

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | July 2021

1. 2021 Mid-Year Action Plan Report

- a. **Delivery:** [Delivery stops restored](#) based on analysis of delivery volume data (May)
- b. **Tech Ops Ticketing System:** A significant upgrade to our ticketing system has resulted in each staff person having their own license, quicker triaging of tickets, and better analytics. The product now enables staff to share answers and fixes to problems they have solved so they do not need to reinvent the wheel each time a question comes up.
- c. **ILS Road Map Progress:**
 - i. [Serials](#): installed, training provided to members and resources added to the MHLS Knowledge Base
 - ii. [Inter-Library Loan \(ILL\)](#): installed, training provided to members and resources added to the MHLS Knowledge Base
 - iii. [Materials Booking](#): This product allows patrons to book materials hours, days, weeks and months in advance. It has been installed, MHLS staff are utilizing it for special projects; training and resources coming soon for members.
 - iv. [Patron Images](#): installed, waiting on member libraries to self-identify as a pilot
 - v. [Encore Harvesting](#): now live with New York Heritage, including Hudson River Valley Heritage content appearing in our online catalog.
 - vi. [Vega Discover](#) Development Partnership continues to progress. Current estimate is that we would go live with this new interface in 2022.
- d. **eResource Statistics:** We have added [entries for all eResources in the MHLS Knowledge Base](#) and now publicly provide the [E-Resources at-a-glance document](#) to help members track the status of usage and contract dates.
- e. **Aerohive Router Project:** Wi-fi access point renewal process has been negotiated on behalf of all libraries who have an expiring account. This is resulting in a savings of \$350/unit and for licensing, a savings \$42/per unit, per year.
- f. **Trustee Education:**
 - i. A **COVID-19 Briefing for Trustees** was held on May 13, 2021.
 - ii. The spring **Trustee Education Series** included multiple sessions of the introductory level classes: Trustee Essentials and Core Values & Ethics; the fiduciary course was offered once again; a guest speaker from the NYS Committee on Open Government was brought in to speak about NYS Open Meetings Law; an advanced session, "7 Habits of Successful Trustees" was also offered.
 - iii. We are collaborating with agencies across the state to introduce a new program in the fall: [The Trustee Handbook Book Club](#). This will be a live event that is recorded and feature the co-authors of the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State* (Rebekkah Smith Aldrich & Jerry Nichols). The events will be moderated by two Public Library System Directors: Brian Hildreth, Executive Director of the Southern Tier Library System and Ron Kirsop, Executive Director of the Pioneer Library System. Promotional partners include: The New York State Library, the Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO), the Library Trustee Association of New York State (LTA), and the Public Library Section of the New York Library Association (PLS).

g. Leadership Development:

- i. A new cohort of the **Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration** offered by the Long Island University's Palmer School of Library & Information Science will be hosted by MHLS starting this fall. This is a five semester-long program that focuses on "all the things you didn't learn in library school," in the areas of finance, human resources, technology and facilities, and legal issues.
- ii. Thirty-eight (38) [COVID-19 Updates](#) have been provided to member library directors in 2021 as of June 21, 2021.

h. Professional Development Highlights:

- i. [The Reimagining Library Services Series](#), created in response to local need exacerbated by the pandemic, wrapped up in May:
 1. Collaborations and Partnerships
 2. eBooks
 3. Online Programming Like a Pro
- ii. National experts were brought in to provide a webinar on the intersection of **intellectual freedom and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** in light of the controversy over Dr. Seuss' estate's removal of several titles from their catalog. We partnered with the Southern Adirondack Library System to produce this event and opened up registration to all library systems in the state. We had 240 colleagues register for this event.
- iii. Hosted a **COVID-19 Legal Issues webinar** with two well-respected, Albany-area lawyers.
- iv. Hosted the "[Strengthening Families Through Early Literacy Practices](#)" webinar presented by Dr. Susan Neuman, Professor of Childhood and Literacy Education at NYU.
- v. Hosted speakers from the NYS Archives to review the new **LGS-1 records retention schedule**.
- vi. Produced a new web resource featuring [MHLS Lab Project Toolkits](#), capturing the resources and outcomes of three MHLS Lab Projects:
 1. Increasing Circulation
 2. Increasing Active Account Holders
 3. Increasing Program Attendance
- vii. The **New Directors Forum** and **MHLS Leadership Circle** have been re-introduced after taking a break during 2020 due to the pandemic.

i. Consulting & Development Services

- i. **2021 Turning Outward Cohort** has record-setting 15 member libraries participating this year.
- ii. **A support cohort for the record number of libraries (11) going for a municipal ballot vote (414 vote) in November 2021 has been formed.**
- iii. [The Library of Local Project](#) launched in April thanks to our partnership with Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley.
- iv. Introduction of a [new, draft Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Toolkit](#) which includes a series of on-demand, 30-minute training videos on topics related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).
- v. **Digital Divide Data Reports** were generated for each county we serve to assess broadband availability, affordability, and adoption.

- vi. MHLS Staff continue to serve as a mentor to member libraries enrolled in the **Sustainable Library Certification Program**. The [Highland Public Library](#) and [Town of Esopus Public Library](#) both recently finished the environmental section!
- vii. MHLS Staff continues to support member libraries in meeting the **new Minimum Standards for Public Libraries from New York State**.
- viii. [2020 Salary & Benefits Survey](#) of member libraries conducted
- j. **Awareness & Advocacy**
 - i. Conducted our first-ever, fully online **Advocacy Week** (February 22-26, 2021)
 - ii. Contributed towards the successful advocacy for the passage of:
 - 1. [S4420/A5456: Reduce Petition Requirements for Library Elections](#)
 - 2. [S6511/A7021: Streamline & Modernize Library Program Requirements](#)
 - 3. [S4435/A6121B: Training for Library Trustees](#)
 - 4. [S5753A/A7060A: Increased Access to the Library Construction Program](#)
- k. **Construction**
 - i. **New Partnership with MetroIAF and NYSERDA** to provide access to member libraries to a new funding stream available for energy assessments of facilities and funds for retrofits to decarbonize HVAC systems.
 - ii. **Conducted a survey of member library directors' opinions towards the funding priorities the MHLS Board uses for the State Aid for Library Construction Program.**
- l. **Correctional Facilities**
 - i. Completed annual negotiations for the NYS Public Library System Services to State Correctional Facility Libraries State Aid Program

2. The Current Impact of COVID-19 on Member Library Operations

- a. A survey of member libraries conducted in June 2021 reveals:
 - i. 98.5% of member libraries have now fully reopened their facilities to the public
 - ii. 98.5% of member libraries are meeting the State's current definition of minimum hours.
 - iii. 90% are currently offering in-person programming
 - iv. 98.5% have ceased quarantining library materials
- b. Mask policies vary from library-to-library due to the continued complication of young children being ineligible for vaccination from COVID-19. Throughout the system we see a mix of policies influenced by vaccination rates, size of library facilities, and library leadership comfort levels. Our snapshot, taken in mid-June indicated a majority of libraries are requiring masks for all – regardless of vaccination status – either throughout their facilities or in the children's room/area of their facility. MHLS has continued to provide the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the NYS Department of Health to aid library leaders in making the right decision for their communities.

3. Plan of Service Development (2022-2026)

- a. I am pleased to share that the Directors Association has unanimously endorsed the drafts of the three components of our next Plan of Service: the System Plan of Service, the Central Library Plan of Service, and the Free Direct Access Plan.
- b. At our July meeting, you will also see that the MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee has unanimously endorsed the plan documents as well and are recommending them for passage at our meeting.
- c. Our plan is due to NYS on October 1, 2021. Filing this plan with DLD on time is critical to our ability to continue to receive state aid.

4. Personnel Updates:

- a. As previously reported, we have promoted Kerstin Cruger to the position of Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Specialist. An action item is on your agenda for the July meeting to approve her salary adjustment related to this change.
- b. We are currently interviewing for four positions:
 - i. Administrative Associate
 - ii. Technology Operations Support Specialist
 - iii. Cataloging/ILL Specialist
 - iv. Library Sustainability Associate

5. Board Operations

- a. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group is introducing a new “*EDI Policy & Procedure Analysis Framework*” at this meeting. Please become familiar with this tool if you serve on a board committee that has policy making responsibilities.
- b. Board-to-Board Visits & Talking Points:
 - i. Since our last meeting, many of you have received invitations to member library board meetings and county association meetings. Thank you for your coordinated and prompt reply to these invitations.
 - ii. For the coming months, please promote:
 1. The new MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Resource Toolkit found at <https://midhudson.org/edi/>
 2. The MHLS Annual Membership Meeting on Friday, October 22nd

6. ALA Council Committee on Sustainability: I have been named as the chair of the newly created ALA Council Committee on Sustainability. This committee will pick up where the ALA Special Task Force on Sustainability, of which I was the co-chair, left off. Our first charge is to aid ALA staff to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality for ALA Conferences by 2025.

7. Executive Director’s Event Participation: May 1 – June 30, 2021

- a. Dutchess County Directors Association

- b.** Invited Presentation to Institution of Museum and Library Services Staff re: the future of sustainability in our profession and how it may relate to IMLS grantmaking.
- c.** Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO) (2)
- d.** Webinar: NYS Archives – LGS-1 Record Retention Schedule
- e.** Presentation: Trustee Essentials (MHLS Trustee Education Series) (2)
- f.** COVID-19 Briefing for Member Library Trustees
- g.** Columbia County Library Association (2)
- h.** Presentation: Keynote, Connecticut Library Association
- i.** Presentation: Keynote, North Carolina Live
- j.** MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group (2)
- k.** Ulster County Library Association (2)
- l.** Meeting with Assemblymember Didi Barrett (3)
- m.** System Services Advisory Committee
- n.** NYLA Legislative Committee (2)
- o.** New York State Library Update to PULISDO (2)
- p.** MHLS Audit Committee
- q.** 414 Vote Libraries Meet-up
- r.** MHLS Nominations & Elections Committee
- s.** MHLS EDI Working Group's Policy Team (2)
- t.** MHLS COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group
- u.** Presentation: Core Values & Ethics (MHLS Trustee Education Series) (2)
- v.** Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee
- w.** Presentation: An Introduction to the Clean Energy for Anchor Institutions Program
- x.** New Director Check-in: Victoria Herow, Amenia Free Library
- y.** Presentation: "Oh, the Places You'll Go!: The Intersection of Intellectual Freedom & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- z.** Webinar: Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) for Libraries (NYSL)
- aa.** Presentation: Financial & Fiduciary Responsibility (MHLS Trustee Education Series)
- bb.** MHLS Directors Association
- cc.** Presentation: New Directors Forum
- dd.** Webinar: Open Meetings Law (MHLS Trustee Education Series)
- ee.** Community Conversations with MHLS Trustees (2)
- ff.** Community Conversations with MHLS Staff (2)
- gg.** Putnam County Library Association (2)
- hh.** Presentation: 7 Habits of Highly Effective Boards (MHLS Trustee Education Series)
- ii.** New Director Check-in: Kirstin Salierno, Howland Public Library
- jj.** Center for the Future of Libraries Board Meeting
- kk.** MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee
- ll.** American Library Association Annual Conference
- mm.** The Library of Local Launch Event