

State Librarian's Update

November 2025

We're about to enter the second phase of Teaching Information Literacy, NJSL's IMLS-funded project to support the implementation of the state's new K-12 Information Literacy Student Learning Standards. Phase One saw more than 200 people attend at least one Pillars of Information Literacy virtual training session. The sessions were well-attended and generated a lot of great discussion. Two in-person trainings will be held – one a Deep Dive at the NJLA/NJASL Conference in February. A train-the-trainer all-day session will be held on March 7. More information is forthcoming. While the training series will be offered again in Spring 2026, we are turning our focus to the rollout of Learning Activities.

Learning Activities for each Grade Band and Pillar of Information Literacy will be ready for pilot deployment by January 2026. Several school librarians are interested in piloting the activities to ensure they fill the need for curricular support. The pilot phase will last through March 2026.

In addition, we are actively planning a National Forum on Reimagining Information Literacy to be held online July 14 and 15, 2026.

If you're interested in learning more about the project, [please visit our website](#). You will find recordings from the October Series of Pillars of Information Literacy Training sessions, information about a new Community of Practice on Information Literacy we are supporting, and more general information about the project.

You may also want to [visit LibraryLink NJ's website](#) for their asynchronous online modules that introduce basic information literacy concepts. They are a great starting point for someone just becoming familiar with information literacy.

If you'd like to learn *even more* about the project or express your interest in becoming a participant in the pilot activities, attending the forum or training, please contact Jen Nelson jnelson@njstatelib.org.

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Stay Informed:

A Farewell Note from Adam Szczepaniak

On November 1st, I retired from the New Jersey State Library after eighteen years with the Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC). Technological advances and partnerships have highlighted my tenure as director. The program has gone from audiobooks on cassettes to digital copies that can be listened to on cellphones and smart devices. Our programs with the state's Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired have strengthened over the years, and the Commission continues to be our prime source for adding new patrons. The proudest accomplishment is our partnership with over 100 public libraries across the state. Working with the staff at these libraries adds support for patrons needing assistance and is another great resource to promote the program. TBBC will be in good hands as Elizabeth (Liz) Burns has accepted the appointment as Director of the Talking Book and Braille Center. Liz and I have worked together these past eighteen years, and her leadership will keep the program moving forward. It has been my pleasure to work with the dedicated staff at the State Library.

NJSL Appoints Elizabeth Burns as Director of TBBC

New Jersey State Librarian Jen Nelson has announced that Elizabeth Burns has been named the State Library's new Director of the Talking Book and Braille Center. Reporting to the State Librarian, Burns will direct all aspects of TBBC, including the library's collection, services, and staff. She started in her new capacity on November 3rd. [Read more about her appointment and biography here.](#)

NJSL Service Hours Change

For our onsite library users, please note that beginning November 3rd, NJSL's Research Library walk-in hours will change from 10:00 am – 4:30 pm to 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. We are also shifting our telephone and email service hours from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm to 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. Appointments with librarians for research assistance can now be made as early as 8:00 am.

Affordable Care Act

While there continues to be a lot of unknown factors regarding the status of coverage under the Affordable Care Act, we provide information about signing up for coverage in New Jersey during the open enrollment period that begins on November 1st. See our [Affordable Care Act Information: Get Covered NJ State Marketplace guide.](#)

You're Invited:

Upcoming NJSL Presents Events

Don't miss our upcoming programs celebrating Family History Month and more. These are all free sessions with advance registration required:

- [On the Turtle's Back: Stories the Lenape Told Their Grandchildren](#) – Nov. 5th, 12 pm – 1 pm
- [Introduction to Finding Grants](#) – Nov. 6th, 12 pm – 1:30 pm
- [Introduction to Medicare](#) – Nov. 12th, 12 pm – 1 pm
- [Resume Writing 101](#) – Nov. 18th, 12 pm – 1 pm
- [Let's Talk Diabetes: Prediabetes, Type 1, and Type 2 Explained](#) – Nov. 20th, 12 pm – 1 pm

Research Ready: Resources for Supporting Teens

The State Library is sponsoring a five-part series of one-hour virtual sessions to equip librarians with the essential tools and strategies to support teens' skills in conducting academic research. The series, [Research Ready: Resources for Supporting Teens](#), will be facilitated by Christine Jansen, Research and Instruction Librarian at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and moderated by Sharon Rawlins, Youth Services Specialist, NJ State Library. The final two sessions are scheduled in November and December.

- [Researching with Open Data & Government Sources](#) – Tues., Nov. 18th, 11 a.m. – Noon.
- [Researching with AI Tools](#) – Tues., Dec. 2nd, 11 a.m. – Noon.

Join the Community of Practice (CoP) to Discuss Teaching Information Literacy in New Jersey

Anyone who works with youth in school, public, or academic libraries is invited to register to join the NJ State Library-sponsored monthly virtual Community of Practice (CoP) meetups. These sessions offer an opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and explore strategies to strengthen information literacy programming for youth. The CoP meetups will be held on the second Tuesday of each month beginning December 9th, from 4:00 – 5:00 pm via Microsoft Teams. [Register here to attend the CoP meetups](#).

CSLP Summer Symposium

The annual CSLP Summer Symposium for participating public library members will be held this year on December 4th, from 11 am – 4:30 pm. Come hear keynote speaker Dan Santat, and attend breakout sessions about the manual, learning to decorate a space, and dinosaur programming to use in your library. Full agenda coming soon. [Register here to attend live](#). Can't attend the live event? [Complete this form to receive the recording](#). Thank you to our sponsors (Hoopla and Midwest Tape) for helping us keep this event at no cost for participants.

Get Involved:

2026 CSLP Printed Incentives Catalog – No Longer Being Printed

For years, every CSLP member library in NJ received a packet through the statewide delivery service (if you are a member) containing a cover letter, and flyer with the manual code for the summer reading manual, as well as a printed CSLP incentives catalog. Unfortunately, the catalog is no longer being printed, so it will not be included in the 2026 packet this year. You are welcome to download a PDF of the catalog that you can find [on the shop page on the CSLP website](#). If you need to have the code before you receive your packet, email Sharon Rawlins, Youth Services Specialist, srawlins@njstatelib.org.

2025 Statewide Summer Reading Statistics

- 128,648 children, teens, and adults actively participated in the program
- 83,366 reached their reading goal (determined by the library)
- 51,103 themed programs for all ages were offered by libraries
- 685,671 individuals of all ages attended these programs
- 755,338 books were read by children and teens (optional question)
- 167,804 books were read by adults (optional question)
- 923,142 books read by all ages (optional question)

Digital Skills User Group

The Digital Skills User Group will meet on Monday, November 17th, from 2:30 to 3:30 pm. This group is for any library staff member who is interested in helping patrons with technology. The next meeting will cover accessibility and ensuring technology services accommodate older adults and those with low vision. Our special guest will be Stephen Felle, Outreach Librarian at the New Jersey State Library's Talking Book and Braille Center. [Click here to register](#). Questions? Contact Andrea Levandowski: alevandowski@njstatelib.org.

English Language Learners in New Jersey Libraries

The State Library is compiling information to better understand how New Jersey Public Libraries provide English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and support. This research will help us gauge the needs of New Jersey communities, learn about current partnerships with outside agencies, and potentially develop new programs and services at the state level. Your response is important in creating a clearer picture of the state of ESL training, tutoring, and other services in NJ libraries. [Please fill out this brief survey](#) by November 28th, regardless of whether your library offers ESL programs or classes. If you have any questions, please reach out to Michael Maziekien (mmaziekien@njstatelib.org) or Andrea Levandowski (alevandowski@njstatelib.org).