

Board-to-Board Visits | Mid-Hudson Library System

Trustee Visits to Member Library Boards

As a trustee of the Mid-Hudson Library System you represent the member libraries of your county. **It is recommended that you visit an average of two member library Boards of Trustees each year during your tenure on the MHLS Board to stay in touch with the libraries of your county.**

These visits not only help you stay connected to member libraries, giving you context for conversations going on at MHLS Board meetings, they also serve to strengthen member library connections to the System by:

- Raising member library board awareness of System services that can help them.
- Increasing communication between member libraries and MHLS.

Planning your Visit

- Coordinate with the other MHLS trustees from your county to visit the widest number of members possible. (If you are also a trustee of a member library please don't count that library as one of your MHLS visits.)
- Contact a library's board president, introduce yourself and ask to be added to their next agenda.
 - Let the board president know that you are coming to introduce yourself and MHLS, to share resources, and to listen.
 - The MHLS Visit portion of the agenda should take up to 15 minutes but ask if you can stay longer to listen in to what issues the board is facing.
- MHLS Professional Staff (Josh or Rebekkah) can equip you with the "*Introduction to the Mid-Hudson Library System*" packet and current information that may be of interest to the member library boards you visit and brief you on 'hot topics' that might be buzzing through the System or that specific member library.
- Directions to MHLS member libraries: <http://midhudson.org/directions.htm>

During Your Visit – Suggestions:

- Thank the member library Board for their time and introduce yourself.
 - You might include information about your term with MHLS, and your own library background.
- Let the Trustees know you are there for a friendly visit – to 'put a face' on MHLS for them. You are there to share some information, but your primary goal is to hear what's going on in their library.
 - You could ask what is going on at their library – what issues are they facing?
 - Try to listen more than you speak at this meeting.
- *Tip:* Don't try to problem solve at this point → It's okay to say, "*I don't know but I'll find out.*" Confirm that MHLS Professional Staff will follow up on the question, or follow up yourself via conversation with the board president after you obtain an answer.
- As we all do, some member library Trustees may have very strong specific concerns about select issues. It's best to hear their thoughts, thank them for being so open, and assure them that you will bring their comments back to the MHLS Board.

MHLS Communication

The Trustee Services Committee recommends a quick report at the next MHLS Board meeting after your visits. Share things like: Which library did you visit? | What is going well at the library? | What challenges do they currently face? | Were there any System-specific issues raised that should be brought to the attention of the MHLS Board? | What type of questions did they ask? (The MHLS Professional Staff and the Trustee Services Committee hope to compile a list of FAQs for future visits) | Your overall impressions after the visit.