MHLS Report to Member Library Directors | February 2024

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

1. **Delivery Services**
    a. MHLS signed an eighteen-month renewal Agreement with our delivery vendor, Valley Courier, which will run from July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025, and increase the cost by 2%.
    b. A reminder that MHLS will be conducting our annual spring review of delivery stops by circulation, which is based on members three-year average circulation numbers. Any adjustments, if necessary, will be reviewed by the SSAC in May, and adjustments would begin on July 1, 2024.
    c. Magazine donations by member libraries through MHLS Delivery for correctional facilities has been extended until further notice. Donated magazines are welcome according to the guidelines below.
        i. Donated magazines should be in good condition with a published date no more than one year prior to the current year and mailing labels removed or obscured.
        ii. Only donated magazines will be acceptable for delivery. No other donated media or formats have been approved for transportation through delivery.
        iii. Donated magazines for correctional facilities should be bundled together and addressed to MHLS ILL.
        iv. Donated magazine bundles should be no more than 10 inches thick.
        v. Donated magazine bundles may not be placed into Monday or Tuesday pickups due to high volume on these days.
        vi. Libraries may not send more than one donated magazine bundle per week. Questions about delivery should be directed to Tom Finnigan, MHLS Delivery Operations Manager, tfinnigan@midhudson.org. General questions regarding magazine donations should be directed to MHLS Interlibrary Loan, ill@midhudson.org.
    d. Delivery Operations has been assisting the Grinnell library with periodic storage during an ongoing construction project. As always, let us know if you have or need any special delivery requests during renovations, construction, or emergency situations.

2. **Integrated Library System & Cataloging Services**
    a. **Certified!:** Our newest catalogers, Rebecca Hagan and BJ Vickery who have completed the certification requirements for Innovative's Certification Technical Services Coordinator. The certification requires coursework in Managing Technical Services in Sierra, Sierra Cataloging, Reports and statistics, SQL. The two will go beyond certification to complete Load Profile training (4-6 hour courses) this spring. While not officially a cataloger, Kathryn Brew has also completed the course requirements for Cataloging. Laurie, Nina and Kathryn are all 3 certified as Systems Administrators which includes coursework in system management, Basic Cataloging, SQL, advanced SQL, Python, APIs, and reports and statistics.

    b. **Catalog Launch:** Discover.Midhudsonlibraries.org has been in a full pilot launch for more than 2 months. We are actively taking in feedback from the form linked on our toolbar, tickets, comments, county meetings, and advisory committee meetings. We have organized the feedback into a prioritized list of issues. We met with Innovative's development team to review what we have gathered.   We identified the following issues as primary and they are listed in priority order:

i. **Facet Display of locations**: Display all libraries-Smaller collections are rarely displayed and require many clicks to expose. This is a critical issue for consortia our size.

ii. **Were are we?:** we voted this up to the top priority in the enhancement ideas, but that does not equate to innovative taking this up right away. We have an understanding that this will begin at the end of the first quarter (fingers crossed).

iii. **Patron login errors**: Some patrons experience a login error. We have been reporting these incidents (27).
    Were are we?: We were told to use the ticketing early on, but there was no communication between support and development, and development believed that they had resolved the issue. They are reviewing our tickets and logs. We hope to have a better understanding of the issue soon. This is not an enhancement and is actively being pursued for a fix. We are sharing new tickets with the development team proactively.

iv. **Location should be prioritized** – custom order facets. This is a new issue as consortia come on board with the product.
    Where are we? This is part of the overall facet work being done

v. **Sort facet subsets in alphabetic order**- Particularly location
    Again, this has surfaced for consortia mostly, but where location is concerned the listing by record count is really not useful and get's in the way when trying to find your library.
    Where are we? This will be addressed at the end of Q1 with other facet changes.

vi. **Sort search results by Author or Title**
    Where are we?
    An enhancement request has been made in place, but currently not in the roadmap.

vii. **Search Bar needs to be more prominent**: Currently the bar melds not the top toolbar
    Where are we? Innovative has this on their radar. They are concerned with being responsive to all devices and screens sizes

viii. **On order location –** Currently the display indicates on order items but does not identify the library.
    Where are we? –As this is a Consortia issue, it hasn't been reported before us. The APIs required for this service are not yet available to map this level of information to the Sierra system. While the APIs were created for Encore, Vega is very different and incompatible with the Encore version of the API. This is possible, but will be a longer range goal.

ix. **Due Date** it would be useful to have the due date in item record when checked out. This also falls into the category of API development. We have introduced issue as an enhancement, but it is a longer range goal for innovative.

x. Rollup inconsistencies:
    1. Punctuation causes titles to not roll up
        "Dolly Parton, songteller: my life in lyrics."
        "Dolly Parton, songteller: my life in lyrics"
        "Dolly Parton: songteller: my life in lyrics"
    2. Duplicate entries from OverDrive
    3. Subtitles are inconsistent

xi. Problematic whitespace – poor page cohesion/grouping

xii. Patron lists should be more compact or offer list view

Where are we?: By the time you are reading this report, and certainly by the meeting

c. **Sierra 6.1 Upgrade:** The 6.1 upgrade was completed on January 29th.
  i. Enhancements included in 6.1
     1. Reprint Bills: From within the patron record, in the fines tab, staff can reprint a bill if the bill was sent after January 30th (the first day of billing after the upgrade), is not more than 60 days past the send date & has not been paid.
     2. Show time of last status update: Staff can hover over the status to view the date of the last change to the item status. This is also available as a searchable item in Create List.
  ii. Several issues have popped up since upgrading that you should be aware of.
     1. Print Templated for overdue, bills and pickup notices stopped working . This was not known to us before the upgrade, and it took a few days to be made aware. Our testing process for upgrades now includes both the standard and custom notice testing. The issue was resolved with a patch.
     2. Additional information now appears in the pop up messages. This does create a distraction from the content in the message. This is now a known issue for iii to address in a future upgrade.

d. **Sierra Email notices:**
  i. Mail notifications sent from Sierra have been upgraded to an Amazon Email Relay (AWS SES). This is to keep with current industry standards adding DKIM (DomainKeys Identified Mail) authentication to our existing SPF (Sender Policy Framework) and DMARC (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance). Gerry was proactive in identifying this as something we should do and worked with Innovative to complete the process. This helps ensure that your notices continue to be delivered to patrons' inbox without being blocked as spam.
  ii. The Sierra 6.1 upgrade patch to fix notice templates created an new issue that required us Part of the custom notices fix required a single "From Address". This has been set notices@midhudson.org. Any reply or error is received by MHLS then forwarded to the appropriate library. Any abuse report (patron marking email as Spam) will have the patron's email removed from Sierra and a note placed in the patron record by MHLS staff.

3. **Coordinated IT Services**
   a. **Legacy Microsoft Products**: Microsoft continues to push subscription model with Microsoft 365. Ending support of older versions (2016, & 2019) with Windows 10 in Oct 2025. https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/deployoffice/endofsupport/resources. All new versions of MS Office require a Microsoft Account. Some older versions of MS Office, where previously you were not required, may require a Microsoft Account if reinstalled. Microsoft is also reducing what will be offered in the MS Office Suite. Retiring MS Publisher with Office 2021 in October 2026. https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/microsoft-publisher-will-no-longer-be-supported-after-october-2026-ee6302a2-4bc7-4841-babf-8e9be3acbfd7 Libraries may wish to review alternatives to Microsoft.

4. **Professional Development & Continuing Education**
   a. Trustee Handbook Book Club
      i. 2024 Dates

1. **What's New in the 2023 Edition of the Trustee Handbook**
   Tuesday, March 19th, 5:00-6:30 PM **REGISTER**
2. **Libraries for the Future: An Introduction to Sustainability as the Newest Core Value**
   Tuesday, June 18th, 5:00-6:30 PM **REGISTER**
3. **Governance Structure: The Role of Board Officers and Board Committees**
   Tuesday, October 15th, 5:00-6:30PM **REGISTER**

   ii. We have recorded another "After Party" session to answer a bunch of the questions we got during 2023 sessions that we ran out of time to answer during a particular webinar: https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/

   iii. We have archived all past sessions (2021-2023) in the MHLS Trustee Education Portal of Training on Demand. This is a good time to remind folks that trustees should view past sessions through Training on Demand in order to receive a certificate of attendance.

b. **Libraries as Resilience Hubs Cohort kicks off Wednesday, February 21st.** The American Library Association has called climate change the "greatest challenge of our generation." In partnership with the Mid-Hudson Library System and Ramapo Catskill Library System, Sustainable Hudson Valley has designed a program of action planning, training and support for libraries as living laboratories for climate resilience in their communities. This will help library leadership make their facilities energy-secure, safe and comfortable in extreme weather, and position them to serve as community hubs for education and action projects to help their surrounding neighborhood deal with climate change. This cohort program includes 4-sessionsto facilitate participants' understanding of climate resilience needs and opportunities at and around their locations, and the participatory approaches to working with local stakeholder partners to capture these opportunities.

c. *Getting Started with Girls Who Code Clubs* **| March 6 | 10:00 – 11:00 am | Online | Register**
The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) is now an organizational partner with Girls Who Code. Join Michaela Burger, Girls Who Code Community Partnerships & Outreach Senior Associate for an overview of what your library can offer and how to get started. This session is open to all MHLS member library staff who are interested in learning how to start a free Girls Who Code Club, sponsor a Summer Coding Session, or simply want to learn more about this worldwide program. Bring your questions!

d. *Adventure Begins at Your Library: Collaborative Teen SRP Workshop* **| Wednesday, March 13 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm | Online | Register**
14 Library systems representing libraries from around the state are joining together to host a Collaborative Teen Summer Reading Program Workshop. Teen librarians can hear from their colleagues around the state and walk away with programming ideas for their summer reading program.

e. *MHLS Member Library Friends Groups Meetup* **| April 16 | 3:00 - 5:00 pm | Kinderhook Memorial Library | Register**
Join Mid-Hudson Library System member library Friends Groups for sharing and discussion at the Kinderhook Memorial Library. All MHLS member library Friends Groups interested in sharing their experiences, questions, and concerns for building and sustaining a Friends Group are welcome to attend. The Friends of the Kinderhook Memorial Library will give a brief presentation of what their group is working on, and we will have a fundraising sharing session. Bring your best ideas!

f. *NYS Talking Book and Braille Library Informational Session* **| April 18 | 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Online |** **[Register](#)**
New York State Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) Senior Librarian Laurenne Teachout (she/her/hers) will provide an overview of services, focusing on institution membership and the important role public libraries play in connecting community members to accessible reading materials. There will be plenty of time for your questions. This event is part of the MHLS EDI in Libraries Series.

g. *Rethinking Summer Reading* **| April 25 | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm | MHLS Auditorium | [Register](#)**
This 2-hour in-person session will provide an overview of summer reading research and trends and help library staff re-focus on how to set kids up for future success using real-world examples. There will be a discussion session for participants following the presentation. Presented Millbrook Library Director, Courtney Tsahalis. This event is open to all MHLS member library staff who plan, program or promote their library's Summer Reading Program. *This is also the kick-off event for the Evaluating Our Impact: Summer Reading Program Cohort 2024-2025.*

h. *Banned Books Symposium: Proactive, Reactive, and Supportive* **| May 4 | 8:30 am – 1:00 pm | Dutchess BOCES 5 Boces Rd., Poughkeepsie**

The event includes two sessions with a choice of presentations from academic, school and public librarians followed by lunch and the keynote speaker Jeff Trexler, Interim Director, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Registration will open on March 1 including a list of presentation topics. The cost per person is $25.

This Symposium is in partnership with Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Mid-Hudson Library System, Mount Saint Mary College, SUNY New Paltz and BOCES School Library Systems of Dutchess, Orange-Ulster, Rockland, Sullivan, and Ulster.

i. *The Book Doctor Is In* **| May 30 | 4:15 – 7:15 pm | Dutchess BOCES (5 BOCES Rd. Poughkeepsie) |** **[Register](#)**
The Mid-Hudson Library System is partnering with Dutchess BOCES School Library System to offer a free book care workshop with Kimberly Young, the Book Doctor from DEMCO. Book Doctor Workshops provide book care training with the aim of helping you keep your collection in circulation longer.

Training includes protection and repair techniques and offers: A hands-on experience, Ideas for protecting books ahead of circulation, Tried-and-true methods for a variety of repairs

j. **OverDrive Marketplace in Training on Demand:** Nina has created a comprehensive self-paced training course for OverDrive and Overdrive Marketplace. The course includes background information about how OverDrive has evolved at the Mid-Hudson Library System, an overview of available resources and training, lending models, checkout reports, holds reports, purchasing with patron interests in mind, user reports, and purchasing tools. The course is also linked to resources and provides quizzes throughout the course to check your comprehension. The course is available in both the [Cataloging and Circulation categories within Technology Training on Demand.](#)

5. **Consulting & Development**
   a. Governor Hochul recently signed the following bills into law:
      i. Legislation (S. 4878-A /A. 398-A) requires employers to give notice to their employees that they are eligible for unemployment insurance whenever the employer makes a permanent or temporary separation of the employee or reduces hours to a point that the employee qualifies for total or partial unemployment.
      ii. Legislation (S. 2518/A. 836) prohibits employers from requesting or requiring username, login information, and passwords, of personal accounts as a condition of hiring, as a condition of employment, or for use in a disciplinary action.
      iii. Legislation (S. 1902-A/A. 1245-A) requires the Department of Labor to provide notice to unemployment applicants of the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) and the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children (WIC).

   b. The State Library has changed which policies they require under the minimum standards. The following policies must now be adopted by all association and public Libraries in order to meet the minimum standards :
      i. **Open Meeting Policy**: All public and association libraries are subject to open meetings law (Education Law, §260-a).
      ii. **Confidentiality of Library Records**: All public and association libraries are required to keep library records confidential according to Civil Practice Laws and Rules, §4509.
      iii. **Conflict of Interest Policy**: All public and association libraries are subject to Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, §715-a.
      iv. **Whistle Blower Policy**: All public and association libraries with twenty or more employees AND an annual revenue in excess of one million dollars in the previous fiscal year are subject to Not-for-Profit Law, §715-b. *(Note that this is required only for certain libraries.)*
      v. **Disaster Response Policy**: A board-approved disaster response policy in the event of a natural or man-made disaster that affects the library facilities, holdings, or staff and library users.
      vi. **Collection Development Policy**
      vii. **Meeting Space Policy** (exception: if the library does not have a meeting room)
      viii. **Internet Use Policy**
      ix. **Code of Ethics**
      x. **Personnel Policy**
      xi. **Financial Controls**: Purchasing/Procurement Policy and Petty Cash Policy."
         https://nyslibrary.libguides.com/publiclibrarystandards/policies

   c. **All Libraries should have a board approved Trustee Education Policy** which acknowledges the two hours of mandatory trustee training required by Education Law 260-d. The policy should identify the procedures your board is putting in place to ensure trustee compliance, as well as outline consequences and procedures in cases of noncompliance. The State Library's Trustee Education Requirements webpage has useful information including a sample policy that can assist Libraries that are looking to draft or update their trustee education policy.

d. **Evaluating Our Impact: Summer Reading Program Cohort 2024-2025:** The Mid-Hudson Library System Summer Reading Program Cohort members will evaluate their library's current Summer Reading Program (SRP) by focusing on why they hold the SRP and evaluate current practices through dollars spent, organizational goals reached, and other specific aspects chosen by participants. This program spans April 2024 to September 2025. This cohort is open to all MHLS member library staff who plan, program, or promote their library's Summer Reading Program. Multiple staff members from an individual library are welcome to attend as a team. This cohort has a limit of a total of 10 libraries participating.

Timeline of Events:

i. **March 22: Application Deadline**

ii. **April 25, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm: 2-hour Education Session (In-person)**
Rethinking Summer Reading **workshop** presented by Millbrook Library Director, Courtney Tsahalis. This 2-hour in-person session will provide an overview of summer reading research and trends and help library staff re-focus on how to set kids up for future success using real-world examples. There will be a discussion session for participants following the presentation.

iii. **May: 2-hour Group Work Session (In-person)**
During this 2-hour session member library participants will outline specific aspects of their 2024 SRP they will evaluate.

iv. **June: One-hour check-in session (Online)**
This one-hour check-in session will solidify any evaluative plans for the 2024 SRP.

v. **September: 2-hour Group Work Session (In-person)**
This 2-hour session will focus on analyzing the collected assessment points from the library's 2024 SRP.

vi. **October: 2-hour Group Work Session (In-person)**
This 2-hour session will focus on outlining changes for the library's 2025 SRP.

vii. **January 2025: One-hour check-in session (Online)**
This one-hour check-in session will focus on peer support during SRP planning.

viii. **February 2025: One-hour check-in session (Online)**
This one-hour check-in session will focus on peer support during SRP planning.

ix. **September 2025: 2-hour Follow-up Session (In-person)**
This 2-hour follow-up session will allow participating members to share the outcome of the changes made to their 2025 SRP and talk about next steps for future programs.

If your library is interested in participating in the MHLS Summer Reading Cohort Program, please complete this application by March 22. Questions can be directed to MHLS Outreach & EDI Specialist, Kerstin Cruger.

6. **Cooperative Collection Development & Digital Collection Access**
   a. **OverDrive e Magazines:** OverDrive adds **TIME Magazine** to the e magazine collection! The title comes with three years back issues included and special issues.

   b. **Teen Collection in OverDrive**: OverDrive now has a teen collection tab available simmilar to our Kids and Magazine page links available in the top toolbar and Libby. These pages provide focussed content, making it easier to browse. The page uncludes subjects and links and features for that age group.

7. **Awareness & Advocacy Services**
   a. State Advocacy:
      i. Thank you to all who made the trip up to Albany for the New York Library Association's (NYLA) Library Advocacy Day. Attendance with almost back to pre-pandemic levels but we were still able to make an impact. Legislators in the region indicated they will sign on to the letters going to the leadership of the Senate and Assembly endorsing the NYLA Budget Priorities which is a very good sign that the one-house budget bills may come in higher than the Governor's proposals which would be ideal.
      ii. Please keep up the pressure. Calls and requests for visits have the most impact but we also urge the maximum number of library supporters to use the NYLA Online Advocacy Center to send legislators' a message that let's them know a great deal of their constituents care about library aid.
      iii. The so-called "Anti-Book Ban" bills continue to proliferate. NYLA has been working hard to manage legislator's expectations about these bills and to hone in on just one that will advance through committee. Currently, the frontrunner bill would add language to the Minimum Standards that would require every library to adopt a collection management/development policy and request for reconsideration process that protects the right to read, something that all libraries should already have. If you don't have one or feel yours may not be up to current standards MHLS partnered with other public library systems around the state to hire a lawyer to write a template you can use. You can find this resource here: PDF/Word

8. **Interlibrary Loan Services**
   a. Requesting increases – Rebecca Hagan, MHLS Interlibrary Loan Specialist has noted an increase in requests and volume of items crossing her desk for SEAL. The uptick seems to coincide with a training session that we did last fall, collaborating with South Eastern's Kelsey Milner, on Requesting 3 ways. If you didn't get a chance to attend, it is a very good overview of how to access materials for your patrons that your library doesn't have.

9. **Construction Program Services**
   a. Watch for the Construction Needs Update Action Memo in April, this will be the first step to apply in the next funding round.
   b. Register for the MHLS workshop: **Applying for Funds Through the State Aid for Library Construction Program** on April 24th, 10am-11:30am.
   c. Contact Laura Crisci with any questions on construction projects.
   d. To get ready for the next round of grant funds:

      i.   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](#))

      ii.   Directors will be sent a 2024 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.

      iii.   [Register for a NYS Directory Service Account](#) (necessary to access the online application)

      iv.   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.

      v.   A UEI number (Unique Entity Identifier) is required. Libraries without one can apply at SAM.gov.

      vi.   Is your building more than 50 years old? Check out the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Approval Documentation

10. **Communications Among Member Libraries**

   a. **ACTION MEMO #24-01 Library Information Update:** We have received just over half of the completed information requested for this Action Memo. Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist, Stephanie Werskey, is following up with Library Directors for any missing information. If you have any questions about this process, please reach out to Stephanie at swerskey@midhudson.org.

   b. **Member Library Logos:** MHLS is seeking to update our collection of member library logos, so that we have the most up-to-date versions on file. Please forward your file(s) to Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist, Stephanie Werskey at swerskey@midhudson.org. Logos should be sent in either .jpg or .png format and be the largest size available. If your library has multiple versions of your logo (such as color and black and white versions), feel free to send them together.

   c. **Job Postings:** The deadline to submit job openings to be included in the MHLS Bulletin is Wednesday, 4:00 pm of the week before publication. The MHLS Bulletin is published every Tuesday. Please send job ads to bulletin@midhudson.org the job posting should not be more than 100 words and include a link to the complete job posting.

   d. **Library Spotlights:** MHLS is always looking for member spotlights to share in the Bulletin. If you have a program, partnership, grant, collection, etc. that you would like to share with your peers, please let us know, [bulletin@midhudson.org.](mailto:bulletin@midhudson.org)

11. **Special Populations**

   a. **2024 MHLS Early Literacy Cohort:** MHLS member library staff who work with families with young children age birth-5 who are **interested in establishing a new community partnership or strengthening an existing partnership to support your library's capacity to provide early literacy services in your community** are invited to participate in the *2024 MHLS Early Literacy Cohort Program*.

Establishing partnerships demonstrates the library's commitment to participating in community-wide goals, strengthens community connections, amplifies shared resources, and helps connect libraries to

members of the community who may not be using the library.

This program is designed to help your library identify an early literacy partner in your community and create and implement an outreach plan with your partner organization. Sessions cover training on best practices as well as offer member library peer support. **This program consists of four 90-minute interactive online sessions taking place in April, May, June, and October as well as individual work between sessions to establish a partnership and implement programming.**

Topics covered will include Community Asset Analysis and Identifying Community Partners, Strategies for Partnerships and Outreach and Creating Action Plans with Partners.

If you are interested in participating in this dynamic peer supported program, please fill out this brief form by March 15th. Questions can be directed to MHLS Outreach & EDI Specialist, Kerstin Cruger.

b. *Summer Meals at NYS Libraries* **| March 27 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm | Online | Register**
    Hunger Solutions New York's Summer and Afterschool Meals Specialist Cody Bloomfield will give an overview about offering, or supporting outreach for, summer meals at your library. Hunger Solutions New York strives to maximize participation in, and support for, federally funded nutrition assistance programs. This session is hosted by Hunger Solutions New York and coordinated by the New York State Library. *The NYSL collaboration replaced the webinars previously offered to individual systems.*

c. **If you would like to volunteer in a NYS correctional facility library,** you can do so through the Volunteer Services Program of Corrections and Community Supervision. View the directive 4750 document to access the forms and specifications. The Division of Volunteer Services can be reached at (518) 402-1700 or mfvs@doccs.ny.gov for specific volunteer questions. Please specify the facilities you are interested in. If you have specific questions about a facility's general library, please contact Corinne Leone, at (518) 485-7109, corinne.leone@doccs.ny.gov.

d. **Incarcerated Individual Reference Request Procedure:** A reminder to all MHLS member libraries that should you receive - by mail - a reference request directly from an incarcerated individual in a correctional facility you should not respond to them.

    Please send the letter including the envelope to MHLS, ATTN: Kerstin Cruger, to forward to the senior librarian at their correctional facility. This will 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 the incarcerated, 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 to Kerstin Cruger, Outreach & EDI Specialist at MHLS through the delivery.

e. **Service Animals in the Public Library:** A service animal is any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or

domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered to be service animals. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

To determine if an animal is a service animal, a public entity or a private business may ask two questions:

    i.   Is this animal required because of a disability?

    ii.   What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?

These inquiries may not be made if the need for the service animal is obvious (e.g., the dog is guiding an individual who is blind or is pulling a person's wheelchair.) A public entity or private business may not ask about the nature or extent of an individual's disability. It also may not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained or licensed as a service animal, or require the animal to wear an identifying vest.

It is important to understand the rights and responsibilities of service animal handlers and their service animal partners under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To learn more please visit the [Northeast ADA Center.](#)

12. **Cooperative Efforts with Other Library Systems**
    a. **Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley: The application for Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley Spring 2024 session, which will run from April 2024 to June 2024, is now open** for individuals affiliated with libraries and organizations in the Hudson Valley. **[Applications](#) are due by Tuesday, March 26 at 12:00 pm.**

       The program is open to anyone who works at a library or a community-based organization that would like to offer Digital Navigator services to their patrons. Applications are available to individuals who work at libraries and nonprofit organizations in the following counties: Columbia, Greene, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester. This cohort is open to individuals who have previously trained as a Digital Navigator and those new to the program. Visit the [Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley website](#) to view the program requirements. Navigators who meet the requirements by June 30, 2024 will receive a $500 investment incentive payable to their organization.

13. **Administrative**
    a. **Memo of Understanding (MOU) Action Memo (24-02):** With the help of the System Services Advisory Committee we have drafted the Action Memo that will go out to all member library directors and board presidents to get their signatures on the new MOU.
       i.   The draft is attached to this report.
       ii.   We will host an online meeting to provide an orientation to the document for directors and trustees. This is scheduled for Tuesday, March 5 at 5:00pm. You and your trustees are welcome to register for this meeting [here](#).
       iii.   Suggested talking points if you haven't already introduced this document to your board:
          1. The MOU defines the relationship between MHLS and member libraries.
          2. The former documents that did this, the Document of Understanding (20+ years old) and the Automation Agreement (8 years old), were out of date and out of step with how things currently work in the system.

3. The new MOU is not a major departure from the original two documents, it simply merged them; removed or updated out-of-date language and concepts; and clarified issues that have become questioned over the years.
4. The document was unanimously approved by the MHLS Directors Association and MHLS Board of Trustees.

b. 2024 Local Library Services Aid Payment Schedule: The best of our knowledge we should expect to see LLSA payments from MHLS to your library in August and December. This is not in our control. It depends on when the state turns over the funding to MHLS. We apologize for the confusion in 2023 around this issue.

c. The Town of Union Vale submitted a provisional charter application for their new library on December 22, 2023. The Path to Membership Joint Committee met to continue their work from the fall and will be presenting a proposal for feedback at upcoming county directors' meetings.