MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | February 2026
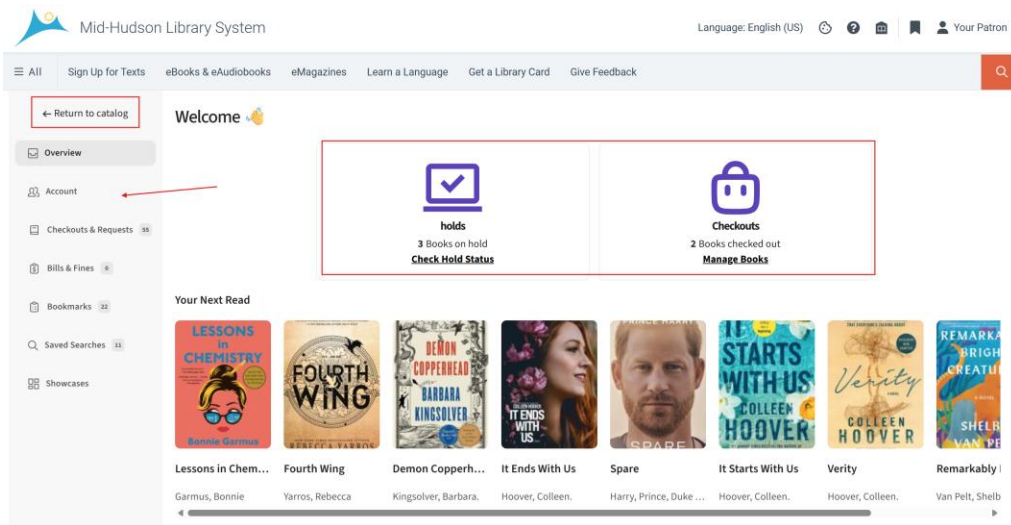
The format of this report is based on the MHLS service priorities as determined by MHLS stakeholders.

1. **Delivery Services**
   a. **Winter is here in the Hudson Valley, which can impact your delivery service.** MHLS and our delivery vendor, Valley Courier, work together during inclement weather events to discuss the best strategy regarding the delivery service. This includes options for night delivery, delayed delivery, or the cancelation of delivery. The drivers are independent contractors and make the decision of whether conditions allow for the safe completion of their routes. We will communicate any route or schedule changes with an email to the MHLS Notice list. Also, members can be a big help by clearing their parking lots and sidewalks as early as possible to allow for safe and easy access to your library.

   b. MHLS Operations is currently **working with the Marlboro Free Library during their construction project** providing storage of items at MHLS for items normally returning to their shelves while still delivering holds for their patrons at Marlboro.
      - As always, let us know if you have or need any special delivery requests during renovations, construction, or emergency situations.

   c. The Operations Team welcomed a **new team member in January, Material Handler Clifford Nilsson**. Cliff has quickly become an asset to our sorting team working hard to prepare items for delivery to your library.

   d. Edward Konzen is a **new substitute driver** for MHLS delivery vendor, Valley Courier. Ed drove route 4 in December, while a primary driver was on vacation. MHLS will notify libraries of any driver change with as much notice as possible.

   e. Our partnership with Central Hudson on the Central Hudson HomeBoost Energy Efficiency Program continues. For participating libraries: If you need additional **Weatherization Kits** please contact Chris Herron.

   f. **Delivery service contacts:**
      Chris Herron
      Operations Manager
      c. 845.750.5995, o. 845.471.6060 x247
      cherron@midhudson.org

      Dave Haspel
      Assistant Operations Manager
      o. 845.471.6060 x 248
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2. **Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services**

a. **Discover Catalog Patron Portal:** Discover now has a new environment where patrons can manage their account in one place. You can learn more about the [Patron Portal by checking out our documentation in the Knowledge Basse](#)

b. **Inventory Field Update at Check In**: The Resource Sharing Advisory Committee reviewed an optional new feature to update the inventory date each time an item is scanned in at check in. Not only will this date show that an item was physically present on a specific date, but it will also provide one more piece of information if an item goes missing. It is important to note that the new date will overwrite any date that is currently in place. Libraries who are reporting on inventory dates will need to use the "Greater than or equal to" operator rather than "equal to" their known inventory date. We hope to have this in place for all libraries by the end of February.

c. **The Mobile App:** It has been a few months since we launched the Mobile app. We have started to notice that activity in the mobile Admin has dropped off. Like your website, the app will connect users to your services with more success if you keep it up to date and refreshed.   If you are looking for ideas, head to our [Training On Demand: Technology for ways to pimp out your app](#). Is there something you would like to see in the app that isn't in our help guides? Open a ticket by emailing techsupport@midhudson.org. We will see what we might be able to do, and if nothing is possible we will work on the enhancement process on your behalf.

d. **LX Starter – Lunch Reboot:** We have a number of libraries who have not yet begun using LX Starter to send circulation notices.   To reinvigorate the launch of this product, we invite you to request a one-hour training session to review the process and get launched. In this hour we can work directly on your library's notices and develop a next step plan on your own timeline. If you have had the training already, don't sweat it, we can start from the beginning or wherever you are. We can set the bar at whatever level you like for the first meeting and build on from there.

e. **TEXT Messaging:** Our current SMS text messaging service will be replaced with a new service. MHLS staff are working with the vendor to revise some aspects of the app that are not currently consortia friendly, which has delayed our launch. After a period of testing, the current service will be given an end date, which we will publish in the bulletin and on our notices list. Patrons who wish to receive text messages will be able to subscribe online on a web form, which will also be linked in the discover

catalog.

f. **MHLS has been invited to participate as development partners for Innovative's new analytic product**. This new reporting tool was described at the Regional Northeast IUG as a tool that will use APIs to manage reporting across platforms. Innovative plans to work with vendors like OverDrive to build API connections that can begin to integrate data to give libraries a big picture view of how resources are consumed. This big data approach is new and really exciting. Of course, the early goal will be to connect Sierra (and Polaris) to the Vega products suite.

g. **Sierra User Group** – MHLS staff (Laurie, Nina and Kathryn) will be attending the annual Innovative User Group. Laurie and Kathryn were awarded scholarships, which cover the cost of the event including hotel accommodation. In addition to the daily sessions, we will be using this opportunity to meet with Innovative's product managers and peers. If you have something that you think we should carry forward or investigate, please do reach out to us before the first week of April, so that we can set up time with the appropriate people who will be in high demand.

h. **Patron Record Clean up and PType expansion:** In 2026 we will be focusing on the patron records in our system. The process will build through the year and by the conclusion we hope to have a very clean and correct reflection of our patrons. In addition to getting entries on point we will be working on expanding our Ptypes. Ptype is the field that reflects a patron's residency. Where a patron resides will determine which library service area they live. As library service continues to evolve in the direction of a pay to play environment, where membership can have privileges, we recognize the necessity for libraries to limit services or prioritize access to the residents who have supported the collection development. We also need to understand the strain placed on the collection by unserved areas. By further segmenting our Ptypes we will be able to evaluate use with more granularity, prioritize access to paying residents.

   Early Patron Record Clean up Events

   - **MHLS Patron clean up –** The 2026 patron record cleanup is in progress currently. Over the last year we have had many libraries who have gone fine free and waived fines along the way. A few libraries have also begun to remove standing debt. This has cleared many patrons who had not met the 7-year debt restriction. This year our record purge was nearly 100,000 records. At this time, we have removed all patrons who have been expired 3 years or more, with no checked-out items and no fines or fines for more than 7 years. The records yet to be purged are being done in smaller batches that can be netted with a Create List. Eventually, there will be some that we must do by hand.
   - **Introduction to the Patron Record:** In this online webinar we will take a deep dive into the patron record, reviewing each field- How it is entered, utilized and connected to other areas of functionality throughout the ILS environment. This will be a good opportunity to review and to dispel some long-standing myths.
   - **Mapping Unserved Areas:** All counties besides Putnam include areas of service that are not served by any library. In some cases boundaries overlap. We will be looking at and working with the County Associations to re define and add Ptypes.

- **Staff education:** MHLS will create opportunities for staff to learn and master the process of entering new patrons to ensure that no matter where a patron record is created it will be entered as accurately as possible. New training modules which include specific workflows and processes are now being developed.

As we move through the year, we will be discussing this at county and committee meetings as well as reporting here to the DA. You are encouraged to engage in those discussions. It will also be important for all to hear the staff's concerns and perspectives. Please do share with them that this initiative is coming. In the end, how successful we are in getting the work done and maintaining good entry depends on their level of understanding and participation.

i. **Initiative to retain $v:** The Library of Congress has a February 2026 planned end of life of a specific subdivision that indicates form.   While our catalog does not rely on this subdivision to filter or segment our collection, this subdivision is used to indicate specific aspects of the format to describe the work. Where the subdivision is used, it often conveys critical information to further describe the work beyond standard format or genres that the Library of Congress will use instead. An ALA working was formed in March of 2025 to review the impact of removing the format subdivision. The [full report of the working group can be read in the Report of the ALA Core SAC Working Group on $v Retention,](#) and includes many compelling reasons to reverse LC's plan to eliminate $v from future records.

Some key findings from the Group's research:
- No user studies to date demonstrate that removing $v improves patron search or recall.
- Patrons primarily do basic keyword searches and examine the first few search results screens and individual records, valuing subject context and glanceability. Having found records of interest, patrons click on the subject strings (including those with $v) to find other materials. Faceting and advanced searches are not generally utilized by patrons.
- 59% of survey respondents report that omitting form subdivisions would make patron searching more difficult (as opposed to 14% that say it wouldn't), and 57% assert that $v omission would impede access to specific collections and types of material (versus 12% that say it wouldn't). Missing form subdivisions disproportionately impact vulnerable library patrons, including children and socioeconomically challenged communities, who may lack search skills or public catalogs with robust genre display/search options.
- 60% of public catalogs lack a dedicated search genre/form search option, so patrons could not search by form as they could by title, author, or subject. 42% of public catalogs lack dedicated genre/form facets for filtering search results, so patrons would be unable to narrow a topic by form if $v were omitted.
- 55% of survey respondents were unaware that LC planned to omit form subdivisions, indicating a lack of adequate outreach and input-gathering from LC. Percentages are higher in certain library types.
- 71% of respondents to question 3.8 oppose $v omission, whereas only 14% support it.
- Requiring libraries to individually add $v information or configure catalogs disproportionately impacts lesser-resourced libraries, who are least likely to have time, knowledge or resources. 67% of libraries have no time and/or knowledge to add form subdivisions into their catalogs individually for all records that might require them. 55% of libraries cannot or are unsure of their ability to change their public catalog indexes and/or display if needed.
- In light of these findings and more, the Working Group's top recommendations are that the Library of Congress:
- continue providing form subdivisions in all applicable subject strings included in bibliographic records shared with other libraries, as a public service for library patrons and less-resourced institutions;
- continue accepting proposals for new form subdivisions to allow growth for continued patron benefit and to maintain data interoperability between libraries;
- retain all authority records containing form subdivisions and all *Library of Congress Subject Headings Manual* documentation pertaining to their use;
- and commit to broad-based outreach regarding all future vocabulary decisions to allow all of the library community to participate in decision-making related to changes that impact them and their patrons.

The committee is asking the library community to join them in advocating that Library of Congress reverse the decision, or at the very least delay it for further discussion. The MHLS cataloging team has reviewed the report sees merit in retaining the subfield and recommends that The Mid-Hudson Library System endorse the recommendation of the working group and be included in the appendix of the

report as an endorsing organization.

3. **Coordinated IT Services**
   a. **Wi-Fi Access Points administered by MHLS:** MHLS IT department is the administrator and supports the service of multiple Wi-Fi access points in many of our libraries.   These units and their licenses have an end of life and so we will be conducting a group buy this summer to replace equipment and licensing which is due on nearly all of our supported units either this Fall or next summer. **You should budget $1450 for any MHLS Wi-Fi Access Point installed at your library that has not been replaced within 5 years.** MHLS will provide each library with licensing options and replacement quotes as soon as we have a quote and will facilitate the Purchase/Renewal in August of this year.
   The renewal targets equipment and licenses from the following initiatives:
      - The Wi-Fi Access points that were distributed by MHLS in 2016-2018 as a Pilot project to introduce and facilitate access and provide statistical data for the annual reports, was initially funded by MHLS and we continue to support and administer the AP units and support them in a central network. The licensing for these units mostly expire in October of 2026.
      - The Beyond the Library ARPA grant in 2022 where we distributed 44 more units and service licenses to extend Wi-Fi service, in many cases outside of the library building. These units expire in June of 2027.

   Note: This equipment, if purchased on your own and managed by the library is also e-ratable. MHLS cannot facilitate or support equipment purchased by the library.

4. **Professional Development & Continuing Education**
   a. **2026 Trustee Handbook Book Club Series** (all session meet from 5-6:30pm; trustees are encouraged to read the related chapter in advance of the event; all sessions qualify to help your trustees meet their 2-hour requirement for trustee education this year; directors are always welcome and encouraged to attend; questions may be submitted in advance of each session here)
      - January 27: **Open Meeting Law** with Kristin O'Neill from the NYS Committee on Open Government
      - February 10: **Freedom of Information Law** with Kristin O'Neill from the NYS Committee on Open Government
      - April 16: **Hiring and Evaluating the Library Director** presented by Brian Hildreth, Executive Director, Southern Tier Library System
      - June 17: **Laws and Regulations** presented by Trustee Handbook Co-author Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
      - October 29: **Duties and Responsibilities of Key Officer Roles**, Panel Discussion moderated by Trustee Handbook Co-author Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

   b. *New for 2026*: **Director Handbook Book Club Series** (all session meet from 10-11:30am; directors are encouraged to read the related chapter in advance of the event; questions may be submitted in advance of each session here)
      - March 13: **What New in the New Edition** with Author Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
      - May 15: **Getting Off to a Good Start,** Panel Discussion with Matthew Bollerman, CEO of the Hauppauge Public Library; Meghan Harney, Director of the Lowville Free Library; and Mandy

Travis Executive Director of the Mid York Library System, moderated by Trustee Handbook Co-author Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

- September 25: **The Director-Board Relationship** presented by Ron Kirsop, Executive Director of the OWWL Library System
- December 9: **The Library Network in New York State**, an interview with Lauren Moore, State Librarian & AnnaLee Dragon, Executive Director of the New York Library Association moderated by Director Handbook Author Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

c. **NYS Talking Book and Braille Library Informational Session Online** | Monday, February 23| 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM | Registration

In this one-hour online session New York State Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) Senior Librarian Laurenne Teachout (she/her) will share recent updates to the program, provide an overview of services focusing on institution membership and the important role public libraries play in connecting community members to accessible reading materials. There will be plenty of time for your questions.

This session is open to all member library directors and staff no matter what your registration status with TBBL. Every public library should register as an institution with TBBL to keep up to date with important free resources for your community.

The New York State Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) is a free library service for residents in Upstate New York who have difficulty reading standard print due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. TBBL's service includes free circulation of audio and braille books and magazines through the US Postal Service, long-term loan of playback equipment, and access to a free online downloading service called Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD).

d. **2026 Summer Programming Ideas for Teens Online** | Wednesday, March 11 | 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM | Registration

Library systems across the state are hosting this 2026 Online Summer Programming Workshop—UNEARTH A STORY! Hear from your colleagues around the state and walk away with ideas for your summer reading program. This session focuses on teen programming.

Hosted by: Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, Mid-Hudson Library System, Mid-York Library System, Mohawk Valley Library System, Nassau Library System, Onondaga County Library System, Ramapo-Catskill Library System, Southern Adirondack Library System, Southern Tier Library System, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Upper Hudson Library System

e. **MHLS Programmers Forum In-Person** | Thursday, April 9 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Town of Esopus Library - 128 Canal St. Port Ewen NY | Registration

This event is open to all MHLS member library staff who work on programming for all age groups. This two-hour in-person event will start with a 30-minute presentation followed by 90 minutes of sharing and discussion by attendees. Come with your questions and get ready to share with your peers about all things programming in your library!

f. **Path-to-Belonging Introductory Sessions Online.** Registration Coming Soon. Two dates to choose from:
   - **Tuesday, March 24 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM**
   - **Wednesday, May 20 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

Libraries have long enjoyed being popular third places and trusted community anchors. But how can library professionals take the next step, and create places of belonging, where everyone is not only welcome, but invested in the organization's success?

Join us for a one-hour interactive webinar about the Path-to-Belonging initiative, designed for small and rural libraries to work with their communities to create a resilient, healthy future. Participants will learn about the Path-to-Belonging, have a chance to try one of its tools, and learn about an upcoming cohort.

Due to the participatory nature of this webinar, it will not be recorded.

The Path-to-Belonging is designed by NYS Outreach Coordinators from 8 different systems with input from public libraries, groups and consultants nationwide.

5. **Consulting & Development**
   a. The new edition of the **Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State** is now available through the New York State Library's website.

   b. **dPlan Accounts** for all MHLS Member Libraries: With the new requirement for all libraries to have a Disaster Preparedness Plan on the horizon due to the changes in NYS Commissioner Education's Regulations, I am pleased to announce that thanks to grant funds for The Library of Local Project we have secured free, 12-month accounts for dPlan for all member libraries.

   dPlan is a comprehensive online tool for emergency planning and response for libraries. It provides you with a guided risk assessment so you know what you are planning for, resources for response and recovery to help you build your plan, the ability to create a "pocket plan," a quick resource to use in the midst of a disastrous event, and more.

   This resource should help build your capacity to create a strong plan that truly serves you should disaster strike.

   Instructions to claim your library's free account were provided on the MHLS Notices list on January 8, 2026. An introductory webinar was offered on February 11th. This webinar was recorded and in available through the Library Sustainability Academy of the MHLS Training on Demand platform.

   c. **Turning Outward**
   The following member libraries will participate in the 2026 MHLS Turning Outward Cohort: Reed Memorial Library, Hudson Area Library, Olive Free Library Association, and Woodstock Public Library District. The MHLS Turning Outward Program is a nine-month guided opportunity to help your library's stakeholders gather community input using tools and techniques from the American Library Association (ALA) Libraries Transforming Communities program. These tools help you focus on "public knowledge"

to gather intel on the community's aspirations that your library staff and board can use to define strategic goals and to design library services, programs and partnerships.

- March (Program Overview, Turning Outward Introduction, & Action Planning)
- April (Public Knowledge & Community Conversations)
- May (Action Plans in Action & Conversation Skills)
- June (Experiences in Conversations & Organizing What You're Hearing)
- July (What Did You Hear & Analyzing Capacity)
- August - BREAK
- September (Understanding the Components of a Strategic Plan)
- October (What's Your Plan?)
- November (Finishing Up)

"Turning outward" is a process developed by The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, which entails taking steps to better understand communities, changing processes and thinking to make conversations more community-focused, being proactive to community issues, and putting community aspirations first.

    d. In April, MHLS will launch a **pilot Library of Things collection** that is designed for member library use (not for the public). This collection will focus on items that will be **helpful to your institution and community as you consider the library's role in disaster preparedness and recovery**. Items such as a solar generator; sump pump, industrial floor drying equipment, air quality monitor; pop up tent; traffic safety cones; carpet cleaner, pressure washer, and walkie talkies will be made available to lend to member libraries. At the April DA meeting we will introduce the list of items you may borrow from the collection.

6. **Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access**
   a. We have begun tracking two new data points in our OverDrive monthly report as requested by The Resource Sharing Advisory Committee. Each month we will now provide an average **Wait Time** figure as well as a chart showing **Patron Counts by the Number of Holds** they currently have. Both are a capture on the day the monthly reports are compiled and do not reflect the monthly average. We have begun to capture this data as a way to track changes over time.

   b. **NEW: Introducing "Staff Picks" to the Catalog and OverDrive**
      - MHLS is inviting MHLS Member library staff to suggest titles to be highlighted in the online catalog and within OverDrive.
      - Each month we will invite staff to suggest up to two titles to contribute to a themed showcase that will display in the Discover catalog and through Libby/OverDrive. Staff may also write a brief explanation of why they are suggesting a title that may be used as a "shelf talker" in Libby/OverDrive.
      - Staff may also suggest a future theme to be the spotlight later in the year.
      - To participate, please ask your staff to review the policy and them submit their ideas through the form – both are found here: https://kb.midhudson.org/mhls-staff-picks/ The theme we are currently working on will display in April and will be focused on sustainability through the

lens of Earth Day.

c. MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, is serving on the statewide eBook Working Group. This group is working to pool information on purchasing in the digital collection environment across all public library systems in NY; develop licensing and negotiating best practices; researching a statewide digital collection platform; and considering options to approach publishers and vendors about licensing and purchasing options as a collective. A survey will be forthcoming this year to help inform this work statewide.

7. **Awareness & Advocacy:**
   a. New York State:
      - The Governor proposed a cut to both library operating aid and State Aid for Library Construction but left NOVELny intact. The Governor has introduced a new budget line ($12 million) to stabilize the Office of Cultural Education (OCE) which is where the Division of Library Development is housed. Our efforts are now focused on influencing the one-house budget bills out of the Assembly and Senate to seek an increase to library and construction aid, to retain and increase NOVELny funding, and to ask that they also introduce the budget line to stabilize OCE.
         - We will have the latest information for how to best influence a positive outcome at the DA meeting.

      - **Legislative Priorities** are listed on the [New York Library Association website](#).

      - With the support of the MHLS System Services Advisory Committee MHLS is joining forces with other public library systems in NYS to advocate to the Governor that public libraries and association libraries be **added to the list of "sensitive locations" where a judicial warrant would be required** for federal officers to enter a location. You can read more about the Governor's plans on this topic [here](#).

      - Reminder: **The Dr. John L. Flateau Voting & Elections Database of New York Act goes into effect on April 1, 2026.** This new law (Election Law §3-112) requires any entity that holds a public vote in NYS to electronically submit data about the vote to the NYS Board of Elections. While the act goes into effect on April 1 - meaning it applies to any votes taking place after that day - it seems that libraries have until 12/31 to actually submit their data. The NYS Board of Elections is required to distribute information on how specifically you are required to do this data submission within 180 days of the act going into effect. We have been consulted on this and the takeaway was that the entity running the election is likely who will be required to submit the information, but so far no guidance has been issued and, as per this law, that guidance may not arrive until October. More information about the law can be found here (https://elections.ny.gov/flateau-database)

      - MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich has been appointed as chair of a statewide committee that will analyze the current state funding formula for library aid to make recommendations to raise the current ceiling that exists for this funding. This year the

Governor pointed to the statutory levels of funding as her excuse for cutting library aid so the library community needs to address the fact that the statutory levels are out of date given that they were set over 40 years ago.

    b. National:

- **Association libraries in New York State that have been serving as U.S. Passport Acceptance Facilities are being told to cease and desist** in that role by the federal government. Even libraries that have served in this capacity for decades are not being spared from a new interpretation of the law that allows non-federal agencies to provide this service. In our region we have four libraries impacted by this: Beekman, Cold Spring, Lagrange, and New Paltz. We are therefore advocating for a bill to amend the Passport Act (H.R. 6997) that would allow these libraries to remain as U.S. Passport Acceptance Facilities. A service that helps geographically isolated locations have access to this federal necessity in a trusted, familiar location. <mark>Action Requested</mark>: Please call your federal legislators to urge them to support this bill.

- Recently, Congress passed a series of spending bills that included an ***increase*** in federal funds for libraries in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026! Less than a year ago, an executive order threatened to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the only source of federal funding dedicated to libraries, and the White House proposed eliminating funding for libraries in FY 2026. Thanks to your efforts, IMLS still exists. Library grants are intact. And Congress just passed a $1.4 million increase in funding for library programs run by IMLS through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), bringing LSTA funding to $212.5 million for FY 2026. Congress also provided level funding ($30 million) for the school library-focused Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program. <mark>Action Requested</mark>: Please tell your Congressmembers that you appreciate federal funding for libraries; You can use the American Library Association's online advocacy center to do so.

8. Interlibrary Loan Services

    a. **MHLS will order OCLC requests when Empire delivery is available.** Our policy for interlibrary loan requests includes that we will not Order items that are available for circulation in MHLS or the SEAL catalog. The policy also includes that we do not order items that cost less than $25 at Amazon, which was set in place with the logic that if it was more cost effective to purchase the item than borrow and ship the item the library should make the purchase. MHLS is now subscribed to Empire delivery services, and while that is in place we can actually get items from OCLC without incurring a delivery cost. At this time, we are recommending that you place the request for us to review. If we can find it in the Empire delivery network, we will fill the request. If it is not available, we will then follow up with the Amazon search and advise you on next steps. We have updated the text on our website to reflect this and the procedures in the Resource Sharing Standards.

9. Construction Program Services

    a. State Aid for Library Construction Project Numbers and Deadlines
       Projects have 6 years to be completed (Chapter 333 of the Laws of NY 2022).
       0386-21-**** - July 1, 2020-June 30, 2026

0386-22-**** - July 1, 2021-June 30, 2027
0386-23-**** - July 1, 2022-June 30, 2028
0386-24-**** - July 1, 2023-June 30, 2029
0386-25-**** - July 1, 2024-June 30, 2030
0386-26-**** - July 1, 2024-June 30, 2031

   b. 0386-25-**** State Aid for Library Construction Projects [Announced](#)

   c. Interested in learning more? Join Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, on **April 14 at 10AM** for an online informational session on *Applying for Funds Through the State Aid for Library Construction Program* | [REGISTER](#)

10. Communications Among Member Libraries

   a. 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.

      Member library directors will soon receive an encrypted email with two attached PDF files, one containing the library information we have on file, the other for the library's trustee information we have on file. We ask that you **review the information in the files, and if changes are not needed - respond to the email stating that the information is correct and does not require changes**.

      All member library directors are asked to **submit updated details through a form** (links will be provided in the email) **or confirm the information provided by Friday, March 6, 2026.**

      If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Werskey, Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist, swerskey@midhudson.org.

11. Special Populations

   a. **The Public Library Association (PLA) is offering a free session for American Library Association (ALA) Members on *Responding to ICE at the Library: Real World Approaches* on February 24th.** [Learn more about this event](#). You must log in to your ALA account to register.

   b. **Know Your Rights Cards:** MHLS still has a small supply of Know Your Rights cards provided by the New York State Library (NYSL) and the New York Immigration Coalition in an assortment of languages. Please contact [Kerstin Cruger](#) if you would like to receive additional cards. Please include the preferred amount and the languages you would like to receive in your email request. A second round of printing was offered by the NYSL and MHLS placed an order for the most requested languages from our first order and additional languages not previously requested. When the supplies arrive, MHLS will offer cards to our members through an on-demand request form.

   c. **The NYS Library has published a [Library Accessibility Guide](#).** This guide was designed in the months following the NYS Library's Room For Everyone: A Library Accessibility Day of Learning event this past Summer. Library workers can use this guide to learn more about physical accessibility, digital accessibility, and universal design. It's equipped with resources and materials created by NYS agencies such as the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, as well as specific insight from the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library regarding assistive technology. This information will support library

workers in connecting patrons with information tailored to their needs. For those moments when additional clarity is needed, you can find pathways to connect with accessibility experts on this resource guide. Relying on additional support and insight from experts will help us all evolve our approach to serving individuals, families, and communities with disabilities.

d. **America 250:** [New York at 250: Resources for Educators](). This guide for educators includes a variety of information, including classroom resources from the Office of Cultural Education at the New York State Education Department.

e. **Start a free Girls Who Code Club** and help students build confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of belonging through coding. Clubs meet just 1–2 hours per week and can fit into your existing schedule—after school, during lunch, or online. When you start a Club, you'll receive free access to our curriculum for grades 3–12, plus training and resources to support facilitators every step of the way. Ready to get started? Complete the Clubs Application at girlswhocode.com/clubsapply and affiliate with our Community Partnership to unlock exclusive benefits and swag. The Mid-Hudson Library System is a Girls Who Code Community Partner! Check out the perks when you start a club at your library.

- **Help spread the word to your teens about this summer program!**
  Girls Who Code's free, [virtual Pathways program]() is back for summer 2026! If you're a high school girl or non-binary student, this is your chance to explore the world of tech at your own pace, create meaningful tech-for-good projects, and join a supportive global community of students like you.
  Why you'll love Pathways:
  - Build personalized projects around causes you care about
  - Explore AI, Game Design, Cybersecurity, and Data Science at your own pace
  - Connect with industry mentors and students from around the world

  Program dates: June 29 to August 14, 2026
  [Apply]() by February 25 for priority consideration or by April 10 for the final deadline.
  Need more info? Reach out to pathways@girlswhocode.com.

f. **The [Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence]()** offers free in-person and online training for library staff and community members on Gender-Based Violence Awareness, Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence and many more topics. You can also download and print pre-made informational cards and flyers or request printed copies through their office. Those seeking help can access services 24/7. Chat, text and calls are completely confidential; secure and private; staffed by professionals who can help; available 7 days/week, 24 hours per day. TEXT at 844.997.2121 | CALL at 800.942.6906

g. **Hunger Solutions NY:** If your library is interested in becoming a Summer meals site* please contact [Cody Bloomfield](), Summer Nutrition Specialist [Hunger Solutions NY]().
- Site Requirements + Eligibility
  - Be located in an eligible low-income area (for open sites), meaning ≥50% of the area's children qualify for F/RP school meals
    a. Can be determined based on local school and/or Census data. We can help!
    b. CEP schools must have ISP of 31.25% to qualify

- Attend required training & fulfill other requirements in their sponsor agreement (e.g., tracking meal counts)
- Serve meals (provided by the sponsor) to kids 18 and under, in safe and sanitary conditions
- Ensure children eat all meals on site, unless approved for non-congregate meals in rural areas
- Rural non-congregate meals
  - Permanent flexibility. Includes grab-and-go and home delivered meals
  - Must be in rural areas when and where in-person meal service isn't available
  - New York State Education Department (NYSED) approval is required to operate RNC
  - In area eligible locations (50% or more F/RP), any child can enroll
    a. In non-area eligible locations, RNC meals can still be served
  - Provide menu and directions ○
    a. Meals should involve minimal preparation

*At "open" sites, any child or teen 18 and under can drop by for a meal at no cost. Other site types include rural non-congregate sites, camps or "closed-enrolled" sites.

h. **Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) is now ready to begin distributing the new NLS Digital Advanced Player 2 (DA2).** This player is ideal for patrons who use BARD, have access to a WIFI connection, and would like to download books for themselves directly to their talking book player. If a patron has Bluetooth headphones or speakers, they can pair them with this player and listen to a book from anywhere in the room. Alternatively, cartridges will still work with the new player just like the older players. Patrons may contact TBBL to request a DA2 digital player. Patrons may also receive cartridges in the mail if they prefer and use the Digital Advanced Player 1 or Digital Standard Player. Patrons who prefer to use the BARD Mobile app or another device to listen to books from BARD, can continue to do so without this player. TBBL Phone: 800-342-3688 | Email: tbbl@nysed.gov

i. **211 / ConnectAll:** 211 NY has an informational web page and reproducible flyers to help you spread the word about the Affordable Broadband Act, Low-Cost Home Internet available for qualified New Yorkers. Visit, https://www.211newyork.org/aba to access information and promotional materials.

j. **USPS Postmark Update:** On December 24, 2025, the U.S. Postal Service changed how postmarks are applied. Under the new process, USPS does not stamp mail when they receive it at your local post office. Instead, the "official" postmark date is whenever your envelope first hits an automated sorting machine at a regional processing center. As a result, the date shown on the envelope may be several days later than the day you placed it in the mail. This can impact bills, taxes, and vote by mail for elections that rely on the postmark to identify if the item was sent within the appropriate period. Information on how to ensure a postmark on the date of delivery can be found on the USPS website.

12. **Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems**
   a. We teamed up with the Westchester Library System, Ramapo Catskill Library System, and Southeastern Library Resources Council to apply for a NYS ConnectAll grant to help underwrite the future of the Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley program. Our application was successful; the program was awarded $750,000. However, it has since come to light that this is a reimbursable grant which none of us can

afford to forward fund, therefore we are in negotiations with the ConnectAll office to see if a lower amount could be awarded, or, if they would make an exception for us. Please stay tuned.

13. **Administrative**

   a. **Annual Report to the State**
   We are still awaiting crucial information from the State Library regarding the final questions, question numbers, question instructions and software login information. MHLS will provide data packets to help you complete the report. Packets cannot be made available until the State finalizes the report questions and instructions.

   If you haven't already registered, please plan to join us for one of the following workshop sessions: **Feb 26th** at 10:00-11:00 AM | Register -OR- **Feb 27th** 2:00-3:00 PM | Register

   At this time, a **mid-March deadline is still anticipated**. Questions? Please contact Laura Crisci.

   b. **Your Feedback Needed: New MHLS Website:** MHLS staff have been hard at work designing a new midhudson.org to achieve several institutional goals including taking the advice of a PR Consultant who recommended to the board that the homepage be more directed to a general, public audience; to merge our current multiple separate sites (e.g. Knowledge Base, DA, Vote Toolbox, Board, etc.) into one site which will improve the overarching search feature; to weed out information members have not found useful; to ensure the site is completely accessible to modern standards; and to improve the user experience to access the information you do rely on. While we are not 100% done with this draft, at this point we're comfortable inviting you to take a look and give us feedback to ensure it works well for you.
      - **ACTION REQUESTED:** Please visit https://staging.midhudson.org/ to give the new site a test drive. You can leave feedback through the form linked at the top of each page of that draft site. This initial feedback window is open until Friday, March 20 at which time we will use your feedback to fine tune the site before going live in April 2026 with the new site.

   c. **Plan of Service Development:**
      - Plan of Service Development Timeline
      - Director Focus Groups:
         - Thank you to all who have already participated in a county-based focus group to help shape the new plan of service.
         - **If you were not able to join us for your county's focus group:**
            a. There is an additional focus group session planned for Thursday, March 5 at 10am. Directors are welcome to register for this event here.
            b. For any director who will not be able to participate at a live focus group, we will provide a survey for you to provide your input.
      - Board President Focus Groups: Two sessions are being offered for board presidents to share their thoughts and plans for your library in the future to help shape the plan of service:
         - Friday, March 6 at 10am
         - Monday, March 9 at 4pm
      - **ACTION REQUESTED**: Plan of Service Development Survey – due Friday, March 20
         - Part A: Reactions to current plan of service goals

- Part B: Ranking Service Priorities for new plan of service
- Free Direct Access Plan Task Force
    - The task force met once in January and has another meeting scheduled for February.
    - Task Force Members:
        a. Columbia County: Tammy Gaskell, Director, Roeliff Jansen Community Library
        b. Dutchess County
            i. Kristen Campbell, Director, Grinnell Public Library District
            ii. Tom Lawrence, Director, Poughkeepsie Public Library District
            iii. Lisa Palmer, Director, Hyde Park Public Library District
        c. Greene County: Jaki Elmo-Emel, Director, Mountain Top Library
        d. Putnam County: Donna Perolli, Director, Kent Public Library
        e. Ulster County: Jesse Chance, Director, Town of Esopus Library
- Central Library Service Plan Development: The Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee has met this year to help shape this plan and will have a draft for your consideration at the April DA meeting.

d. We are pleased to welcome **Jennifer Montalbano** as the new MHLS Administrative Assistant.