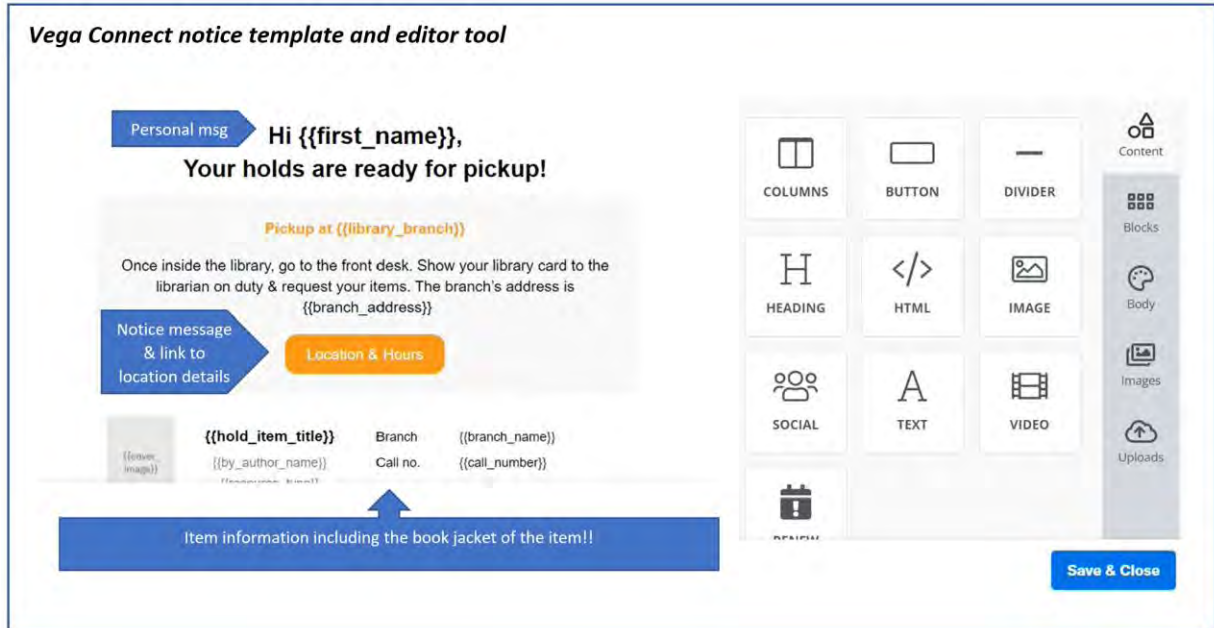
- a. Forward Sorting: Our current delivery vendor has requested assistance with forward sorting from member libraries. Whether or not we comply will impact the continuation of this contract after June 2022. This would entail member library staff batching items going to libraries next on the delivery schedule to streamline distribution of those items by delivery drivers on the same day. System Service Advisory Committee members have provided feedback to MHLS staff about the implementation of this activity and are currently soliciting more feedback from each county's director's association.
- b. Winter is coming...
  - i. Just a reminder that if walks leading from the street to your library are not shoveled, delivery drivers may not be able to make a delivery to your library.
  - ii. If weather is predicted to be severe, the drivers may deploy the night before to ensure delivery keeps running smoothly. In these cases, a message will be sent to the MHLS-ALERTS list to let you know.

## 2. Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services

- a. MHLS ILS Road Map 3.0 Updates
  - i. Vega Discover will move into the Pilot Phase before the end of the year. The Poughkeepsie Public Library District (PPLD) will be the first library to test the Vega Discovery Platform with their patrons. Limited access will provide a wider audience to preview the catalog, test drive the features and functions and unearth defects. PPLD will provide a multi-branch testing environment as well as a large patron base to evaluate the success patrons find in maneuvering through the searches and managing features. We thank PPLD leadership for their willingness to partner with MHLS staff to test this on behalf of our system.
  - ii. Vega Connect will include all Sierra Notices! This means that the library can create and send Sierra notices through Vega Connect. Vega Connect will include editor software that allows libraries to quickly and easily customize messages. In addition, staff will have access to review the send and receive process in the interface. This is a huge improvement over the standard Sierra notices and much more manageable than the Custom Templates.

***Vega Connect Template example and Editor Tool***

This product is still in development- The template view does not include merged data content from the patron, bibliographic or item records.



- b. The new MHLS Create List Lab Course has completed the first round of lessons and will continue in the Spring of 2022. This fresh take on Create List training which included three levels of participation (Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced) is now going to be an ongoing event. The coursework is prepared in advance in small “bite-sized” video and web-based documentation. Participants are invited to work through the coursework at the level they choose, on their own and then choose to participate in the lab event. The live lab event is an online session to review the coursework and share the experience. In the first round we had 15-20 participants in each session and over 160 video lessons viewed. The content from this series will be included in the Create List area of the MHLS Knowledge Base and will continue to be added to, as the series continues.
- c. Closed Dates: It is that time of year again. We need to know when you will be closed next year in order to edit the Sierra closed dates table. The easiest way to let us know the dates you will close is to complete the [Days Closed Form for 2022](#) , which you can find in the Library Administrator’s Toolbox of [KB.Midhudson.org](http://KB.Midhudson.org).

### 3. Coordinated IT Services

- a. Contracts for IT support and hosted websites will be sent to participating member libraries for review in early December. Contract pricing will increase by 2% over 2021. If you would like to make changes or even drop your service with us we ask that you let us know **by the end of the year (or sooner)** as this creates room for libraries on the waiting list. Please do sign and return your contracts as soon as possible. The MHLS Business Office will send invoices in January, so please do not send checks back with your contract.
- b. Aerohive Update:
  - i. MHLS IT staff has successfully transitioned our WIFI access points from Aerohive into the Extreme Networks cloud service. There will be no change in your service, reports or support in the new environment.
  - ii. Plan to replace Aerohive access points that were carried over from previous contracts within the next 2-3 years. While the equipment is still supported, the units have been in place for more

than 5 years in some cases. We recommend budgeting \$600-\$700 (current cost was \$550 to give perspective).

#### 4. Professional Development & Continuing Education

a. Trustee Handbook Book Club:

- i. Trustee Handbook Book Club: Library Board Meetings | 11/16/2021 | 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Join co-authors of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State Jerry Nichols and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich for this fun and informative series! Each month trustees are encouraged to read a [chapter](#) of the Trustee Handbook and send in questions that the authors will address. [Click here to Register.](#)

- ii. Trustee Handbook Book Club: Personnel | 12/14/2021 | 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Join co-authors of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State Jerry Nichols and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich for this fun and informative series! Each month trustees are encouraged to read a [chapter](#) of the Trustee Handbook and send in questions that the authors will address. [Click here to Register.](#)

- b. The Next Great Read: Readers' Advisory on a Dime | 11/17/2021 | 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Readers' Advisory (RA) is a fundamental library service to connect readers with new titles they may not have otherwise known about. This event is designed by the Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee of the Mid-Hudson Library System to ensure member libraries have the skills and resources to provide quality RA services and maximize collections that we already have.

Join our panel of experts to:

- i. Explore RA basics, including best practices for conducting a readers' advisory interview
- ii. Learn about tools seasoned practitioners use to help readers find their next great read
- iii. Check out the latest trend in online readers' advisory: online book match forms

[Click here to register.](#)

- c. Reimagining Library Services: Let's Move in Libraries Webinar | 11/19/2021 | 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Everyone has a role to play in increasing healthy living, including libraries! This webinar focuses on how you and your library can get involved in local, regional, national, and even international efforts to transform cultures of health. With their impressive reach and great potential for impact, public libraries can and do support healthy communities through StoryWalks®, seed collections, Yoga classes, gardens, cooking classes, and much, much more. What public librarians do in particular places is a function of the partnerships and community connections they're able to establish and leverage. Join Noah Lenstra, Director of Let's Move in Libraries, to learn how your library can join the thousands of libraries around the world promoting healthy living!

[Click here to register.](#)

- d. Annual Report Workshop for New Directors | *Tentative: 01/28/2022 | 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM*

The MHLS Annual Report Workshop for New Directors is designed for Directors who are new to submitting the NYS Annual Report with Bibliostat software but is open to all. The workshop will cover:

- Logging in to the software

- Entering your data
- Dealing with “Edit Checks”
- Writing “Notes”
- Submitting your report

## 5. Consulting & Development

- a. NYS Commissioner of Health officially [posted](#) the extension of the designation of COVID-19 as a “highly contagious communicable disease that presents a serious risk of harm to the public health” through December 15th, 2021. The NYS Commissioner of Health originally issued the designation on September 6th, 2021, prompting covered private employers in New York State including association libraries to activate their NY HERO Act airborne infectious disease exposure prevention plans. The initial designation was effective through September 30th, 2021. The latest extension will be reviewed December 15th, 2021, and the circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic considered in determining whether to extend the designation at that time. Accordingly, association libraries should continue to operate under NY HERO Act plans in place.
- b. Circ Trends Report:
  - i. As per the MHLS Action Plan we have created a Circulation Trend Report looking at physical circulation as well as OverDrive eBook and OverDrive eAudiobook circ 2019 vs. 2021. As you are likely quite aware there have been a significant shift in physical and eResource usage in the wake of the pandemic, the data shows a sustained increase in eResource usage and a lagging return of physical circ since the pre-pandemic era:
    1. Physical item circ is down, by 35% systemwide.
    2. OverDrive eBooks circ is up by 40% systemwide.
    3. OverDrive eAudiobooks circ is up 26% systemwide.
  - ii. These findings justify both the changes made to delivery routes as well as the continued call from the Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee for increased investment by member libraries in the OverDrive collection.
  - iii. Will the circ of physical items bounce back?
    1. **This is a question we encourage discussion of at the county directors’ meetings.**
    2. **Looking to address this issue at your library?** Check out the Increasing Circulation Lab Project Toolkit found at <https://midhudson.org/lab-project-toolkits/>
- c. 2022 MHLS Turning Outward Cohort Program Introductory Webinar | 12/9/2021 | 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM  
  
Libraries interested in participating in the 2022 MHLS Turning Outward Cohort Program are invited to join the introductory webinar, which will outline the value of “turning outward”, through community conversations, to seek public knowledge about community aspirations to better guide the future design of library services, programs, partnerships, and resource allocation. This webinar will also provide a brief overview of the program schedule and expectations for 2022.  
[Click here to register.](#)
- d. New York State Minimum Wage Increase: The [NYS Department of Labor announced](#) that the minimum wage north of Westchester will rise to \$13.20 an hour, up 70 cents from \$12.50 an hour. This change will take effect December 31, 2021. Subsequent annual increases will be published by the Commissioner of Labor on or before October 1. They will be based on percentage increases determined by the Director of the Division of Budget, based on economic indices, including the Consumer Price Index. See the [NYS DOL Minimum Wage page](#) for more information.

- e. Public Library Minimum Hours and Curbside/Lobby Hours: The New York State Library has announced effective January 1, 2022, only in building hours will be accepted for the purposes of minimum standards compliance. Curbside and/or lobby service hours will no longer be counted towards the library's [required minimum weekly hours open](#). Member libraries that believe they may have difficulty meeting their minimum required hours should contact MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, [Casey Conlin](#) before November 30, 2021.
  
- f. 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 2022 budget. For more info: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/property-tax-cap/real-property-tax-cap-local-governments?redirect=legacy>
  
- g. State Law Updates
  - i. NYS Department of Labor has issued answers to Frequently Asked Questions regarding recreational marijuana and the workplace: <https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/10/p420-cannabisfaq-10-08-21.pdf>
  
  - ii. Chapter 481 of Public Officers Law has been amended to require documents to be discussed at open meetings be made available upon request or posted on the public body's website *at least 24 hours prior to such open meeting*. This new requirement will take effect November 18, 2021.
  
  - iii. A new law signed by Governor Hochul provides for a charge-back of refunds of taxes levied by a school district to association, municipal, and special district public libraries. This law will go into effect January 1, 2022.
  
  - iv. Governor Hochul signed legislation that significantly expands the scope of New York Labor Law Section 740 (NYLL 740), the state's "whistleblower" protection law covering all private sector employees. Most notably, beginning in January 2022, employees and independent contractors will be protected for reporting employer activity that they reasonably believe violates any law, regardless of whether the law relates to public safety or whether the activity was an actual violation.
  
  - v. Governor Kathy Hochul signed a bill (S.2928-A/A.06098-A) that expands New York State's Paid Family Leave (PFL) legislation to allow caring for siblings beginning January 1, 2023. Under the current law, employees cannot take leave to care for a sibling with a serious health condition. PFL is employee-paid insurance that provides workers with job-protected, paid time off to bond with a newly born, adopted or fostered child; care for a family member with a serious health condition, or assist loved ones when a member of the family is deployed abroad on active military service. Currently, Paid Family Leave family care covers caring for spouses, domestic partners, children and step-children, parents, parents-in-law, grandparents and grandchildren with a serious health condition. Through this legislation the definition of "family members" expands to include siblings. This includes biological siblings, adopted siblings, step-siblings and half-siblings. These family members can live outside of New York State, and even outside of the

country.

- vi. Streamlining and Modernizing Library Aid - A new law amends Education Law 273 to streamline and modernize public library and library system aid formula language. These amendments provide greater flexibility and will ease program and reporting requirements, improve efficiency, and reflect changes in the way library and information services are now delivered.

The amendments include:

1. Consolidation of central library development aid and central book aid to create a central library services aid program.
  2. Streamlining of public library system basic aid formulas by combining per capita funding streams.
  3. Elimination of the separate adult literacy and family literacy grant programs and consolidation of those funds into the public library system coordinated outreach services program formulas.
  4. Elimination of the regional bibliographic databases program and consolidation of those funds into the reference and research library resources system (3Rs) basic aid funding formulas.
  5. Consolidation of two separate funding amounts for general support of The New York Public Library Research Libraries into one amount.
- h. The Great Give Back - Thank you to the 38 libraries that participated in the Great Give Back to give their this year. These libraries provided opportunities for library patrons to participate in meaningful community service experiences. Including art and writing projects to benefit the community, collections of items like socks, soap, and shampoo for people in need, food drives, pet adoption events, collecting and creating items to aid cancer patients, and supporting our pollinators. Many libraries also partnered with other organizations such as local animal shelters, local food pantries, and local women's shelters to build connections in their communities and increase the impact of their efforts, and aligned their GGB events with Hudson Valley Climate Solutions Week. To capture the impact of the GGB please complete the [evaluation survey](#) from the Suffolk Cooperative Library System when you get a chance. You can also photos and press coverage to [librariesgiveback@gmail.com](mailto:librariesgiveback@gmail.com).

## 6. Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access

- a. Please see System Services Advisory Committee Action Item Related to pursuing an OverDrive Reciprocal Lending Agreement (RLA) with one or more neighboring public library systems.

## 7. Awareness & Advocacy Services

- a. Advocates & Ambassadors Webinar | 11/10/2021 | 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

This workshop is for library staff, directors, trustees and Friends who want to help their libraries win public support and attract public funds to benefit their community. Participants will learn to craft messages that will generate supporters and followers for their library as well as strengthen stakeholder and community partnerships.

At this workshop we will cover:

- i. Tools for crafting a meaningful and impactful message about your library

- ii. Strategies for tailoring and delivering your message to different audiences
- iii. Identifying and maximizing relationships within the community

[Click here to register.](#)

- b. Save the date: Advocacy Day 2022 is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2. It will be very likely be a combination in person and online events.

## 8. Interlibrary Loan Services

- a. A new transit slip has been introduced in our interlibrary loan process. The form improves the visibility of the destination library for sorters at MHLS and Ramapo Catskill Library System. You can find this new form at <https://midhudson.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Routing-Slip.pdf>
- b. The provision allowing MHLS member libraries to use delivery bins to send bundles of magazines to correctional facilities is set to end on December 31, 2021. MHLS is currently assessing this service to determine whether this is something that will continue.

## 9. Construction Program Services

- a. Solar Group Purchase with Metro IAF and CPA 9 i. The Mid-Hudson Library System has partnered with Metro Industrial Areas Foundation (Metro IAF) and the Community Purchasing Alliance (CPA) to provide community institutions including MHLS member libraries with affordable options for installing solar panels and generating solar power at their library buildings. This group purchasing program will save participating libraries money on their utility bills while generating clean energy to operate the library. Metro and CPA provide libraries with expertise in the area of solar equipment procurement and installation along with bargaining options that allow libraries to realize savings and incentives not normally available to non-profit and public organizations. For more information, check out the [Metro IAF Anchor Institutions Solar Program webinar recording](#). The [slides from the presentation](#) are also available. Libraries interested in participating in the solar group purchasing program should reach out to MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, [Casey Conlin](#). Solar-generating capability will be evaluated for libraries interested in participating, and libraries with suitable facilities will be asked to submit electric bills at a later date.
- b. Construction Project Timeline Extension - A recently signed technical amendments bill provides an additional 12 months for State Aid for Library Construction projects to be completed. Below are the timelines for the most recent grant year. Additional questions about grant deadlines should be directed to MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, [Casey Conlin](#).

State Aid for Library Construction Project Numbers and Deadlines

- i. 0386-19-\*\*\*\* - July 1, 2018-June 30, 2022
  - ii. 0386-20-\*\*\*\* - July 1, 2019-June 30, 2023
  - iii. 0386-21-\*\*\*\* - July 1, 2020-June 30, 2024
  - iv. 0386-22-\*\*\*\* - July 1, 2021-June 30, 2025
- c. FY2020-2021 State Aid for Library Construction Programs Announced
    - i. Brewster Public Library
    - ii. Claverack Free Library
    - iii. East Fishkill Public Library
    - iv. Town of Esopus Library
    - v. Desmond-Fish Public Library
    - vi. Hyde Park Library District



- vii. Lagrange Association Library
- viii. Pawling Free Library
- ix. Philmont Public Library
- x. Pleasant Valley Library
- xi. Morton Memorial Library & Community House (Rhinecliff)
- xii. Valatie Free Library

## 10. Communications Among Member Libraries

- a. Library Information Update Request - In order 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 Action Memo will be sent out via the MHLS-Notice List in January 2022 for all member library directors to complete and submit.

## 11. Special Populations

- a. Outreach Mini-grants - Libraries who received approval for 2021 Outreach Mini-grant programs must expend the allotted funds and complete their [Grant Closing Report](#) by December 1, 2021. Visit the [MHLS Outreach Mini-grant page](#) for more info, or contact MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, [Casey Conlin](#) with questions.
- b. Adult Literacy and Family Literacy Grant Programs - A new law amends Education Law 273 to streamline and modernize public library and library system aid formula language, including funding requirements for the Family and Adult Literacy grant programs. These amendments provide greater flexibility and will ease program and reporting requirements, improve efficiency, and reflect changes in the way library and information services are now delivered. The Adult Literacy and Family Literacy programs will be evaluated and reorganized to best meet member library needs given the updates.

## 12. Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems

- a. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): The State Library has allocated \$5,514,315 of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to New York State's nine regional Reference and Research Library Resources Councils for collaborative regional projects that will advance digital inclusion, encourage library/museum partnerships, and expand student access digital resources. Of the \$5,514,315 mentioned above, Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (SENYLRC) will receive \$414,016 for their region, which includes the service area of the Mid-Hudson Library System.
  - a. [Digital Inclusion Efforts](#) (\$342,487): The digital inclusion funds would primarily be spent through the two public library systems in the SENYLRC region, MHLS and the Ramapo Catskill Library System (RCLS). If approved by the State Library, SENYLRC's plan for these funds will be used in two project areas:
    - 1. Project A: Provide member libraries in economically disadvantaged communities with the hardware and configuration support to expand the Wi-Fi connectivity for patrons outside of library buildings (by 300 feet). If any wiring costs are needed, they will be the responsibility of the library. Participating libraries will receive one Access Point Unit which will be configured for use supported by Mid-Hudson Library System. Support includes monthly reports and remote management, including software updates. Access Points are an important element of a modern public Wi-Fi service and include:



- a. A statistical report of activity
  - b. The ability to require users to accept your usage policy
  - c. Scheduled service hours for access
  - d. Expanded service footprint of Wi-Fi signal
  - e. Additional reporting available upon request
2. Project B: **“Digital Navigator” training** for member library staff. The four-day, online training will be provided by the **National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)** After the training, individuals will participate in a monthly meeting to share resources and concerns and your library will commit that the staff trained as Digital Navigators will work as a Digital Navigator from April to June, five hours a week. Each Navigator will have a quota of folks (current number under discussion is five, which could change) to help them connect, participation and/or produce in the digital world. If the library staff successfully fulfills the project’s primary goals, a small stipend will be provided to the library (amount pending). More details on the training can be found **Digital Navigators Toolkit**.
- a. Staff who are good candidates for this training should be able to fulfill this Digital Navigator **job description**.
  - b. Museum-Library Partnerships (\$72,358): <https://libguides.senylrc.org/ARPA/Library-Museum>

### 13. Administrative

- a. MHLS Trustees Elected: At the 2021 Annual Membership Meeting three trustees were elected for 5-year terms commencing January 1, 2022:
  - i. Dr. Alexandra Prince, representing Greene County
  - ii. Carla Taylor, representing Putnam County
  - iii. Kenneth Goldberg, representing Ulster County
  
- b. A Look Back... 2021 marks my third year as the MHLS Executive Director. As you did, I hoped 2021 would be a “return to normal,” leaving the pandemic in the rearview mirror. While things didn’t quite play out as we would have hoped our abilities to manage our libraries and our system in the face of continued disruption continued to improve. I would like to thank the Directors Association for their partnership, leadership, and continued good humor as we worked together to navigate unprecedented impacts on our institutions thanks to the continued public health crisis and a political landscape that looks unlike what we have contended with before. Our board and staff did good work this year to stabilize our organization after the financial hits of 2020 and to continue to make progress on our goals. Highlights included:
  - i. Support for members on COVID-19 related issues from vaccine access for library workers; support for newly mandated Emergency Health Plans and Airborne Infectious Disease Exposure Prevention Plans; management of Delivery Operations and our delivery vendor contract to acknowledge fluctuations; Open Meetings Law Advocacy; Open Hours Advocacy; and provision of more than 50 “COVID-19 Updates.”
    - 1. Petition Signature Reduction bill was co-authored by MHLS. Advocacy continued to extend this bill for 2022 and ultimately, to make it permanent. Thanks to this bill, a

- record number of 414 votes took place in 2021 with **all member library votes passing!** A grassroots effort in the Town of Union Vale using the 414 mechanism did not pass.
- ii. Submission of our new 2022-2026 Plan of Service to NYS; adoption of a [revised mission statement and creation of a vision and values statements](#); Identification of five [themes](#) for action planning in 2022-2026:
    - a. Sustainable Funding
    - b. Digital Inclusion
    - c. Collective Impact Efforts
    - d. Outreach to New Residents & Non-Users
    - e. Professional Development for Staff, Trustees, and Friends with a particular emphasis on tech competencies for staff.
  - iii. Securing a second Paycheck Protection Plan forgivable loan, which has been forgiven, and using 2020 funds restored from the state to lift the hiring freeze, restart capital stewardship projects, and advance our plan of service to the best advantage of the membership.
  - iv. Full-court press by the board of trustees and staff on the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) resulting in:
    1. Board of Trustees: A shift in board recruitment efforts to address diversity on the board; creation of policy analysis framework; board orientation on topics such as implicit bias and impact over intention; the creation of the new Outreach & EDI position; approval of [EDI](#) and [Sustainability](#) Policies.
    2. For the membership: new [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Resource Page](#); [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion On Demand Training](#) for member library staff and trustees; two continuing education events: “When Anti-Racist Reading Lists Aren’t Enough” with Dr. Nicole Cooke and “Oh, the Places You’ll Go: The Intersection of Intellectual Freedom & EDI” with Deborah Caldwell-Stone and Dr. Emily Knox.
  - v. Introduction of greatly expanded eMagazine product, now with over 3,000 titles.
  - vi. ILS Road Map Progress
    1. Completion of the MHLS ILS Road Map 2.0, resulting in the implementation of:
      - a. Serials
      - b. Interlibrary Loan module
      - c. Materials Booking
      - d. Patron Images
      - e. Encore Harvesting
    2. Running start at ILS Road Map 3.0: Vega Discover & Vega Connect as a development partner and the launch of a pilot project to test the discovery platform with the Poughkeepsie Public Library District
  - vii. New Partnerships Formed:
    1. [Library of Local Project](#) Launched
    2. MetroIAF/NYSERDA Funding access to decarbonize library facilities
  - viii. Largest Turning Outward Cohort yet!
  - ix. [MHLS Lab Project Toolkits](#)
  - x. Introduction of new Continuing Education offerings including:
    1. Reimagining Library Services Series: online programming, collaborations and partnerships, ebooks, digital literacy, Let’s Move in Libraries, and more!
    2. Create Lists Lab

3. Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration Course from Long Island University
4. [Trustee Handbook Book Club](#)