



# YEAR END WRAP-UP

## 2022



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# WHO WE ARE

The **New Jersey State Library (NJSL)**, an affiliate of **Thomas Edison State University (TESU)**, serves a variety of functions. These include delivering direct services to state government, state employees, and the public, as well as providing support for New Jersey's network of libraries (academic, school, public and special). The State Library offers a law library, a research library, and a library for the visually and print impaired.

We foster library development and innovation throughout the state, delivering statewide services that promote equity of access.

We lead initiatives that respond to current and timely issues, and build alliances that position NJSL to develop local partnerships and collaborations.

We serve many diverse communities in New Jersey with an overarching mission to connect people with information through libraries.

## The New Jersey State Library provides services that fall into one or more of four primary areas:

- » The **State Library Information Center (SLIC)** is NJSL's operating library that serves the state legislature, state employees, and TESU students, staff, and mentors.
- » The **Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC)** provides free library services for New Jersey residents who cannot read regular printed books due to a visual or physical impairment or reading disability.
- » The **Library Development Bureau (LDB)** provides support for library development across the New Jersey library community. Services range from providing statewide resources and continuing education activities for library directors, staff and trustees, to offering leadership models and opportunities for innovation.
- » **Statewide services and network support**, which includes JerseyConnect, the statewide library technological infrastructure, JerseyCat, the statewide interlibrary loan system, and JerseyClicks, the statewide platform for electronic resources.

**What follows is an overview of some of the many accomplishments at the New Jersey State Library during the 2022 calendar year.**

# MANAGEMENT TEAM



**JENNIFER R. NELSON**  
STATE LIBRARIAN  
New Jersey



**MARIA BARATTA**  
CHIEF DEPUTY STATE LIBRARIAN  
State Library Information  
Center (SLIC)



**ADAM SZCZEPANIAK**  
DEPUTY STATE LIBRARIAN  
Talking Book & Braille  
Center (TBBC)



**SHERI SHAFER**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
State Library



**MICHELE STRICKER**  
DEPUTY STATE LIBRARIAN  
Library Development  
Bureau (LDB)



**TIFFANY McCLARY**  
DIRECTOR  
Communications,  
Marketing & Outreach

**NOT PICTURED** **MIKE RASIMOWICZ**, DIRECTOR, Information Technology

The Office of the State Librarian promotes exemplary service in accordance with New Jersey Library Law. The administration of the Office includes the State Library Business Office and the Office of Communications, Marketing & Outreach. The State Librarian supports professional development for New Jersey librarians through LibraryLinkNJ, the New Jersey Library Cooperative. Information Technology support is offered through JerseyConnect, the statewide library technology infrastructure backbone which provides internet services throughout New Jersey. The Office of the State Librarian is also responsible for library development through the Library Development Bureau.



# I. STATEWIDE & NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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## NJ State Librarian Served on U.S. Government Publishing Office Task Force

State Librarian, Jen Nelson, served as a member of a task force appointed by the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO). The task force studied the feasibility of a digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Since 97% of Federal publications are born digital, the charge of this task force was to recommend whether a digital FDLP can and should be implemented, and if so, to define the scope of an all-digital depository program.

Comprised of 23 members representing the Depository Library Council, the Depository Library Community, Federal Agencies, and library associations, members examined the current landscape in Federal depository libraries and FDLP-related operations at the GPO and made recommendations to the GPO director as to the feasibility of an all-digital FDLP in the future. The task force delivered a final report to the director on December 19, 2022 that recommended the move to a digital FDLP.

## Second Round of Funding for Library Construction Bond Act

In January 2022, Governor Phil Murphy announced the second round of funding for the Library Construction Bond Act (LCBA), which allocated \$37 million to 36 library projects from 13 counties across New Jersey. The Library Bond Act was approved by voters in 2017 and authorizes \$125 million in state bonds for technology updates, building improvements, new library buildings and other library projects across the state. The first round of funding, which allocated \$87.5 million, was awarded during November 2020.

## EDI Collaborative for New Jersey's Libraries

On February 1, 2022, a collaborative framework for addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in New Jersey's libraries was announced by the leadership of the New Jersey State Library, the New Jersey Library Association, and LibraryLinkNJ-The New Jersey Library Cooperative. The impetus for this collaborative was a shared commitment to action towards achieving a New Jersey library community that demonstrates the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

This collaboration was the first of its kind among the three organizations. The initiative launched during a kickoff EDI Townhall meeting, held February 24, 2022, where members of the library community were invited to join working groups under the topics: Policy Assessment, Collection Development, Hiring Practices, Leadership Development, and Training. At year's end, sub-committees were actively developing plans and activities.

## New Jersey Library Association Annual Conference

Every year the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA), the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), and the New Jersey Library Trustees Association (NJLTA) invite New Jersey librarians and library staff, supporters, and vendors, to participate in workshops, networking, and professional development, during a three-day conference.

This year's conference took place June 1-3, 2022 at Harrah's in Atlantic City. State Librarian, Jen Nelson, hosted the annual State Librarian's Program & Networking Breakfast, and was joined by guest speaker R. David Lankes, the Virginia & Charles Bowden Professor of Librarianship at the University of Texas at Austin's School of Information. Lankes was the recipient of the American Library Association's Reference and User Services Association 2021 Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award for distinguished contribution to reference librarianship. His book, *The Atlas of New Librarianship*, won the 2012 ABC-CLIO/Greenwood Award for the Best Book in Library Literature. Lankes is a passionate advocate for librarians and their essential role in today's society.



State Librarian Jen Nelson and guest speaker, R. David Lankes.

## 2022 LSTA Grant Awards

The State Library awarded Library Services and Technology Act 2022 (LSTA 22) Grants to New Jersey Public Libraries and Library Consortia. Just over \$200,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) was dispersed to 16 public libraries in the state. Through a competitive grant process, awards between \$2,000 and \$20,000 were offered to eligible organizations to address literacy needs across the state.

LSTA 22 funds were awarded to library projects that address literacy needs including but not limited to early literacy, family literacy, adult literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy, and English language learning activities.





TBBC Outreach Librarian Stephen Felle, and Hispanic Outreach Coordinator Luisa Martucci, providing a presentation of TBBC services to an audience of older adults.

## II. PROMOTING EQUITY OF ACCESS

### Information Technology (IT)

The NJSL IT department and JerseyConnect accomplished several projects:

- » Moved JerseyConnect customer's virtual servers to an isolated network to improve security for those systems.
- » Copied all Dspace backups to cloud storage for disaster recovery purposes.
- » Created an online application portal for LSTA Grant applications.
- » Replaced all the uninterruptible power sources at State Street and at TBBC locations.
- » Implemented Clobba, a tool to provide better reporting for NJSL's Microsoft Teams phone service.

### Talking Book & Braille Center (TBBC)

In 2022, TBBC began participating in the Library of Congress' Patron Engagement Section program called "The Many Faces of BARD." Each meeting covered one aspect of

BARD usage and included two components: a brief presentation and a Q&A session.

TBBC's Virtual Book Club entered its third year. Throughout the year, members were able to join book discussions either online using a link, or by calling in over the phone. Club members were given the opportunity to vote on the book selections each month, and Book Club titles were always available through TBBC, giving patrons free access to the readings.

TBBC finished strong with its 2022 classes for the Library Equal Access Program (LEAP). LEAP, presented in partnership with the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, offered a series of free technology classes held at libraries throughout the state, including TBBC in Trenton. The classes taught visually impaired individuals, aged 55 and older, how to use accessibility features available on iPhones and iPads. Accessibility features covered in LEAP classes include Siri, VoiceOver, and magnification.



# III. DELIVERY OF DIRECT SERVICE

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## State Library Information Center (SLIC)

As New Jersey state government resumed more in person services in 2022, onsite access to the State Library restarted in February of 2022, first with scheduled appointments followed by a full reopening in May.

The State Library Information Center saw the retirement of two senior staff members. Margaret Nizolek, Director of SLIC from 2016-2022, retired June 30, 2022. Leslie Witko, Supervising Librarian of the Law Library, retired July 31, 2022. They were both instrumental in guiding the public services of the library through many major projects, as well as through the tumult of the COVID-19 pandemic. Maria Baratta was appointed the new Director of SLIC, to direct all aspects, including the research library's collection, services and staff. Teri Taylor was named the new Associate Director of SLIC, to lead key library services and programs in the unit, and work collaboratively with library staff to increase the visibility and promote the value of the Library to state government departments and officials.

The State Library's U.S. Documents section started using a PURL (Persistent Uniform Resource Locator) usage system to track online access to Federal government documents available through the State Library's website and online resources. The PURL usage system allows Federal Depository Library Program librarians to gain insight into how their end-users are accessing content provided by the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO). As the GPO continues to distribute more federal government information to

Federal Depository Libraries in electronic format only, using this PURL data will be an important collection development tool for U.S. Documents Librarians.

In 2022, several digitization projects started within the State Library Information Center. The State Library was the recipient of a National Archives and Records Administration Grant for the project, "Telling New Jersey's Untold Stories". With this funding, the library is purchasing advanced digitization equipment to add to an onsite digitization studio. The new equipment will be used to digitize fragile content from a historic collection of decisions from the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals, which existed from 1844 through 1947. Additionally, library staff digitized the official proceedings of the 1966 NJ Constitutional Convention along with additional hearings and associated documents. Staff reviewed the donated papers of Samuel A. Alito Sr. (father to Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito), who was the head of the Office of Legislative Services, to find the original proposal pamphlet distributed to voters and the records of voting from one unrecorded meeting.

Virtual programs and presentations offered by SLIC staff continued at a significant pace in 2022. Library staff offered 142 programs, most of which were virtual, and welcomed 2,537 attendees. Genealogy programs, as well as programs geared toward grant writing and business and non-profit management, were very popular.





All NJHealthConnect @ Your Library participants used iPads to offer telehealth services to their communities



## IV. LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

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### NJHealthConnect @YourLibrary

NJSL partnered with the East Brunswick Public Library, and libraries across the state, to launch NJHealthConnect @ Your Library, a health literacy program that made 450 iPads freely available to over 150 libraries across the state.

Each iPad was preloaded with links to multilingual health information, mental health resources, Zoom and Google apps for doctor appointments, crisis hotlines, health insurance information, and the latest COVID-19 updates in English and Spanish. This project was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

This project was made possible with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

### Digital Literacy Forum

The State Library held a virtual Digital Literacy Forum, May 10-13, 2022, to foster an open and encouraging environment for New Jersey libraries to expand capacity in response to digital literacy needs in their communities. Spearheaded by members of the State Library's Library Development Bureau, this four-day forum aimed at inspiring new investments, engagements and partnerships that advance digital literacy across the state.

The first day focused on bridging the digital literacy gap in adult basic education/English as a Second Language. The next day's theme featured career progress through digital skills centered on workforce development and basic digital literacy. The third day was devoted to youth services and digital literacy and the last day was all about digital literacy as it relates to health literacy.





NJSL+ Partners Literacy Project Pilot Program Participants gathered in Red Bank Public Library's Labor & Literacy Lab.

## NJSL+ Partners Literacy Project

The State Library used funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, through the American Rescue Plan Act, to provide expanded literacy services and support to NJ residents in communities of need across the state. Through a competitive grant process, the State Library selected three hub libraries that served as regionally-based training labs, and 11 spoke libraries that provided additional digital literacy support. Additionally, the State Library partnered with the New Jersey Library Association to launch a mobile navigator program in 12 libraries covering nine New Jersey counties. The Navigators provided individualized assistance to persons seeking employment, job training, or digital competence.

NJSL provided licenses for Northstar Digital Literacy to sixty public libraries, including those that participated in the NJSL + Partners Hub, Spokes, and Access Navigators program. Northstar Digital Literacy was developed by Literacy Minnesota in response to the needs of job seekers who may lack the digital literacy skills needed for employment, as well as to perform other tasks in daily life. Since the licenses became available, there have been 873 unique users, and 3,360 assessments have been taken.

A second year of NJSL + Partners, which began on October 1, 2022, focuses on building sustainable digital literacy programs, fostering a community of practice, and developing standardized training materials for both library staff members and the learners they serve. Additionally, the New Jersey State Library is adding at least twenty-five Northstar Digital Literacy licenses for New Jersey public libraries and will continue to support the software's adoption and implementation.

This project was made possible with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

## Statewide Summer Reading Program

The 2022 statewide Summer Reading Program in public libraries explored “Oceans of Possibilities.” To go along with the ocean theme – one that was perfectly suited for New Jersey – libraries offered many creative and fun opportunities for their patrons of all ages to encourage their love of reading and learning.

Nearly 97,000 children, teens and adults participated this year. Libraries offered almost 23,000 themed events for the public that were attended by nearly 465,000 people. The libraries that counted the number of books read by participants reported that readers of all ages read over 1,140,000 books. The Statewide Summer Reading Program is funded by the New Jersey State Library using NJ Network funds.



## Catalyzing Teen Entrepreneurship through Makerspaces

The Catalyzing Teen Entrepreneurship through Makerspaces project evaluated the current status of makerspaces in New Jersey public libraries. The project explored the intersection between makerspace activities and entrepreneurship. Between August and November 2022, a consultant researched the services and resources available at makerspaces throughout New Jersey. The consultant administered a survey, held site visits and focus groups, and conducted a webscan of New Jersey library websites. The consultant, along with an intern hired for this project, then analyzed the data collected. The final phase of this one-year project will use this information to create a curriculum and other support for teen library staff to increase their knowledge and skills in order to better support entrepreneurship among teens.

This project was made possible with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds, through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

## NJLibsGrowBiz Summit

The 2022 NJLibsGrowBiz Summit was held virtually on September 15, 2022. This mini-conference focused on the value libraries bring to the small business owners and entrepreneurs in their communities. Of special focus was how entrepreneurship can change lives, empower individuals, and revitalize neighborhoods. Speakers provided insight on the role libraries can play in economic development and shared creative ways libraries can start or grow their business outreach and services.



This year’s keynote was Samira Cook Gaines, Managing Director of Strategic Partnerships at Rising Tide Capital. Other speakers included representatives from ALA’s Libraries Build Business initiative, SCORE, and the New Jersey Business Action Center.







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