

# MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | February 2021

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

## 1. Delivery Services

- a. MHLS staff continues monthly and quarterly assessments of circulation activity in member libraries as compared to pre-pandemic times. This past quarter we made relatively minor adjustments that will go into effect on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Impacted libraries have been contacted by Delivery Operations Manager, Tom Finnigan.
  - At-a-Glance:
    1. Delivery volume is down by 12% from this time last year with delivery vans running at 56% capacity. This COVID-19 era related analysis has revealed an opportunity to optimized delivery van capacity from pre-pandemic times. We are taking this into account as we continue to monitor volume changes quarterly.
    2. Systemwide (December 2019 compared to December 2020):
      - a. Circ is down by 27%
      - b. Searches in Encore are down by 18%
      - c. Holds placed is down by 5.5%
- b. We have approached delivery vendor Valley Courier with a request to run alternate routes after snow days/holidays that fall on a Monday or Thursday.
- c. Thank you to all for your efforts to clear access to your facilities after the Storm Orlena which ensured we could make deliveries the day after.
- d. Please remember to send back any “extra” delivery bins, we need them! Particularly after a holiday or day we have paused delivery due to weather. MHLS delivery bins should not be used for non-delivery related storage, including quarantine efforts.

## 2. Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services

- a. Mobile Worklist is being reintroduced with new features and we are bringing back title paging, which has been updated to respect our paging order. We have been testing with a couple of our member libraries and have assurances that the product is working as described. To assist you in getting familiar with Mobile Worklists, new documentation and recorded webinars are being added to the [MHLS Knowledgebase](#). **You should delete the old version of Mobile Worklist from any device you have had it installed on and reinstall it from the app store.**
- b. Baker & Taylor Title 360 renewal notices will soon be sent out. MHLS has secured reduced pricing from the vendor to provide the 360 service for the annual cost of \$100 per library. This enables you to use their online ordering where records are imported into Sierra by the MHLS Cataloging Team. If you would like more information, please open a ticket with [techsupport@midhudson.org](mailto:techsupport@midhudson.org)
- c. We are piloting a local pickup only element for holds with the Pine Hill Library who has snowshoes available that can be borrowed by visiting the library only. These items are not suitable for delivery but

a patron who wishes to pickup and return the items to Pine Hill is welcome to borrow the snowshoes. In this case the issue wasn't really about managing "who" could borrow, but how they could borrow. Pine Hill director Gisi Vella will let us know how it works, but this could be applied to other items where delivery is an issue, eliminating the use of local holds when the intent is a local pickup.

- d. We are in the process of adding a new value to the Annual Report field in the item record. The field will allow us to create more granularity within the suppressed items. The Annual Report field serves two purposes, first it provides the statistical codes that divide the item records for the purpose of completing the Annual Report to the State, but it also contains the code that "hides" or suppresses things from view in the public catalog. Currently the value "n-Suppressed" is used to tag items that libraries would like to catalog for internal use, but not show in the catalog. This would include "dummy cards" and internal use equipment. We also use it for items with a status 'Lost & Paid', 'Discard' or 'Claims returned', which have not been updated for 3 months. A new field value of "! – MHLS Staff Suppress" will be used for the quarterly updates. This will help to differentiate the items that have been suppressed for their status value from those that are intentionally suppressed by library staff in the entry process.
- e. Serials is Launched! At this time we are working through some local issues as libraries get used to the new process or add new titles. In the fall we will have a retraining in order to prepare you for the 2022 checkin card ranges that will need to be entered.

**Note:**

We've confirmed there is a bug in the current version of Sierra that when double clicking on a checkin card, it will sometimes open up a different record instead.

To get around this issue, please use this workaround:

1. Click ONCE on your library's checkin record so that it is highlighted
2. Then click on the CARD tab on the left.

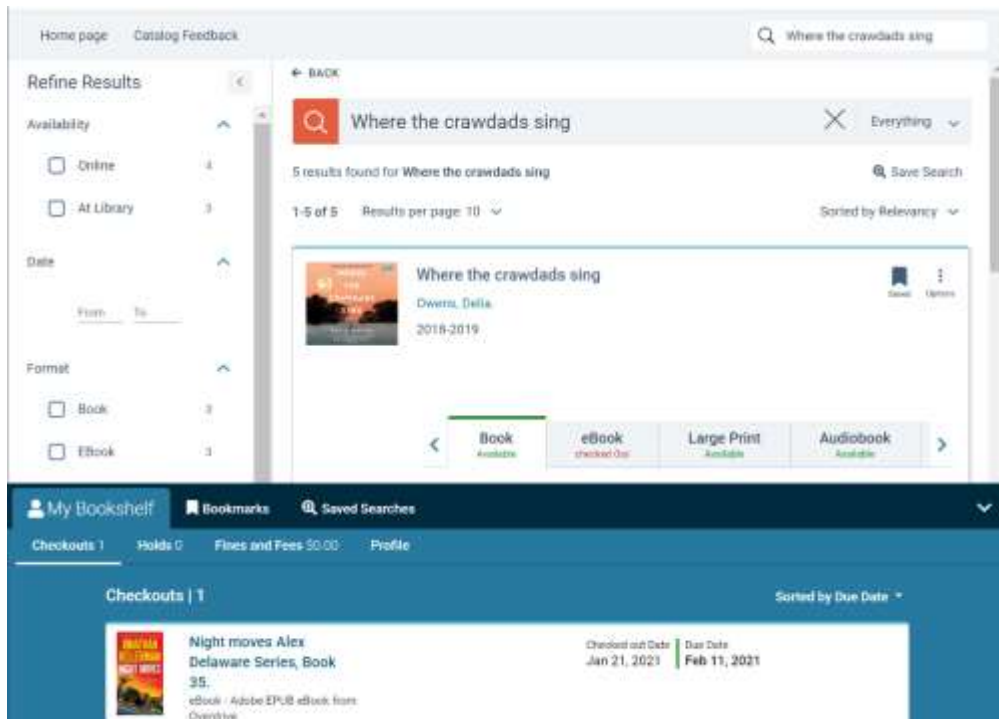
**b19033643**

**TITLE** WebMD the magazine.

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- f. Vega is coming! MHLS begins our active rollout as a development partner for consortia this month. Up until now the work has been to build the interface to meet the basic needs of a standalone library. We will work with the development team to make certain that the more complex displays and logic necessary to manage searching and viewing the catalog an individual library member as well as a participating library existing in a consortia. The interface is coming along well and embraces eResources in a much more fluid and inclusive way. Patrons will find the interface engaging and intuitive. See a sneak peek from Ferguson Library below.



Click to see a brief marketing video from Innovative on [Vega Discover](#)

### 3. Coordinated IT Services

- a. Extreme Networks has purchased Aerohive, the company many member libraries use for WIFI access points. They will continue to support the current Aerohive Access Points and subscriptions, but have issued an end to the sale of Aerohive Products. This means we cannot purchase additional Aerohive Access Points or renew subscriptions with the Aerohive HiveManager. We are working closely with Extreme Networks in planning a migration to Extreme Networks Cloud IQ that will best match everyone's needs and resources. The goal of the migration is to continue the use of the current Aerohive products, while allowing the addition of new units and subscriptions.

As part of the migration, **we are preparing a group buy of new Extreme Network Access Points.** This will be done in an Action Memo in early summer, this year. The Extreme Networks ExtremeWireless AP305C is the successor to the Aerohive AP230 which is currently installed at most libraries. The current market price of the Extreme Networks ExtremeWireless AP305C is \$555.00 and a 5 Year Cloud IQ Subscription is \$274.31. Libraries who are expiring this year or wish to expand their access will need to budget for each unit at the combined cost of about \$830 for the five-year subscription. We will be

hoping for some reduction with volume, but won't be able to negotiate with them until we know the number of units involved in the potential purchase.

You will recall that an MHLS funded initiative provided the first unit for each library over a 3-year period and committed to provide ongoing central management and reporting. We are in our 5<sup>th</sup> year of the program and original units for the libraries who received units in the first year are now expiring.

**Expiring libraries include:** Amenia(1), Cairo(1), Coxsackie(1), Esopus(1), Hudson(4), Hunter(1), Hurley(1), Hyde Park(1), Millbrook(1), Milton(1), Mountain Top(1), New Paltz(1), Northeast Millerton(1), Red Hook(1), Rosendale(1), Ulster(1), Valatie(1), West Hurley & Woodstock all have units expiring 10/18/21. The number of expiring units is shown in parenthesis.

#### 4. Professional Development & Continuing Education

- a. New Director Resources: We have a lot of new faces at MHLS member libraires this year! 12% of member library directors are new to their position in the past year with a few more retirements on the horizon this year. We know new(er) directors have a lot on their plate and MHLS is here to help!
  - The New Directors Forum is back for 2021! Our first event this year will be held the afternoon of the DA meeting (February 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm). Our topic is "Sierra for New Directors" presented by Laurie Shedrick, MHLS Assistant Director/Technology Operations Manager. Please [register online](#) for this event.
  - The [New Directors section of the MHLS web site](#) is a great reference for new(er) directors in the System.
  - One-on-One Consultations – MHLS staff is here to help! From Sierra workflow issues, to funding, governance and management issues, feel free to reach out to us to get the help you need, when you need it. To get started:
    1. Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Executive Director: x239 | [rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)
      - a. Start with Rebekkah for all things related to Board, Funding and Management issues
    2. Laurie Shedrick, Assistant Director/Technology Operations Manager: x220 | [lshedrick@midhudson.org](mailto:lshedrick@midhudson.org)
      - a. Quick Sierra, cataloging, Encore or IT issue? Open a ticket by emailing [techsupport@midhudson.org](mailto:techsupport@midhudson.org)
      - b. Larger questions/issues or not sure if it's a small or large issue? Start with Laurie for all things Sierra, Encore, Cataloging & IT
      - c. [Workflow Consultation Request Form](#)
    3. Casey Conlin, Library Sustainability Coordinator: x260 | [cconlin@midhudson.org](mailto:cconlin@midhudson.org)
      - a. Start with Casey for COVID-19 related topics, annual report issues, strategic planning, State Aid for Library Construction, Adult and Family Literacy grant support, and more! Casey also helps with board and management issues.
- b. This spring, the **Reimagining Library Services series** will continue to explore the new services libraries have found to support their communities and new ways to deliver services people have come to rely on through the pandemic and the recovery.

- **Collaborations and Partnerships | Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> | 10:00-11:30 am | [Register](#)**  
Working with an organization in your community or a neighboring library can help both parties provide better services than they could alone. At this workshop, we'll cover strategies for finding, developing and maintaining collaborations that increase the reach and capacity of your library, and hear from libraries that have built effective, worthwhile relationships.
  - **eBooks | Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup> | 10:00-11:30 am | [Register](#)** In the pandemic, eBooks took centerstage in collections as libraries met patrons' needs amid stay-at-home orders and the pandemic. Understanding patron expectations and habits around eBooks will be critical in building relevant, sustainable collections that serve the people in our communities at a reasonable cost. At this workshop, we'll review strategies for understanding eBook collection use at your library, eBook collection development, and budgeting to meet patron demand for electronic materials.
  - **Online Programming Like a Pro | Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> | 10:00-11:30 am | [Register](#)** | Online programming started as a stop-gap solution to connect with patrons safely during the pandemic, but many libraries have found it's an effective way to reach people who might not be able to make it to the library building and plan to continue providing programming online even as the risk of COVID is reduced and social distancing restrictions are lifted. At this online workshop we'll review best practice and technique for creating engaging and secure experiences for your participants whether it's storytime or your board meeting.
- c. **Libraries Addressing Food Scarcity with Hunger Solutions NY | Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> | 2:00-3:30 pm | [Register](#)** | The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented rise in food insecurity. Fortunately, librarians are no strangers to connecting children and families with resources they need; as trusted messengers and community hubs, libraries can help connect patrons with federal nutrition programs that alleviate hunger. Join Krista Hersdorfer, Child Nutrition Programs Specialist at Hunger Solutions NY, and participating MHLS member libraries to learn about the ways libraries can get involved, from serving summer meals for kids to sharing information about SNAP, WIC, school meals, and other vital supports.

## 5. Consulting & Development

- a. Reminder: all public libraries must have a Pandemic Response Plan/Public Health Emergency Plan in place by April 2021. This is strongly recommended for association libraries as well.
- [Pandemic Response Plan/Health Emergency Plan](#) Templates
    1. [NYS Public Employer Health Emergency Planning Template](#) (provided by Emergency Preparedness Solutions)
    2. [Library-specific template](#) (provided by the Pioneer Library System)
- b. Deferral of Property Tax Payments During COVID-19: [New state legislation](#) authorizes municipalities to defer certain property taxes “during a declared state disaster emergency” for up to 120 days or provides for installment payments thereafter. This is to be determined municipality-by-municipality so each library that receives an appropriation of town funds, funds allocated due to a municipal ballot vote (414 funds) and special district public libraries will need to be aware that their municipality may make use of this mechanism which does open a door for a municipality to slow down payment to the library. While NYS Education Law does require the municipality to turn over *voter-directed* funding to a library upon written request of the library board (414 and special district), libraries will want to be sensitive to the

pandemic-driven nature of residents' financial situation.

- c. NYS Property Tax Cap [Inflation and Allowable Levy Growth Factors](#) now available for FY 2021
- d. Need help with the new NYS Minimum Standard on policy review? *"...board-approved written policies for the operation of the library, which shall be reviewed at least once every five years or earlier if required by law..."* Download the [MHLS Essential Documents Inventory Workbook](#) (Excel) *Updated 2020*, a customizable spreadsheet available for download to help you track policy development and review at your library. This list of policies matches the list from the [Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State](#) and is updated by MHLS staff as new policies arise.
- e. Public Votes
  - Association and Municipal Libraries planning to pursue a 414 vote in 2021 should plan to attend our upcoming webinar: Municipal Ballot Votes (414 Votes) in the Time of COVID-19 on Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 – 11:00 am | [Register](#)  
This event is for directors, boards and campaign committee members of libraries seeing to have a municipal ballot vote, also known as a 414 vote, in November 2021. Given the petition signing process will be taking place during a pandemic, this webinar will share the timeline for the activities related to this vote with that in mind. At this webinar we will review: Procedural steps the board of trustees must take to get off to a good start and be in compliance with all applicable laws, including the new early voting law and the Property Tax Cap; Petitioning tips and Campaign best practices.
  - See section 7 of this report for an update on petition signature thresholds.
  - Libraries planning to hold budget votes in 2021 should confirm deadlines and plan to submit petitions and other necessary documentation to their relevant town, village, or city clerks according to their local Board of Elections' political calendar. The NY State BOE [Political Calendar](#) is a good general source, but libraries should check with their local BOE for the most accurate dates relevant to voter registration, absentee ballots, early voting, petitions, and other relevant voting dates.
- f. The 2021 MHLS Turning Outward Cohort Program has begun with member libraries building the teams that will help them engage with and learn about their community in an authentic way and build a strong strategic plan using the public knowledge they will help develop. The training and collaboration for this year's program will be online and include considerations for how to safely engage community members in conversations amid the pandemic and the recovery.
- g. Recent Grants to MHLS
  - Grow with Google Partnership Grant: MHLS has received a \$4,300 grant to augment the shared OverDrive collection with workforce development and job search help related content (this will include Civil Service exam prep ebooks) and for the regional promotion of the [Primer app](#) to local business owners.
  - Libraries of Local Grant: MHLS has received a grant from The Lifeboats HV Fund of The New World Foundation to establish four "Libraries of Local," formerly known as The Resilience Hubs, that will house enhanced collections of books and films, seed libraries, outdoor programming



space, and a custom designed kiosk to house the enhanced collection; collaborate on a regional web site that will serve as a clearinghouse of local expertise – how-to videos, links into our catalog, etc.; produce online events for 2021 that all member libraries can promote locally and resources that all member libraries can utilize to book even more local programming if you want to create a series of your own this year. The 2021 focus will be on food security, specifically growing and preserving your own food. This is a pilot year for this program. The goal of this project is to establish libraries as a hub to develop local community resilience in the face of continued environmental, economic and social disruption and to honor the local expertise throughout the Hudson Valley that can find a platform through local public libraries to reinforce the strength of the idea that “local supports local.”

- h. Single-Use Restroom Signage Law: By March 23, 2021 New York State Law requires that all single occupancy public restrooms be designated “...as gender neutral for use by no more than one occupant at a time or for family or assisted use...Such gender neutral bathroom facilities shall be clearly designated by the posting of such on or near the entry door of each facility.” Existing single-occupancy bathrooms must remove any signage designating the bathroom as “male” or “female” and replace it with signage indicating it is open to people of all genders.
- i. The [Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement Act \(CASE Act\)](#) was signed into December to create a small claims court for copyright proceedings at the Copyright Office in the Library of Congress where those who think their copyright is being infringed can bring actions against infringers. The new law will protect the rights of copyright holders and artists, but it also means American organizations and individuals, from small businesses to religious institutions to nonprofits and libraries, maybe subject to up to \$30,000 in statutory damages per case for merely sharing a meme or posting a photo they do not have the rights to. The new law also creates opportunities for bad actors to abuse the system in an effort to scare people and organizations into paying settlements using software to crawl websites and social media accounts for copyrighted images. More information should be forthcoming on compliance and procedure around the CASE Act, but libraries should ensure they are using images and media which they have the rights to share and providing attribution where necessary. The websites below provide large libraries of images, many of which can be used for free without attribution, but it is the library’s responsibility to always verify the rights and attribution requirements for any images or media before sharing or otherwise using them. Visit the Western New York Library Resources Council’s [Ask a Lawyer](#) page for more information about how to handle a CASE Act claim.
  - <https://www.pexels.com/>
  - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>
  - <https://stocksnap.io/>
  - <https://creativecommons.org/>
  - <https://unsplash.com/>
  - <https://nappy.co/>
  - <https://www.wocintechchat.com/wocintechphotos>
- j. Oath of Office Reminder
  - New York State Public Officer's Law §10 (<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBO/10>) requires all public library trustees (but not association library trustees) to take and file an oath

of office within 30 days of beginning their term of office. Public library trustees are public officers and the oath of office is required to officially undertake and perform the duties of a public library trustee.

- If a public library trustee does not properly complete and file an oath of office, the trustee's position may be deemed vacant. See Public Officer's Law §30(1)(h) (<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBO/30>).
- For more information about how and why the oath of office is administered, and where to properly file an oath of office, please see the Oaths of Office FAQ on the New York State Library website: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/oath.htm>

## 6. Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access

- a. Remote access to Ancestry.com is scheduled to end on March 31, 2021. Mark your calendar to remove any local links to their site that you may have on your website. Libraries who subscribe to Ancestry should revert to using their IP based access.
- b. eMagazines have launched in OverDrive bringing in more than 3,200 titles, available in the OverDrive platform for browser reading, and Libby for in-app reader access. The Libby app is capable of downloading titles to read away from your wifi. It does require that patrons [adjust their app download setting](#) to bring the content into their device. Our access through the RBDigital platform is now up to date and will direct patrons to try Libby. That platform will sunset on March 31 and we will only be using OverDrive and Libby for e Magazine access.

Things to know...

- All titles are available for simultaneous use
- There are no circulation caps on titles or limits to patron checkouts
- Checkouts do not count against patron limits for ebooks and audiobooks
- There is no subscribe feature for automatic checkout
- A rolling 3 years of back issues will be available where the issues exist
- Web links have been changed to direct patrons to the eMagazine collection feature page. From the feature page it is easy to browse all titles or switch to a genre. Home Access and member hosted websites are being updated. No tickets are required to manage this.  
<https://mhls.overdrive.com/collections/featured/4>

## 7. Awareness & Advocacy Services

- a. Vaccine Advocacy: MHLS continues to work to influence legislators and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to include library workers in the 1b phase of the vaccination schedule. Last week the New York Library Association introduced an [online advocacy form](#) to expedite your advocacy on this topic. Please share this far and wide to amplify this issue with the Governor and DOH.
- b. Budget Advocacy:
  - Governor Cuomo has proposed a 10% cut to library aid from 2019 aid levels and knocked back State Aid for Library Construction to \$14 million after its pre-pandemic high of \$34 million.
  - State aid underwrites many of the services your library relies on accounting for 75% of the MHLS Operating budget and 100% of the Central Library Program which funds programs such as OverDrive, eMagazines, Mango, Universal Class, JobNow and contributes to critical programs



and services such as Encore and delivery services. While we are hopeful that some of the funds “withheld” in 2020 will be restored by March 31<sup>st</sup>, nothing is certain and having a 22.6% cut in 2020 compounded by another 10% cut in 2021 is bad news for us all.

- Advocacy at the state level will look a bit different this year: we are scheduling all meetings as online meetings and will be inviting library stakeholders like yourself to join us the week of February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- To help you prepare for this work, MHLS is offering an Advocacy Briefing on Tuesday, February 16th at 3:00pm, please [register online](#) for this event.
- The #1 thing you can do right now is to fine tune your talking points about how your library has helped your residents during the pandemic and how MHLS has supported you in this work. This is where we want to focus our messaging to demonstrate to legislators that we are more than just books and that local libraries can do more, for less, thanks to their partnerships forged within the Mid-Hudson Library System.
- [The New York Library Association is calling on all library advocates](#) – from library staff and trustees to library patrons and municipal leaders who understand how critical libraries are, particularly during the pandemic – to help your state representatives understand the value libraries bring to help New Yorkers “build back better.”
- Don’t let the pandemic stop you from inviting your state representatives to your library or to offer to advertise virtual office hours. Citizens need a platform to connect with their representatives and their local library is still a place that can help to facilitate that access.

c. Legislative Advocacy: MHLS has been influential in assisting with two bills that have been introduced for the current legislative session:

- Petition Bill: A bill has been passed in the NYS Senate, and has moved on to the NYS Assembly, to reduce the signature thresholds for petitions for both 414/municipal ballot votes and school district public library trustee nominees for 2021 in recognition of the challenge of petition signature gathering in a pandemic.
- Trustee Education Bill: This bill has been re-introduced to amend NYS Education Law in relation to requiring members of a board of trustees of public and association libraries to complete two hours of continuing education per year.

d. New Senators in our region – if your library is in one of these districts please reach out to introduce yourself and invite these new representatives to your library so they can get a first-hand look at the good work you are doing in their district:

- [Senator Mike Martucci \(R\)](#) 42nd District [Email](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)
  - Elting Memorial Library
  - Rosendale Library
- [Senator Michelle Hinchey \(D\)](#) 46th District [Email](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)
  - D.R. Evarts Library
  - Cairo Public Library
  - Catskill Public Library & the Palenville Branch
  - Heermance Memorial Library
  - Town of Esopus Library
  - Greenville Public Library

- Mountain Top Library
  - Highland Public Library
  - Hunter Public Library
  - Hurley Library
  - Kingston Library
  - Saugerties Public Library
  - Stone Ridge Library
  - Town of Ulster Public Library
  - West Hurley Public Library
  - Windham Public Library
  - Woodstock Public Library District
  - [Senator Peter Oberacker \(R\) 51st District](#) [Email](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)
    - Phoenicia Library
    - Morton Memorial Library (Pine Hill)
    - Olive Free Library Association
- e. County Funding Advocacy Group
- This group will meet @MHLS on Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. We request that at least one representative from each county plan to attend to share best practices for county-level advocacy. please [register online](#) for this event

## 8. Interlibrary Loan Services

- a. Sierra ILL is launched and is off to a very nice start. As we are actively using the workflows, we now recognize that there are additions necessary to create a more informed request and facilitate a successful loan. We will be adding *Video Recording* and *Audio Recording* to the material types in the drop-down menu and we will be requiring you to provide a library contact who can help us to follow through with request related details and also to enter the pickup location, which is oddly not intuitive. We have also noticed that our instruction did not require staff to edit the due date upon checkout. Our documentation now includes this element, and future training sessions will make a note to point that step out more obviously. Please thank your ILL staff for their patience and feedback! Directors do need to request that ILL be enabled for at least 1 staff person. If you have not yet requested authorization, please do so. There is documentation and video training available on [kb.midhudson.org](http://kb.midhudson.org).
- b. As always---Tara Stohr, from the MHLS Tech Ops Team, is happy to help you to navigate the waters of Inter Library Loan! You can reach her at [tstohr@midhudson.org](mailto:tstohr@midhudson.org) or on extension 224.

## 9. Construction Program Services

- a. Status of 2020-2021 Applications
- 2020-2021 are currently being reviewed by the Division of Library Development. If you have been contacted by MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Casey Conlin to update your application please make the changes as soon as possible and notify him when they have been completed. Contact Casey with any questions about your application.
- b. Getting Ready for the Next Application Round (2021-2022)
- Watch for the *Construction Needs Update Action Memo* in April, this will be the first step to apply in the next funding round.

- *Introduction to the State Aid for Library Construction Program Webinar: Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> | 10:00-11:30am | [Register](#)*
- To get ready for the next round of grant funds:
  1. Update (or create) your library's board approved, prioritized facility plan. (Need help getting started? Check out this [sample outline for a facility plan](#) from MHLS)
  2. Directors will be sent a 2021 Construction Needs/Intent to Apply Action Memo from MHLS via the MHLS-Notices list. Completion of this is the required first step for eligibility in MHLS.
  3. Register for a [NYS Directory Service Account](#) (necessary to access the online application)
  4. **FEIN and SED Vendor Number:** In order for a public library to apply for funding from the NY State Library's Public Library Construction Grant Program, the library must have its own **FEIN** number, which will enable the library to receive a NY State Education Department **vendor number**. A public library must be assigned a vendor number in order to receive construction grant funds.
  5. **Is your building more than 50 years old?** Check out the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Approval Documentation
  6. NYSERDA Program for environmental priority
    - a. Green Jobs Green New York Energy Studies - provides Energy Studies to identify and analyze opportunities to make buildings more efficient, which lowers associated energy costs. Small Businesses with 100 or fewer full-time equivalent employees or Not-For-Profit Organizations of any size are eligible for this costshare program. Pricing: 10 FTE or less: \$100, over 10 and less than 50 FTE: \$250, over 50 FTE: \$500. More info at <https://on.ny.gov/2QD2G8u>.
- c. For more information: <https://midhudson.org/nysconstructiongrant/>.

## 10. Communications Among Member Libraries

- a. No report this month.

## 11. Special Populations

- a. **Strengthening Families Through Early Literacy Practices Webinar | Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup> | 2:00-3:30 pm | [Register](#) | Presented by Dr. Susan Neuman, Professor of Childhood and Literacy Education NYU Part of the 2021 MHLS Reimagining Library Services Series**  
 Learn about strengthening families through early literacy practices with Dr. Susan Neuman, Professor of Childhood and Literacy Education at NYU. Dr. Neuman will be speaking about early literacy skills and particularly focusing on talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing. In this one-hour webinar Library staff will learn why teaching simple early literacy teaching methods to parents is important, and examples of what parents can do to help strengthen early literacy skills outside the library. [Susan Neuman](#) is a specialist in early literacy development whose research and teaching interests include early childhood policy, curriculum, and early reading instruction for children who live in poverty. She has written more than 100 articles and authored and edited eleven books.
- b. **If Your Library Receives a Direct Request from an Inmate at a Correctional Facility:** A reminder to all MHLS libraries that if you receive in the mail a reference request directly from a state correctional facility inmate that you should not respond to them – you should send it along to Tara Stohr at MHLS to

forward to the senior librarian at their facility. This will actually legitimize and facilitate their access to information, as the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has a mechanism and procedure for information sent to prisoners, and it must involve the facility library. Keep in mind that there is seemingly innocent information that certain incarcerated individuals are not allowed to have due to their history of criminal actions, and when the requests come to you unmediated by a facility librarian it is not possible to determine what those specific parameters are. The best way to serve this patron, if they contact your library directly, is to send the request (including the envelope) to Tara Stohr in the delivery.

## 12. Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems

- a. The OverDrive Reciprocal Lending Agreement between Mid-Hudson Library System, Westchester Library System, Ramapo Catskill Library System, and Upper Hudson Library System is progressing and is an action item for the February 2021 DA Business Meeting.
- b. The Public Library Systems Directors Organization's (PULISDO) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiative is compiling a guidebook for applicants to civil service library positions using crowd-sourced responses and scores to from applicants. The PULISDO EDI group is also working to secure training that will support library trustees and staff statewide in understanding issues around systemic racism and building more diverse and inclusive libraries.

## 13. Administrative

- a. MHLS Plan of Service 2022-2026 Development: The Plan has three components that will need to be updated by October 2021. Below is the process that will be used to update each component and where you can be helpful in providing input to shape the plan.
  - MHLS Plan of Service
    1. [Current Plan](#)
    2. Updates to this plan will be shaped by the stakeholder groups below with ultimate approval of the plan by the Directors Association and MHLS Board of Trustees:
      - a. Community Conversations with Directors\*
      - b. System Services Ranking Survey
      - c. Board President Survey (using similar questions as used for the director community conversations)
      - d. System Services Advisory Committee
      - e. MHLS Board
      - f. MHLS Staff
  - Central Library Plan
    1. [Current Plan](#)
    2. This plan will be developed and recommended to the Directors Association and the MHLS Board of Trustees.
  - Free Direct Access Plan
    1. [Current Plan](#)
    2. A committee will be convened, volunteers for this committee are noted below, **if you are interested in joining this team please let Rebekkah know**. This group will develop recommendations for the Directors Association and the MHLS Board of Trustees.

- a. Mary De Bellis, LaGrange
  - b. AnnaLee Dragon, Kinderhook
  - c. Tom Lawrence, Poughkeepsie
  - d. Courtney Tsahalís, Millbrook
- b. The Tech Ops team is taking deliberate action to evaluate and understand the work that is done by individual team members in the wake of the recent departure of ILP Operations Manager, Thomas O’Connell. We look forward to managing our work in new ways that not only make the most of the talents and expertise of the team members, but to also elevate the entire team towards a more comprehensive approach. The goal is to strengthen our ability to work together to support and move the system forward. Already, the workload has been redistributed and there are no knowledge gaps or delays in ticket response time. To improve internal efficiency, a new ticketing system is being implemented that will help us to streamline the management of tickets across the team and provide analytics and other tools to help us to continue to finetune our efforts. You will notice that CE is being scheduled in similar frequency, and we plan to have some very exciting and new topics to present in 2021. Our [Knowledge Base](#) continues to expand. We are committed, as always, to your success and look forward to any feedback you have. Please continue to use the ticketing system ([techsupport@midhudson.org](mailto:techsupport@midhudson.org)) and to request [workflow consultations](#). No need to hold back, the team continues to perform at a high level and all projects are on pace.
- c. News from the MHLS Board:
- Board-to-Board Visits: The MHLS Board of Trustees represents members libraries, there are three representatives from each county serving on our board. Directors and Board Presidents should have received an outreach letter requesting invitations to member library board meetings. Their intent is to attend and listen, to get a better feel for what your library’s challenges and aspirations are. They would welcome an invitation so please do [reach out to them](#).
  - COVID-19 Response & Recover Working Group: This working group, a sub-committee of the MHLS Finance Committee, continues to explore diversified revenue streams for MHLS operations and reserves and recently conducted a Market Research Survey with the pro-bono help of a veteran marketing consultant and business school professor. Thank you to all who participated in this survey. We are currently analyzing the results and will use the results to inform advocacy messaging, grant writing and outreach to potential funders.
  - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group: This working group recently changed their name from the “Racial Equity Working Group” to the EDI Working Group in recognition of their desire to ensure all people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. The group has four teams focused on the following areas for 2021:
    1. Board Education: This team is focusing on assisting the MHLS Executive Director and MHLS Board President with talking points and content for events such as our committee chair orientation, new trustee orientation, and orientation topics discussed at regularly scheduled board meetings.
    2. Policy Review: This team is testing a customized policy analysis tool to aid in the review of existing MHLS policies and procedures.

3. Communication Assessment: This team also includes MHLS staff members and is working to assess a variety of communication and style guides to help educate those on the board and staff who have responsibility for communicating to the MHLS community-at-large. The team recently recommended [The Social Justice Phrase Guide](#), created by The Opportunity Agenda, and is researching resources related to terms used frequently in EDI-related messaging such as privilege, “impact over intention,” and implicit bias.
4. Board Development/Recruitment: This team is analyzing the current MHLS board recruitment and election process for the MHLS board to identify opportunities to ensure our board reflects the demographics of the MHLS service area.

d. 2020 Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries

- Each library is required to complete the annual report by March 1, 2021 at 5pm.
- Information for completing the report is available at <https://midhudson.org/annualreporttips/> and libraries can contact MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Casey Conlin, with any questions they may have.