
Executive Director's Report June 2021

NYS Legislative Updates

Four New York Library Association (NYLA) policy initiatives directly affecting public libraries were passed as legislative bills by the NYS Legislature earlier this month. The next step in the process is for these legislative bills to be sent to the Executive Chamber. Once the bills have been received by the Executive Chamber, the Governor must either sign or veto each bill within 10 days of receipt. If the bills are signed by the Governor, they will become law with an effective date that is dependent on the language included within the text of the bill.

Streamline & Modernize Library Program Requirements [S6511 (Ryan) / A7021 (Jean-Pierre)]

The distribution of state funding for New York State's public libraries and library systems is governed by complicated formulas contained in the Education Law. These amendments are funding neutral and replace outdated provisions with new language, consolidate and modernize programs and streamline the planning and reporting requirements to improve efficiency. [Passed by both the Senate and Assembly on June 3, 2021.]

Aspects of this bill most important to WLS include the:

- Expansion of the timeline for completing Public Library Construction Aid projects from 3 years to 4 years.
- Combining of the Central Library Development Aid and Central Book Aid into one program and allowing for purchases of all types, in all formats, for all ages. This would be a move away from having a Central Library seen in a reference capacity and more about access and centralized access to collections.
- Elimination of the adult literacy program and family literacy program and redirecting the funds into coordinated outreach services to allow for greater flexibility for systems. The category of at-risk youth from birth to 21 would be added as a component to the definition of outreach services.

Training for Library Trustees [S4435 (May) / A6121B (Jean-Pierre)]

Currently, the state does not require library trustees to obtain any formal training. If this bill is signed by the Governor, beginning January 1, 2023, a trustee of a public or free association library shall be required to complete a minimum of two hours of trustee education annually, from a provider approved by the commissioner on the financial oversight, accountability, fiduciary responsibilities and the general powers and duties of a library trustee. Such trustee education may be delivered online or in person, and may include lectures, workshops, regional or national library association programs or any other format approved by the commissioner. [Passed by the Senate on June 6th and by the Assembly on June 7th.]

Increased Access to the Library Construction Program [S5753A (Ryan)/A7060A (Jean-Pierre)]

Many small and rural public libraries in dire need of capital improvements are located in economically disadvantaged communities unable to meet the current minimum of matching funds set by the Public Library Construction Aid Program's requirements. If signed by the Governor, this bill would allow a public library system to use up to 50% of its Public Library Construction Aid allocation to support projects in economically disadvantaged communities (as defined by NYS requirements) receiving construction aid awards in excess of 75% of total project costs. [Passed by the Senate on June 1st and by the Assembly on June 10th.]

Access to E-Books [S2890B (May) / A5837B (Jean-Pierre)]

This bill requires that publishers who offer electronic books to the private market, also extend licenses to libraries within the State, without discrimination. Contracts would stipulate "reasonable terms" that would allow libraries across the state, and their patrons, to have equitable access to the content they seek. [Passed by the Assembly on June 9th and by the Senate on June 10th.]

Public Library Construction Aid Program

With the state-wide allocation of \$34 million to support the FY 2021/2022 Public Library Construction Aid Program, WLS was notified by NYS Library Division of Library Development (DLD) that \$1,590,468 will be available for approved public library and public library system construction projects within Westchester County. This is an increase of \$935,569 in funding from last year, when the state-wide allocation was \$14 million.

Due to the pending legislative bills noted above, it is unclear at this time when the changes noted will take effect and how some details will be implemented. A meeting of the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Grants Committee will be scheduled soon to review the guidelines for this year's application process. Information will be shared with the library directors, and workshops will be scheduled to cover the Construction Aid Program itself and the online software used for submission of these applications.

Public Library Administration Program

WLS, the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) and the Palmer School of Library & Information Science at Long Island University have partnered to bring back the Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration courses to the Hudson Valley. MHLS would serve as the host site for the 2021-2023 program. WLS served as a host site for the program from 2016-2020.

The Public Library Administrator's Certificate program consists of five courses that carry graduate academic credit and culminate in an Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration recognized by the New York State Education Department. The program is designed to:

1. Provide a solid management education program for public library administrators;
2. Update librarians on new management principles and organizational structures; and
3. Integrate these concepts and illustrate their practical application within the public library setting.

Cataloging Services

In March, Manager of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray met with the PLDA's ILS (Integrated Library System) Committee to follow up on PLDA's earlier discussion about changing certain controversial subject headings in the catalog. The subject headings pertain to the topic of people entering the United States without authorization. In 2016, the Library of Congress was about to change "Illegal aliens" to "Noncitizens", and to follow through with all the many related subject headings in their catalog. The American Library Association (ALA) approved, saying that the existing terms had acquired derogatory connotations and were "becoming increasingly associated with nativist and racist sentiments." The United States Congress intervened and, by threatening to micro-manage all future cataloging decisions made by the Library of Congress, prevented the changes.

Since then, libraries across the country have been making the changes unilaterally, and the Westchester Library System PLDA voted in April to do the same.

Since the meeting in March, Mr. Wray had been working with Angela Kilsdonk of the Equinox Open Library Initiative and Shannon Montes de Oca of Backstage Library Works to ensure that the WLS catalog would function properly as far as displaying cross references which would point to the new headings when a patron entered the old headings in a search. For example, it is desirable that when a user browses subjects for "Illegal aliens Civil Rights United States", the message "See: Noncitizens Civil Rights United States" is displayed. This is obviously preferable to the user simply getting no results and then assuming that there are no such materials in Westchester's public libraries.

For cross references to work, a subject heading in one or more bibliographic records has to have an authority record to which it is linked, the authority record has to be coded properly, and the ILS (Evergreen in this case) has to have particular settings configured for the cross reference to correctly display in the catalog. After many conversations, much adjusting and testing and several setbacks, Ms. Kilsdonk and Mike Rylander of Equinox and Mr. Wray finally achieved success in the middle of June. Mr. Wray has now begun doing the extensive work of editing the bibliographic records, creating and editing the authority records, and linking the two—one subject heading at a time. Cataloger Melissa Glazer will also be involved in the project.

During the winter and spring, Mr. Wray and Systems Librarian Lindsay Stratton worked with Equinox, the vendors Baker & Taylor and Brodart, and Scarsdale Public Library to solve some problems with the acquisitions process. It was found that more information was required in both the library's ordering and the vendors' coding of MARC records. As of mid-June, the problems seem to be resolved.

Ms. Glazer completed her work on West Harrison Branch Library's "#OwnVoices" special collection. Earlier in the spring, she and Mr. Wray did the same for Harrison Public Library's "#OwnVoices" special collection. In this genre, authors from a marginalized or under-represented group write about their own experiences or from their own perspective. The libraries selected the titles, and the WLS catalogers added the term "#OwnVoices" to the bibliographic records, making them findable in the catalog.

Cataloger Qingshe Ren cataloged electronic games for Yonkers Public Library and John C. Hart Memorial Library; Chinese books for Briarcliff Manor Public Library and Chappaqua Public Library; Japanese books for Eastchester Public Library; and his usual assortment of DVDs, Blu-rays and

audiobooks for many member libraries. Among the many books cataloged by Ms. Glazer were Spanish ones for the Field Library and Yonkers Public Library and Filipino and Vietnamese ones for Yonkers Public Library. Mr. Wray cataloged music scores for Mamaroneck Public Library, a puzzle for Rye Free Reading Room, 3Doodler Pen (a 3D modeling tool) kits for Tuckahoe Public Library and a range of other non-print and print materials for the member libraries.

By filling all requests from the member libraries and consulting with them, acting as a liaison between the libraries and their vendors, and working to make the shared catalog effective, WLS Cataloging Services strives to serve the libraries and their communities.

Development

Provided below is a chart that highlights WLS's grant-related activities. Building relationships with current and potential funders is an ongoing process. The funds listed below support ongoing activities such as outreach to adults and support for job and career development while helping to address newer initiatives to address digital equity and health and wellness programming for young adults.

WLS Grants 2021 – as of 6/17/2021

Grantor/ Credit Name	Program Area	Specific Focus	Demographic Benefit	Amount	FY Dates
Entergy Charitable Foundation	Outreach Adult Job and Career Search	Job Search Tool Kit (JSTK) Spanish Translations Career Coaching Job & Career Counseling Includes marketing and management	County-wide	\$25,000	2021
TD Charitable Foundation	Outreach Adult Job and Career Search	Spanish translation of JSTK printing, etc. Included marketing	County-wide	\$5,000	2021
The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation	Outreach Adult Job and Career Search	JSTK Spanish printing Spanish Translations Career Coaching	County-wide	\$5,000	2021
Westchester Community Foundation	Digital Equity	Includes materials: Chromebooks, WIFI, staff time and administration Training for library staff/public on Chromebook usage	260 Families in Head Start and County Shelters; to promote member library card sign up	\$158,500	2021
RXR Realty	Digital Equity	Distribution of refurbished desktops with camera, keyboard & mouse; (100), budget includes overhead, staff time for WLS and STEM fees (paid)	60 families in County Shelters; to promote member library card sign up	\$43,500	New in 2020; program in 2021
Hope for Youth Foundation	Teen Health and Wellness Programming	Teen Peer-to-Peer Breath-Body-Mind Training	County-wide; to promote Member Library Programs	\$5,000	2021-2022

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Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) NY CARES	Digital Equity	Digital loaner program; 100 Chromebooks and training, includes overhead and training	Member Libraries	\$65,926	6/21

Information Technology (IT)

The helpdesk system was deployed in early January 2021. Below are the current numbers of opened and closed work orders since using the new system.

Work Orders	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
Opened	295	277	343	373	490
Closed	278	217	248	266	345

Hiring Process Status

Part-Time Support Technician: Interviews took place in April, and Jorry Dorelian was hired and started working mid-May on the evening and weekend shift.

IT Operations Manager: The job advertisement was posted in numerous online locations to maximize awareness of this employment opportunity to a diverse audience. Sites used to promote this job advertisement included the WLS website, NYLINE listserv, METRO Job Bank, Diversityjobs.com, Indeed.com, Nonprofit Westchester (NPW) Job Board, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Numerous applications have been received to date, and we anticipate beginning the first round of interviews by mid-July.

On June 17th, PLDA voted to approve the PLDA Finance Committee's recommendation to use Option B, which uses the current model with the base membership and ILS maintenance factors combined, for the ILS Maintenance portion of the IT invoices for FY 2022. The invoices for the July-December 2021 IT services will be sent out shortly and will be based on the 2019 IT Funding Model with a 4% increase (excluding digital content). Member libraries have until June 30th to provide any updates in equipment or service needs for the July-December 2021 time period.

Information sessions on the Service Level Agreement and 2022 IT invoices are being scheduled for the member library directors and trustees. The dates of these information sessions will be shared with the WLS Board for those interested in attending.

Project Hope

NY Project Hope's (NYPH) Westchester Crisis Counseling Team has been doing a great amount of outreach in communities throughout Westchester. We have collaborated with many of the member libraries by holding groups and giving presentations. The table below shows the number of presentations and group sessions given through May 16th. NYPH staff participated at Westchester's Salute to Seniors events; and this opportunity was used, not only to inform people about NYPH, but to let them know about all of WLS's offerings for the senior population. Through our helpline, the WLS team was able to provide digital access to remote students and seniors.

Highlights included:

- Participation in the NYPH program has been approved to continue until August.
- Tables have been set up at Farmers Markets throughout the county.
- The formation of a COVID Support Group with Family Services of Westchester and People USA is in process.
- A grieving woman was helped to reconnect with people by locating virtual and in-person social groups and activities.

Project HOPE RSP Group Crisis Counseling/Public Education Participants Summary by Provider		
Report Level: Regional	Report Period: 09/17/2020-05/16/2021	
Region: Westchester County	Data Extracted On: 05/18/2021	
Provider/Agency	# of Sessions	Total Participants
Empress EMS	3	30
Family Services of Westchester	73	899
Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, Inc.	2	8
Open Door Family Medical Center	8	47
PEOPLE USA, Inc.	11	115
Westchester Library System	25	520
Total	122	1619

PUBLIC INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT (PIE)

Youth/Family Outreach

Throughout April, May, and June, five presentations were delivered to students and their families regarding the valuable e-resources they could access with a library card. These presentations focused heavily on the importance of literacy in learning as a whole, demonstrating how families can find materials (e-books, audiobooks, comics) that can help younger audiences build a love for reading. For the older students, more emphasis was placed on study help through Tutor.com/westchester. Parents and staff at these presentations were also shown resources like FirstFind.org where they could find support for job searching, adult learning, and accessing family benefits. The message was well-received, with the Greenburgh Eleven school making immediate plans to get all of their on-site high school and middle school students signed up for library cards through the Dobbs Ferry Public Library. We are coordinating the delivery of temporary library card numbers to these sites for quick digital access while students and families get their permanent cards through their local library.

Senior Programming

Education and counseling on Medicare and related senior topics has been a feature of our outreach programming since 2008. Throughout the pandemic, the program—**Westchester Seniors Out Speaking (WSOS)**—has operated largely through its helpline and the creation of new online content including webinars and audio broadcasts. As of June 1st, 77 Westchester residents were counseled by phone and there were 479 visitors to the Demystifying Medicare audio recordings.

Over the last few months, changes in program staff and funding as well as volunteer attrition have supported a decision to reduce the size of the program from 9 to 2 sites. We are, however, determined to continue the program given its significant value to community seniors (and library patrons).

In the fall of this year, and in time for open enrollment, we hope to reopen two "in-person" counseling sites at the Yonkers Public Library-Grinton I. Will Branch Library and the John C. Hart Memorial Library in Yorktown. These sites will continue to be known as **Senior Benefits Individual Counseling Services (SBICS)**, which will become the official program name in lieu of WSOS. Concurrently, educational programming (in person and via Zoom) will continue to be delivered to explain Medicare options and enrollment requirements. We also hope to continue our email and phone Helpline [sbic@wlsmal.org and (914) 231-3260].

Our most recent **VisionLabs** guest presentation on BARD audiobooks was attended by 16 librarians, and two desktop magnification units were recently received as donations from patrons of the John C. Hart Memorial Library. With libraries reopening their spaces and COVID restrictions being lifted, we look forward to setting up an in-person presence for the VisionLabs program at the Yonkers Public Library Grinton I. Will Branch Library.

As part of our ongoing support of the Senior Law Day Collaborative, WLS participated in the June World Elder Abuse Awareness program (June 16th). The presentation covered scams and frauds, and we were joined by the Westchester District Attorney's Office, the Attorney General's Office, and Pace Women's Justice Center. The event's [resource toolkit](#) is now posted to seniorlawday.info in addition to the [Essential Online Health Information for Older Adults](#), a toolkit that is expected to be a valuable resource for ongoing programming.

Adult Education

Starting in 2021, we've focused on implementing our new *fully online* high school equivalency preparation tool – **EssentialEd** - which includes "TABE Academy" and "TASC Academy." As a result, our adult education program - HSE Connect! - has shifted from a tutoring model to a coaching model. Once students are guided in the use of EssentialEd, their progress is monitored through the EssentialEd Instructor Panel. A coach connects with the student as appropriate (weekly or biweekly) to guide the review of content that has not been fully mastered and to offer encouragement. When time on task is evidently not taking place, students are helped to reassess and/or rededicate their ability to address their HSE goal as well as to connect to other services that can support their progress and needs, e.g., job search, social services.

Currently, there are 42 students enrolled on EssentialEd. Since April 1st, students have spent 297 hours working in the program. A total of 31 volunteers have been actively engaged in supporting our students, with some continuing to work one-to-one on other tasks such as core literacy.

Reentry Programming

As part of our ongoing support of library services at the Westchester County Jail, WLS has uploaded several of our publications—*Guide to Getting Your High School Diploma, Job Search Toolkit* (English and Spanish versions), *Westchester Reentry Task Force Resource Guide*—to the tablets available to several units within the jail. Our work with the provider of the tablets (American Prison Data Systems a/k/a APDS) has led to making available graphic literature content from WLS. The graphic literature vendor worked with us and APDS to assure that security concerns

were addressed. This effort is a win for readers in the jail, especially adult developing readers and those who read in Spanish. All of these efforts assure that library resources are integral to jail orientation and pre-release programming.

Additionally, with the help of member libraries, we continue to support the jail with donations (and purchase) of books. Key requests have been for paperbacks, materials in Spanish, and materials in large print.

Of note: EssentialEd (mentioned above under Adult Education) is also made available on the tablets used in the jail. Those participating in the jail's education programs now are able to continue toward their high school equivalency goal by connecting with WLS's reentry services.

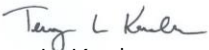
RESILIENCE / Westchester Breathes

Rockland County is working to launch a professional/community trauma-informed services effort modeled on the work of the Westchester Resilience Coalition. Happily, the expertise developed in facilitation and the web resources curated are being leveraged for this expanded effort. Agencies in Rockland are also being assisted in incorporating wellness programming (Westchester Breathes) into this effort.

In the first half of 2021, Westchester Breathes programming has continued to be actively sought! Programming has proved to be a valuable entry point to reviewing library services as well as supporting wellness during the prolonged pandemic. WLS-led programming (delivered by Elena Falcone) has included programming at:

- The Virtual Senior Center - a Westchester County Department of Senior programs and Services pilot program targeting isolated older adults, especially those with digital access challenges; an ideal venue for promoting library services (12-15 attendees weekly)
- ARC Westchester - a service to adults with developmental challenges that has fostered a robust dialog about library services with ARC staff and clients (20-30 attendees weekly)
- Mamaroneck Public Library (12-30 attendees weekly)
- Westchester County Probation (clients), Coming Home (reentry clients and volunteers), and My Sister's Place (staff) - Ad hoc programming

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director