

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | December 2019

1. Albany Update

- a. State Aid for Library Construction:
 - i. The Governor signed the bills to create a second reduced match opportunity at 90/10 match and a new bill to allow applications for coordinated grant applications among multiple libraries:
 1. ["Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation Authorizing State Funding for Up to 90 Percent of Total Project Costs for Public Libraries in Economically Distressed Communities"](#)
 2. Please see the November 2019 [MHLS Report to Member Library Directors](#) for details on the 90/10 match opportunity.
 - b. Outreach Efforts to the Governor
 - i. As previously discussed, the Governor and his staff are currently working on his Executive Budget. In an effort to raise the profile of the need to increase library aid I have participated in NYLA's letters to the editor campaign and initiated outreach to the Governor's regional representatives:
 1. I joined up with Grace Riario the Executive Director of the Ramapo Catskill Library System to meet with Dylan Miyoshi, the Governor's Representative for the Upper Hudson Valley Region in October. He was supportive of our request for the Governor to reconsider his pattern of cutting library aid. Dylan agreed to write a memo on our behalf to the budget staff that help the Governor craft his executive budget to that effect. This was our first outreach through the Governor's representative.
 2. I have a meeting scheduled with Jeff Quain, the Governor's Representative for the Capital Region in December.
- c. Stuart Auchincloss, MHLS trustee; Stephen Cook, director of the Starr Library in Rhinebeck; Margie Menard, director of the Kingston Library & chair of the Ulster County Library Association; and Tessa Killian, Director of the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council joined me for a meeting with senior member of the Assembly majority, Assemblymember Kevin Cahill. Mr. Cahill urged us to encourage our members to speak specifically about the system and how MHLS supports their library when talking to members of the NYS legislature.
- d. The New York Library Association has announced they have hired Briana McNamee as their new Director of Government Relations and Advocacy. This is a key staff position for us as this person is our lead strategist for advocating for state aid for our system and for the construction aid program. Since 2017 Briana served as Governmental Relations Representative for the New York

State School Boards Association (NYSSBA). Previously, she was the Associate Director of Alumni Relations & Institutional Events at Albany Law School, and prior held positions with New York State Assembly members Gunther & Quart and Senator Tkaczyk. Briana received her bachelor's degree in Political Science as well as her master's degree in Business Administration from the University at Albany. Her tenure with NYLA will begin December 9.

- e. Save the Date! NYLA Library Advocacy Day: Tuesday, February 25th, 2020 We will once again coordinate transportation to Albany with help from our friends at the Ramapo Catskill Library System.

2. Town of Union Vale Contract

- a. **Background:** As required by Commissioner's Regulations 90.3, the [MHLS Free Direct Access Plan \(FDAP\)](#) reflects MHLS's commitment that no resident in the area served by MHLS will be excluded from direct or on-site access to the resources of any of the system's member libraries on the basis of age, cultural, economic or civic status. However, the FDAP does provide a process for member libraries to identify and place restrictions on excessive and unfair use of resources that have a negative impact on services a member library provides their resident borrowers.

The Town of Union Vale does not have their own library and residents from their town consistently use four other member libraries: Beekman, Dover, LaGrange and Millbrook. As a result of the provisions in the FDAP, restrictions were put in place in 2015 due to the unwillingness of the town to contract for library services at a fair and equitable amount. After restrictions were put into place a successful multi-year contract was negotiated and the restrictions were lifted later that same year. We have since negotiated another successful contract that covered 2019. However, upon presenting the current town board with a contract for 2020-2021 (using the same contract language that has been in place since 2015; proposing a 2% increase for 2020 and no increase for 2021) the town board has declined to sign this contract despite 6 months of discussion between the town board and MHLS and advocacy work by the residents of the town.

For more detailed information about this situation please see these [answers to Frequently Asked Questions](#) provided to Union Vale cardholders in September.

- b. **Issue:** The boards of the Beekman Library and the Millbrook Library have both formally made a claim of "serious inequities and hardship" to the MHLS Executive Director and are requesting that the MHLS Board enact systemwide restrictions* for Union Vale residents, should no contract be in place by December 31, 2019, based on the following facts:
 - 1. The Town of Union Vale is unserved by a chartered public library and [provides less than the average funding](#) for public library services provided by contract with neighboring community libraries.

2. More than 5% of the total circulation of library materials by each library has been provided to the residents of the Town of Union Vale.
 - a. Beekman: 9.36%
 - b. Millbrook: 9.34%
3. Under the MHLS Free Direct Access Plan, the two libraries may claim “serious inequities and hardships” due to non-residents making excessive use of a libraries’ resources that affects the libraries’ ability to provide direct and on-site access to their residents.

At the November 2019 meeting of the MHLS Directors Association a vote was taken on this issue. The DA unanimously supports the Beekman and Millbrook libraries’ claim of “serious inequities and hardship” and endorses the use of systemwide restrictions for Union Vale cardholders should no contract be in place by December 31, 2019.

**Restricted access will mean no access to non-print items (i.e. DVDs, CDs, Video Games, Audiobooks), special collections (i.e. museum passes and kits), and downloadable content currently available through OverDrive Advantage Accounts: popular fiction and nonfiction titles in ebook and eaudiobook formats paid for with local funds.)*

c. The MHLS Board is asked to consider this issue at their December board meeting.

3. Ebook Advocacy

- a. On November 1, Macmillan enacted its eight-week embargo period for new library ebook licenses. Libraries across the country have responded – announcing boycotts, stepping up advocacy efforts to raise awareness among the general public and encourage outreach to the publishers.
- b. More than 90 city and county leaders serving high-density urban populations, those most negatively impacted by this new embargo, have signed a “[Statement on Equitable Public Access to E-Books](#),” declaring their commitment to protecting and supporting the capacity of public libraries to:
 - Provide equal access for individuals to gain knowledge and become proficient with digital tools, regardless of their income, physical abilities, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, citizenship status or religion
 - Support lifelong learning and foster empathy, curiosity, civic engagement and a love of reading among community members.
 - Educate community members about the rights, responsibilities and implications of their lives online, including data privacy risks when accessing online learning resources and digital content.
 - Serve as valued partners to local government in advancing city/county outcomes for digital inclusion and as institutions that support informed citizens.

- c. This embargo pits small libraries against large libraries as it provides reduced pricing on one copy of a title during the embargo period, something very attractive to small libraries such as those in our region, however it is a slippery slope as other publishers are watching how the library community reacts to this embargo.
 - i. I encourage you to sign the [#ebooksForAll petition](#) and learn more about this issue. At this website: <https://ebooksforall.org/> you can find out how to respond to questions surrounding the issues behind eBook embargoes by publishers and help spread the word about the importance of eBooks in libraries.

4. Census 2020

- a. After discussions with the Dyson Foundation, our county library association chairs and a member library director serving on the Dutchess County Complete Count Committee, we have provided a letter of interest/proposal for a \$20,000 Census Get Out the Count (GOTC) grant from the New York State Census Equity Fund which is managed by the Dyson Foundation and the New York Community Trust. We have requested funds for training for our member libraries and a print and social media outreach campaign to Hard to Count (HTC) populations in our service area. It is unclear when we will find out about the success of our proposal.
- b. MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Casey Conlin has created a Census resources page for member libraries: <https://midhudson.org/topics/sustainable-libraries/census-2020/>
 - i. Featured Resource: [Hard to Count Population Map with Libraries](#) – Hard to Count populations are communities and groups with historically low response rates to the Census including, young children, highly mobile persons, racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, low income persons, persons experiencing homelessness, undocumented immigrants, persons who distrust the government, LGBTQ persons, persons with mental or physical disabilities, persons who do not live in traditional housing.
- c. New Resources:
 - i. A Census 2020 LibGuide has been produced by the NYS library community: <https://libguides.senylrc.org/Census2020/home>
 - ii. The Digital Equity Laboratory at The New School has both produced a manual for libraries, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community advocates, “[Preparing for the First Digital Census](#),” meant for anyone who intends to work with communities towards a complete county during Census 2020; and, based on [expert risk assessments](#), compiled a set of curriculum modules intended to equip organizations, like libraries, with the information and tools they need to play their part.
 - 1. Digital Census Preparation Train-the-Trainer sessions using this new curriculum are scheduled across the state starting this month and will be an opportunity for MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Casey Conlin, to bring back the latest thinking in how to support our member libraries in the form of workshops and webinars in the first quarter of 2020.

- iii. 2020 Census mini-grants from the American Library Association were publicized to our member libraries: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/govinfo/census/grants>
- d. Governor's recent press release about funds for a complete count in New York mentions libraries: [Governor Cuomo Announces \\$60 Million to Support Counting Every New Yorker in the 2020 Census](#)
 - i. If you are a Twitter user please post a Tweet to thank the Governor for announcing Census funding for CBOs and libraries: "Thank you @NYGovCuomo for announcing Census funding for trusted voice CBOs & libraries! The 💰 getting out quickly will help #GetNYCounted! #Census2020"

5. Board-to-Board Visits & Talking Points

- a. Thank you to all MHLS trustees who have let me know you are visiting member library boards, this is helpful so we can brief you on any local issues before you get there and to ask for your help with getting the word out about initiatives and opportunities at MHLS. We are now formally tracking board-to-board visits so appreciate the head's up and completion reports.
- b. For the next few months we are asking for your help to promote three things:
 - i. NEW: To learn more about the Macmillan embargo and what it means for the future of ebook pricing for libraries: <https://ebooksforall.org/>
 - ii. To attend NYLA Library Advocacy Day 2020 on Tuesday, February 25th in Albany
 - iii. To understand the important role libraries can play for Census 2020, both to promote that it is happening and preparation to assist residents to fill out the Census online.

6. Executive Director's Event Participation: September-November

- a. MHLS Incentives Committee
- b. Directors Association
- c. MHLS Leadership Circle Workshop
- d. Trustee Essentials Workshop at MHLS
- e. Meeting with John Wackman of Hudson Valley Repair Café
- f. Trustee Essentials Workshop at Mahopac Library
- g. Columbia County Library Association at Philmont Public Library
- h. New York Alliance of Library Systems meeting at Guilderland Public Library
- i. Union Vale Town Board Meeting
- j. Trustee Essentials at Cairo Public Library
- k. Committee Amendment Working Group of the Bylaws, Policy and Procedures Committee
- l. Putnam County Library Association at Carmel
- m. Livingston Free Library Board of Trustees
- n. Sustainable Library Certification Program Advisory Board
- o. Directors Association Workshop: Open Meetings Law & Freedom of Information Law

- p.** Advanced Trustee: Legal Issues at the Hudson Area Association Library
- q.** New Director Orientation: Victoria Herow, Amenia Free Library
- r.** Ulster County Library Association Annual Meeting in Rosendale
- s.** Dutchess County Directors Association at Beekman Library
- t.** Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State
- u.** Division of Library Development Monthly Update
- v.** LaGrange Library Board Meeting
- w.** Wendy Tremper Wollerton, Director, Livingston Free Library
- x.** Columbia County Library Association at Germantown Library
- y.** Ulster County Library Association at Highland Public Library
- z.** Greene County Library Association at Cairo Public Library
- aa.** Intermediate Trustee Workshop: Financial & Fiduciary Responsibilities at MHLS
- bb.** Assemblyman Kevin Cahill
- cc.** Drawdown Learn, Omega Center for Sustainable Living, Rhinebeck, NY
- dd.** Adriance Honors, Locust Grove, Poughkeepsie
- ee.** Putnam County Library Association at Carmel
- ff.** Consultation, Hyde Park Free Library
- gg.** MHLS Annual Meeting
- hh.** Claverack Free Library Grand Opening
- ii.** Dylan Miyoshi, Governor's Representative for the Upper Hudson Valley Region
- jj.** New Director Orientation: Darren Lanspery, Director, Plattekill Public Library
- kk.** MHLS Facilities Committee
- ll.** Advanced Trustee Education: Strategic Thinking at Patterson Library
- mm.** MHLS Finance Committee
- nn.** MHLS Trustee Services Committee
- oo.** Directors Association Business Meeting & Staff Appreciation Luncheon
- pp.** Columbia County Library Association at Hudson Area Association Library
- qq.** Advocates & Ambassadors Workshop at Hudson Area Association Library
- rr.** Public Library System Director Organization of New York State
- ss.** New York State Alliance of Library Systems
- tt.** New York Library Association Conference, Saratoga Springs, NY
- uu.** Ulster County Library Association at Kingston Library
- vv.** Pleasant Valley Free Library Reception with Assemblymember Didi Barrett