LIBRARY COOPERATIVES of Michigan

Working Together to Empower Libraries!

Report to Library of Michigan Board of Trustees
April 2026

Individual reports from each cooperative are attached for this reporting period.

Across the state, cooperatives are making thoughtful shifts to strengthen long term sustainability, including redefining staffing structures, outsourcing select services, reevaluating delivery models, updating shared systems, and engaging in strategic planning efforts.

There is also a strong, coordinated focus on securing external funding that directly supports member libraries, particularly through opportunities like the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. rural library initiative and Molina Healthcare grants.

LCM's Mi Library Finder tool (www.milibraryfinder.org) was highlighted in the Governor's email about continuing March is Reading Month at home, a meaningful acknowledgment of the role public libraries play in statewide literacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Balcom
President, Library Cooperatives of Michigan
Executive Director, Mid-Michigan Library League

Detroit Library Cooperative
Library of Michigan
April 1, 2026

Carnegie Corporation of New York

The Carnegie Corporation has awarded a $10,000 gift to all Carnegie libraries nationwide in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Carnegie funded the construction of 1,681 free public libraries in the United States between 1886 and 1917, driven by his belief that libraries were the "cradles of democracy." During this period, the Detroit Public Library constructed eight libraries using Carnegie funding, four of which are still in service: Main Library (1921), the Herbert Bowen Branch (1912), the Edwin F. Conely Branch (1913), and the Divie B. Duffield Branch (1916).

2026 African American Booklist

DPL's 2026 African American Booklist entitled, *If This World Were Mine: Romance and African American Writers*, is available at all Library locations and for viewing online at detroitpubliclibrary.org. Dr. Nicole Jackson, associate professor of history at Bowling Green State University, has written an insightful essay about this popular genre. Detroit's own queen of romance, Beverly Jenkins, is also featured in the Booklist. Detroit artist Jamea Richmond-Edwards generously gave permission to use her work, "Slow Dance with Big Chief," on the cover.

Women's History Month

DPL marked Women's History Month by offering book discussion and film screenings about influential women in Detroit and beyond. Programs were offered at the Chaney, Elmwood Park, Chandler Park, Bowen, Parkman, Lincoln and Duffield branches. The Library also celebrated the legacy of Clara Stanton Jones, who served as DPL director from 1970-1978. Mrs. Jones was the first woman director of the DPL and the first African American director of a major library system. She also the first African American president of the American Library Association (ALA).With the permission of the ALA, we shared their Instagram post about her on our website.

Successful Author Event

DPL's Author Series Committee launched Black History Month on Sunday, February 1, 2026, when nearly 100 people attended a Main Library book talk by MacArthur Cotton, a civil rights activist who worked with Medgar Evers and others on the ground in his home state of Mississippi. He discussed his book *Mississippi Black Cotton*.

April 2026 Author Talks at Main Library

- Vanessa Riley, an acclaimed author of historical fiction, will visit the library at 2 p.m., on Sunday, April 12, to discuss her latest book, *Fire Sword and Sea*.
- At 2 p.m., on Sunday, April 19, Dr. April Langley will discuss her book, *Repoliticizing the Word Through Poetry and Preaching: Early Black Christian Women's Lives Matter.*

Literacy for Kids Author Program

On Wednesday, February 25, 2026, the Main Library hosted a Literacy for Kids program, "Authors IN-Detroit," featuring Monique Duncan, author of *Freedom Braids.* Her audience was one hundred third- and fourth-grade students from Detroit Innovation Academy, along with homeschooled students. All students received a signed copy of *Freedom Braids.*

LAKELAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE
LEADING • LEARNING • LENDING

April 2, 2026

Members of the Board of the Library Michigan,

On behalf of the Lakeland Cooperative Board and member libraries, we extend our heartfelt condolences on the passing of Randy Riley. He was a champion of Michigan public libraries and will be greatly missed.

There have been some leadership changes on the Lakeland board. In March, we said farewell to Diane Kooiker who is retiring from the Herrick District Library after over a decade as director and 40 years overall. Ron Suszek will be the new director at Herrick District Library and has resigned as director of the Muskegon Area District Library. The Muskegon board has appointed Doug Hughes (former board member) to be the interim director. We wish Diane, Ron and Doug well as they begin their new chapters.

The long-term goal of any organization is to provide economic stability and sustainability. At the end of April, our Delivery and Facilities Manager, Terry Cross will be retiring so we will be making some significant changes. After careful consideration and analysis, we will be outsourcing our delivery operations. This was not an easy decision. We have made modifications to our MERS plan to accommodate both drivers. Overall, this change will not only save us money long-term but it will allow us to focus our resources on shared resources for patrons, training, technology and other services for our 42 member libraries and the communities and individuals they serve. With limited funding, we needed to reassess, recalibrate and reorganize.

The Lakeland ILS Evaluation Committee voted unanimously on March 24th to recommend to the Advisory Council to move to a new integrated library system. The Advisory Council will discuss this in April and/or May and then decide whether to vote to recommend that the full Lakeland board make a final decision. There are a lot of moving parts and we will do our best to meet the needs of individual libraries and the cooperative as a whole. As I mentioned in prior reports, the committee, led by the Lakeland ILS manager, Ann Langlois has done an outstanding job.

Change is never easy, but as leaders, it is our responsibility to move an organization forward while providing long-term stability and sustainability. I wish you all well as you move forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dawe, Director

LM Updates from MMLC
April 2026

In January 2026, we hired Kate Pohjola Andrade, director of Woodlands Library Cooperative to help MMLC with our Strategic Plan. With the main idea of what we need to do to remain a cooperative. We had our first meeting in February, which led us to a discussion of the future of our cooperative. We sent out a survey to all members with emphasis on whether members wanted the cooperative to continue. With results of the survey, they do want to continue the cooperative but will need to change the structure of MMLC to be able to accomplices that goal.

Our next meeting will be in April, via zoom and then in May in person. We will also be having a Board meeting in May. We are most likely going to have more meetings in the Summer to be able to complete the Strategic Plan by fall.

We have three libraries who are working through the process of hiring a new Director. Lapeer District Library has hired a new Director, Stephen Banister. Stephen previous position was Director of Germantown Community Library in Tennessee. He stated at the end of February as Director of Lapeer District Library. Gloria Coles Flint Public Library is negotiating with their candidate and hope to have an announcement soon about the person. Public Libraries of Saginaw are searching for a new director, and they have been collecting resumes for that position.

Mid-Michigan LIBRARY LEAGUE

Executive Director's Report
Jennifer Balcom
April 2026

Provided direct consulting support to member library directors and trustees on topics including staff hiring and onboarding, facilities management, strategic planning, district library establishment, policy development, and digital collections.

Supported the partnership between Superiorland Library Cooperative and Molina Healthcare by serving on the Molina Healthcare Grant Review Committee. The Molina Grant made funding available to public libraries offering services and programs for senior populations. Reviewed applications and helped select recipients for $2,000, $5,000, and $10,000 grants awards.

Continued supporting member libraries in preparing for website accessibility compliance by April 2027, including responding to increased questions about accessibility requirements. MMLL continued work on its own website accessibility with a focus on PDF remediation.

Advisory Council trainings draw strong participation and positive feedback. Recent presentations included Library Insurance 101, focused on coverage and risk management, and an OverDrive session on Advantage collections and digital collection development for smaller libraries.

Received MMLL Board approval to pursue training in strategic planning facilitation (SOAR) to better support member libraries in developing and updating strategic plans, particularly Class 1 and 2 libraries with limited financial capacity.

To bring fresh ideas and best practices back to the Cooperative, I continued my own professional learning and explored innovative programming models, including the Human Library event at the Rochester Hills Public Library in February.

Planning is underway for the MMLL Annual Luncheon and Membership Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at Caberfae in Cadillac.

Worked with the LCM Continuing Education Committee to plan and present the statewide webinar *Is a District Library Your Next Chapter: Empowering Directors and Trustees to Take the Next Step*.

Suburban Library Cooperative

Library of Michigan Report
April 2026

- Rural Library Grant
    - The Cooperative along with The Library Network and the Woodlands Library Cooperative received a grant from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation for up to $250,000 a year for 3-years. The Cooperative Libraries who fit their criteria are: Armada, Jean Waterloo Lenox Township, Lois Wagner, MacDonald, Ray Township and Romeo District. These libraries would have to apply for this grant, however, the administrators are looking to make the procedures for applying and reporting easy as these libraries often do not have the staff or time to invest in the process. The Library Network will be overseeing all parts of this grant. For more information, go to www.tln.org/page/wilson
- Director Search Update
    - The SLC Director Search Committee, Board, Advisory Council, and staff were unanimous in recommending Kathy McKinney for the director position at the Cooperative. Kathy began her position on March 2, 2026. Since then, Kathy has been working on updating the internal policies and procedures at SLC. She has been meeting with Cooperative Directors. She will be meeting with Library of Michigan and MCLS staff in the near future.
- Audit for 2024/2025
    - Maner Costerisan completed the audit for FY 2024/2025 and presented it to the SLC Board of Trustees in January 2026.
- Library Passport Wrap-Up
    - Residents in SLC service areas were able to participate in the Library Passport Program where they could visit each library in the cooperative. They were able to receive prizes after visiting 8 libraries and then again after visiting all 21 libraries.
    - 1,971 passports were distributed.
    - 268 people were awarded the first prize after visiting 8 libraries
    - 112 people were awarded the second prize after visiting all 21 libraries
- ILS Upgrade
    - February 19, 2026 all shared catalog libraries were upgraded to Polaris 8.0. The catalog was re-indexed. Things went very smoothly.
- Food For Thought Library Food Drive
    - SLC is teaming up with Gleaners to disperse collection boxes to participating libraries. The campaign runs March 30 - April 17, 2026.

- Member Library News
    - Warren Public Library hired Maria McCarville as their new Director in January 2026.
    - Roseville Public Library reopened their doors for full service on April 1, 2026 after a full library renovation. Their grand opening was held Saturday, March 28, 2026.
    - Romeo District Library - Graubner Branch will have their groundbreaking ceremony on April 28, 2026 to begin construction on their new addition to the building.
    - St. Clair Shores Public Library is offering curbside service while their library is still under construction. They hope to open in June 2026.
- SLC Board of Trustees
    - SLC Board of Trustees had board training on January 15, 2026. For those members who could not attend, the powerpoint presentation was sent out to those board members.

Superiorland Library Cooperative Report

Library of Michigan Board Report, April 2026

E-Rate
Pamela Malmsten, assistant finance director, spearheaded the E-rate application process for both category 1 and category 2 expenses. All E-rate applications have been submitted for the upcoming fiscal year.

Great Lakes Talking Books
A support group for people with visual impairments meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 10am EST. The meetings are held both in person at the SLC office conference room and via Zoom. Mia Brodeur, talking books specialist, is also working with volunteer readers to record new books at the recording booth at the Peter White Public Library.

Molina Healthcare Grant for Libraries
The Molina Healthcare Grant for Libraries in Michigan's Lower Peninsula recipients have been notified. Applicants requested grants of either $2,000, $5,000, or $10,000 to support projects or programs aimed at addressing social isolation and loneliness while promoting health and wellness. The Upper Peninsula grant recipients have also been selected. They were eligible for grant funds of up to $2000.

UPRLC Annual Conference
The UPRLC Annual Conference will take place September 21-22 at the Northern Center at Northern Michigan University. The theme is "The Next Chapter." Save the date notices have been sent and vendor sponsorships have been solicited.

Tech Support
Gordon Tellefsen and Joshua Collins continue to troubleshoot tech issues for libraries, often requiring travel to on-site locations in the Upper and Northern Lower Peninsulas. They recently facilitated purchases of new discounted laptops and desktops and have been working to configure and deploy the new equipment.

ILS, Database, & Cataloging Support
Ellen Moore works with library staff who need cataloging training. She also manages the OverDrive collection for Great Lakes Digital Libraries and provides monthly database stats to libraries. Jeremy Morelock regularly updates the MyLibro patron app and troubleshoots ILS issues and configurations.

Quarterly Activities Report
Steven K. Bowers
April 2026

Rural Library Grant Program Update

Work continues on implementation of the Rural Library Grant Program, funded by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation. Grant partners for the region include TLN, Suburban Library Cooperative, and Woodlands Library Cooperative. An informational meeting was held for eligible libraries in January, and another is scheduled for March 4. Through the program, TLN will administer grant awards to libraries in Southeast Michigan, beginning mid-year 2026. Applications will be taken prior, and grant awards will range from $10,000-$250,000.

More information on the program, online at: TLN.org/wilson

TLN Summer Reading Adventure Book Program

TLN is expanding our Summer Reading Adventure Book program this year. After piloting variations of the project the past couple of summers (with a small group of libraries in Oakland County) we are expanding the program to any TLN library that wants to participate. Participating libraries will receive for free: 1 stamper, 50 booklets, and 50 prize stickers. Library directors have been invited to sign their library up soon. More program information posted at: TLN.org/summer

Celebrating Humanity: Book Displays in the Public Library

TLN This year marks 100 years of nationally honoring Black History Month! With this important milestone, we thought now might be a good time to talk about how libraries can bring awareness to communities through displays and collections. Libraries can celebrate communities even while remembering and acknowledging truthful and sometimes horrific history. Through our daily work, libraries can do a lot by providing access, services, and resources to support everyone in our communities.

Read full article online at: TLN.org/news/719997/

TLN Wayne Metro Partnership for MAP

TLN will continue our partnership with Wayne Metro Community Action Agency this summer to offer transportation to MAP activities in the tri-county area. This year, the transportation service will be open to anyone aged 18 or older (or accompanied by an adult). Transportation will be provided to those that need a ride to their MAP destination and that book through the service partnership with Wayne Metro. The transportation program will be available during the typical MAP season this summer, the Memorial Day weekend through the Labor Day weekend. This summer MAP will also pilot having a couple of farmers' markets in our directory for each of the three counties (Wayne/Oakland/Macomb) in the grant sponsored transportation program. Visit the Michigan Activity Pass (MAP) online at: MiActivityPass.org

TLN Strategic Goals Update

Work continues on various goals in the TLN strategic plan, as approved by the TLN Board of Trustees with input from various member groups from withing the cooperative. Below are updates on a few specific goals.

Goal 3 TLN Local Resource Sharing: TLN is forming a committee to investigate the feasibility of TLN running a catalog like our previously retired project, MiLE (Michigan Library Exchange). MiLE was a precursor to the MeLCat statewide catalog and served the Southeast Michigan region. If feasible and approved, the purpose of such a project would be to enhance resource sharing within TLN and the local region, in addition to using the statewide MeLCat program.

Goal 5 Automated Materials Handling (AMH) Machine Deployment: Planning and work progresses on the AMH project, with contracting recently completed with selected vendor EnvisionWare. Preliminary work to RFID (radio frequency ID) tag all items in the shared g system catalog continues, with approximately 1 million more to go (3 million completed). By August we should be down to our last 2 or 3 libraries for tagging, and ready to use the AMH machine in the fall.

Goal 7 Business Operations: TLN is forming a committee to explore implementation of a unified contracting and invoicing system to assist in managing our annual business processes. Member libraries will be asked for volunteers to serve on the investigative committee.

Access the complete TLN Strategic Framework doc, online at: TLN.org/goals

White Pine Library Cooperative

April 2026

- Highlighted our upcoming transition to the OCLC ILL Clio platform to 37 member libraries at the February Advisory Council meeting. In mid-March, we launched beta testing with an initial cohort of 10 participants, with a second cohort scheduled to begin on April 20. Peabody will remain available through May 31, at which point all current OCLC ILL libraries will be fully migrated to Clio.
- Provided board development support to the Suburban Library Cooperative Board in advance of the appointment of a new director.
- Assisted a member library with the process of hiring a new director, including developing job postings and descriptions and facilitating candidate interviews. In collaboration with Lori Poznanski-Mason, I was also able to present a tribute from LOM, honoring the retiring director.
- Coordinated a presentation by Amber Sheerin (MLA), “MI Right to Read,” at Reese Unity District Library, attended by 27 directors, staff, and trustees.
- Partnered with colleagues from the LCM Continuing Education Committee to present “Is a District Library Your Next Chapter: Empowering Directors and Trustees to Take the Next Step.”
- Working alongside a member as they navigate the process of reestablishing.
- Supported a member library in pursuing a significant federal grant to update and expand its facility.
- Reviewed Molina Health Care Grant applications and met with the committee to determine recipients.
- Participated in the Traveling Librarians visit to Bad Axe District Library, where 16 library directors toured the newly renovated facility and engaged in meaningful discussions about current challenges and opportunities in libraries.
- Continuing to plan presenters and programming for the Annual Meeting in October.
- Maintaining regular communication through weekly updates, hosting virtual check-ins as needed, and traveling throughout the Cooperative to connect with and support member libraries.

Kate Van Auken, Director

WOODLANDS
LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

Woodlands Library Cooperative
Report to the Library of Michigan Board of Directors
April 2026

This year marks my 40th year serving in public libraries, if you count the pre-MLIS years. I have seen a LOT of change, but it struck me recently that as a library worker, there has always been a constant. The library cooperatives. I'm so proud of the work my fellow Cooperative Directors are doing to support Michigan's library workers, especially in these uncertain times.

In March, Woodlands partnered with the Library Cooperatives of Michigan to host an informal webinar, "Is a District Library your next chapter: empowering Directors and Trustees to take the next step." We had four panelists; three are library directors and one is a board member. Each shared their unique story of how their library became a district library. We deliberately did not record the session, as the discussion was informal. We had

As anticipated, WLC's Governing Board approved the application from the Burlington Township Library to re-join the cooperative, as our 51st member.

I continue to present board development sessions at our member libraries. In each session, I detail the relationship between the library and the cooperative, as well as the lines between the board and the director. Board development and continuing education are vital.

I am working with member directors and their boards, as they strive to ascertain what they want to learn from community surveys as they develop their strategic plans. My own continuing professional development has focused on survey creation and implementation.