

Executive Director's Report April 2022

NYS Budget FY 2022-2023

In the final FY2022-2023 NYS Budget, Library Aid received a slight increase to \$99.6 Million, an increase of \$5.5 Million from last year's allocation of \$94.1 Million. While this is a step in the right direction, the amount still falls below the \$102.6 Million required by Education Law as well as the \$123.1 Million requested by New York Library Association (NYLA).

Public Library Construction Aid will remain at \$34 Million. This also is below the NYLA request of \$45 Million; but it is important to note that the legislators added \$20 Million over the proposed \$14 Million in the Governor's original Executive Budget.

Considering that the State legislators were trying to support many new funding initiatives this year, libraries fared well. Thank you to all who supported the WLS Library Advocacy Day activities and for your ongoing efforts to keep our legislators informed about the valuable work taking place in your libraries.

Open Meetings Law Update

The [Committee on Open Government](#) has provided notice that public library boards may continue with virtual meetings until at least June 8, 2022. The Governor also signed into law Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022, and section WW of the law provides for expanded use of videoconferencing by public bodies to conduct open meetings, in limited circumstances, regardless of a declaration of emergency. A major point to keep in mind is that a physical quorum must occur at one or more locations where the public can be present to view the meeting. These physical locations are the only locations that would need to have their addresses made known to the public. There are also requirements concerning the minutes, the posting of the video recording, and the provision of transcripts. Once more details about how public libraries can best navigate the new law are received from the Committee on Open Government and NYLA, they will be shared.

NYLA Civil Service Committee Update

Ron Kirsop, Executive Director of the Pioneer Library System, is chairing NYLA's Civil Service Committee. Jessica Pacciotti, Director of the Warner Library (Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow), is also a member of this Committee. At the Committee's March 15th meeting, a Priority Items Report was developed with the following key priorities: continuous recruitment; standard grading metrics; modern exam content from the field; provisional to permanent appointments; part-time positions; and electronic canvassing process.

The work of this Committee should help support the efforts of the PLDA Civil Service Committee chaired by Beth Bermel, Director of the Scarsdale Public Library, with the following members:

- Andrew Farber – Chappaqua Library
- Christina Linder – Greenburgh Public Library
- Yvonne Cech – John C. Hart Memorial Library (Yorktown)
- Laura Eckley – Larchmont Public Library
- Kathryn Feeley – Mount Kisco Public Library
- Karen LaRocca Fels – Ossining Public Library
- Augusta Turner – Town of Pelham Public Library
- Jessica Pacciotti – Warner Library (Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow)
- Terry Kirchner - WLS

Cataloging Services

Without the bibliographic records provided by WLS Cataloging Services, the Westchester community cannot have full knowledge of the member libraries' holdings, nor the ability to borrow.

As an expression of WLS's goal of promoting equity and access, the WLS catalogers work on materials in many languages. During the March-April period, Spanish, French, German and Albanian books were cataloged, chiefly by Cataloger Melissa Glazer.

Another group of materials being added to the WLS catalog is the book collection of the National Maritime Historical Society in Peekskill. This large project, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2022, will facilitate access to about 6,000 volumes, some of which date back to the nineteenth century. The collection has great potential for research and education. Ms. Glazer, Cataloger Qingshe Ren, and Manager of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray are all equally involved in the endeavor.

Because Ossining Public Library was reluctant to send a collection of musical equipment to WLS via the standard delivery service, Mr. Wray visited the library to gather enough information about the items to catalog them accurately. The collection includes: a trumpet; a classical guitar; an electric guitar; a bass guitar; a guitar amplifier; a bass guitar amplifier; and two synthesizers. Mr. Wray also cataloged two ukuleles for Tuckahoe Public Library. (These could be cataloged without seeing them, because sufficient descriptive material existed online.)

Additional "library of things" items (i.e. non-traditional library materials) cataloged by Mr. Wray were a children's telescope and digital camera, both owned by Yonkers Public Library.

The member libraries sometimes create their own materials by assembling components. In these cases, the WLS catalogers provide original ("from scratch") cataloging in order to give the community knowledge of, and access to, them. Two recent examples were: White Plains Public Library's DVD "binge boxes" (each is a handful of feature film DVDs grouped according to theme) and Katonah Village Library's latest juvenile "Play and learn kit", which focuses on farms. This kit contains five books, a puzzle and eight plastic animal figurines, all held in a backpack. Mr. Ren cataloged the binge boxes, and Mr. Wray cataloged the kit.

Career Coaching Services (CCS)

Career Coaching Services (formerly WEBS) has been in existence for over 30 years and has maintained its integrity by offering programming on current trending career topics and advice. The program is known for its career seminar which provides participants with relevant information around self-assessment and employer hiring practices. In its present evolution, we have transitioned with the times to offer virtual events and are working on innovative initiatives.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Career Coaching Services hosted a Virtual Open House for member libraries to familiarize them with the new branding and focus of the program, the current career coach staff, and services provided. The career coaches gave an overview of the virtual seminar, *Managing Your Career in Changing Times*. They spoke about the career workshops offered covering resumes, interviewing, LinkedIn and more. The coaches introduced the concept behind new presentations designed to engage both career coach professionals and local employer perspectives on specific topics.

Moreover, the event was an opportunity for the libraries to share their input about their patrons career needs. The messaging also emphasized the need for partnerships with the member libraries where we can provide additional career resources and our commitment to supporting the libraries and their community needs. Overall the libraries were very receptive to our program offerings.

SEMINAR - *MANAGING YOUR CAREER IN CHANGING TIMES*

The seminar entitled, *Managing Your Career in Changing Times*, is designed to help adults in career transition whether they have lost their jobs, are changing fields, re-entering the workforce or seeking work pre- or post-retirement as well as assisting recent college graduates determining their career direction. Individuals learn career strategies to build their self-awareness and develop their career goals. It is currently offered through a virtual seminar format, and incorporates well known career development theories.

The seminar is held over a 6-week period, meeting once a week for 90 minutes virtually over Zoom with 2 day-time sessions, and one evening and cover the following topics:

- Self-assessment of strengths, interests, and values
- Exploring Options through Networking and Online Resources, and
- Job Search including Resumes, LinkedIn, and Interviewing.

There were 3 seminar sessions held in the Winter session on Tuesday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and Wednesday afternoons. There were a total of 29 participants for the Winter 2022 Program with 10 in two groups and 9 in the third.

Evaluations were sent, and 24 out of the 29 participants completed the evaluation with extremely positive feedback—94% of the responding participants rated the seminar Excellent; 6%, Good. Responses to the time allotted, virtual format, materials and knowledge of the facilitators was equally as good. Below are a few highlights:

- Continuing to run one session which started one week later proved to be a good change overall, the third seminar attracted nine more participants with differing reasons to join the session, some were late registrants and others found the timing to be more accommodating.

- As the pandemic restrictions are lifting, there was a noticeable interest among the daytime participants for in-person sessions.
- The diversity of each group and their situations during the pandemic has opened new discussion and thoughts on the topics presented. The dynamics were always collaborative and compassionate at times.
- Participants were actively using the information provided in their job search while in their respective seminar sessions.
- At least 3 people were interviewing and found employment during and shortly after the seminar ended.

WORKSHOP: *Teen Job Search Tips, Applications, Resumes & More*

Facilitated by Marie Riffel and Phyllis Blake; Spearheaded by Sara Prosser, Teen Librarian, Rye Free Reading Room, and WLS CCS and sponsored by 13 additional member libraries.

This workshop focused on the process of identifying and finding the right part-time or summer job. In addition to the career coach presenters, there were three invited peer guest speakers who described their job search experiences and personal tips in successfully finding employment.

The workshop was held on February 17th and was attended by 39 participants, who answered a poll to gauge the student grade level with the following results: 8th Grade: 5%; 9th Grade: 43%; 10th Grade: 14%; and 11th & 12th Grade: 19%. Topics covered included:

- What type of jobs are available for teens
- Where to look for jobs
- How to answer questions on the job application
- What to include in a resume
- What to share and ask during the interview

SPEAKER SERIES

CCS launched a Speakers Series in March 2022 to present additional insights and perspectives of Job Search and Career Exploration. Guest professionals, who are career coaches, recruiters and employers themselves, will speak on specific topics based on their profession as they relate to the employment market. The current trending topics to be covered include: How to advance in your career with your current employer; Hiring from a recruiter's perspective; Volunteering as a form of internship/skills development and work exposure; Current interviewing trends such as virtual and asynchronous interviewing, and How to create a confident interviewing mindset.

The first presentation on the topic *Why are Video Interviews so Important?* was held virtually via Zoom on March 30th with 20 people in attendance. Alex Freund, a career coach who specifically helps his clients to improve their interview performance, spoke about virtual interviewing, the various modes such as asynchronous and video, best practices to prepare for video interviews, and making a good impression.

LIBRARY VISITS

As an ongoing introduction and re-branding promotion, the director of CCS along with the facilitators continued to meet with member libraries to speak with them about their needs and also

to encourage support in promoting CCS events. Each visit was well received and has strengthened relationships with the individual libraries. Libraries visited included: New Rochelle Public Library (virtual); Briarcliff Manor Public Library (virtual); and John C. Hart Memorial Library (in-person).

Development Report

As mentioned at last month's meeting, WLS is one of five NYS nonprofits to receive the first round of **Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants** from *the New York Digital Inclusion Fund, sponsored by Schmidt Futures*, a philanthropic initiative founded by Eric and Wendy Schmidt. The \$250,000 grant for the WLS Reentry Digital Inclusion project will facilitate the delivery of supported coordinated activities to enhance digital equity for recently incarcerated individuals. WLS, The STEM Alliance and the Westchester County Reentry Task Force (WCRTF) will collaborate over the two-year grant period to address the digital equity gap for Westchester's reentry population. Participants vetted by WCRTF will receive Wi-Fi enabled Chromebooks and one year Wi-Fi subscription upon successful completion of digital skills training provided by The STEM Alliance. In addition, library cards will provide access to library resources to enhance their skills to become engaged, informed and productive citizens. This project will serve as a state-wide model of collaborative partnerships working towards a shared goal to increase digital equity in Westchester County.

WLS responded to the state-wide Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) in October of 2022 seeking projects that support innovative partnership collaborations between digital inclusion stakeholders to increase the number of New York households connected to affordable broadband, devices, digital literacy training and technical support that meet their needs. The overarching goal of NY Digital Inclusion Innovation Grants is to use funding to bring together diverse sets of local organizations to provide digital inclusion resources to their constituents.

Digital Equity Initiatives

Joe Maurantonio, Director of Special Projects, and Dana Hysell, attended the Nonprofit Leadership Summit in person at Pace University on March 25th. It served as an invaluable opportunity to share information about the upcoming WLS Digital Equity work and make connections with potential partner organizations— such as the IFCA (Interfaith Council for Action) Housing Network in Ossining, and Caring for the Hungry and Homeless of Peekskill (CHOPP). A date in April has already been set for a visit to one of IFCA's locations where they will do a pop-up style digital skills event.

There are a plethora of nonprofit agencies throughout Westchester County and being a part of the NonProfit Westchester Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) Class of 2021 has afforded Ms. Hysell the opportunity to forge some amazing connections within this sector. Since completing the program, she has already met with fellow alumni to network on multiple occasions. Being able to share the projects and events happening at each of their specific organizations, and being open to new collaborative opportunities, have been the most valuable outcomes from the experience.

Thanks to the connections made at ELP, Ms. Hysell was extended an invitation from the Mental Health Association of Westchester (MHA) to attend the ribbon cutting event for their new Behavioral Health Mobile Unit. Both Mr. Maurantonio and Ms. Hysell witnessed some of the strategies MHA is using for their mobile unit, and this helped formulate ideas for hosting WLS's own 'launch' event of the eVan, which should be available in May.

In the weeks since the event, a meeting was held with the lead of MHA's Driving Towards Resilience initiative, which engages individuals throughout the Hudson Valley who experience limited access to behavioral health services due to lack of transportation, telehealth technology or insurance, as well as those who speak a language other than English. WLS and MHA discussed the possibility of partnering on locations/events and bringing the mobile units out in tandem as both organizations share goals to help our community.

Mr. Maurantonio has been working with Family Services of Westchester (FSW) to get an additional 28 Chromebook and hotspot kits for families in New Rochelle. These units are scheduled to be purchased, set up, and delivered in May. Delivery includes a 90-minute digital skills training session to ensure all recipients have the basic know-how to use their new devices and are able to connect to WLS online resources as well as to their local public library.

Information Technology (IT)

The WLS Information Technology (IT) Department has made progress in our mission to provide updated services to all member libraries. A new Internet Service Provider (ISP) has been selected, and the migration process to a new infrastructure will begin over the next several months. The goal is to be switched over by the end of the Summer. Libraries will not only have a new ISP, but all their network equipment will be upgraded as well.

The Data Dashboard is almost completed and is being tested by staff. The statistics from the ILS and major system resources, such as Overdrive, Kanopy and WLS IT wireless, will be presented in an automated fashion and generated on monthly basis. This will allow for less dependency on staff time to generate, modify and post data. WLS continues to work with the libraries to fully understand the relationships between third-party vendors' data accessibility requests and WLS patron privacy policies. The goal is to be able to accommodate vendors without posing any conflict with WLS policies.

Finally, the lack of available hardware continues to be an obstacle due to global supply issues. This has affected the purchase of VDI staff terminals, monitors and even some library network equipment, slowing down the process and completion of some of the major projects that WLS IT has been working this past year.

Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)

PIE proactively delivers a variety of materials to our outreach partners and member libraries—bookmarks, brochures, flyers, guides, and more. Happily, many requests come in for materials that can be offered at local community events. Thanks to funding received from government agencies, foundations, and corporations, a number of new materials have been produced, translated, and printed over the last few years.

The PIE Publications *Spring Catalog* (see the inaugural issue appended to this report) highlights the most in-demand publications. With a planned twice-yearly update, the *Catalog* will be distributed to member libraries and service agencies to build awareness of both the diversity of programming and ways in which we can help their clients/patrons.

Upcoming Events

TRUSTEE HANDBOOK BOOK CLUB: Thanks to the success of this series, it will be continued in 2022. All sessions will be held on Tuesdays from 5-6:30 p.m. Below is the schedule and the registration links:

May 3 | Topic: Planning & Evaluation

Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1JWbEj6VTdehLvoal6sd7w

June 14 | Topic: PR & Advocacy

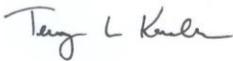
Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0EUGOkzIQ3uDPK-qjyOXFA

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY ASSOCIATION VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE – SAVE THE DATE

May 6 | Topic: Diverse Voices in Libraries

For more information: <https://www.westchesterlibraryassociation.org/conferences/>

Respectfully submitted,

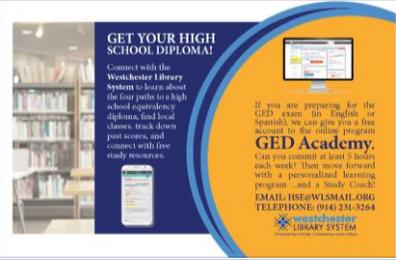


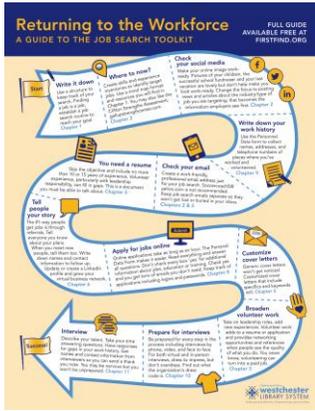
Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM (WLS)
Welcome to the Spring 2022 PIE Publications Catalog!

Here's your sneak peak at the new brochures, flyers, bookmarks, publications, and printables available for distribution, courtesy of WLS Public Innovation and Engagement (PIE). **If you would like to request copies for distribution, please email outreach@wlsmail.org.** Delivered directly to your organization, free of charge!

You can click on the image links to view the full files, hosted on our outreach websites. Items are presented alphabetically by publication title.

Item Cover	Item Description
	<p>DOWNLOAD, STREAM, ENJOY!</p> <p>The newest addition to our handouts promoting e-resources. This three-panel brochure directs people to the three giants of streaming content—Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy— as well as the unique collection offered by Comics Plus.</p> <p>The handy chart on the back tells readers of the formats and materials they'll be able to find on each platform.</p> <p>Find resources and learn more at: westchesterlibraries.org/listen-read</p>
	<p>ESSENTIAL ONLINE HEALTH INFORMATION FOR OLDER ADULTS</p> <p>This jam-packed brochure was originally distributed as a handout for our Essential Online Health Information for Older Adults presentation, but the information stands on its own! Learn about smart research strategies and library databases like X-Plain and Consumer Lab which will help you find trustworthy information.</p> <p>Find resources and learn more at: seniorlawday.info/essential-online-health-information-for-older-adults</p>
	<p>GED ACADEMY HALF-SHEET</p> <p>A simple handout that provides readers with the contact information they can use to get in touch with our High School Equivalency program. Upon reaching out to our team, the patron will receive information about GED pathways, including study via our online program <i>GED Academy</i> from EssentialEd.</p> <p>Bilingual English/Spanish</p> <p>Find resources and learn more at: firstfind.org/adult-education</p>



[Spanish version available](#)

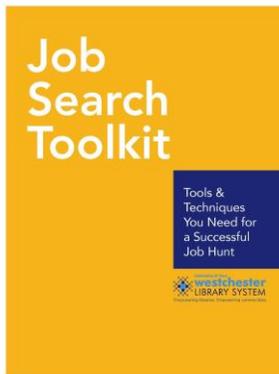
GUIDE TO THE JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT (AKA ROADMAPS)

Our collection of job search roadmaps are both an introduction and compliment to the Job Search Toolkit. Each roadmap lays out the steps you should anticipate throughout the job search process, from beginning to end. Each handout is geared towards a specific group that might be looking for a job:

- First Time Job Seekers
- Your Career at 50+
- Returning to the Workforce
- Reentry after Incarceration

Available in English or Spanish

Find resources and learn more at: firstfind.org/jobs-and-careers



[Spanish version available](#)

JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT

The newest rendition of the Job Search Toolkit has been redesigned from the bottom up to present the information in a clearer, more visually appealing style.

Content still covers all of the steps one can expect before, during, and after landing a job. New content has been added to address the prevalence of video and phone interviews.

Available in English or Spanish.

Find resources and learn more at: firstfind.org/jobs-and-careers



LEARN WITH CHESTER

This brochure aims to inform parents of the ways they can help their young child learn, grow, and prepare for school through everyday early literacy activities. Includes guidance on how to use library e-resources to find interactive picture books!

Bilingual English/Spanish

Find resources and learn more at: firstfind.org/family-resources/help-your-child-learn-and-develop/early-literacy



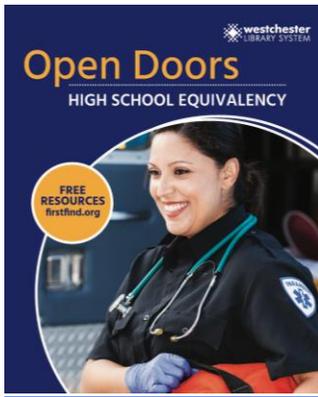
ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

Our classic Online Learning Resources brochure has been updated to reflect our current digital offerings in a sleek, bilingual design.

Aside from the usual learning resources like Tutor.com/Westchester, Tumblebooks, and LinkedIn Learning, this brochure includes information about using your library card to access educational documentaries, audiobooks, and more.

Bilingual English/Spanish.

Find resources and learn more at: westchesterlibraries.org/learn-online



OPEN DOORS: HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY *Not yet available in print*

The High School Equivalency guide, now titled *Open Doors*, serves as a companion to our FirstFind.org site, walking readers through the pathways and steps required to earn a high school equivalency diploma. NOTE: New version coming in May that reflects the shift from TASC to GED.

Available in English (Spanish translation coming with “GED” edition)

Find resources and learn more at: firstfind.org/adult-education

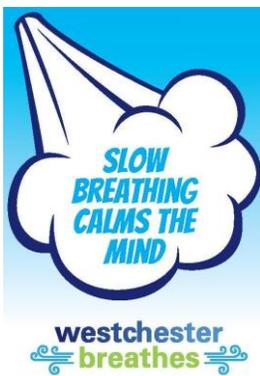


SENIOR LAW DAY BOOKMARK

This simple, large print bookmark lists the four major offerings from the Senior Law Day Collaborative: Consultations, Educational Programs, Resources, and Referrals. SLD continues to offer these services through online and in person events.

Bilingual English/Spanish

Find resources and learn more at: seniorlawday.info



[Spanish version available](#)

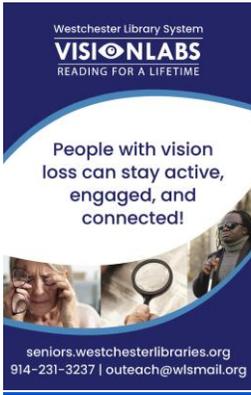
SLOW BREATHING CALMS THE MIND

Our newest “z card” brochure introduces readers to the simple breathing exercises that make up the backbone of our larger Westchester Breathes initiative—addressing trauma and resilience through science-based techniques.

With the dimensions of an index card when folded, this pocket card is easy to keep in a bag, desk drawer, car, etc.

Available in English or Spanish.

Find resources and learn more at: conversations.westchesterlibraries.org/breathe

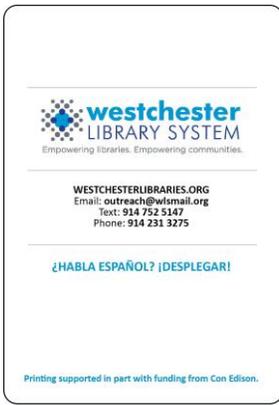


VISION LABS: READING FOR A LIFETIME

This large print, bi-fold brochure highlights offerings and supports available to people experiencing vision loss—especially as it impacts older adults.

Featured resources include direct library services, the New York State Talking Book and Braille Library, and three crucial organizations that serve our community: VISIONS, Westchester Disabled on the Move, and the Westchester Council of the Blind.

Find resources and learn more at: seniors.westchesterlibraries.org/visionlabs



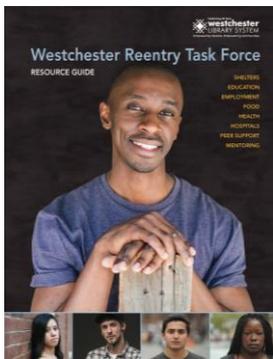
WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

This index card-sized fold-out describes the many outreach programs and services offered by WLS.

Programs mentioned: high school equivalency coaching, job search support and coaching, VisionLabs and senior benefits, re-entry guide.

Bilingual English/Spanish.

Find resources and learn more at: westchesterlibraries.org/services-programs



WESTCHESTER REENTRY TASK FORCE RESOURCE GUIDE

The Reentry Task Force resource guide is a mainstay of our information services to people who are currently incarcerated or otherwise involved in the justice system. Copies are frequently distributed locally to individuals, family members, or reentry service partners.

We also provide copies for the county jail and statewide correctional facilities by request.

Find resources and learn more at: connections.westchesterlibraries.org