

Call to Meeting
February 24, 2026

The next Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System (WLS) is **Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will take place at the WLS Headquarters, 570 Taxter Rd, Ste 400, Elmsford, NY 10523.

Regular Meeting Agenda

Minutes: January 27, 2026

Finances

President's Report

WLS Committee Reports

Executive Director's Report

PLDA Report – Kathrn Feeley, Director, North Castle Public Library

NEXT MEETING: The next Regular Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 31, at 6:00 p.m.

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
January 27, 2026 – Approval Pending

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Organizational Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Nishat Hydari, President, at 6:08 p.m. and held in-person at the WLS Headquarters in Elmsford. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Ralph Esposito, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Susan Morduch, Diane Tabakman, Hudson Trader

Board Members absent: Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Patricia Phelan, Barbara Tepper, Karen Zevin

Also present from WLS: Terry Kirchner, Rob Caluori, Patricia Brigham, Wilson Arana, Allison Midgley, Kate Meyer

ACTION ITEM

Election of WLS Officers: Ms. Hydari introduced the following slate of executive officers for 2026:

President – Nishat Hydari

Vice President – Andrea Zuckerman Bober

Secretary – Diane Tabakman

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 has been appointed, and Maureen LeBlanc has agreed to serve as Treasurer. The Board approved the slate of executive officers for 2026 on a motion by Wes Iwanski and seconded by Ms. Bober. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hydari introduced Ralph Esposito to the Board. Mr. Esposito has agreed to fill the vacancy for District V [Armonk, Bedford Village, Mount Pleasant, Pound Ridge]. The Board approved the appointment of Mr. Esposito on a motion by Ms. Bober and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion passed unanimously.

Additionally, The Oath of Office required by New York State for public library system trustees was administered to re-elected trustee Andrea Zuckerman Bober, and elected trustees Ralph Esposito and Hudson Trader.

There being no further business, the organizational meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Bober and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion was approved unanimously.

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Nishat Hydari at 6:13 p.m.

The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Raph Esposito, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Susan Morduch, Diane Tabakman, Hudson Trader

Board Members absent: Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Patricia Phelan, Barbara Tepper, Karen Zevin

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Meeting and Regular Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2025 were approved as amended [name change on second page] on a motion by Mr. Trader and seconded by Ms. Bober. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Caluori presented the check registers for November and December 2025. Mr. Caluori presented the financial statements highlighting positive and negative variances. He also presented the statement of Temporarily Restricted Net Assets, provided an update on the year-end closing process and discussed the upcoming audit for FY2025. The financial reports for November and December 2025 were approved on a motion by Ms. LeBlanc and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Ms. Hydari thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as Board president once again. Ms. Hydari noted that there were 2 items for the Board to complete: acknowledge the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy and the Board Committee sign-up sheet. She welcomed Ms. Brigham, who spoke about the upcoming conference entitled “The Transformative Power of Play: Combating Depression, Anxiety and Isolation in the Digital Age” on April 27, 2026. Ms. Brigham encouraged the Board to purchase a ticket for a professional librarian to attend. She also thanked the Board for their year-end contributions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit/Finance Committee: Mr. Caluori reported that the auditors will begin receiving information as requested beginning in the coming week and will be on site during the week of February 23, 2026, for their field work. Ms. LeBlanc encouraged other Board members to join the Budget and Finance Committee, and to attend the scheduled meetings, the first of 2026 to be held on February 24th at 5 pm.

Governance: Ms. Bober, Chair, noted the Committee will begin meetings in March 2026 to review the following:

- Bylaws - Articles III and IV
- Employee Handbook
- Policy (due to 5 years): Code of Ethics #7, Health Emergency Plan #19, and Remote Work #20

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

A copy of the Executive Director’s Report was mailed in advance of the meeting.

- WLS is working in conjunction with the Ramapo Catskill to provide transportation up to Albany for Library Advocacy Day on Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026. Dr. Kirchner stressed the importance of reaching out to local legislators to advocate for funding.
- Dr. Kirchner spoke about the New York State Budget and working with Member libraries to be prepared.
- Dr. Kirchner reminded the board that WLS will be lowering the maximum system-wide checkouts for hoopla and Kanopy effective February 1, 2026, in response to the current and anticipated budget reductions from Westchester County and New York State.

The new system-wide maximum checkout threshold for hoopla will be 3 downloads per month (from 5 downloads per month). On a monthly basis, 64% of hoopla patrons used between 1-3 downloads per month. Individual libraries are currently able to provide additional checkouts beyond the system-wide threshold. Library patrons are also able to utilize hoopla’s Bonus Borrow options for access to “free” titles provided throughout the year.

The system-wide maximum checkout for Kanopy will be 5 tickets per month (from 30 tickets per month). Over the one-year period of November 1, 2024, to October 31, 2025, 92% of Kanopy patrons used between 0-4 tickets per month on average. WLS is working with Kanopy to offer interested member libraries the option of providing additional tickets for their library patrons. Ideally this option would be available by July 1st and WLS will share updates on this option as they become available. In addition to the movies accessed via tickets, all system-wide users have unlimited access to Kanopy’s subscription movie services. The Kanopy Subscription Services include over 2,280 films.

- There are several state budget forums taking place, and Dr. Kirchner will be advocating for libraries and 211 at these forums, as he currently serves on 211’s State Board of Trustees and is the chair of the 211 Hudson Valley Policy Board. These forums will be held Friday, January 30th, 2026 (virtual), and Wednesday, February 18th (in-person at Greenburgh Town Hall). The Executive Director of the United Way, which runs 211, will also be advocating for library funding. Dr. Kirchner noted how the two groups, 211 and libraries, acknowledge their mutual goals and benefits to the community as well as the added value of working together.
- There are vacancies at the following libraries: Katonah Village Library (Director), Purchase Free Library (Library Administrator), and Port Chester/Rye Brook Public Library (Director).
- Mid-Hudson Library System will be hosting two book club series in 2026. The first, entitled “2026 Trustee Handbook Book Club Series” has 5 sessions and help trustees meet their 2-hour requirement for trustee education this year. The second, entitled “Director Handbook Book Club Series” has 4 sessions and is geared toward Director roles and responsibilities.
- Dr. Kirchner will be meeting with the Mount Vernon Public Library Board of Trustees to discuss meeting minimum standards on January 28, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:26 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Morduch and seconded by Ms. Tabakman that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Diane H. Tabakman
Secretary

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WITH NOTES – JANUARY 2026

REPORT NOTES

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

This month's report includes the following financial statements:

- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Revenues and Expenditures with Comparison to Budget

Please note that this report contains unaudited financial data for the year-end 2025. At the time of this report most work to close the books for the year has been completed. However, we are just beginning to enter the audit phase and any corrections identified for FY 2025 will be entered as of December 31 and may change the figures included in this report.

PAYMENTS OVER \$50,000

The WLS Purchasing Policy (Policy #13) requires that purchases exceeding \$50,000 without prior budget approval be formally reported to the Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. To meet and exceed the policy directive, all payments over \$50,000 in January 2026 are listed below:

- Amount: \$78,264
 - Vendor: NYS Employees Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP)
 - Purpose: Employee health insurance for February 2026
- Amount: \$76,745
 - Vendor: Crown Castle Fiber LLC
 - Purpose: Internet at member libraries for January – March 2026
- Amount: \$54,404
 - Vendor: Midwest Tape (Hoopla)
 - Purpose: December 2025 Patron Pay-Per-Use Digital Content

BALANCE SHEET – JANUARY 2026

The Balance Sheet shows comparative figures for the period from month-ending (ME) December 2025 through ME January 2026. The key changes include sharp increases in receivables, which offset increases in *Deferred Revenue*, resulting in a 1% decrease in *Net Assets*. Details are discussed below.

ASSETS:

This section indicates the organization's liquidity by showing what assets WLS holds in cash and other assets. The net result for the period is an overall increase in assets driven primarily by anticipated recording of receivables in *Unconditional Promises to Give* and *Accounts Receivable*.

Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents (This shows the cash in WLS's operating and payroll bank accounts and petty cash): WLS's operating cash decreased by \$65,700. With \$676,000 in receipts, activity included \$605,600 from member libraries for IT services and group purchases, \$35,000 in pass-through Grants-In-Aid for member libraries from New York State, \$16,300 in contributions from retirees for health benefits, and \$5,000 from the United Way for the capacity building grant awarded in 2025. Notable expenditures aside from rent, payroll and benefits, Internet, and delivery to libraries included \$45,500 to Tutor.com for the subscription for online tutoring services for patrons in 2026 and \$25,300 to LinkedIn Learning for patron access to their learning platform for 2026.

Reserve Cash & Cash Equivalents (This shows the cash in WLS's reserve accounts and short-term investment holdings): This line increased by \$8,200, the result of earnings on reserve funds held with NYCLASS, TD Bank, and earnings on US Treasury investments.

Unconditional Promises (These are promises to give money to WLS such as governmental aid): This line increased by \$309,100, the result of recording receivable revenues from Westchester County and New York State.

LIABILITIES:

This section shows WLS's near-term obligations. The net result for the period is an overall increase in liabilities, primarily driven by the recording of *Deferred Revenue*. Details are discussed below:

Deferred Revenue (Funds received which have not yet been earned): This figure increased by \$1,156,700, the result of deferring \$1,156,500 in revenues from 6-month and 3-month invoices to member libraries for IT services and group purchases and, \$1,800 in revenues toward the Disconnect2Reconnect Conference against the recognition of \$1,200 in revenue for movie licensing for member libraries.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

COMPARISON TO BUDGET WITH PREVIOUS YEARS TO DATE – JANUARY 2026

Revenues were \$12,000 less than expenses before depreciation for January which represents a \$28,900 positive variance from the budget, which had called for a \$40,800 deficit.

REVENUES:

Total revenue for January was essentially in-line with the budget with offsetting positive and negative variances in several lines. Details are discussed below.

State Revenues without Restrictions and *State Revenues with Restrictions* – These lines are flat against the budget. This is based on WLS's procedure to recognize NYS revenues in-line with the budget until New York State releases official aid figures which will not be known until after NYS passes and figures are released by the Division of Library Development later in the spring.

Other Revenues with Restrictions ended the month at \$3,600 less than budgeted. This was due to the lack of activity for the LIU Palmer School program in January, for which revenue recognition will begin in February. Other activity in this line includes revenue from New Rochelle BTOP (Broadband Technology Opportunity Program).

EXPENSES:

Expenses before depreciation came in \$30,300 less than the budget and were \$12,000 more than revenues for the month. Lines with significant variances and/or noteworthy activity are discussed below:

Library Materials expenses were more than the budget by \$46,900. The overage in January was primarily driven by overages from pay-per-use content through Hoopla and Kanopy. Service reductions were implemented in November 2025 on pay-per-use materials from these services and so January represents a truly unexpected increase in activity. The reductions were implemented in the form of limits on the number of downloads per user. There was an increase in unique users for January, presumably from awareness of the service being driven by news of the reductions. Further restrictions with strict monthly caps on spending were implemented on these services starting February 1 and similar overages like those seen this month are not expected going forward.

Fringe Benefits – This line carried a \$29,700 surplus for the month and was mainly driven by health insurance premiums not increasing as much as planned in the budget and the timing of contributions from retirees for health insurance. WLS had planned for a 15% increase in health insurance premiums, while the actual increase was 9.2%, which should drive an anticipated \$25,500 savings for the year.

Delivery – This line ended the month essentially in-line with the budget. The performance in January was because there were five billing cycles in January. However, it should be noted that the delivery service agreement was renewed in December and the negotiation resulted in no rate increase for 2026 while a 2% increase was negotiated. This should result in an anticipated savings of \$9,600 for the year.

Contractual Services – This line ended the month with a \$6,200 deficit. The overage was due to the timing of a milestone payment for the Data Dashboard project (\$15,250). The line is not expected to be overspent going forward but will be monitored closely.

Westchester Library System
Balance Sheet
As of January 31, 2026

	Month Ending	Month Ending	Month Ending		Year Ending
	01/31/2026	12/31/2025	01/31/2026		12/31/2025
	Actual	Actual	Period difference	Period variance	Actual
Assets					
Current Assets					
Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,101,359	1,167,040	(65,681)	(5.62) %	1,167,040
Reserve Cash & Cash Equivalents	3,082,648	3,074,462	8,187	0.26 %	3,074,462
Unconditional Promises to Give	711,830	402,696	309,133	76.76 %	402,696
Accounts Receivable	896,621	82,600	814,020	985.49 %	82,600
Prepaid Expenses	1,018,154	792,708	225,447	28.44 %	792,708
Total Current Assets	6,810,612	5,519,506	1,291,106	23.39 %	5,519,506
Long-Term Assets					
Property & Equipment	178,565	188,848	(10,283)	(5.44) %	188,848
Right Of Use Asset	418,334	418,334	0	0.00 %	418,334
Total Long-Term Assets	596,899	607,182	(10,283)	(1.69) %	607,182
Total Assets	7,407,511	6,126,688	1,280,823	20.90 %	6,126,688
Liabilities					
Short-Term Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	535,741	393,111	142,630	36.28 %	393,111
Deferred Revenue	1,180,178	23,400	1,156,777	4,943.43 %	23,400
Short-Term Right of Use	332,189	332,190	0	0.00 %	332,190
Total Short-Term Liabilities	2,048,108	748,701	1,299,407	173.55 %	748,701
Long-Term Liabilities					
Long-Term Right of Use	173,923	173,923	0	0.00 %	173,923
Post-Retirement Benefits Payable	3,441,346	3,441,346	0	0.00 %	3,441,346
Total-Long-Term Liabilities	3,615,269	3,615,269	0	0.00 %	3,615,269
Total Liabilities	5,663,377	4,363,970	1,299,407	29.77 %	4,363,970
Net Assets					
Net Assets, Beg Bal	1,762,718	1,641,349	121,369	7.39 %	2,094,535
Change in Net Assets	(18,584)	121,369	(139,953)	(115.31) %	(331,817)
Total Net Assets	1,744,134	1,762,718	(18,584)	(1.05) %	1,762,718
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	7,407,511	6,126,688	1,280,823	20.90 %	6,126,688
Net Asset Detail					
Working Capital	4,762,504	4,770,805	(8,301)	(0.17) %	4,770,805
Long-Term Net Assets	(3,018,371)	(3,008,087)	(10,283)	(0.34) %	(3,008,087)
Total Net Asset Detail	1,744,133	1,762,718	(18,584)	(1.05) %	1,762,718

Westchester Library System
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
Comparison to Budget with Previous Years To Date
As of January 31, 2026

	Month Ending 01/31/2026			Year To Date 01/31/2024	Year To Date 01/31/2025	Year To Date 01/31/2026			Year Ending 12/31/2026
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Total Budget
Revenue									
State Revenues without Restrictions	176,897	176,897	0	175,008	185,491	176,897	176,897	0	2,122,760
County Revenues without Restrictions	102,973	106,331	(3,358)	111,920	111,928	102,973	106,331	(3,358)	1,275,970
Federal Revenues without Restrictions	13,333	13,333	0	10,830	11,666	13,333	13,333	0	160,000
Member Technology Fees	243,216	238,377	4,840	225,687	231,466	243,216	238,377	4,840	2,860,520
Fund Raising & Contributions	1,025	133	891	0	108	1,025	133	891	1,600
Interest	7,165	5,625	1,540	8,502	8,172	7,165	5,625	1,540	67,500
Other Revenues without Restrictions	4,185	5,917	(1,732)	2,944	1,346	4,185	5,917	(1,732)	71,000
State Revenues with Restrictions	50,930	50,924	6	50,415	52,942	50,930	50,924	6	611,090
Other Revenues with Restrictions	3,486	7,041	(3,556)	1,621	2,696	3,486	7,041	(3,556)	84,500
Total Revenue	603,210	604,578	(1,369)	586,927	605,815	603,210	604,578	(1,369)	7,254,940
Expenditures									
Salaries	195,876	202,559	6,684	189,004	200,903	195,876	202,559	6,684	2,430,711
Fringe Benefits	102,188	131,935	29,747	108,139	107,995	102,188	131,935	29,747	1,583,219
Professional Fees	1,370	4,650	3,280	5,248	5,424	1,370	4,650	3,280	55,800
Equipment	5,560	8,550	2,990	849	1,288	5,560	8,550	2,990	102,600
Library Materials	108,901	62,042	(46,859)	95,012	113,676	108,901	62,042	(46,859)	744,500
Rent and Utilities	32,207	35,183	2,976	31,021	31,790	32,207	35,183	2,976	422,200
Repairs and Maintenance	40,917	52,983	12,067	62,125	49,366	40,917	52,983	12,067	635,800
Supplies	0	2,584	2,583	326	4,854	0	2,584	2,583	31,000
Telephone and Internet	34,094	37,408	3,314	39,515	36,675	34,094	37,408	3,314	448,900
Printing and Postage	2,558	4,233	1,675	2,751	2,974	2,558	4,233	1,675	50,800
Bibliographic Fees	7,860	8,192	332	7,383	7,734	7,860	8,192	332	98,300
Professional Development	689	8,037	7,348	1,216	600	689	8,037	7,348	96,450
Travel	1,781	6,084	4,302	1,835	470	1,781	6,084	4,302	73,000
Memberships	2,022	2,416	396	2,243	1,611	2,022	2,416	396	29,000
Contractual Services	32,696	26,525	(6,172)	17,136	18,032	32,696	26,525	(6,172)	318,300
Delivery Service	41,461	41,292	(169)	37,410	33,894	41,461	41,292	(169)	495,500
Special Events	0	4,500	4,500	0	0	0	4,500	4,500	54,000
Insurance	3,307	3,417	110	3,941	3,262	3,307	3,417	110	41,000
Miscellaneous	1,683	2,833	1,150	490	1,617	1,683	2,833	1,150	34,000
Total Expenditures	615,170	645,423	30,254	605,644	622,165	615,170	645,423	30,254	7,745,080
Total Net Revenue Before Depreciation	(11,960)	(40,845)	28,885	(18,717)	(16,350)	(11,960)	(40,845)	28,885	(490,140)
Non-Cash Activity									
Depreciation	10,284	8,300	(1,984)	15,258	12,400	10,284	8,300	(1,984)	99,600
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investments	(3,660)	0	3,660	0	0	(3,660)	0	3,660	0
Total Non-Cash Activity	6,624	8,300	1,676	15,258	12,400	6,624	8,300	1,676	99,600
Total Net Revenue	(18,584)	(49,145)	30,561	(33,975)	(28,750)	(18,584)	(49,145)	30,561	(589,740)

WLS Executive Director Report February 24, 2026

WLS Strategic Initiatives



Promoting equity and access



Expand Community/Member Library/Partner Engagement



Update and Improve Our Infrastructure

2025 NYS Annual Reports

The deadline for submission of the 2025 NYS Annual Reports to WLS is March 4, 2026, and WLS will submit all member library annual reports to the Division of Library Development (DLD) by April 1, 2026. As has been previously discussed, DLD will soon provide access to the Counting Opinions portal that will be used to collect the annual data. Until then, an Excel workbook has been developed to aid libraries in their 2025 data collection activities. Allison Midgely, WLS Manager of Strategic Data Analysis and Member Library Support, has been coordinating the data collection efforts and will be conducting a brief review of the member libraries' annual reports before they are submitted to DLD.

DLD has been focusing on the member libraries' annual reports as their first priority, with more information about the public library systems' annual report process to follow. At this point, I anticipate having a draft copy of the 2025 WLS System Annual Report available for board review by April 28, 2026.

Hoopla and Kanopy – Lower Maximum Checkouts

Hoopla

As noted in last month's report, the growing patron audience for hoopla content and corresponding expense increases are not sustainable at the consortium level. For January 2026,

the monthly cost to WLS was over \$60,000, which could easily evolve into an annual cost of over \$750,000 – just for hoopla. We have been encouraging member library staff to share information with patrons about other digital resources, such as Libby, Freading, Comics Plus, and Kanopy. WLS has shared similar information on the WLS website and in our conversations with library patrons who contact us directly.

As previously discussed, libraries can fund additional hoopla borrows for their library card holders above the 3 borrows funded by WLS. At the end of each month, libraries that chose to offer 4 or more total borrows will only pay for their library card holders' borrows that exceed the 3 monthly borrows currently provided by WLS. Currently, the Briarcliff Manor Public Library is the only library that has provided additional borrows for their patrons, and they have reported that this process has worked smoothly and their patrons have not experienced any difficulties in accessing materials.

Kanopy

As with hoopla, the growing demand for Kanopy tickets is not sustainable in the longer term – but the availability of the subscription titles that are “always available” and do not require patrons to use a ticket to download a film has provided more access to content. As noted in last month's PLDA update, Allison Midgley and I are working with Kanopy to offer interested member libraries with the option of providing additional tickets for their library patrons. No guarantees that this option will be available soon, but Kanopy/OverDrive is exploring this option.

The Kanopy Subscription Services include over 2,280 films in the following collections:

- S5: Kanopy Favorites Collection
- S6: Easy Watching Collection
- S7: World Cinema Collection
- S19: British Cinema & TV Collection
- S22: Series Collection
- S27: Kanopy Kids

Kanopy offers a variety of marketing materials to support the “no tickets needed” Subscription Services and member libraries have been encouraged to promote these subscription collections.



Career Coaching Services (CCS)

Seminar - *Managing Your Career in Changing Times*

These seminars provide participants with relevant information about self-assessment and employer hiring practices. The seminars meet weekly for ninety-minute sessions over six consecutive weeks during the Winter, Spring and Fall.

CCS is currently facilitating a second METRO Library Council seminar as a professional development program running through February 25th. Participants are actively working on the concepts presented to guide them with job search strategy and career development.

A virtual evening seminar for Westchester patrons is being promoted to commence on March 10th – April 13th.

Individual Advisement and Career Coaching

Individual Advisement and Career Coaching services remain highly active. These services provide patrons who find themselves in between seminar schedules or have specific career needs which can be personally addressed with a professional Career Coach. Clients appreciate the one-on-one sessions where they are given guidance and advice with their individual career needs.



Cataloging Services

The member libraries are gradually finding vendors to replace the industry giant Baker & Taylor, who ceased operations in December. These vendors are distributors of print and non-print materials, and they typically also offer MARC records which can represent these items in the online catalog. While WLS does not have a role in the selection of vendors, Director of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray does serve as a liaison between libraries and vendors during the setting up stage. Recently, he has aided Ossining Public Library and Larchmont Public Library with the Ingram Content Group, White Plains Public Library with the Follett Corporation and the Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library with the Brodart Company.

The other records in the online catalog are downloaded from the OCLC WorldCat database and edited by the WLS catalogers or created with original cataloging “from scratch” by the catalogers when they are otherwise unavailable. The libraries’ holdings would be invisible to catalog users if they were not represented by MARC records. The records also make it possible to link the items to the circulation system for lending. Here are some examples of recent original cataloging by the WLS catalogers:

The Development of Garth Road, Eastchester, New York, 1926-66: with Special Consideration for the Thornycroft Apartments and its Architect / Robert L. Mawson

“Despite its uniqueness, no one appears to have told the story of how Garth Road came to be. In this paper, I attempt to do so. The paper consists of three parts. The first section tells the history of Garth Road real estate development from the time the area was farmland to the construction of Garth Road's last apartment building. The second offers a brief history of each building. The final section is a more detailed history of Thornycroft Apartments and its architect, George F. Pelham, Sr.”—from the author’s preface.

(Cataloged for Eastchester Public Library by Manager of Cataloging Services
Melissa Glazer)

Geneological Record of the Descendants of Captain Samuel Lawrence and Rhoda Benedict Lawrence / compiled by Rhoda Benedict Lawrence

This family history was created in 1931. It involves Lewisboro, N.Y. (The “word “geneological” is misspelled on the document and is transcribed that way, following standard cataloging rules. The correct spelling is also included in the record, to allow for successful discovery in the catalog.)

(Cataloged for Lewisboro Library by Part-time Cataloger Steven Pisani)

Mr. Wray created records for: a “wintering well toolkit” assembled by Chappaqua Public Library to help people who are suffering from seasonal affective disorder; five plush American Girl dolls with accompanying board books, for younger American Girl fans (for Rye Free Reading Room); and, for the Town of Pelham Public Library, *Pelhamopoly*, a Monopoly-style board game specially created by a Michigan company and featuring Pelham, N.Y. "The object of the game is to be the only player not to become bankrupt."--Instruction sheet.

Works in Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish were added to the catalog during the past month. The WLS member libraries serve the entire Westchester community by offering works in many languages, and the WLS catalogers make sure that they are accessible. As usual, Ms. Glazer was responsible for cataloging the especially demanding non-Roman alphabet items.



Information Technology (IT) Services

Since late last year the IT department has been working on addressing the need for the Microsoft Office productivity suite for the libraries. Last year Microsoft discontinued several of their grant programs and forced users to select a paid service or change their software. WLS IT was able to leverage our status and work with our vendor to acquire new licenses for the users who needed the more advanced version of Office. Most of the requests have now been deployed but this will lead to more conversations about services that are offered for “free.” The dependency is very apparent to vendors and with less consideration, they appear to be changing their billing models which can impact the operations of the organization.

The department has also been reviewing our network service with our current Internet Service Provider (ISP). As we continue to strengthen our security measures we are looking for as many options as possible. After several conversations with other ISP vendors, we have decided to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a possible new service provider. We are still under contract with our current vendor, but our agreement allows us to exit the contract with notice. We are exploring the possibility of acquiring more services for our network environment at a better cost.



Outreach Services

New Director of Outreach Services



Linda Smith has been appointed Director of Outreach. She joined Westchester Library System in January 2021 through a special pandemic initiative Project Hope, and also worked on Reentry Services, including Reconnect with Tech program, supporting community members with technology access and digital skills. Most recently as Manager of Outreach, she has led partnership-building and systemwide outreach efforts and will now oversee and expand outreach strategy and services for member libraries and unserved & underserved populations.

Advocacy Initiatives and Legislative Engagement

Staff and library representatives participated in Library Advocacy Day in Albany on February 3rd, 2026. Attendance from our member libraries and partners was strong, with participants



meeting directly with state legislators to communicate the impact of library services, advocate for policies supporting equitable access and underscore the importance of continued and increased funding. Transportation was coordinated in partnership with Ramapo Catskill Library System (RCLS), and we also worked with RCLS and the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) in scheduling shared district delegates.

Participating organizations include: Chappaqua Public Library, The Field Library, Greenburgh Public Library, Harrison Public Library, Irvington Public Library, John C. Hart Library, Mamaroneck Public Library, Mount Kisco Public Library, Mount Vernon Public, New Rochelle Public Library, Pound Ridge Library, Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES, Rye Free Reading Room, Town of Pelham Library, The Warner Library, Legal Aid Society of Westchester, and Westchester Library System.

Looking ahead, WLS continues to advance coordinated advocacy efforts, including the summer legislative supper, testimony at Assembly and Senate budget hearings, and a new initiative in partnership with RCLS: RCLS & WLS Developing Advocates. This program, starting February 12, creates a cohort of library ambassadors who will attend four professional development sessions led by the Advocacy Institute, covering topics such as state advocacy, relationship-building, policy processes, and creation of individualized advocacy plans. Participants will engage with reading assignments, network with peers, and apply strategies in practical advocacy activities, with continuing education hours offered for each session.

3rd Annual Canned Food Drive

United Way's annual Canned Food Drive, held in honor of National Canned Food Month, runs from February 2–23, 2026. The Westchester Library System is partnered with United Way,

Feeding Westchester, Mid-Hudson Library System, the Office of State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, and member libraries to engage the community and support collection and delivery of donated items.



Participating libraries included Ardsley Public Library, Dobbs Ferry Public Library, Greenburgh Public Library, Harrison Public Library, Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library, Hendrick Hudson Free Library, Harrison - West Harrison Branch Library, Katonah Village Library, Larchmont Public Library, Lewisboro Library, Mamaroneck Public Library District, Mount Kisco Public Library, Mount Vernon Public Library, The Field Library, Town of Pelham Public Library, Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library, Pound Ridge Library District, Somers Public Library, Tuckahoe Public Library, Westchester Library System, The Warner Library, and John C. Hart Memorial Library.

WLS helps facilitate member library participation and ensures collected canned goods are delivered to United Way.



Small Business and Workforce Development

WLS Small Business and Workforce Development continues to collaborate and partner with community organizations to advocate for small business start-ups and skilled trades careers (BlueCareer).

WLS Small Business and Workforce Development has an active first-half 2026 calendar. We are scheduled to attend several small business-related economic development events in the upcoming months. For example, WLS has been invited to participate in a SCORE Westchester and City of Yonkers hosted small business event in March. WLS will speak on our Small Business Resources website and the resources available, including market research data, which support small businesses. The workforce development calendar includes upcoming workforce summits, county and regional job fairs, and skilled trade-related career awareness events.

The recent Library Advocacy Day in Albany provided an opportunity to highlight our small business and skilled trades career resources to legislators. Also, we increased awareness of how

library investment and resources support the community's small business and workforce infrastructure.



Strategic Relations and Development

Pre-Advocacy Day Workshop – Social Impact Storytelling for Advocacy and Fundraising

NYLA invited Pat Brigham, Director of Strategic Relations and Development, to present a pre-advocacy workshop – **Social Impact Storytelling for Advocacy and Fundraising** as part of their Pre-Advocacy Day activities. The 45-minute afternoon workshop focused on identifying, sharing, and supporting program impact through transformative stories. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation can be found on <https://www.wslibraryfundraising.org>.

Disconnect 2 Reconnect (D2R) Conference – The Transformative Power of Play: Combatting Depression, Anxiety, and Isolation in the Digital Age

Sponsors and partnerships continue to build for the Disconnect 2 Reconnect (D2R) Conference, *The Transformative Power of Play: Combatting Depression, Anxiety, and Isolation in the Digital Age*, on April 27 from 8 AM to 4 PM, at Windrose on Hudson, Ossining.

Added to the conference schedule is special guest Benjamin Perks, Head of Advocacy, Child Development and Protection at UNICEF. Sarah Lawrence College and Westchester Jewish Community Services are offering CTLE (Continuing Teacher and Leader Education) and CEU (Continuing Education Unit) credits for qualified candidates (primarily in the social work and psychology fields). The Conference also meets Public Librarian Certification hour requirements. Individual ticket prices are at the special early bird price of \$150 until March 15.

Trustee Institute - Library Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Triple Bottom Line – It's more than just recycling!

On March 3, 2026, the Hendrick Hudson Free Library (HHFL) in Montrose will host a WLS Trustee Institute from 6 PM to 8 PM. The topic is: *Library Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Triple Bottom Line – It's more than just recycling!*

Jill Davis, HHFL Director and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Director, will share how they incorporated environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible practices in their libraries and library system. The presenters will also discuss ways that any library can adopt these sustainability strategies.

This is an opportunity to learn more about the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and its benefits for staff team building and community engagement. Attendees will also have a brief tour of HHFL to see the various strategies they have implemented. HHFL was the first library in New York to

receive Sustainable Library Certification, and Ms. Aldrich-Smith, is one of the founders of the Sustainable Library Initiative. She is a nationally recognized speaker and writer on library sustainability.

Morgan Stanley Presents – Reimagining Libraries: Innovation, Space, and Community Impact

Chris Templeman, Senior VP and Financial Advisor, Morgan Stanley, has been a decades long friend of libraries providing networking and information workshops. Mr. Templeman and Morgan Stanley are hosting a networking and learning opportunity, *Reimagining Libraries: Innovation, Space, and Community Impact* on Thursday, March 5, 2026, 8 AM-10:30 AM at Morgan Stanley, 2000 Westchester Avenue, Purchase, NY 10577.

This event will bring together public and academic library leaders, architects and planners, community and financial partners, and arts and cultural organizations to move beyond ideas and toward action. Libraries continue to redefine their role in a post-COVID environment. This event is designed to help the field expand the meaning of innovation, align on shared language, and identify practical steps that can be advanced now. Among the presenters is Terry Kirchner, who will moderate a panel with Westchester member library directors from Chappaqua, Harrison, Ossining, and White Plains. The keynote speaker is Nate Hill, Executive Director, METRO.



Trustee Education Opportunities

The 2026 Trustee Handbook Book Club's schedule includes 5 new sessions. All of these sessions are hosted online and run from 5 PM to 6:30 PM. Register for these sessions at <https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/>.

Tuesday, February 10: Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

Thursday, April 16: Hiring and Evaluating the Library Director

Wednesday, June 17: Laws and Regulations

Thursday, October 29: Duties and Responsibilities of Key Officer Roles

Archived recordings of earlier sessions are available on the Trustee Handbook Book Club Archive at <https://midhudson.org/trustee-handbook-book-club-archive/>.

Nonprofit Westchester (NPW) provides numerous information and training sessions that qualify for trustee education credits. **All WLS member library trustees and staff are NPW members** through WLS' umbrella membership.

Friday, February 20, 9 AM-10 AM: Nonprofit Lobbying and Advocacy (Virtual). **No cost for NPW Members**. Register at <https://npwestchester.org/event-6463628/Registration>

Thursday, March 19, 8:30 AM-10:30 AM: From Good to Great: Building High Impact Nonprofit Boards (In person – WLS Headquarters, 570 Taxter Rd, Elmsford). **NPW Member cost is \$35.** Register at <https://npwestchester.org/event-6519615/Registration>

Friday, March 27, 9 AM-10 AM: Why Your Audit and Form 990 Matter to Funders (Virtual). **No cost for NPW Members.** Register at <https://npwestchester.org/event-6519160/Registration>

WLS has partnered with the Ramapo Catskill Library System (RCLS) to offer additional attorney led (Stephanie “Cole” Adams, Esq.) online education sessions on a range of topics in 2026. All library staff and trustees are welcome to attend these sessions and individuals who attend can self-affirm their attendance for their trustee education and public librarian certification requirements. These sessions will not be recorded. Registration is not required and the event link will be shared a day before the scheduled session. The tentative list of dates and topics for 2026 includes:

February 26, 10 AM-12 PM: Website Accessibility Law for Public and Association Libraries

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act is phasing in requirements for public library websites and e-resources. Association libraries need to pay attention to this, too! This session will review what is required, policy considerations, and practical tips.

April 30, 10 AM-12 PM: Collection Development and Procurement

Recent court cases and legislative action are inspiring questions about collection development policy and procedure. What are the important considerations for 2026? How can you be ready if there are questions about collection development in your community?

June 11, 10 AM-12 PM: Supporting Social Services at the Library

Is your community turning to your library for needs related to well-being, food security, housing, supervised visits, and addiction?

This session will review the law, policy, procedure, and practical tips for providing library services while maintaining solid boundaries for those needing help from social service, health departments, and other helping agencies. We will also explore templates and language for developing partnerships with government and NGOs to meet community needs.

August 13, 10 AM-12 PM: Grants and External Funding

There are many kinds of grants, aid packages, and donations, and almost all of them come with strings (a.k.a. legal conditions).

This session will review the basic vocabulary, policies, and procedures for compliance, and discuss typical grant requirements. This session will be helpful for those just learning grant writing, and for experienced directors who want to see the latest.

October 29, 10 AM-12 PM: Civil Service

Civil Service compliance can be...a challenge. This session will review the basics, review sample policy and procedure language to coordinate compliance with local rules, review legal requirements that can help smooth the relationship, and discuss techniques for using your local Civil Service as either a trusted partner (or at least a baseline competent resource who does not get in the way of timely hiring and promotion).

WLS Trustee Institute: Library Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Triple Bottom Line – It's more than just recycling!

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 6 PM-8 PM – Hendrick Hudson Free Library

Learn more about this Trustee Institute and register at

<https://westchesterlibraries.libcal.com/event/16252477>

Disconnect 2 Reconnect (D2R) Conference: The Transformative Power of Play: Combatting Depression, Anxiety, and Isolation in the Digital Age

Monday, April 27, 2026, 8 AM-4 PM – [Windrose on Hudson](#) (Ossining)

Learn more about the conference and register to attend at

<https://conversations.westchesterlibraries.org/d2r/d2r-conference/>

