

Call to Meeting
January 30, 2024

The next Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System (WLS) is **Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.** PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will take place at the WLS Headquarters, 570 Taxter Rd, Ste 400, Elmsford, NY 10523. (Masks may be required.)

Organization Meeting Agenda

Report of Nominating Committee - Chair

Formal Action Items

Action Item #1: Election of WLS Officers

Constitutional Oath and Signatures for New & Re-Elected Trustees

Adjournment

Regular Meeting Agenda

Minutes: November 28, 2023

Finances

Action Items

Action Item #1: Minimum Standards Variance – Irvington Public Library

President's Report

WLS Committee Reports

Executive Director's Report

PLDA Report – Jennifer Coulter, Director, Pound Ridge Library District

NEXT MEETING: The next Regular Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Item: Election of WLS Officers

Background: According to the Bylaws of the Westchester Library System, a slate of officers – President, Vice President, and Secretary – must be presented annually to the Board of Trustees.

Status: The following slate of officers for 2024 will be presented at the January 30, 2024, Organizational Meeting:

President – Susan Morduch

Vice President – Nishat Hydari

Secretary – Anthony Amiano

The term of office of all elected officers shall be one year and no member of the Board may serve as President for more than two consecutive years. Article III of the WLS Bylaws contains the Duties of Officers.

The office of Treasurer is appointed, and Maureen LeBlanc has agreed to serve as Treasurer.

Recommended

Action: The election of the proposed slate of officers and the appointment of Maureen LeBlanc as Treasurer for the 2024 term.

January 30, 2024

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Annual & Trustee Meeting
November 28, 2023 –Approval Pending

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Karen Zevin, President, at 6:02 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Wes Iwanski, Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Anthony Amiano, Maureen LeBlanc, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Francis Okelo, Edris Scherer, Diane Tabakman, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Nishat Hydari, Joseph Puglia

Also present from WLS were: Terry Kirchner, Rob Caluori, Patricia Brigham, Kate Meyer, Krishna Brodigan, Dana Hysell, Blas Jamarillo, Allison Midgley, Allison Pryor

Dr. Kirchner welcomed all who attended. He noted that throughout the year, WLS staff and the Board have actively incorporated the organization's three strategic initiatives into its daily interactions and operational planning. By building a stronger, more responsive organizational culture and a more robust and flexible infrastructure, WLS continues to move forward on its strategic initiatives. As an organization, WLS is in a better position to support the public libraries and the communities in Westchester County in the coming year.

The business portion of the Annual Meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Ms. Zevin, who introduced each of the WLS Trustees and the Districts they represent.

ELECTION OF NEW TRUSTEES: Karen Kelly, Chair of the WLS Nominating & Board Development Committee, presented the following slate of trustees who were nominated by their represented libraries and are willing to serve:

District IV: [Lewisboro (South Salem), North Salem, Somers]
Barbara Tepper (To a full term ending December 31, 2028)

District VIII: [Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Scarsdale]
Maureen LeBlanc (To a full term ending December 31, 2028)

District XIV: [New Rochelle]
David Mener (To a full term ending December 31, 2028)

There being no nominations from the floor, the above Trustees were elected to the WLS Board of Trustees on a motion by Wes Iwanski and seconded by Robert Cartolano. The motion passed unanimously. [Andrea Bober was not present for the vote.]

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned the business portion of the meeting at 6:16 p.m. on a motion by Francis Okelo and seconded by Edris Scherer. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Karen Zevin, President, at 6:17 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Wes Iwanski, Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Anthony Amiano, Maureen LeBlanc, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Francis Okelo, Edris Scherer, Diane Tabakman, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Nishat Hydari, Joseph Puglia

Also present from WLS were: Terry Kirchner, Rob Caluori, Patricia Brigham, Kate Meyer, Krishna Brodigan, Dana Hysell, Blas Jamarillo, Allison Midgley, Allison Pryor

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Yvonne Cech, Director, John C. Hart Memorial Library

MINUTES

The minutes of the October 23, 2023 meeting were approved as submitted on a motion by Ms. Mills-Worthey and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion passed unanimously. [Ms. Bober was not present for the vote.]

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report through October 2023 was presented by Mr. Caluori and reviewed by the Board in detail. Check registers for September 2023 were also distributed. The Board accepted the October 2023 finances on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Mr. Cartolano. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

WLS 2024 Operating Budget:

The Proposed WLS 2023 Operating Budget was approved by the board as submitted (see attached) on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. Kelley. The budget had been presented and discussed at the September 2023 Board meeting. Mr. Caluori noted that no additional questions had been raised since the presentation and no questions were raised prior to the vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Zevin thanked Mr. Iwanski, Ms. Scherer, and Mr. Okelo for all their hard work as WLS board members and for their leadership and commitment.

Ms. Zevin noted that the WLS Board has seven new members, and all members need to continue to be open with one another and ask questions whenever possible. She also reminded board members that committees should be formed as of January 31, 2023, and information regarding such will be

sent to Board members beforehand. Ms. Zevin noted that there will be appointment of executive officers at the January 2024 meeting and the following individuals are expected to be voted into their new positions for a two-year term:

Susan Morduch – President; Nishat Hydari – Vice President; Anthony Amiano – Secretary; and Mareen LeBlanc – Treasurer.

Ms. Zevin noted that the annual performance review for the Executive Director is underway, and this process will conclude in January with an anticipated executive session at the January 2024 meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating Committee: Ms. Kelley noted that in January the committee will be searching for a new trustee to fill District XV (Yonkers). She also noted that January 10th, 2023, there is a Trustee Institute online called Problem-Solving Strategies for Library Boards and Staff, and should be an interesting topic, and February 13th is the Annual trustee and staff social at WLS.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Kirchner reported that a new version of the Trustee Handbook for Public Libraries is now available for library board members and is forthcoming. He noted there is a discrepancy on page 62; sexual harassment training for trustees, noting that this training is for paid employees only. An updated WLS Board of Meeting Schedule will be provided to the Board next week. He also noted that he is awaiting a variance on one library – Irvington Public Library – and will present it to the Board at the January 30, 2024 meeting. Dr. Kirchner introduced the WLS employees that were present at the Meeting.

PLDA LIASON'S REPORT

Ms. Cech reported on the November PLDA meeting where the following was discussed:

- The November PLDA meeting was held at Ossining Public Library. It was not a hybrid meeting, and there was no quorum (no votes were taken).
- Member library stats were reported on. Circulation was high, and event participation was low.
- PLDA will vote on their Executive Board via email in December.

Ms. Cech thanked the WLS Board for the opportunity to attend meetings, noting she enjoyed being here.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board Adjourned its meeting at 7:10 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Mr. Okelo that passed unanimously. The January 30th WLS Board Meeting will take place in person at the WLS Headquarters at 6 p.m., and all should be prepared to wear a mask if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Zuckerman Bober
Secretary

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WITH NOTES – DECEMBER 2023

SUMMARY

All of the figures in the accompanying notes are approximated to the nearest \$100 or 1%. The figures in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest dollar and percentages are to two decimal places.

The December 2022 figures included in this statement are consistent with the audited financial statements. This reflects adjusting entries from the audit process as well as the application of ASC 842 (Accounting Standards Codification) which changes the way the lease for WLS's office space is recorded.

In 2023, WLS implemented Sage Intacct, a new financial management system. The transition took place in multiple phases. Initial go-live on the new system went as planned on 8/1/2023 with functionality equivalent to the previous system known as M.I.P., but also included a new paperless journal entry approval process, greater ledger detail for credit card activity and improvements to accounts receivable (AR) processes. Additional phases completed in 2023 included the implementation of automation for processing prepaid expenses amortization (PEA) and fixed asset depreciation (FA). Work will continue in 2024 to add additional efficiencies to financial management processes.

Please note that while this report contains financial statements for the month-end of December 2023, work continues to close the books for the year. This work includes allocations and reclassifications, which redistributes revenues and expenses among WLS's various departments, funds, funding sources and reporting categories, and has no impact on the bottom line. However, this work also includes certain year-end activities that may impact these figures including, but not limited to, recording of eRate as a credit to Internet expenses, updates to the inventory schedule, accrual of payable vacation time, and updates to calculations for post-retirement benefits and lease assets and liabilities, as well as any corrections and updates provided by our auditors. All of this activity will be recorded as of December 31 and the year-end figures may change while the work to close the books for the year continues and the annual audit process begins.

Included with this report is a five-year lookback. The intent of this report is to provide a financial illustration of WLS's activity and position that includes times before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

BALANCE SHEET – DECEMBER 2023

The Balance Sheet shows comparative figures for the period from month-ending (ME) October 2023 thru ME December 2023. The key changes for the period are a decrease in WLS's *operating cash and cash equivalents*, which is lower by \$609,300 and a decrease in *deferred revenue*. Details are discussed below.

ASSETS:

This section indicates the organization's liquidity by showing what assets WLS holds in cash and what assets will be available in cash in the near future.

The chart to the right illustrates WLS's assets.

Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents (This shows the cash in WLS's operating and payroll bank accounts and petty cash): In the 2-month

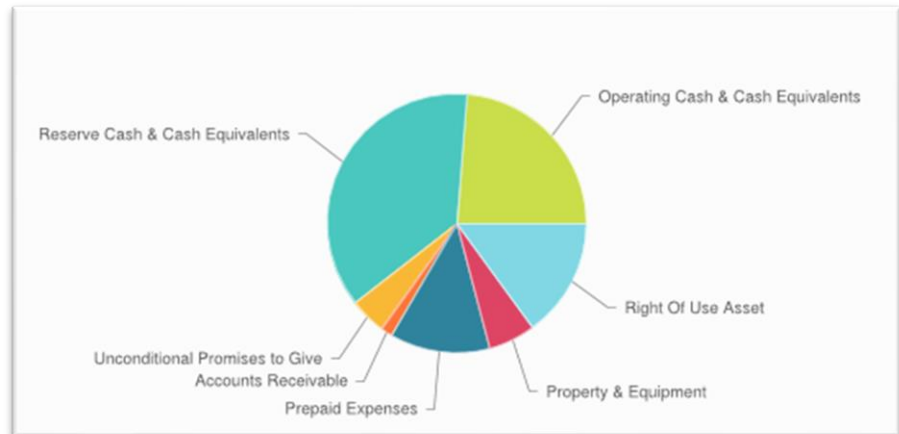
period, WLS's operating cash decreased by \$609,300. With \$777,300 in receipts, activity included \$605,300 from New York State in "Categorical Aid" which includes support for Central Library Services, Coordinated Outreach and Correctional Facilities, \$116,100 from member libraries for IT Services, and \$15,000 from the Field Hall Foundation to support the launch of a centralized home delivery service for those unable to travel to their local library to check out physical materials in 2024. Notable expenditures aside from rent, payroll and benefits, Internet, and delivery to libraries include \$86,100 to Mango Languages for a three-year subscription to their language-learning platform for patrons, \$31,600 to ProQuest for access to digital content that supports the online catalog including cover art and book reviews, and \$12,200 to Baker and Taylor for software subscriptions that supports physical materials purchasing at the member libraries.

Unconditional Promises (These are promises to give money to WLS without any restrictions attached.): The figure in this line decreased by \$263,800 in the period. This is the result of recording \$341,500 in receivable revenue from New York State and Westchester County which was offset by the receipt of \$605,300 in revenues received from New York State. The remaining balance of \$346,700 in this account consists of \$326,000 due from Westchester County for the fourth quarter of 2023 and \$20,700 from New York State for Aid the remaining 10% of 2023-2024 Local Library Services (LLSA) and Local Services Support (LSSA) which is expected to be received in 2024.

LIABILITIES:

This section shows WLS's near-term obligations.

Deferred Revenue (Funds received which have not yet been earned): This figure decreased by \$796,900, the result of recognizing \$796,900 in revenues from New York State, IT services, eContent group purchases, eRate and movie licensing. The remaining balance of \$1,106 is primarily revenue from movie licensing for member libraries which will be recognized in January 2024.



STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

COMPARISON TO BUDGET WITH PREVIOUS YEARS TO DATE – DECEMBER 2023

Net revenue before depreciation was less than budgeted for December (\$45,000) but more than budgeted for the year-to-date (YTD) (\$351,800). Expense figures include all expenses including those associated with special projects. Noteworthy variances are discussed below.

REVENUES:

Total revenue was essentially in-line with the budget for December and the YTD. In December, this was driven by small offsetting variances across several revenue lines. For the YTD, the total revenue distribution is more significantly impacted by offsetting variances in *Interest* and *Other Revenues with Restrictions* and is discussed in greater details below.

Interest for December and the YTD was significantly higher than budgeted. At the time the budget was created, interest rates were beginning to rise but could not be fully anticipated. Interest earned on WLS's cash balances is based on the excess balance, which is the average collected balance less minimum balance requirements.

Federal Revenues without Restrictions came in \$8,500 less than budgeted. WLS received less than expected through the Federal E-Rate program, which reimburses schools and libraries for a portion of their eligible telecommunications costs. WLS's eligible costs were lower, which drove a smaller reimbursement. The line ends the year at \$131,000 in total revenue from the program, falling \$34,000 short of the budget.

Other Revenues with Restrictions ended the month below the budgeted goal driven mainly by falling short of the goal for restricted grants. The line has a \$80,800 shortfall for the YTD of which \$64,200 can be attributed to Restricted Grants.

EXPENSES:

Total spending in December was more than revenues by \$73,200 and \$45,900 more than the monthly budget. However, spending was \$13,700 less than revenues and \$306,200 less than budgeted for the YTD. Significant positive and negative variances are discussed below.

Professional Fees were overspent by \$28,100 compared to budget due to the accrual of \$27,500 for the 2023 financial audit. The line closes the year with spending less than the budget by \$2,300.

Salaries – The figure for December was more than budgeted by \$22,500 and less than budgeted by \$199,100 for the YTD. The overage for the month was driven primarily by the payout of the sick leave incentive which allows employees to receive one day's pay for every three days of unused sick time during the period of the incentive program, which runs from December of the previous year through November of the current year. The underspending for the YTD was driven primarily by (1) open positions during the year which have since been filled and (2) staff changes in the Outreach department due to a retirement.

Library Materials came in \$20,400 more than budgeted, which was driven by activity in pay-per-use electronic content by patrons. The line is \$155,100 over budget for the YTD also due to the increased activity from patrons.

Fringe Benefits came in under budget for the month primarily by lower than anticipated health insurance costs. Costs, which began the year slightly lower than anticipated, were further lowered when NYSHIP (New York State Health Insurance Program) further lowered costs starting in June. The YTD variance was also driven by vacancies during the year.

Equipment – This line came in \$8,500 more than budgeted for the month of December, but \$56,100 under budget for the YTD. The overspending in this line for December was primarily driven by the purchase of laptops for WLS staff.

5-YEAR LOOKBACK AT REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES, AND BALANCE SHEET

Revenues and Expenditures

	YE 2019	YE 2020	YE 2021	YE 2022	YE 2023	Total 5-Yr
Total Revenue	6,676,444	6,449,850	7,508,558	7,277,234	7,059,757	34,971,843
Total Expenditures	6,232,053	6,734,607	6,739,552	7,094,933	7,049,022	33,850,167
Net Rev before Dep (Actual)	444,391	(284,757)	769,006	182,301	10,735	1,121,676
Net Rev before Dep (Budget)	(102,300)	(191,200)	(645,250)	(547,900)	(338,065)	(1,824,715)
Depreciation	267,181	225,940	204,367	172,410	174,495	1,044,393
Net Revenue with Dep (Actual)	177,210	(510,697)	564,639	9,891	(163,760)	77,283
Net Revenue with Dep (Budget)	(366,500)	(435,400)	(833,000)	(692,150)	(507,065)	(2,834,115)

Balance Sheet

	YE 2019	YE 2020	YE 2021	YE 2022	YE 2023
Assets					
Cash & Investments	4,522,870	4,533,681	5,432,852	5,024,381	4,682,673
Receivables	416,223	931,861	498,930	459,774	470,458
Prepaid Expenses	463,318	495,685	431,569	723,226	956,838
Inventory	31,209	254,223	91,887	44,346	44,346
Net P&E	658,979	454,463	329,803	572,228	397,732
Op. Lease ROU net	0	0	0	1,155,488	1,155,488
Intangible Assets	6,000	4,000	2,000	0	0
Total Assets	6,098,599	6,673,913	6,787,041	7,979,443	7,707,535
Liabilities					
AP and accruals	437,927	823,867	841,006	699,491	588,740
Deferred Revenue	0	10,256	7,200	6,686	1,105
Op. Lease obligation	0	0	0	1,372,554	1,372,554
Deferred Rent	282,287	267,665	245,925	0	0
Refundable Advance	0	564,265	0	0	0
OPEB	4,169,203	5,038,065	4,892,551	3,856,991	3,856,991
Total Liabilities	4,889,417	6,704,118	5,986,682	5,935,722	5,819,390
Net Assets	1,209,182	(30,205)	800,359	2,043,721	1,888,145

Notes

YE 2023 Figures have been adjusted to align with audit report for application of eRate

YE 2023 figures are not yet audited

YE 2023 figure do not reflect updated vacation accrual, OPEB actuarial update or inventory update

All Revenues and Expenses do not include non-operating activity (i.e. return on investments, OPEB)

**Westchester Library System
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2023**

	Month Ending	Month Ending	Month Ending		Year Ending
	12/31/2023	10/31/2023	12/31/2023		12/31/2022
	Actual	Actual	Period difference	Period variance	Actual
Assets					
Current Assets					
Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,823,004	2,432,280	(609,277)	(25.04) %	2,261,909
Reserve Cash & Cash Equivalents	2,859,669	2,836,408	23,262	0.82 %	2,762,472
Unconditional Promises to Give	346,714	610,537	(263,823)	(43.21) %	333,377
Accounts Receivable	123,744	233,160	(109,416)	(46.92) %	126,397
Prepaid Expenses	956,838	796,536	160,302	20.12 %	723,226
Total Current Assets	6,109,970	6,908,922	(798,952)	(11.56) %	6,207,381
Long-Term Assets					
Property & Equipment	442,078	470,666	(28,588)	(6.07) %	616,574
Right Of Use Asset	1,155,488	1,155,488	0	0.00 %	1,155,488
Total Long-Term Assets	1,597,566	1,626,154	(28,588)	(1.75) %	1,772,062
Total Assets	7,707,536	8,535,076	(827,540)	(9.69) %	7,979,443
Liabilities					
Short-Term Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	588,740	544,763	43,977	8.07 %	699,492
Deferred Revenue	1,105	798,006	(796,900)	(99.86) %	6,685
Short-Term Right of Use	268,208	268,208	0	0.00 %	268,208
Total Short-Term Liabilities	858,053	1,610,977	(752,923)	(46.73) %	974,385
Long-Term Liabilities					
Long-Term Right of Use	1,104,346	1,104,346	0	0.00 %	1,104,346
Post-Retirement Benefits Payable	3,856,991	3,856,991	0	0.00 %	3,856,991
Total-Long-Term Liabilities	4,961,337	4,961,337	0	0.00 %	4,961,337
Total Liabilities	5,819,390	6,572,314	(752,923)	(11.45) %	5,935,722
Net Assets					
Net Assets, Beg Bal	1,970,208	1,964,004	6,203	0.31 %	800,360
Change in Net Assets	(82,062)	(1,242)	(80,820)	(6,509.56) %	1,243,361
Total Net Assets	1,888,146	1,962,762	(74,617)	(3.80) %	2,043,721
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	7,707,536	8,535,076	(827,540)	(9.69) %	7,979,443
Net Asset Detail					
Working Capital	5,251,916	5,297,945	(46,029)	(0.86) %	5,232,996
Long-Term Net Assets	(3,363,770)	(3,335,183)	(28,588)	(0.85) %	(3,189,275)
Total Net Asset Detail	1,888,146	1,962,762	(74,617)	(3.80) %	2,043,721

Westchester Library System
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
Comparison to Budget with Previous Years To Date
As of December 31, 2023

	Month Ending 12/31/2023			Year To Date 12/31/2021	Year To Date 12/31/2022	Year To Date 12/31/2023			Year Ending 12/31/2023
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Total Budget
Revenue									
State Revenues without Restrictions	206,909	205,921	988	2,359,445	2,471,098	2,476,545	2,471,050	5,495	2,471,050
County Revenues without Restrictions	110,060	106,008	4,052	1,050,600	1,218,696	1,304,005	1,272,100	31,905	1,272,100
Federal Revenues without Restrictions	5,250	13,750	(8,500)	564,265	199,250	131,043	165,000	(33,957)	165,000
Member Technology Fees	223,122	224,833	(1,711)	2,820,800	2,776,739	2,673,187	2,698,000	(24,813)	2,698,000
Fund Raising & Contributions	0	0	0	771	1,114	249	0	249	0
Interest	8,766	417	8,349	2,531	20,746	131,012	5,000	126,012	5,000
CCS & Other	2,165	208	1,957	8,930	26,832	22,600	2,500	20,100	2,500
Government Revenues with Restrictions	19,178	18,959	220	436,580	227,755	228,883	227,500	1,383	227,500
Other Revenues with Restrictions	9,915	14,416	(4,502)	264,676	335,044	92,233	173,000	(80,767)	173,000
Total Revenue	585,365	584,513	853	7,508,598	7,277,273	7,059,757	7,014,150	45,607	7,014,150
Expenditures									
Salaries	220,385	197,936	(22,450)	2,347,714	2,395,596	2,176,126	2,375,223	199,097	2,375,223
Fringe Benefits	85,955	112,350	26,395	1,262,760	1,328,460	1,190,746	1,348,202	157,456	1,348,202
Professional Fees	32,402	4,275	(28,127)	43,238	42,837	48,983	51,300	2,317	51,300
Equipment	24,340	15,833	(8,507)	386,706	190,999	133,928	190,000	56,072	190,000
Library Materials	79,616	59,202	(20,414)	752,234	702,857	865,480	710,420	(155,060)	710,420
Rent and Utilities	31,020	29,656	(1,365)	332,274	356,969	390,464	355,870	(34,594)	355,870
Repairs and Maintenance	44,612	46,616	2,005	406,210	474,448	617,286	559,400	(57,886)	559,400
Supplies	3,667	3,796	129	20,184	21,381	8,045	45,550	37,505	45,550
Telephone and Internet	37,358	38,925	1,567	246,343	307,116	476,713	467,100	(9,613)	467,100
Printing and Postage	476	6,242	5,766	68,855	103,227	62,871	74,900	12,029	74,900
Bibliographic Fees	7,234	7,458	224	79,256	80,898	86,175	89,500	3,325	89,500
Professional Development	1,070	8,171	7,101	22,247	50,906	50,708	98,050	47,342	98,050
Travel	684	4,200	3,516	2,053	37,383	46,799	50,400	3,601	50,400
Memberships	0	2,333	2,333	15,835	19,746	18,361	28,000	9,639	28,000
Contractual Services	49,097	32,942	(16,155)	295,681	459,445	388,514	395,300	6,786	395,300
Delivery Service	37,180	37,583	403	423,703	484,359	444,813	451,000	6,187	451,000
Insurance	2,815	2,917	102	25,658	29,317	33,207	35,000	1,793	35,000
Miscellaneous	653	2,250	1,598	6,641	(5,972)	6,803	27,000	20,197	27,000
Intangible Assets	0	0	0	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	658,563	612,685	(45,879)	6,739,592	7,081,972	7,046,022	7,352,215	306,193	7,352,215
Total Net Revenue Before Depreciation	(73,198)	(28,172)	(45,026)	769,006	195,301	13,735	(338,065)	351,800	(338,065)
Non-Cash Activity									
Depreciation	14,142	14,083	(58)	204,368	172,410	174,495	169,000	(5,495)	169,000
Gain/Loss on Post-Retirement Benefits	0	0	0	(266,098)	(1,211,813)	0	0	0	0
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investments	(5,278)	0	5,278	173	(8,658)	(5,185)	0	5,185	0
Total Non-Cash Activity	8,864	14,083	5,220	(61,557)	(1,048,061)	169,310	169,000	(310)	169,000
Total Net Revenue	(82,062)	(42,255)	(39,806)	830,563	1,243,362	(155,575)	(507,065)	351,490	(507,065)

Item: Minimum Standards Variance – Irvington Public Library

Background: Each year the New York State Library Division of Library Development verifies that all libraries meet the Minimum Standards. This information is supplied by the libraries in their Annual Reports. General information about the NYS Minimum Standards follows.

If a library does not meet the Minimum Standards, the payment of the Local Library Services Aid (LLSA) can be withheld from the library, and ultimately their charter can be revoked if no action is taken to come into compliance. Libraries must submit a Variance Request Form to explain their current status and their action plan for compliance.

Status: As of 12/31/2022, all WLS member libraries were recorded as following the Minimum Standards, with the following exceptions at the Irvington Public Library:

Minimum Standard	Description
#2	Has a community-based, board approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the library board of trustees and staff.
#3	Provides a board-approved written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.
#5	Annual prepares and publishes a board-approved, written budget, which enable the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.
#6	Periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's programs, services and collections to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.
#13	Provides library staff with annual technology training, appropriate to their position, to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

Attached are the Variance Request Forms submitted by the Irvington Public Library.

The Irvington Public Library Board of Trustees approved the library's community-based, written, long-term plan of service (strategic plan) for 2023-2028 at their November 13, 2023, meeting. With the approval of the long-range plan, the library will address the remaining minimum standards within the next calendar year.

The Irvington Public Library Board of Trustees was scheduled to approve the Variance Request Forms at their scheduled January 16, 2024, board meeting which was rescheduled due to inclement weather to January 25, 2024.

Recommended

Action: Acceptance of the submitted Variance Requests.

January 30, 2024

Listed in the table below are descriptions of each standard and the schedule for compliance as outlined in Commissioner's Regulation 90.2.

Minimum Standard	Description																
#1	Is governed by written bylaws defining the structure and governing functions of the library board of trustees, and which shall be reviewed and re-approved by the board of trustees at least once every five years or earlier if required by law.																
#2	Has a community-based, board approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the library board of trustees and staff.																
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#6	Periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's programs, services and collections to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.																
#7	<p>Is open the following schedule of hours:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Population</th> <th>Minimum Weekly Hours Open</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Up to 500</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>500 – 2,499</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2,500 – 4,999</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5,000 – 14,999</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15,000 – 24,999</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25,000 – 99,999</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100,000 and above</td> <td>60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Population	Minimum Weekly Hours Open	Up to 500	12	500 – 2,499	20	2,500 – 4,999	25	5,000 – 14,999	35	15,000 – 24,999	40	25,000 – 99,999	55	100,000 and above	60
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#8	Maintains a facility to meet community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, power and data infrastructure, and a public restroom.
#9	Provides programming to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.
#10	Provides a circulation system that facilitates access to local library collection and other library catalogs; and provides equipment, technology, and internet connectivity to address community needs and facilitate access to information.
#11	Provides access to current library information in print and online, facilitating the understanding of library services, operation and governance; information provided online shall include the standards in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subdivision.
#12	Employs a paid director in accordance with provision of section 90.8 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.
#13	Provides library staff with annual technology training, appropriate to their position, to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.
#14	Establishes and maintains partnerships with other educational, cultural or community organizations with enable the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

Return this form by email to
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MINSTAN@nysed.gov

Variance Request Form



Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 - Standards for Registration of Public, Free Association and Indian Libraries

Instructions: Use this form to request a variance from the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations 90.2, Standards for Registration of Public, Free Association and Indian Libraries (effective January 1, 2021). **If the library is not in compliance with one or more of these Standards, request a variance on a separate form for each standard with which the library fails to comply.** The Library Director, the Library Board President, the System Director and the System Board President sign each variance request form. Attach any information that will strengthen the request. The library system submits all variance request forms to Library Development. No variance granted by Library Development shall be deemed to relieve a public, free association or Indian library of any obligation imposed by any other provision of federal or state law.

1. Library Information (Name of library, contact person, phone number)

Irvington Public Library, Guiteau Foundation
Contact: Rosemarie Gatzek
Telephone: 914-591-7840

2a. Request for Variance from Standard Number: _____ 2 _____

b. What is current status? (Please attach explanation.) As of the completion of the Irvington Library's annual report, the library did NOT have an approved long-rang plan.

3. Circumstances Over Which the Library Has No Control That Are Barriers to Compliance. Explain in detail on a separate sheet the circumstances that prevent the library from meeting this standard of service as set forward in *Commissioner's Regulations 90.2*. Attach documentation to demonstrate that the library has no control over the circumstances.

4. Plan for Compliance. Describe in detail on a separate sheet the library's plan for meeting this requirement before December 31st of this year. **(Please attach documentation.)** The Irvington Library Board of Trustees approved the library's Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 at their Meeting on November 13, 2023.

Library Director Date

Library Board President Date

System Comment and Review: Variance request

_____ may be approvable _____ may not be approvable
(Please include explanation.)

This variance request was reviewed at the _____ meeting of the Board of Trustees of
(Month/Day)
the _____ System.

System Director Date

System Board President Date

FOR SED USE ONLY: ___ Variance request is approvable; Variance granted until: _____
 (Month/Day/Year)

___ Variance request is not approvable because:

Reviewed By: _____

MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 Standards for registration of public, free association and Indian libraries. (c)Variances. *If circumstances over which any public, free association or Indian library has no control prevent it from meeting one or more of the standards of service set forward in subdivision (a) of this section, such library may apply for a variance for such standard(s). The application for such variance shall be submitted for such library by the public library system of which such library is a member, in a form prescribed by the commissioner. No variance granted pursuant to this subdivision shall be deemed to relieve a public, free association or Indian library of any obligation imposed by any other provision of federal or state law.*

Listed in the table below are descriptions of each standard and the schedule for compliance as outlined in Commissioner's Regulation 90.2.

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Variance Request Form



Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 - Standards for Registration of Public, Free Association and Indian Libraries

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1. Library Information (Name of library, contact person, phone number)

Irvington Public Library, Guiteau Foundation
Contact: Rosemarie Gatzek
Telephone: 914-591-7840

2a. Request for Variance from Standard Number: 3

b. What is current status? (Please attach explanation.) Without a strategic plan in place, we were not able to provide an annual written report that discussed its objectives.

3. Circumstances Over Which the Library Has No Control That Are Barriers to Compliance. Explain in detail on a separate sheet the circumstances that prevent the library from meeting this standard of service as set forward in *Commissioner's Regulations 90.2*. Attach documentation to demonstrate that the library has no control over the circumstances.

4. Plan for Compliance. Describe in detail on a separate sheet the library's plan for meeting this requirement before December 31st of this year. **(Please attach documentation.)** We now have an approved strategic plan, so we will be able to comply with this requirement in the future, beginning this month with an assessment of 2023.

Library Director Date

Library Board President Date

System Comment and Review: Variance request

_____ may be approvable _____ may not be approvable
(Please include explanation.)

This variance request was reviewed at the _____ meeting of the Board of Trustees of
(Month/Day)
the _____ System.

System Director Date

System Board President Date

FOR SED USE ONLY: ___ Variance request is approvable; Variance granted until: _____
 (Month/Day/Year)

___ Variance request is not approvable because:

Reviewed By: _____

MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

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Variance Request Form



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1. Library Information (Name of library, contact person, phone number)

Irvington Public Library, Guiteau Foundation
Contact: Rosemarie Gatzek
Telephone: 914-591-7840

2a. Request for Variance from Standard Number: 5

b. What is current status? (Please attach explanation.) Our 202/2023 annual budget was published as part of the Village of Irvington's total budget, but without a strategic plan in place, we were not able to provide a written explanation that discussed how our community's needs, as outlined in our long-range plan, would be addressed specifically in our budget.

3. Circumstances Over Which the Library Has No Control That Are Barriers to Compliance. Explain in detail on a separate sheet the circumstances that prevent the library from meeting this standard of service as set forward in *Commissioner's Regulations 90.2*. Attach documentation to demonstrate that the library has no control over the circumstances.

4. Plan for Compliance. Describe in detail on a separate sheet the library's plan for meeting this requirement before December 31st of this year. **(Please attach documentation.)** We now have an approved strategic plan, so we will be able to comply with this requirement in the future.

Library Director

Date

Library Board President

Date

System Comment and Review: Variance request

_____ may be approvable _____ may not be approvable
(Please include explanation.)

This variance request was reviewed at the _____ meeting of the Board of Trustees of
(Month/Day)
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System Director

Date

System Board President

Date

FOR SED USE ONLY: ___ Variance request is approvable; Variance granted until: _____
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___ Variance request is not approvable because:

Reviewed By: _____

MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

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1. Library Information (Name of library, contact person, phone number)

Irvington Public Library, Guiteau Foundation
Contact: Rosemarie Gatzek
Telephone: 914-591-7840

2a. Request for Variance from Standard Number: 6

b. What is current status? (Please attach explanation.) Without a strategic plan in place, we were not able to evaluate how effectively we have addressed our community's needs, as outlined in such a plan. We now have an approved strategic plan, so we will be able to comply with this requirement in the future.

3. Circumstances Over Which the Library Has No Control That Are Barriers to Compliance. Explain in detail on a separate sheet the circumstances that prevent the library from meeting this standard of service as set forward in *Commissioner's Regulations 90.2*. Attach documentation to demonstrate that the library has no control over the circumstances.

4. Plan for Compliance. Describe in detail on a separate sheet the library's plan for meeting this requirement before December 31st of this year. **(Please attach documentation.)** Quarterly discussions of how our programs, services and collections are addressing the community's needs will help us achieve the goals of our strategic plan.

Library Director

Date

Library Board President

Date

System Comment and Review: Variance request

_____ may be approvable _____ may not be approvable
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This variance request was reviewed at the _____ meeting of the Board of Trustees of
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System Director

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11	Provides access to current library information in print and online, facilitating the understanding of library services, operation and governance; information provided online shall include the standards in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subdivision;
12	Employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of section 90.8 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education
13	Provides library staff with annual technology training, appropriate to their position, to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service; and
14	Establishes and maintains partnerships with other educational, cultural or community organizations which enable the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

Return this form by email to
the New York State Library at:
MINSTAN@nysed.gov

Variance Request Form



Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 - Standards for Registration of Public, Free Association and Indian Libraries

Instructions: Use this form to request a variance from the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations 90.2, Standards for Registration of Public, Free Association and Indian Libraries (effective January 1, 2021). **If the library is not in compliance with one or more of these Standards, request a variance on a separate form for each standard with which the library fails to comply.** The Library Director, the Library Board President, the System Director and the System Board President sign each variance request form. Attach any information that will strengthen the request. The library system submits all variance request forms to Library Development. No variance granted by Library Development shall be deemed to relieve a public, free association or Indian library of any obligation imposed by any other provision of federal or state law.

1. Library Information (Name of library, contact person, phone number)

Irvington Public Library, Guiteau Foundation
Contact: Rosemarie Gatzek
Telephone: 914-591-7840

2a. Request for Variance from Standard Number: _____ **13** _____

b. What is current status? (Please attach explanation.) We provide staff with regular technology training, appropriate to their position, and encourage staff to avail themselves of additional training opportunities offered by both our library system and regional council. But without a strategic plan in place, this could not be done in a way that was outlined in any sort of long-range plan.

3. Circumstances Over Which the Library Has No Control That Are Barriers to Compliance. Explain in detail on a separate sheet the circumstances that prevent the library from meeting this standard of service as set forward in *Commissioner's Regulations 90.2*. Attach documentation to demonstrate that the library has no control over the circumstances.

4. Plan for Compliance. Describe in detail on a separate sheet the library's plan for meeting this requirement before December 31st of this year. **(Please attach documentation.)** We now have an approved strategic plan, so we will be able to comply with this requirement in the future.

Library Director Date

Library Board President Date

System Comment and Review: Variance request

_____ may be approvable _____ may not be approvable
(Please include explanation.)

This variance request was reviewed at the _____ meeting of the Board of Trustees of
(Month/Day)
the _____ System.

System Director Date

System Board President Date

FOR SED USE ONLY: ___ Variance request is approvable; Variance granted until: _____
 (Month/Day/Year)

___ Variance request is not approvable because:

Reviewed By: _____

MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 Standards for registration of public, free association and Indian libraries. (c)Variances. *If circumstances over which any public, free association or Indian library has no control prevent it from meeting one or more of the standards of service set forward in subdivision (a) of this section, such library may apply for a variance for such standard(s). The application for such variance shall be submitted for such library by the public library system of which such library is a member, in a form prescribed by the commissioner. No variance granted pursuant to this subdivision shall be deemed to relieve a public, free association or Indian library of any obligation imposed by any other provision of federal or state law.*

Listed in the table below are descriptions of each standard and the schedule for compliance as outlined in Commissioner's Regulation 90.2.

STANDARD NUMBER	MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS DESCRIPTION																
1	Is governed by written bylaws define the structure and governing functions of the library board of trustees, and which shall be reviewed and re-approved by the board of trustees at least once every five years or earlier if required by law;																
2	Has a community-based, board approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the library board of trustees and staff;																
3	Provides a board-approved written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service;																
4	Has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library, which shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years or earlier if required by law;																
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7	Library at: MINSTAN@nysed.
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Executive Director's Report January 2024

Advocacy – Westchester County and New York State

Even though advocacy is an all-year activity, the Westchester County and New York State budgets are a higher priority during the budget preparation activities that occur during the October to April period.

Westchester County – 2024 Budget: The Westchester County 2024 Budget was approved by the Board of Legislators in mid-December 2023. WLS received an allocation of \$1,343,125 for 2024, this is a \$63,494 increase (4.96%) over the \$1,279,631 allocation received in 2023.

New York State – Library Advocacy Day - February 7, 2024: Governor Hochul's FY 2024-2025 Executive Budget has been released and it includes an increase in Library Operating Aid to \$102.1M (last year's final appropriation was \$99.627 million), the same level of Construction Aid as last year (\$34 million), and \$3M for NOVELNY (digital content to support school libraries).

New York State Education Law calls for \$104.6M in State Library Aid for FY 2024-2025. The New York Library Association (NYLA) requests increasing operational aid to \$147.1 million to expand collections via subscriptions and e-titles, retain existing and hire new staff, and create comprehensive programming for beginners and advanced learners.

NYLA is requesting that Public Library Construction Aid be increased to \$69.4 million to maintain and develop the physical infrastructure of New York State's libraries, to ensure a safe, accessible, and sustainable environment for the future.

WLS has partnered with the Ramapo Catskill and Mid-Hudson Library Systems to provide transportation up to Albany for Library Advocacy Day on February 7th, 2024. WLS Trustees and others who would like to participate in the advocacy efforts can register at [NYLA Library Advocacy Day - LibCal - Ramapo Catskill Library System](#) to save your spot on the bus. There is a registration fee of \$10. There are three possible stops for WLS participants. The first is at WLS headquarters (570 Taxter Rd, Elmsford), the second is in Brewster (at the Park & Ride off US 84: 198-210 NY-312, Brewster) and lastly in West Nyack (Park and Ride at Palisades Mall). If individuals will be driving up separately, they should let Dana Hysell know so that she can provide you with the day's

legislator visit schedule and additional advocacy materials when they are distributed. Ms. Hysell can be contacted at dhysell@wlsmail.org.

WLS will also be offering a workshop on the process and talking points for Advocacy Day with the help of NYLA's Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, Max Prime, on January 30 at 2pm. This information session is designed for anyone who is attending Advocacy Day, whether by chartered buses or via your own transportation. Register for the information session at <https://westchesterlibraries.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=7032>.

Career Coaching Services (CCS)

Seminar - Managing Your Career in Changing Times. WLS Career Coaching Services (CCS) provides Career Development virtual seminars entitled 'Managing Your Career in Changing Times', which meet weekly for ninety-minute sessions over six consecutive weeks during the Winter, Spring and Fall. These virtual seminars provide participants with relevant information around self-assessment and employer hiring practices. Three seminars are planned for the winter/spring 2024.

Individual Advisement and Career Coaching has been a successful service addition and continues to be attractive to patrons who find themselves in between seminar schedules or have specific career needs which can be personally addressed with a professional Career Coach.

Adult Career Coaching Workshops. There has been growing interest in returning to 'in-person' programming for specific career topics among patrons and library staff. In 2023 we hosted several well attended in-person workshops and have planned to do the same for 2024.

'Fighting Ageism' and *'Unleashing Career Opportunities Through Networking'* have become popular and in demand workshops among the member libraries. These in-person, interactive workshops give participants time to ask questions and practice their skills. Workshops will be offered in late spring.

Teen Career Coaching Workshops. Member libraries continue to request programming for Teen Workshops that assist High School students with resume writing, summer job search and college resume content for application submission. Workshops are planned for February, March, and April.

Increased Marketing and Awareness of the CCS programs to the member libraries and the public have been an ongoing effort, but in 2023 two significant activities were launched: the new CCS website and the CCS newsletter.

CCS Website. A new website design was completed and launched in late December. The site is more intuitive to navigate and offers a variety of career

resources and current programming. The site can be reached at www.wlscareercoachingservices.org.

CCS Newsletter. The first edition of the CCS Newsletter was sent to our patrons and member libraries in October 2023 which included highlights of past and upcoming programming along with a featured career article. The second edition will be sent in late January.

Workforce and Business Development. The CCS team continues to explore the needs of small business growth and is exploring strategies to strengthen small business and solo entrepreneur talent pipelines. We have been conducting needs assessments with library and community-based organizations that serve the underserved communities. Our intent is to determine ways to provide guidance to community members who are seeking entrepreneurial endeavors as well as business sustainability to help these businesses and individuals to be successful in the long run.

To strengthen the relationship with the Community Center of Northern Westchester (CCNW) in Katonah, we responded to CCNW's need for food donations to support those in need during the holidays. We held a WLS staff holiday food drive and collected close to 200 pounds of food. We delivered it to CCNW, and its leadership team was very appreciative of our support.



A follow-up visit was made to the CCNW's Community Studio to inquire on how the new sewing machines (donated earlier in the fall) are being received by the seamstresses. Their positive response reflected that the sewing machines helped to significantly upgrade the Community Studio's training program and the participants are learning much more by using the newer model machines.

In addition, we continue to benchmark and learn about various business and government offerings that support small business development and sustainability. In the fall, we started to build a relationship with the metro NY Small Business Administration (SBA) regarding their small business programs and how they work with libraries. Also, we attended the Verizon Small Business Digital Ready workshop which offered us an opportunity to learn about Verizon's small business initiative and networked with local small business owners and entrepreneurs. Finally, we continued to explore business on-line workforce and small business offerings, such as Google Grows Business, and how such programs could be used in supporting entrepreneurs and talent pathways into technology.

Cataloging Services

Promoting Equity and Access: In 2023, WLS Cataloging Services added works in many world languages to the WLS catalog: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish. Most of this work is done by Manager of Cataloging Services, Melissa Glazer.

The online library catalog is an ever-growing entity that requires ongoing updating. For example, in 2021, the WLS catalogers changed the family of “illegal aliens” and “illegal immigration” subject headings to variations of “noncitizens” and “unauthorized immigration.” This was done in advance of the Library of Congress’s decision to make a similar change. These headings need to be revisited periodically, because they are local and the WLS catalog is largely composed of bibliographic records imported from the wider world of cataloging. In 2023, we checked and found additional bibliographic records for recently imported titles which needed to be edited to reflect the systemwide use of “noncitizen” and “unauthorized immigration” subject headings. Ms. Glazer did the editing.

Original cataloging needs to be done in cases where bibliographic records for a particular title are not available from the OCLC WorldCat database, nor from vendors. In 2023, several examples of these titles which particularly reflected the diversity of the Westchester community were: a memoir written by an African American man who grew up in White Plains; a history of rap music in Westchester County; a children’s book which retells a Buddhist legend; and a kit (books, Spanish/English activity guides, art supplies and a pencil) centered on the theme of immigration.

The WLS member libraries collect non-traditional items, known in the library world as the “library of things.” In December, Director of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray visited Katonah Village Library to take notes on a musical instrument collection which was considered too fragile to be shipped to WLS headquarters in the usual way. The collection, which was added to the catalog, consists of: a dulcimer; three electric guitars; a banjo; a mandolin; a tambourine; and a rain stick. For Irvington Public Library, Mr. Wray cataloged a Zozen measuring wheel, which is a device used for measuring and marking distances on athletic fields and parking lots. For the John C. Hart Memorial Library, he cataloged portable DVD players. These are just a few examples of how WLS Cataloging Services assists the member libraries when they reach out to the community by offering materials which go beyond ordinary categories. All of the examples required original cataloging.

Expand Community/Member Library/Partner Engagement: Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer presented a workshop called “Cataloging @ WLS 2023” to 12 attendees at WLS headquarters. It was designed to establish rapport with member library staff, and focused on the role of WLS Cataloging Services, best practices for interacting with the department, the functionality of the catalog and recent developments in publishing and

technology. The workshop was well received, and updated versions will be offered in the future.

The WLS catalogers provide cataloging services to the National Maritime Historical Society (NMHS) in Peekskill. In 2023, additional NMHS titles were cataloged by part-time cataloger Steven Pisani. The NMHS collection provides WLS member library cardholders with access to over 4,200 circulation items that focus on maritime history, and important and long-term components of Westchester County's history.

In June, Mr. Wray met with two librarians at Croton Free Library to discuss their plan to add a collection of LPs (vinyl records). Mr. Wray then began to catalog the recordings, which by the end of December had grown to roughly 280 titles. 2023 was a busy year for cataloging music: New Rochelle Public Library added scores, plus its very large Joseph Albanese Collection of jazz and popular music CDs, and Pound Ridge Library added a gift of about 700 classical music CDs. The cataloging of these Croton, New Rochelle and Pound Ridge materials is ongoing in 2024.

Mr. Wray often helps member libraries with their communications with vendors—setting up specifications, creating pathways for importing MARC records and dealing with occasional technical issues. He also consults with them about call number choices and methods of searching the catalog. These practices continued in 2023. For several years, the largest number of records added to the WLS catalog have been those provided by vendors. (The other sources were mentioned earlier: records imported from the OCLC WorldCat database; and ones created by the WLS catalogers, employing original cataloging.) All the vendor-provided MARC records are edited and imported by Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer.

Updating and Improving our Infrastructure: In the spring of 2023, Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer assisted the WLS IT Department with an in-depth, pre-activation evaluation of Aspen, the new discovery layer (the public's interface with the catalog).

Mr. Wray has been working with the Equinox Open Library Initiative to pursue new ways of increasing the efficiency of upgrading bibliographic records which require enhancements. One project under discussion is the development of a software program which would pinpoint brief records in the catalog and harvest full versions from the OCLC WorldCat database, with a provision for WLS catalogers to inspect them and make necessary edits according to local standards. Another project being discussed would have Equinox regularly deliver to the WLS catalogers all the bibliographic records which had been recently added to the catalog, in a batch. The catalogers would edit the batch and reimport them into the catalog. Because of various importing scenarios required by Evergreen, the catalogers have been editing small groups of records before importing them for the first time into the catalog. Once available, this new procedure will greatly improve efficiency.

In November, WLS Cataloging Services welcomed a new full-time cataloger, Jenna Caccavale. Ms. Caccavale graduated magna cum laude from Iona University, and then earned a master's degree in library and information science from St. John's University.

Before coming to WLS, she gained experience in reference, outreach, interlibrary loan, and collection development, at Iona University, Pace University, Bronxville Public Library and Mamaroneck Public Library.

Development/Fundraising/Strategic Partnerships

In 2023 development initiatives included grant stewardship, such as the management of the final year of the 2-year New York Innovation Grant supporting digital literacy for the reentry population, seeking additional support for WLS Outreach programs, and providing consulting assistance to member libraires.

This year (2023) marked the final year of The New York Innovation Grant – a two-year \$250,000 grant funded by the Schmidt Philanthropic Futures and managed by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA). Over the two years, Linda Smith, Manager of Outreach Services, worked closely with the Department of Corrections, the Probation Department Pre-Release Team, and community reentry programs to identify individuals ready and able to participate in the Reconnect with Tech (RWT) program. When fully concluded in January, the RWT program will have reached over 100 returning citizens. Each participant received 15 hours of technology skills training, a Chromebook, a hotspot, and detailed information on library resources and services to help them as they re-enter the community. For most RWT participants, it was a re-introduction to the library – one vastly different from before their incarceration. A unique aspect of this program is its one-to-one engagement. After a pre-assessment, Ms. Smith coordinated community locations (including Yonkers Public Library and New Rochelle Public Library), training sessions with The STEM Alliance, and secured transportation to and from the sites, including providing meals/refreshments.

Stewardship of this grant required regular meetings and coordination between Development, Outreach, NDIA, The STEM Alliance, Westchester Reentry services, and community partners to monitor progress, address challenges, and insure fiscal responsibility in accordance with the grant's requirement. This New York Innovation Grant further established WLS as a worthy partner in the reentry landscape and helped leverage additional funding for RWT. With one cohort yet to be completed, final metrics on impact will be forthcoming. What we do know now is that every RWT participant to date has expressed gratitude for this opportunity to become fully engaged in their community. And that is perhaps the most important metric of all.

While 2023 grant efforts including proposals to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) did not result in blockbuster grants as in the past, we did secure additional funding to continue our digital equity initiatives from a variety of funders, including Westchester County (Connect Westchester), Con Edison, and The Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation. A successful grant from The Field Hall Foundation will fund a new WLS initiative *Library By Mail* – mentioned in previous board reports.

Strategic partnerships within the nonprofit community continue to be a focal point. Serving on the board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Greater Hudson

Valley Chapter and attending the International Public Library Fundraising Conference – Director of Development Patricia Brigham keeps an eye on trends in the philanthropy landscape. In 2023, Ms. Brigham was invited to attend the Net Inclusion Conference in San Antonio, TX as a panelist for a discussion the digital ecosystems. Locally, serving on the planning committee for the United Way Westchester Putnam's annual Non-Profit Leadership Summit and the Women's Summit increases WLS visibility among our not for profit (NFP) peers and strengthens our strategic partnerships.

Support to member libraries on fundraising topics was offered in 2023 with several individual consultations with staff, library friends and foundations. This has led to a series of roundtables and workshops planned in 2024 offering professional development opportunities. Peer to peer roundtables and resource sharing for library professionals and volunteers interested in developing and implementing fundraising plans.

Information Technology

As 2023 ended, the IT department achieved several milestones related to upgrades to the datacenter, the email migration project, and personnel new hires and role restructuring within the department. The department is in a good position to move forward on new initiatives and to maintain and support existing services.

In 2024, the department will continue to redesign the data network to improve staff and patron security from possible malicious ransomware and other internet attacks. This cybersecurity project began in late 2023, and it will require ongoing reassessment and reconfiguration of library networks to proactively meet the growing and always evolving needs of the libraries' staff and patrons.

A major rollout in 2024 will be the deployment of WLS IT supported laptops at participating libraries. These laptops will allow library staff to securely access IT services on and off the libraries' private networks. Staff will be able to go offsite to provide services to their community while still under the security services, which protects the secure environment of the online catalog (the ILS) which includes patron data and the laptop as well. Staff will be able to work on these laptops remotely as if they were still physically connected to the WLS network without having to whitelist IP addresses or ask for additional "day of event" support from WLS IT.

Another area that the department will be focusing on is further development of the online catalog, as known as Evergreen or the Integrated Library System (ILS). WLS IT will be updating the system to improve overall security and performance, enhancing the user experience by improving the Aspen discovery profile, and modernizing the ILS' mobile app. All these projects will provide a better search and usability experience for library patrons and staff.

Trustee Institutes & Ongoing Education

The next WLS Trustee Institute, *Municipality Relationships with Public Libraries*, is scheduled for March 6, 2024, from 5:30 PM-7:30 PM and it will be held in person at the WLS Headquarters. This Trustee Institute is designed to provide library leadership with the vocabulary and skills for optimizing relationships with their sponsoring municipalities.

To help libraries clarify and strengthen their relationships with their municipalities, WLS has asked the Law Office of Stephanie Adams, PLLC to help put on a fun, informative, and positive session reviewing key legal concepts, skills, and tools for optimizing a library-municipality relationship.

The 2-hour on-site session will be interactive, and questions will be taken during the second half. For those not able to attend the session, a recording of the first 45 minutes of the presentation will be available for viewing later. The Q & A session will not be recorded. Register for the Trustee Institute at <http://tinyurl.com/yc2dcwfk>.

The recording of the WLS Trustee Institute, *Problem Solving Strategies for Library Boards and Staff*, hosted on January 10, 2024, can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/904563753?share=copy>.

Public Innovation and Engagement / Outreach Services

Prioritizing Wellness: Westchester Breathes



Westchester Breathes is a health and wellness program initiated in 2019 as a continuation of WLS' leadership in the Westchester Resilience Coalition. Our interest in the program, especially during the COVID pandemic, came from a desire to provide evidence-based techniques for stress management to the broader community, while encouraging nonprofit agencies to engage with these techniques both for staff and client wellness.

In 2023, WLS' efforts were recognized as a factor in the decision by the NYS Office of Mental Health in funding the program developers, the Breath Body Mind (BBM) Foundation, to make education about BBM available state-wide through 2025 at no cost to participants.

WLS is leveraging NYS' investment by popularizing the program among Westchester community members and agencies. Outreach Coordinator Elena Falcone delivers both online and in-person programming both to the public and to agencies that want to

explore this as a staff health and wellness initiative. In 2023, Westchester Breathes events garnered more than 825 attendees.

Bridging the Digital Divide: Reconnect with Tech and Connect Westchester

Reconnect with Tech is a computer skills program for formerly incarcerated individuals. Cohorts complete a 15 hour course, administered by our partners at the STEM Alliance, at the end of which participants will receive a free Chromebook and internet hotspot with up to a year of free Wi-Fi. For 2023, 6 cohorts were completed with 41 individuals completing the training.

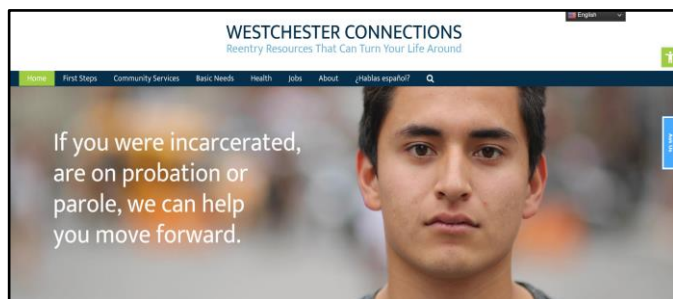


WLS also collaborated with The STEM Alliance to kickstart Connect Westchester, a county-funded digital equity initiative similar to Reconnect with Tech. Expanding eligibility beyond formerly incarcerated individuals, cohorts complete a 15-hour digital skills training at the end of which they receive a free Chromebook. While hotspots and prepaid internet are not provided, participants are also eligible for assistance in enrolling with the Affordable Connectivity

Program (ACP).

Linda Smith, Outreach Manager, spearheads coordination efforts with member libraries to establish Connect Westchester cohorts across the County. The initial library partnership was formed with New Rochelle Public Library. Starting last October, New Rochelle hosted two Tech Skills for Success cohorts serving a total of 31 people and giving out 31 devices. The first cohort for 2024 will be in partnership with the Bedford Free Library, starting January 25.

A New Look for Our Reentry Services: Connections Website Redesign



WLS worked with Full Deck Design to redesign our Connections Website (connections.westchesterlibraries.org) where we highlight crucial information and services for formerly incarcerated individuals. The new site prioritizes ease of navigation with special attention to the fact that many site visitors are connecting primarily

through their smartphones.

Improving Access to Elder Law Information: Senior Law Day Collaborative

The Senior Law Day Collaborative offers free educational seminars, one-to-one 15-minute consultations, and self-help resources, tapping the knowledge and expertise of attorneys, financial planners, and geriatric care managers.

In 2023, SLDC offered 18 webinars and 7 in-person seminars, amounting to over 1,300 live attendees, with 800 more watching the recordings. Of those 18 webinars, 6 were simulcast in English & Spanish. Nearly 200 consultations (in-person and online) were completed throughout the year. The big *Senior Law Day* event at Ridge Road Park drew 210 attendees. We are excited for *Senior Law Day* to return to the County Center in White Plains this year on October 1st!



WLS also worked with Full Deck Design to redesign the seniorlawday.info website, which launched on September 7th. The new website prominently showcases upcoming events, valuable learning resources, and an interactive "Ask Us" feature for visitors to send in questions.

One of the key features on the learning page is the resource filter, allowing users to easily sort through webinars, topics, languages (English and Spanish), and more. Additionally, visitors can access reports on specific elder law topics, written with the knowledge and expertise of Collaborative members.

Supporting Adult Learners: HSE Connect! & Read Better

The HSE Connect! program is a High School Equivalency (HSE) self-paced study program where students are enrolled in Essential Ed (EE), a learning application which teaches the skills needed to pass the GED exam. Students are assigned a volunteer coach for support and encouragement. As an offshoot of HSE Connect, Read Better provides students with a volunteer tutor to specifically help build reading skills.

In 2023, 104 students were registered for the EE app, cumulatively spending a commendable 5,570 hours on the platform throughout the year.

A steady 10 Read Better students persevered throughout the year. Having collaborated with a Read Better coach for approximately two years, one student built the confidence to begin preparing for the GED exam.

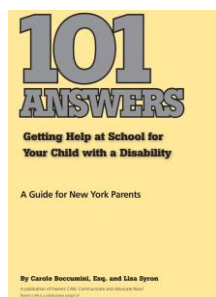
Free Job Search Coaching



Our Job Search Coach, Rebecca Mazin, provides One-on-One job search and job readiness guidance for every stage in life including, but not limited to: seeking your first job; changing your career; returning to the workforce; and looking for work after incarceration.

In 2023, 39 individuals were helped. Most notably, in the last quarter a determined job seeker struggling to kickstart her healthcare career received a job offer from White Plains Hospital! Equally impressive, a recent immigrant who sought assistance with resume and interviewing skills landed the exact role he was targeting: Process Engineer.

Revitalizing our Guide for Families and Children with Special Needs



The 101 Answers booklet was developed in 2009 in a collaboration between WLS and Student Advocacy, Inc. Intended to help families understand and navigate the special education process from birth through young adulthood, topics include early intervention (EI), the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), the Committee on Special Education (CPSE), and more. Our redesign incorporates new and changed laws enacted since the original publication date and moves away from the old Q&A format to instead focus on preparing families for the progressive steps of the special education process.

Completion of project scheduled for early 2024.

Resource Reviews

- Department of Social Services** - As part of a multi-part programming request from the Department of Social Service, we provided 10 90-minute Resource Review programs that reached 255 staff. This was an expansion of work done before the pandemic and was designed to assist these service professionals in encouraging library use at the point of need, i.e., in the context of needing computer access, adult learning opportunities, employment assistance, programs for children, and educational and enrichment resources in all formats. For many of the participants - including a large number of new DSS staff - this was also an introduction to public library services. Our efforts to inform our outreach partners of the resources available through WLS is an embodiment of our strategic goal to expand partner engagement.



- **FSW & Westchester County Jail** - Staff from Family Services of Westchester (serving state returnees) and the Westchester County Jail joined Elena Falcone and Linda Smith for a review of service needs and available programs for those returning to the community from incarceration, or currently on probation or parole. This training featured a demonstration of the revamped Westchester Connections website as well as Reconnect with Tech - two reentry services provided by WLS.

Keeping Tabs on Westchester Communities: Member Library Visits

We frequently find ourselves at member libraries during our outreach work, but our scheduled site visits were initiated to strengthen relationships and communication between member libraries and the outreach team. During a site visit, the outreach team typically meets with the director and heads of youth and adult services to discuss what they have going on at their library, obstacles to serving patrons, and ways in which WLS can assist with networking, brainstorming, and programming. In 2023, WLS made 14 planned site visits.

Spreading the Word: Outreach Events

The outreach team attended many outreach/tabling events throughout the year. Sites included Westchester Pride, food pantries, county-wide senior events, Senior Law Day, job resource fairs in Mount Vernon and Yonkers, the Women's Summit, and many more. When possible, we made it a priority to invite staff from local member libraries to spotlight their services, programs, and library card signups.

Although this is not a complete list of outreach activities, these serve to highlight some of our bigger projects and initiatives.

Upcoming Events:

January 30, 2024 – Online
February 7, 2024 – Albany, NY
February 13, 2024 – WLS Headquarters
March 6, 2024 – WLS Headquarters

WLS/NYLA Advocacy Prep Session
Library Advocacy Day
WLS Trustees & Staff Social
Trustee Institute – Municipal Libraries

Sincerely,



Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director