



An affiliate of Thomas Edison State University

2023 YEAR END WRAP-UP



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 2023 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. STATE LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Community Center Digital Connect – A Capital Projects Fund Grant Opportunity

The State Library announced a new competitive grant opportunity – Community Center Digital Connect. The grant is funded by the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund, established by Section 604 of the Social Security Act, as added by Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Though it is being managed by the State Library, eligible applicants included Community Centers, full-service Community Schools, Health Centers and Public Libraries.

The purpose of this grant is to enable the construction or improvement of buildings designed to jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring located in communities with critical need for the project. Capital Projects Fund grant funding can also be used for the ancillary costs related to eligible capital projects that are necessary to put the asset to full use. The purpose is to also address needs in communities that were most impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Projects are anticipated to begin early 2024.

Communications, Marketing & Outreach

The State Library, in partnership with LibraryLinkNJ, the New Jersey Library Association, and Libraries Are Essential, launched a statewide digital marketing campaign under the theme: Life Happens @ The Library: Venture Beyond the Bookshelves. The goal of the campaign was

to demonstrate the value of libraries, and debunk public perception that libraries are simply repositories for books. A series of campaign materials, including videos, web graphics and social media content, were offered to public libraries across the state to spread this message. The NJSL Communications Team worked with the New Jersey Office of Innovation to conduct research to gain insights into reasons why NJ residents may or may not be visiting the library. Over 300 residents were surveyed, and the findings of the research helped to inform the statewide marketing campaign.

**Life Happens
@ Your Library**
Venture beyond the bookshelves

In an effort to increase engagement with the New Jersey school library community, the State Library, in partnership with LibraryLinkNJ, launched a statewide direct mail campaign to raise awareness about the wealth of library resources and support available to New Jersey teachers and students. All K-12 schools were mailed promotional materials, and an information session webinar was held to provide further details about the State Library's Talking Book & Braille Center, information about statewide databases and e-resources available through JerseyClicks, and instructions for accessing professional development and mentoring services through LibraryLinkNJ.

Information Technology (IT)

The JerseyConnect team worked on several important projects for 2023, including a data center refresh project, assuming ownership of the lib.nj.us domain, evaluating spam filtering solutions, rebidding managed WiFi services, and partnering with the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to scan our network infrastructure for security vulnerabilities.

The data center project entailed replacing servers, switches, and cabling, which resulted in improved backup workflow and resiliency, more computing power with fewer devices to manage, and a smaller footprint.

The JerseyConnect team worked with Registry Services, the designated .US administrator, to take over hosting of the lib.nj.us domain. Previously the domain had been managed by 3rd parties and several NJ libraries rely on this domain for critical services. Hosting lib.nj.us provides greater control and flexibility without the added cost of paid hosting.



After months of meeting with different vendors and testing different spam filtering solutions, the team signed a new contract with the current provider in the spring of 2023. This system is used by the NJ State Library staff as well as the over 6000 email accounts used by libraries across the state.

Through the e-rate process, the JerseyConnect team had to rebid its managed WiFi service. Currently JerseyConnect supports 60 libraries and their WiFi network.

CISA provides ongoing vulnerability assessment by regularly scanning our public facing infrastructure. They send weekly detailed reports with actionable information. This has allowed us to stay on top of emerging threats and quickly apply mitigations.

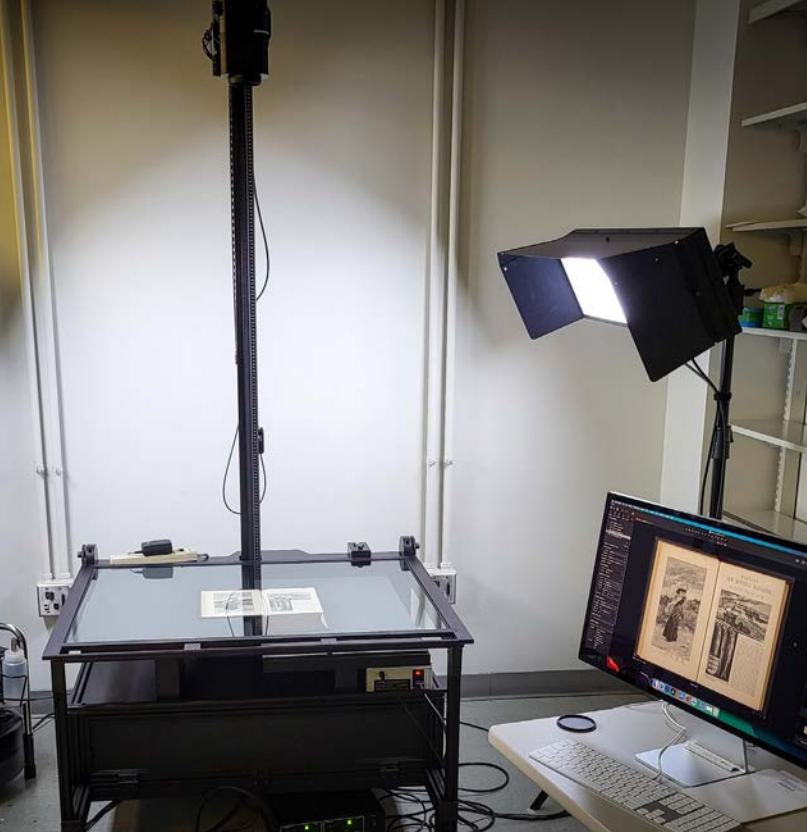
Retirements

Two long term members of NJSL's library administration unit retired at the close of the 2023 year.

- After 50 years of service, Ruth Pallante retired from her position as the Assistant to the State Librarian. Karen VanMorter retired from the State Library after serving nearly 47 years in the business office.
- Deborah Mercer, head of the New Jersey Documents section of the State Library Information Center, retired at the end of June, after 20 years of service.
- After over 19 years of service, at the close of 2023, Paulette Biancamano retired from her position as Technical Library Assistant.

The New Jersey State Library will miss each of these staff members, and wishes them well on their retirement journey.





NJSL's newly acquired digital book copy systems.

II. DELIVERY OF DIRECT SERVICE

State Library Information Center (SLIC)

The State Library received a copy of the 1866 Extra Session of the Minutes of the General Assembly and the Senate Journal. This material is unique in that it is the session in which the NJ Legislature discussed ratification of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. New Jersey has a very conflicted past regarding the 14th Amendment and this volume contributes greatly to scholarship on this topic. Additionally, the historic collection of the Annual Reports of the New Jersey State Reform School for Boys was digitized and added to the New Jersey State Publications Digital Library.

During each school year, hundreds of 4th grade school children tour Drumthwacket, the official residence of the Governor of New Jersey, as part of their elementary social studies curriculum. Upon a request from the First Lady's Office, the State Library staff developed

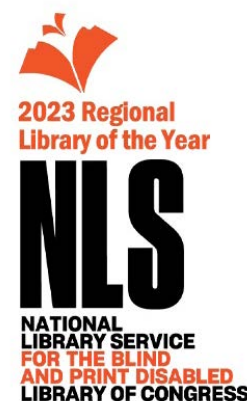
a meaningful collection of age appropriate materials about New Jersey and by New Jersey authors to display in Drumthwacket's library.

The State Library Information Center acquired two high end digital book copy systems in the second half of the year. These units are for use in digitizing bound and fragile material, large format documents, maps, and much more. This equipment was paid for through a grant from the National Archives and Records Administration. Collections selected for digitization as part of the grant include the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals collection, New Jersey historic land use documents, and documents pertaining to the NY-NJ Port Authority.

In addition, with dedicated funds for digitization projects approved in the New Jersey State budget in FY2023, a contract vendor, Backstage Library Works, was engaged to digitize

State Library Information Center (SLIC) Continued

large portions of the Errors and Appeals collection. As of the end of 2023, almost 400,000 pages of the approximate 2.6 million pages of the collection have been digitized by BLW. Following extensive training in the summer and fall, library staff digitized about 35,000 pages from the collection with the new equipment purchased through the NARA grant. It is anticipated that digitization of the complete Errors and Appeals collection will require several years.



Talking Book & Braille Center (TBBC)

TBBC was honored with the 2023 Regional Library of the Year Award from the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. Deputy State Librarian and TBBC Director Adam Szczepaniak, and the TBBC Associate Director Liz Burns, accepted the award at a luncheon held in the historic Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, attended the luncheon and praised TBBC's "24/7 commitment to ensuring that disability stops no one from experiencing the lifelong joy of reading." She said TBBC is an "outstanding example of the service that NLS and its network of libraries provide to hundreds of thousands of people from coast to coast."

With the addition of a new Hispanic Outreach Coordinator, TBBC has focused on exploring and celebrating Hispanic and Latinx Culture. The first Spanish Reading Program was held, and patrons were encouraged to read

Latinx authors. Additionally, TBBC patrons were invited to participate in an online event to honor Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month. Reading recommendations were available in Spanish and English, and the virtual celebration highlighted the rich history, culture, and contributions of Hispanic Americans.

TBBC continued its iPad and iPhone intermediate classes, as part of the Library Equal Access Program (LEAP). LEAP is a program sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI). LEAP offers classes for individuals aged 55 and above, who have a loss of vision. These classes teach participants how to use accessibility features built into iPads and iPhones. These include features like VoiceOver and Siri voice commands. Classes are held at several public libraries throughout the state, including TBBC in Trenton. In 2023, there were 31 sessions at libraries throughout the state, for a total of 154 classes held to date.



Camden Mayor Vic Carstarphen with ACP Enrollment Navigators Lauree McArdle and Angelita Kellum during a Thanksgiving turkey giveaway in Camden on November 20.

III. LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Social Workers in Libraries

Committed to supporting libraries and the next generation of library social workers in the mission of reducing barriers to helping the most vulnerable in our communities, the State Library introduced its Social Work Informed Library Services project, in partnership with Rutgers University–New Brunswick School of Social Work. This project focuses on strengthening public libraries' capacity for providing social work-informed library services for their communities.

The program provides a training curriculum for both library supervisors and social work students, which has created an ongoing community of practice to promote connection, collaboration, and shared problem-solving between social work interns and public libraries throughout the state. There was a total of 12 interns from 8 participating

libraries, which included East Brunswick Public Library, Edison Public Library, Highland Park Public Library, New Brunswick Public Library, Piscataway Public Library, Somerset Library System, South Brunswick Public Library, and Woodbridge Public Library.

ACP Connects NJ

In partnership with the New Jersey Department of Health, the State Library received grant funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) from the Federal Communications Commission, which provides financial assistance for New Jersey residents who are struggling to afford high-speed internet services. The State Library hired two ACP Enrollment Navigators to provide one-on-one assistance to ACP applicants at events and host locations in targeted geographic areas.

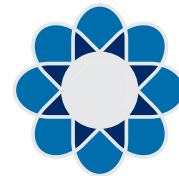
ACP Connects NJ Continued

ACP outreach and enrollment activities have continued to grow and build momentum through the end of the year. In 2023, there were 26 outreach and enrollment events in the central and southern parts of New Jersey that reached 679 individuals. The ACP Enrollment Navigators have guided 47 individuals through the application process.

Northeast Summit on Climate Adaptation

The State Library led the first virtual summit in which all northeast State Libraries joined together to help libraries prepare for and adapt to extreme climate change. Climate change promises to increase demands for library facilities to prepare and build community resilience, and to rapidly restore well-being. This summit helped prioritize responses to climate hazards with programs that help future-proof facility plans. The goal was also to position libraries for state and federal aid designed to invest in community resilience.

The summit had 253 attendees from participating State Libraries, which included Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Massachusetts Library System, New Hampshire State Library, New Jersey State Library, New York State Library Office of Library & Information Services, State Library of Rhode Island, Vermont Department of Libraries, Maine State Library, and Connecticut State Library. A recording of the summit was hosted on the New Jersey State Library's YouTube channel, with 182 views as of the close of the 2023 year.



NORTHEAST SUMMIT ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION

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