

MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | April 2023

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

1. Delivery Services

- a. MHLS has resigned a one-year commitment for Empire Library Delivery Service from July 1, 2023 through June 2024. Empire Library Delivery (ELD) is a statewide delivery service maintained by the Empire State Library Network (ESLN) that makes resource sharing connections streamlined among all types of libraries. ELD provides a convenient, affordable, and tailored delivery service to institutions, thereby supporting increased statewide resource sharing among ELD participants. Delivery and pickup of shared materials takes place twice a week at MHLS. Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (SENYLRC) will be paying for 50% of the yearly total of \$3,815.00 as an incentive for MHLS member libraries' participation in ELD and to make lending to public libraries easier for the colleges, particularly the heavy lenders like Vassar and SUNY New Paltz.
- b. A reminder that MHLS will be resuming our annual spring review of delivery stops by circulation, which is based on members three-year average circulation numbers, after suspending this for a few years due to the pandemic. As was the pre-pandemic practice, these adjustments, if necessary, will be reviewed by the SSAC in May.

2. Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services

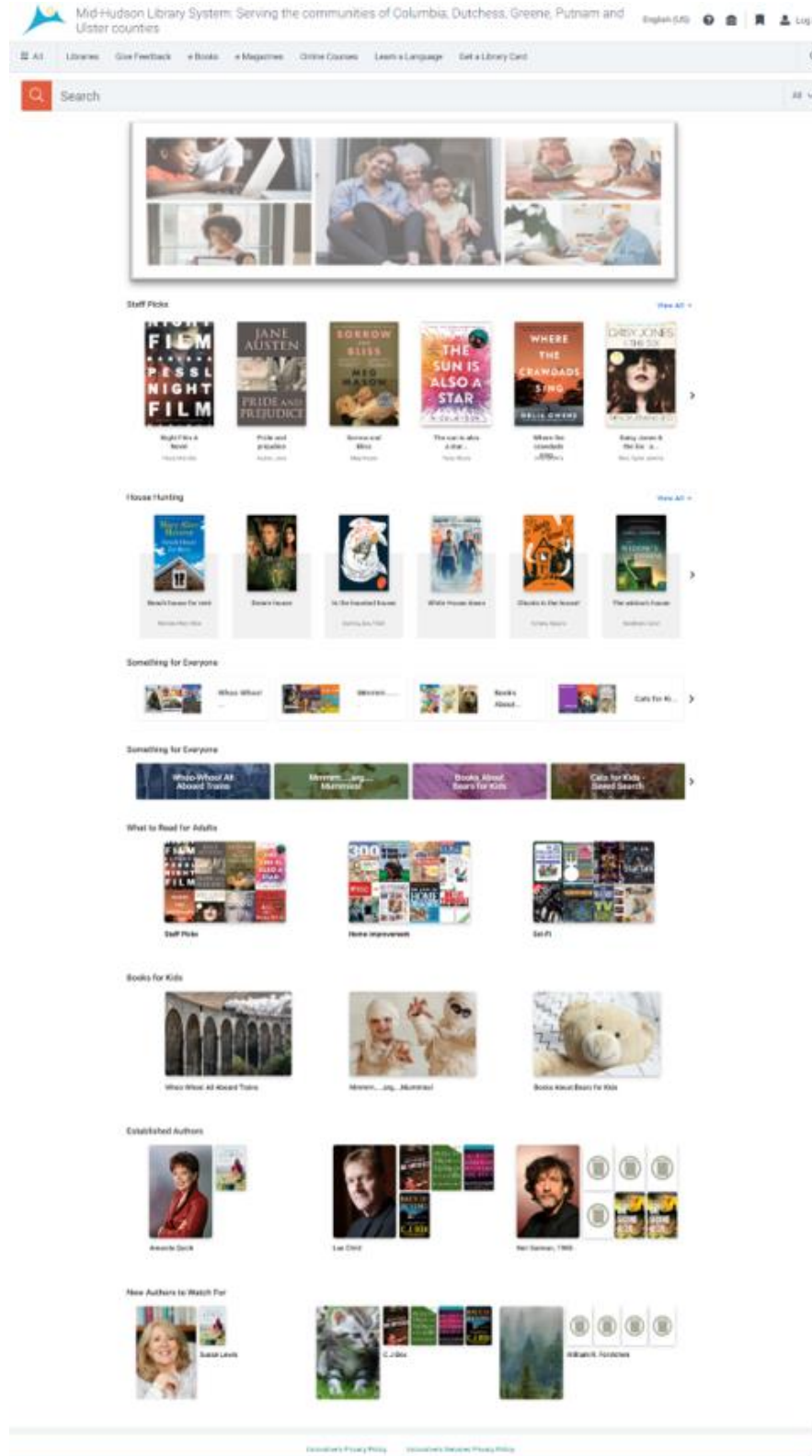
- a. Sierra 5.6 was installed on Tuesday March 28th. This update included no enhancements, focusing on bug fixes and structural includes for future enhancements (see 2.c). The next release of Sierra to 6.0 will be a more significant bundle and include a fix to the repeat entries in the High Demand Holds report and also fix the ability to delete items by barcode, which was broken in release 5.6.
- b. Encore 5.6 was installed on Wednesday March 29th. Like the Sierra counterpart, no enhancements were included, but an issue with synching data was included in the bundle.
- c. Vega LX Starter in sight: The 5.6 Sierra upgrade provided the groundwork needed to begin implementing Vega LX Starter, the new software that will update our notifications for hold pickups, Overdue items, Courtesy Notices and Bills. The current template process will be replaced with a user-friendly template that will be a joy to update, compared to the process we have today. Eventually, the product will also include what innovative is calling "Journeys". These notifications follow a process with updates. For example, a new online registration form will follow up with the patron to provide information about the registration and their library. Anniversaries and renewals will become part of the patron registration "journey". LX Starter is now available to small to medium libraries today, and will be coming to consortia later this summer.
- d. Vega Discovery developments are happening.

- i. Languages: Available languages for Vega discovery include:
Catalan (ES), Chinese (CN), Chinese (TW), English (NZ), English (CA), English (AU), English (UK),
English (UK), French(CA), French (FR), Icelandic (IS), Maori (MI), Polish (PL), Spanish (US),
Spanish (ES)
- ii. Custom Main page – MHLS has been invited as a test site for early adoption to customize the Vega Discover environment. Our main page can now include up to 20 rows of content. We will have access to this after completing training on April 12th.

There are 5 different types of components: Cover Carousel, Showcase Groups, Hero Carousel, Events and author spotlight.
- iii. Custom Domain – MHLS added a custom domain name as a product requirement early in the development requirements. This will later allow us to use search.midhudsonlibraries.org as the URL for the platform and also include it under our SSL certificate. In the interim, as we continue through the development process, we will be able to identify the site under our own URL which is recognizable by our patrons rather than <https://mhud.na.iivega.com/>, which is unrecognizable as a Mid-Hudson Library site.
- iv. Accessibility tools-In testing of ReciteMe
- v. E resources for consortia (in test phase)– One of the most anticipated additions to Vega Discovery is the integration of Electronic Resources. Currently, our process to expose resources in our catalog requires creating bibliographic records and adding links, similar to how we manage physical materials. Vega will rethink this process in ways that improve efficiency and access.
 - 1. Getting the records- using API integrations Innovative will work with vendors to integrate records at the point of purchase. That means that when you purchase an OverDrive title the record will be virtually created. In the next few weeks we will begin testing virtual records in Vega, while continuing our MARC record creation in Sierra to be exposed in Encore. Eventually, the hope is to rely on the virtual records. MHLS cataloging will be reviewing the records for accuracy work with iii to ensure the indexing is on point for access.
- vi. Exposing only accessible content: Exposing the records to those individuals who have access has been a challenge. Vega e resource integration will be working towards providing the filters that expose or mask materials so patrons get the view that is relevant to their access. Not all vendors are ready to work in this way, but OverDrive is an early development leader with the Vega development team. Nina will be joining other consortia specialists to work with the

developers at Innovative to understand how to design around our advantage accounts and lending models.

vii. Suppressing items by the item status is now available in Vega Discover.



- e. Brief Bibliographic records need items: The catalog department is noticing a recent increase in the number of Brief Bibliographic records being created with no attached item or order record. These records are temporarily available in the catalog, and patrons do find them and add requests. If you find you are called away before you add your item, pop a quick note into the Bib record to let MHLS staff know you intend to add an item. If we find these Bib records without attached items, we will delete them.
- f. Patron Privacy: In an effort to improve patron privacy we have further restricted personal identifying information from our API extracts. Names, Phone numbers, addresses and emails are no longer provided to 3rd party vendors requesting authentication.

3. Coordinated IT Services

- a. Beyond the Library Access project update- Access Points (AP) were purchased and installed at 44 member libraries. 90% saw over a 25% increase. The project was fully funded through the SENYLRC and the State Library using American Rescue Plan Act. No cost was incurred by member libraries. MHLS staff facilitated the setup and installation at each site. The final report has been submitted to conclude the project.
- b. Gerry attended the Computers in Libraries held in person in Washington DC. The big theme of the conference was strong towards Artificial Intelligence. AI won't replace your staff but can be used for planning, drafting and revision of text. Want to learn more? Register for our [upcoming webinar on AI with Nick Tanzi on May 18th](#).

4. Professional Development & Continuing Education

- a. Training on Demand – There are three separate areas for MHLS Training on Demand. 59 libraries have enrolled staff or trustees in training in one or more areas. The training is set up so that each library can manage the goals and training for their own people and track the activity and document completion. Directors can get reports, add and remove members from their team.

Training Area	Focus	Enrolled Learners	Enrolled Courses	Completed Courses
Trustee Education	Essential topics and an opportunity to complete the required hours of annual training.	589	333	97
Library Sustainability	Create resilient libraries that reflect the communities that they serve.	454	85	46

Technology	Build staff skills in library technology with a focus on the ILS, catalog, and eResources.	523	1117	527
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The service is supported by MHLS in the ticketing system. If you would like to add staff or trustees, please email techsupport@midhudson.org and put “Training on Demand” in the subject line.

b. Applying for Funds Through the State Aid for Library Construction Program | [April 19](#)

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

c. Artificial Intelligence and the Library: The Current Landscape | [May 18](#)

- i. More and more we hear about AI, but what is it exactly? What program and service opportunities does AI present for libraries? Nationally recognized library technology consultant Nick Tanzi will help us explore the many ways this technology has already begun to impact our organizations and our patrons and prepare attendees for what advancements lie just around the corner.

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

- i. Upcoming Dates
 1. May 8: [The Pronoun Workshop](#)
 2. Sept 14: [Bystander Intervention in Public Workplaces](#)
 3. Oct 12: [Conflict De-Escalation in the Workplace: Bystander Intervention 2.0](#)

e. Trustee Handbook Book Club in 2023

- i. Upcoming Dates:
 1. April 18: [Board-Director Relationship](#)
 2. June 20: [Financial Planning & Budgeting](#)
 3. Aug 15: [Strategic Planning](#)
 4. Oct 17: [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access & Justice](#)
 5. Dec 19: [Financing & Managing Construction Projects](#)
- ii. Archive of recordings: <https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/>
- iii. Recordings will be made available in the Trustee Academy in the MHLS Training on Demand platform where enrolled member library trustees can obtain certificates for viewing.

f. Trustee Education Spring 2023

- i. Upcoming Dates

1. Trustee Essentials:
 - a. [April 13th at 5:00pm](#)
 - b. [April 27th at 10:00am](#)
2. May 3: [Financial & Fiduciary Responsibilities](#)
 - a. This intermediate-level course is for trustees who have been on the board for at least a year. Library boards are trusted with public and private funds to provide quality library service to their community. Transparency and accountability must be at the forefront as a board makes decisions pertaining to the library's finances. This course will focus on the financial and fiduciary responsibility involved with: the library's budget, library funding, financial policies, reports to the board, external audits.
3. May 16: [Core Values & Ethics](#)
 - a. Trustees have enormous influence in creating libraries that are relevant and responsive to community needs. From policymaking and fiduciary responsibility to strategic planning and advocacy work, the board needs a strong sense of the core values of librarianship and a commitment to ethical governance to support patrons' rights to access to information and resources while creating a viable, vital and visible library that their community is proud of.
- g. Sierra User Group meeting 5/24/2023 - [Register](#)
- h. Circulation Comprehensive Training 5/5/23 - [Register](#)
- i. Data Entry – Comprehensive Training 07/11/2023 - [Register](#)
- j. OverDrive Marketplace refresher 06/23/2023 - [Register](#)

5. Consulting & Development

- a. **Emergency Preparedness:** The number of threatening and violent incidents involving libraries is certainly cause for concern and a call for preparation. MHLS is urging all member library administrators and boards to review current policies and procedures to ensure they are up-to-date and that staff have received the support they need.
 - i. Please note: [the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the US Department of Labor requires that an employer have an emergency action plan](#). This plan must be in writing, kept in the workplace, and be available to employees for review. An employer with 10 or fewer employees may communicate the plan orally by law but MHLS would still advise you have a plan in writing.
 1. Minimum Elements of an Emergency Action Plan:

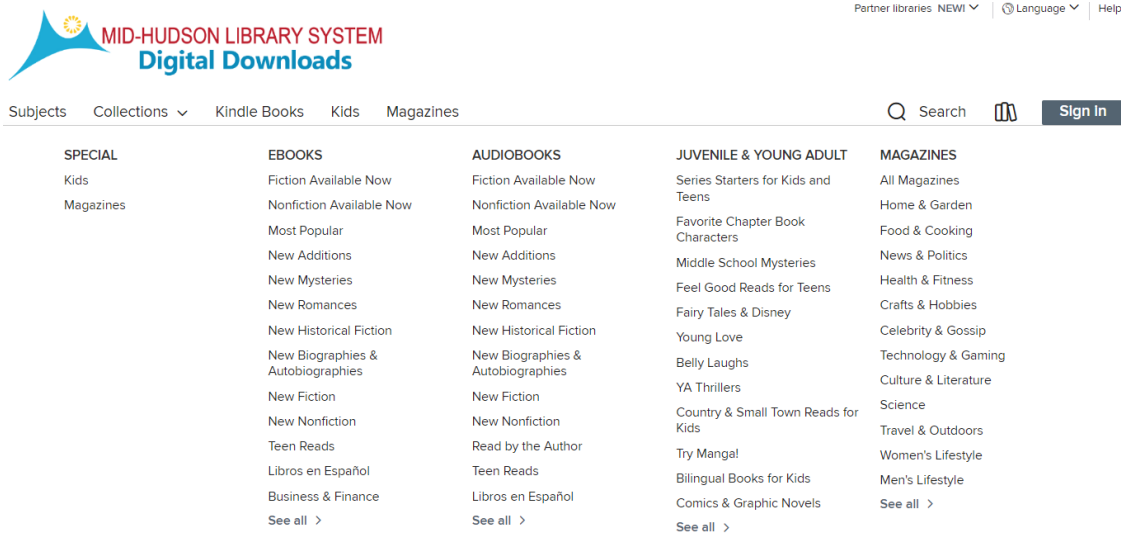
- a. Procedures for reporting a fire or other emergency;
 - b. Procedures for emergency evacuation, including type of evacuation and exit route assignments;
 - c. Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate;
 - d. Procedures to account for all employees after evacuation;
 - e. Procedures to be followed by employees performing rescue or medical duties; and
 - f. The name or job title of every employee who may be contacted by employees who need more information about the plan or an explanation of their duties under the plan.
2. An employer must designate and train employees to assist in a safe and orderly evacuation of other employees.
 3. An employer must review the emergency action plan with each employee covered by the plan:
 - a. When the plan is developed or the employee is assigned initially to a job;
 - b. When the employee's responsibilities under the plan change; and
 - c. When the plan is changed.
- ii. **If you are lacking documentation related to emergency procedures, here are some resources that might help you develop your own:**
1. [“How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations,”](#) Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor
 2. [Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities,](#) The National Fire Protection Association
 3. Templates:
 - a. [Emergency Action Plan Template,](#) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - b. [Bomb Threat Procedures,](#) Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency
 - c. [Library Employees Emergency Response Procedures, Massachusetts Library System & Instructions: How to complete the Library Employees ERP Template](#)
 4. Library examples:
 - a. [Emergency Procedures,](#) Lancaster Public Library, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
 - b. [Bomb Threat Policy & Procedures,](#) Bay County Library System
 - c. [Emergency Procedures Manual,](#) Elmhurst Public Library

- b. New York State has [updated the model sexual harassment prevention policy](#). All employers are required to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy. Changes include how to address remote workers, gender discrimination and retaliation in the workplace. The NYs Department of Labor also announced an [updated model training requirement](#) and [new training videos](#) for employers, each employee must receive training ***on an annual basis***. An employer that does not adopt the model policy must ensure that the policy that they adopt meets or exceeds the following minimum standards. The policy must:
- i. prohibit sexual harassment consistent with guidance issued by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Division of Human Rights
 - ii. provide examples of prohibited conduct that would constitute unlawful sexual harassment
 - iii. include information concerning the federal and state statutory provisions concerning sexual harassment, remedies available to victims of sexual harassment, and a statement that there may be applicable local laws
 - iv. include a complaint form
 - v. include a procedure for the timely and confidential investigation of complaints that ensures due process for all parties
 - vi. inform employees of their rights of redress and all available forums for adjudicating sexual harassment complaints administratively and judicially
 - vii. clearly state that sexual harassment is considered a form of employee misconduct and that sanctions will be enforced against individuals engaging in sexual harassment and against supervisory and managerial personnel who knowingly allow such behavior to continue
 - viii. clearly state that retaliation against individuals who complain of sexual harassment or who testify or assist in any investigation or proceeding involving sexual harassment is unlawful
- c. Reminder about helpful resources to prepare for **book challenges** that you hope will never happen,:
- i. *2022 Public Library Collection Policy Template and Guide* ([PDF/Word](#)) (2022), brought to you thanks to a collaboration between MHLS and the other public library systems in NYS
 1. Related webinars:
 - a. [Ready Set Policy! Using the 2022 Collection Management Policy and Guide](#) (July 19, 2022)
 - b. [Calm, Legally Cool, and Collected: Tactics for Libraries Facing Book Challenges and Collection-based Protests](#) (December 2, 2022)
 - ii. New Resources from the American Library Association:

1. [“Fight Censorship” Resource Clearinghouse](#): A clearinghouse of resources to assist library workers and advocates in responding to and supporting others facing those challenges.
2. [Resource Guide for Library Safety and Preparedness](#)

6. Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access

- a. A new collection group has been created in OverDrive for Juvenile and Young adult content. The collection replaces the former Video collection that OverDrive ended last year. Creating this collection provides a filtered access point for a younger audience and makes it possible to have a URL that can be used in web sites and marketing: <https://mhls.overdrive.com/collections/featured/3>



7. Awareness & Advocacy Services

- a. State Advocacy:
 - i. As of the issuance of this report, the state budget has still not been passed. A second continuance was approved by the legislature the week of April 10th so we’re still waiting to see this finalized. In the meantime, we will proceed with assuming there will be some money for the State Aid for Library Construction, we just won’t know how much, and MHLS will continue to be conservative in its own expenditures given the uncertainty around our revenue for the coming year.
 - ii. Thank you to everyone who has been assisting with state level advocacy this year. IT has been rough, between a record number of new legislators and the proposed cuts from the Governor

we've had a lot of work to do and we appreciate your continued help.



Above: The staff at the Howland Public Library in Beacon did a great job using Instagram to help get the word out about state-level advocacy this year!

- iii. The 414 Petition Signature Reduction Bill has not been included in either one-house budget bill. We continue to advocate for its inclusion in the final budget bill but we do recommend that libraries planning a 414 vote this year plan to gather the currently required number of signatures: at least 10% of the number of voters that voted in the town in the last gubernatorial election.
- b. The County Funding Advocacy Group will meet on <https://midhudson.org/events/county-funding-advocacy-meeting-2/> Friday, April 28th at 10:00am online. This is an opportunity for directors, and others, involved in county-level advocacy to learn from one another and strategize for the future.

8. Interlibrary Loan Services

- a. We currently have a job opening for the full-time Interlibrary Loan & Cataloging Specialist position. Amy Kendel will be departing in June to be a full-time student. If you know of anyone who would be a good fit please share [the job ad](#).

9. Construction Program Services

- a. 2023 State Aid for Library Construction Applications: Applications submitted in August of 2022 have been reviewed by DLD and are now in the process of being reviewed by DASNY. MHLS staff will be in contact with applying libraries for clarifications and updates as requested by DLD and DASNY. Official announcement from the state for award funds for this round of projects is expected between June 2023 and October 2023.
- b. [MHLS Action Memo #22-02: Construction Needs Update & Intent to Apply for State Aid for Library Construction](#) was sent to the MHLS-Notice list on April 11th. This will be the first step to apply in the next

funding round. All directors are asked to please fill out the survey found at <https://mhls.wufoo.com/forms/mhls-action-memo-2302-mgfc3vb0fyrobj/> (Yes, even if you do not plan to apply for a construction grant this year. Thank you!) Submissions are **due by May 24**.

c. 2023 Construction Grant Timeline

i. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Laura Crisci, to discuss potential projects well ahead of any due dates.

1. **April 11** – [Construction Needs/Intent to Apply MHLS Action Memo](#) Released
2. **April 19** – [Applying for Funds Through the State Aid for Library Construction Program Webinar](#)
3. **May** – [Construction Grant Office Hours by Appointment](#)
4. **May 24** – Construction Needs/Intent to Apply MHLS Action Memo Due
5. **Early June** – Construction Grant Portal Opens
6. **June** – [Construction Grant Office Hours by Appointment](#)
7. **June 28** – Construction Grant Technical Assistance Workshop
8. **July** – [Construction Grant Office Hours by Appointment](#)
9. **August 4** – **Grant Application due to MHLS**
10. **September 12** – MHLS Board of Trustees Reviews Applications
11. **Mid October** – Applications are due to DLD from MHLS
12. **June – October, 2024** – Libraries receive confirmation of Grant awards from DLD

10. Communications Among Member Libraries

- a. Nothing to report this month. Questions on this topic can be sent to Laura Crisci, Library Sustainability Coordinator.

11. Special Populations

- a. Without an approved state budget for this fiscal year, we are unable to proceed with announcing plans in this area just yet. In the meantime, questions on this topic can be sent to Laura Crisci, Library Sustainability Coordinator.

12. Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems

- a. RLA agreements: On Monday, March 28th our RLA agreement was expanded to include both the Southern Adirondack and Mohawk Valley Library Systems. We have only just cleared the one year anniversary of our first agreement with Upper Hudson Library System, which went live on March 15th of 2022. Each site has agreed to share access to items that are not in demand, metered access or cost per use. Visiting patrons may not place a request, or request purchases. Patrons have alternative access to a much broader collection by searching and borrowing across our digital borders. MHLS will coordinate

with the partner sites to provide the library specific activity statistics each month. A sample of the expanded report is shown below. We will store the report each showing the total columns for RLA activities in each format, but you can expand these out to see the specific details of which partner your patrons borrowed from. Please do let us know if you have any comments or enhancements in mind on how this information is presented by sending an email to techsupport@midhudson.org, with RLA in the subject line.

OverDrive RLA Checkouts through UHLS collection	Feb 2023 RLA checkouts (All UHLS)		Mar 2023 RLA checkouts									
	eBooks	eAudio	Ebooks				Audiobooks					
			MVLS	SALS	UHLS	TOTAL	MVLS	SALS	UHLS	TOTAL		
Alice Curtis Desmond and Hamilton Fish Library - Garrison	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amenia Free Library	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Beekman Library	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blodgett Memorial Library - Fishkill	3	6	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brewster Public Library	16	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cairo Public Library	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canaan Branch of Chatham Public Library	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catskill Public Library	11	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chatham Public Library	24	20	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
Claverack Library	9	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinton Community Library	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
D.R. Evarts Library	6	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dover Plains Library	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Fishkill Public Library District	9	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elting Memorial Library	7	14	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Germantown Library	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greenville Public Library	31	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grinnell Public Library District	7	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heermance Memorial Library	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highland Public Library	27	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hillsdale Public Library/Roeliff Jansen Community Library	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Howland Public Library	11	25	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Hudson Area Association Library	10	24	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Hunter Public Library	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hurley Library	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hyde Park Free Library	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library - Coldspring	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

13. Administrative

- a. The System Services Advisory Committee is working on their third draft of the Memo of Understanding. The MHLS lawyer, Ellen Bach, is also reviewing the current draft, her input will be incorporated into the next draft shared with all. As a reminder, the MOU is being developed to replace the currently out of date Document of Understanding and the aging Automation Agreement. These two documents were used as the basis for the new MOU but updated to reflect current contracts and practices. We thank you for your continued attention to the drafts as they are presented at your county meetings and greatly appreciate your feedback.
- b. The Mid-Hudson Library System is now [an official partner of the Unite Against Book Bans initiative](#) thanks to a unanimous vote of the MHLS Board of Trustees.
 - i. Please review the [Action Toolkit](#) for talking points, branded materials and social media tools.

- ii. You can also buy swag to both support the efforts and proclaim your support of the campaign [here](#).
- c. Updating Midhudson.org: Thank you to all who are providing feedback through the county director meeting discussions on midhudson.org to help with our redesign project this year. After we wrap up the discussions with directors we will issue a system-wide survey that library directors, staff, and trustees are welcome to respond to that will help us further refine our understanding of what you use most on the web site, what you have trouble finding, and what else might be helpful.
- d. MHLS is wrapping up our contract with Impact PR & Communications. This contract was underwritten thanks to a grant from the Dyson Foundation and thanks to private donations from MHLS Board Members. The goal of the contract is to help MHLS refine messaging, our online presence, and the visibility of MHLS in the Hudson Valley in a way that is complementary to member libraries.
- e. MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, was recently interviewed for In Touch, a Hudson Valley public affairs and issues program put out through Townsquare Media. It will air on WPDH, WRRV, The Wolf, and Lite FM on Sunday, April 30th and be available on demand online.
- f. MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, has been selected as the [OCLC Distinguished Seminar Speaker for 2023](#).