
Across the Board - MHLS Trustee eNewsletter

From Mid-Hudson Library System <engage-midhudson.org@shared1.ccsend.com>

Date Fri 6/13/2025 4:03 PM

To Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <rsmith@midhudson.org>



June Trustee eNewsletter

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Calling All Library Advocates: Five Easy Things You Can Do Now

A message from MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

The first five months of 2025 have been a lesson in the power of library advocacy. We were confronted with not only our traditional state budget advocacy season, but the chaos created at the



federal level by an Executive Order that called for the dismantling of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the granting agency that funds the New York State Division of Library Development (DLD).

I harbored concerns over overwhelming our advocates, people like you who volunteer to serve their local community through their local library.

But every time we put out a call to action? **You answered.** You showed up. You spoke up. You stood up for your neighbors, our libraries, our library system, and the core values we share.

The results?

- A state budget outcome that, despite all odds, contained a modest increase for library operating aid and a restoration of \$10 million to the State Aid for Library Construction.
- A lawsuit from the New York Attorney General that helped to halt the dismantling of IMLS (for now.)
- Dear Appropriator letters from Senator Gillibrand and Congressmen Riley and Ryan, a first step toward the renewal of the legislation that will retain the IMLS and Grants to States program for the next several years.

Your voice makes a difference. That has been proven.

The challenge now lies in the fact that the chaos continues, and we will need to stay vigilant. On the horizon we are watching three key things:

1. The potential for mid-year cuts to the budget of the Mid-Hudson Library System should the federal reconciliation budget process prove too punishing for our state, this could happen in the fall;
2. The Supreme Court ruling on the [E-Rate program](#) which is expected in July; and
3. The renewal of the federal Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA), which would also happen in the fall, which is how we protect IMLS and DLD funding.

Below, in the “*Ask Rebekkah Anything*” section, you will find more detailed information that helps give you context for these three things and should help you make the connections to the future calls to action that seem inevitable at this time.

In the meantime, here are five things you can do now to stay ready:

1. **Take time to check out your own local library’s Summer Reading Program** and visit other member libraries during the [2025 MHLS Road Trip](#) to observe the amazing work library staff do every day to help the children – and folks of all ages - in our communities enjoy reading and learning. Nothing will keep you fueled more than the reminder of why we all do what we do.
2. **Sign up for [Library Advocate e-mail alerts](#)** from the New York Library Association.
3. **Work on your storytelling abilities.** Nothing sticks with a legislator more than a story about how your library or our system makes a difference in the lives of others. Check out the

[Advocacy Story Template](#) from the American Library Association to think through the narratives you want to present.

4. **Ensure your library's membership in [NYLA](#) and [ALA](#) are up-to-date.** Membership dues are what makes the advocacy and lobbying work each organization engages in on our behalf possible.

5. **Take care of yourself.** The world can feel overwhelming at times. Be sure to take time to do what sustains you, to be with folks who make you happy, and enjoy the beautiful Hudson Valley in the way that makes the most sense to you.

Thank you for all you do for our libraries and the Mid-Hudson Library System. *You* are making a difference.

Sincerely,
Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
MHLS Executive Director

Library Advocacy Briefing | June 25 | 4 - 5pm | Online | REGISTER HERE

Join Rebekkah Smith Aldrich for a status report on state aid as well as advocacy efforts to protect congressionally mandated funding, such as the Grants to State program, and check in on State plans to ensure the continued operations of the NYS Division of Library Development.

TRUSTEE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

MHLS Trustee Education Series & Statewide Trustee Handbook Book Club

All events in the MHLS Trustee Education Series & Trustee Handbook Book Club count toward your NYS Trustee Education Requirement for 2025.

June

MHLS Trustee Education Series: Legal Basics (intermediate-level)

Monday, June 16 | 6:00 – 8:00pm | IN PERSON: Town of Esopus Library | [Register here](#)

MHLS Sustainable Funding Series: Finance for Trustees (intermediate-level)

Tuesday, June 17 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

MHLS Sustainable Funding Series: Multi-Year Financial Planning (advanced-level)

Tuesday, June 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

MHLS Sustainable Funding Series: Strengthening the Future of Your Library by Investing in Your Staff (Salaries & Benefits)

with Guest Speaker: Brian Hildreth, Executive Director, Southern Tier Library System

Wednesday, June 25 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)

July

Trustee Handbook Book Club: Recruiting & Retaining Quality Staff

Tuesday, July 15 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

MHLS Trustee Education Series: Policies 101 (essentials level)

Thursday, July 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

August

Introduction to E-rate with MHLS Assistant Director & Technology Operations Manager, Laurie Shedrick

Tuesday, August 5 | 10:00 – 12:00pm | Online | [Register here](#)

MHLS Sustainable Funding Series: Multi-Year Financial Planning (advanced level)

Wednesday, August 13 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | IN PERSON: Roeliff Jansen Community Library | [Register here](#)

MHLS Sustainable Funding Series: Facilities for the Future: Evaluation, Planning, Operations and Renovation/Construction

Friday, August 15 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)

September

MHLS Trustee Education Series: Trustee Essentials (essentials level)

Wednesday, September 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

MHLS Trustee Education Series: Board Development – Recruitment, Orientation, Education and Evaluation (advanced level)

Thursday, September 25 | 6:00 – 8:00pm | IN PERSON: Beekman Library | [Register here](#)

MHLS Trustee Education Series: **Policies 101 (essentials level)**

Tuesday, September 30 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

October

MHLS Trustee Education Series: **Seven Habits of Highly Effective Boards (advanced level)**

Thursday, October 9 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | IN PERSON: Philmont Public Library | [Register here](#)

MHLS Trustee Education Series: **Legal Basics (intermediate level)**

Thursday, October 16 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | IN PERSON: Hunter Public Library | [Register here](#)

MHLS Training on Demand

The MHLS Training on Demand Trustee Education Academy gives you 24/7 access to learn when it is convenient for your schedule. All topics listed below are available through this platform, day or night. A certificate of attendance is available to you upon completion of an event. **Contact your library director for your log-in information.**

All recordings in the Trustee Academy of the MHLS Training on Demand platform count towards your New York State Trustee Education requirement.

Did you know? All past episodes of the statewide Trustee Handbook Book Club are available through the MHLS Training on Demand platform!



Trustee Handbook Book Club

1. 2025 Recordings – so far:

- Advocacy
- Board Development

2. Past Recordings:

- Governance Structure: The Role of Board Officers and Board Committees
- Libraries for the Future: An Introduction to Sustainability as the Newest Core Value
- What's New in the 2023 Edition of the Trustee Handbook
- Financing & Managing Construction Projects
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access & Justice
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Planning & Budgeting
- The Board-Director Relationship
- Open Meetings Law with Kristin O'Neill, Committee on Open Government
- Effective Meetings Using Parliamentary Procedures
- PR & Advocacy
- Planning & Evaluation
- Ethics & Conflicts of Interest + Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Privacy
- Policies & Risk Management
- Facilities
- Budgets & Finance
- Duties & Responsibilities
- Library Board Meetings
- Personnel



Ask Rebekkah Anything:

A regular feature in the MHLS Bulletin and now the MHLS Trustee eNewsletter! MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, has worked with area library boards for over 25 years. Co-author of the *Handbook for Library Trustees for New York State*, Rebekkah has a lot of experience with answering questions from more than 6,000 library trustees statewide. Here are answers to some recent questions that came in from trustees:

Q: *What is the NYS Division of Library Development (DLD) and how would its defunding impact my library?*

A: DLD is one of two divisions within the New York State Library. DLD administers state-level funding for public and association libraries and public library systems as well as the Reference and Research Library Resource Systems (3Rs) and school library systems. The federal Grants to States program, administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provides \$8.1 million to New York State to fund the state library which covers 55 of the 84 positions at the state library. Defunding

New York State
Library

the organization would leave few staff to administer the \$104.6 million in State Aid that funds critical infrastructure for your library such as:

- **Operating aid to the Mid-Hudson Library System.** This underwrites mission critical services for your library such as the software that runs front desk operations, the online catalog, and mobile app as well as physical delivery.

- **Central Library Service Program Aid.** This aid pays for important eResources such as the OverDrive platform that houses all of the ebooks and downloadable audiobooks your library purchases as well as the entire eMagazines package, Transparent Language, and JobNow.

- **State Aid for Library Construction.** Our region receives over \$1 million to invest public library facilities. DLD serves as the liaison between our system and the Dormitory Authority of New York State to champion our applications and comply with a multitude of state regulations.

- **NOVELny.** Essential research databases for schools and libraries, ensuring equitable access to information literacy skills for students of all ages.

- **Legislative and Discretionary Grant administration.** When your state legislator is able to earmark funds for your library for special projects DLD administers those funds to get them into your hands.

DLD also spearheads important projects that advance topics such as early literacy initiatives, digital equity, and documentary heritage and preservation services.



Q: *What is the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and how would its defunding impact my library?*

A: IMLS is an independent federal agency founded in 1996 to administer the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the Museum Services Act. The agency uses congressionally mandated funding, such as the Grants to State program, as well as discretionary funding programs, such as the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, to meet the essential information, education, research, economic, cultural, and civic needs of the American public. IMLS is strategically focused on four areas of work:

1. **Champion Lifelong Learning**
2. **Strengthen Community Engagement**
3. **Advance Collections Stewardship and Access**
4. **Demonstrate Excellence in Public Service**

The Grants to States program is what funds the operations of the New York State Division of Library Development. See answer above for why that matters!

The library community also relies on IMLS grant-funded projects to advance the profession. In 2024 alone, IMLS awarded over \$260 million in grants, research and policy development, to advance, support and empower libraries. Over the years they have created key resources our community relies on such as:

- [Toward Gigabit Libraries toolkit](#)

- [Community Catalysts project](#)
- [Small Libraries Create Smart Spaces](#)
- [dPlan | ArtsReady](#) – disaster preparedness resources and [dPlan template](#)

Q: *What is “E-Rate” and how does it impact my library?*

A: E-Rate is a federal program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that provides as much as \$4 billion annually in discounts for telecommunications, broadband internet access and internal network connections to provide phone and internet services to eligible libraries (and schools).

The program is funded through the Universal Service Fund (USF) which has its origins in the 1934 Communications Act which stated that all people in the United States “shall have access to rapid, efficient, nationwide communications service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges.” Updated in 1996 through The Telecommunications Act, the program was expanded to benefit Americans through their local library.

The amount of discount each library can receive under the program ranges from 20 to 90 percent and is determined using a matrix designed by FCC, with libraries located in rural and low-income areas receiving the highest discounts from the fund. The USF compensates the schools' and libraries' vendors for the amount of the discount.

Laurie Shedrick, MHLS Assistant Director and Technology Operations Manager annually offers training and consultations to help member libraries apply for the E-Rate Discounts.

In the news is the Supreme Court case, [Consumers’ Research v. Federal Communications Commission](#), testing the constitutionality of the E-Rate program. “E-rate has been a highly successful, bipartisan program that has benefited tens of millions of students around the country since its inception,” said Joseph Wender, the executive director of the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition, a Washington-based group that is a party in the case helping defend the nearly 30-year-old program. “The impact of losing these funds would be profound and devastating across the country.”

Cool Stuff

Check out news and innovative ideas from around the Mid-Hudson Library System:

New MHLS [Mobile App](#) Now Available!

[MHLS Road Trip](#) Launches June 6 and runs through October 18!

Coming in late June: Postcard writing for Advocacy

Details to come!

LIBRARY USERS ARE VOTERS



SUPPORT NEW YORK LIBRARIES

**“Whatever the cost of
libraries, the price is
cheap compared to that
of an ignorant nation.”**

Walter Cronkite

SUPPORT NEW YORK LIBRARIES

FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY

SUPPORT NEW YORK LIBRARIES

Member Spotlights:

The **Cairo Public Library** just hosted their first Cairo Library Market to allow local artisans to feature their creations!



The **Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library in Cold Spring** is celebrating their 100th anniversary this year! They are offering events and experiences all year to celebrate including a Centennial Picnic and the creation of a “Communal Book: 100 Things to do with an Alligator”!





100 YEARS BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY !!

**OUR
ALLIGATOR
FRIEND
WILL BE AT
THE
PICNIC!**

JOIN US IN MAKING A COMMUNAL BOOK -

100 THINGS TO DO WITH AN ALLIGATOR:

- COVER HIM IN CHIQUITA BANANA STICKERS
- FEED HIM BERRY PIE
- GET HIM A JOB AS A LIFEGUARD IN CAPE COD
- GIVE HIM A BACK RUB
- USE HIM AS A SURFBOARD
- PASTE A SILVER STAR ON EACH OF HIS SCALES

THINK OF SOMETHING TO ADD TO OUR BOOK!

EVEN BETTER: (DRAW A PICTURE OF IT)

**SUBMIT EITHER PRIOR OR DURING OUR JUNE 7TH
100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY PICNIC**

Questions? Email Aurora
kids@butterfieldlibrary.org



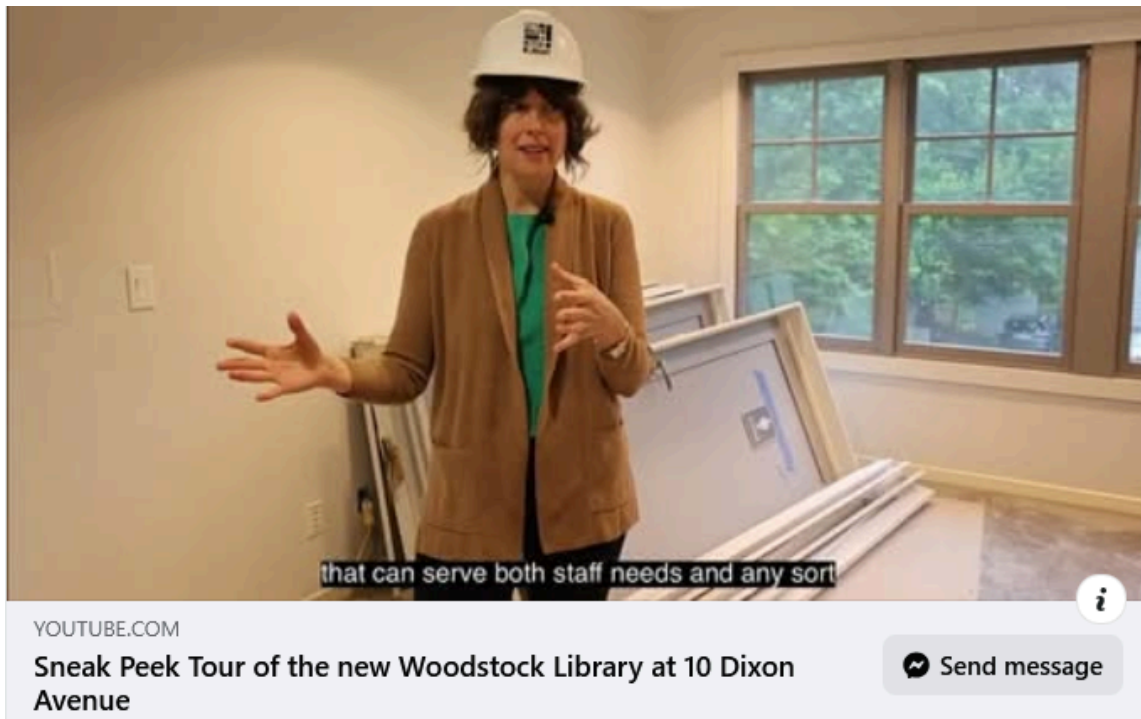
The **Morton Memorial Library & Community House in Rhinecliff** recently hosted WAMC's Roundtable on the Road!



The **Roeliff Jansen Community Library**, serving **Ancram, Copake, and Hillsdale**, recently held a Volunteer Fair to help residents and area nonprofits and service organizations make a match!



Get a sneak peek at the future home of the **Woodstock Library** at 10 Dixon Avenue!



Save the Dates!

- **Bravery in Literature Awards** – MHLS is proud to partner with the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill for the second annual Bravery in Literature Awards Ceremony! This year the event will be held on **Saturday, October 11th at the Bardavon** in Poughkeepsie. Author Margaret Atwood will be honored at the event with the Lifetime Achievement Award! Stay tuned for more details and ticket info!
- **MHLS Annual Membership Meeting** will be held on **Friday, October 24th** at The Wallace Center of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, NY We are proud to announce that our keynote speaker will be Sam Helmick, incoming president of the American Library Association!
- The [Annual Conference of the New York Library Association](#) will be held in Saratoga Springs, NY November 5-8



MHLS BULLETIN

Did you know you can receive the weekly newsletter of the Mid-Hudson Library System directly in your inbox every Tuesday?
Sign up now to stay in the know!

SIGN UP HERE!



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