LIBRARY COOPERATIVES of Michigan

Working Together to Empower Libraries!

Report to Library of Michigan Board of Trustees
August 2026

Individual cooperative reports received for this reporting period are attached.

Across the state, library cooperatives continue to support their member libraries through shared technology, delivery, digital resources, grants, and training. The reports also highlight direct work with library directors and boards, as well as support for libraries navigating staffing, governance, and operational challenges.

Three library cooperatives are experiencing leadership transitions. Northland Library Cooperative and White Pine Library Cooperative are preparing for new directors following retirements. Northland's Selection Committee is in the process of hiring a new director, while White Pine recently announced that its new director will begin in mid-September. The Mid-Eastern Library Cooperative Director position is currently vacant and the MMLC Board is working to establish a search timeline.

Through LCM, cooperative directors are working together to welcome and support incoming directors, share information, and help maintain continuity during these transitions.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Detroit Library Cooperative
Library of Michigan
July 31, 2026

DPL and DPSCD Expand Digital Book Access for Students

The Detroit Public Library is partnering with the Detroit Public Schools Community District to make it easier for students to discover and borrow free eBooks and audiobooks from both the school district and DPL through a single, easy-to-use digital platform. With this collaboration, DPSCD students will be able to access age-appropriate titles from both collections using their existing school credentials, helping to support literacy and learning beyond the classroom while connecting more students with the library's free digital resources. The partnership uses the Sora student reading platform by OverDrive. Staff from DPL and DPSCD are working collaboratively to coordinate the program rollout and support promotion to students and their families.

Detroit Stories, Detroit Voices

DPL's Author Series Committee usually takes a break during the summer but could not miss an opportunity to partner with the Wayne State University Press to celebrate two of its latest publications. On June 17, 2026, Main Library hosted Desiree Cooper, editor of *Black Summers: Growing Up in the Urban Outdoors*. On June 24, the Committee welcomed Joe Robinson and Lance Woods, co-authors of *We Run 313: The Pulse of Detroit's Run Club.*

America250: Burton Exhibit

The Clarence M. Burton Historical Collection is presenting a Main Library exhibit featuring items from its Collection that are related to the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The display cases include items from the years 1776 – 1865.

America250: The Stories of Us Exhibit

The Stories of Us is a national public art and civic storytelling nonprofit designed to share lived experiences from communities across the country and to ensure those stories become part of the nation's evolving civic narrative. As part of America250, Main Library is one of three local sites for "The Stories of Us Talking Drum" exhibition. Located at the corner of Woodward and Kirby, the Main Library exhibit includes ten sculptures, several of which are designed by local artists. There is a storytelling platform connected to the exhibit which encourages the public to preserve family stories in Spanish and English.

2026 Summer Reading

The theme of DPL's 2026 Summer Reading was "Unearth a Story." Our program was held June 22 – July 31. After a successful partnership in 2025, the Detroit Lions returned again to support the 2026 program. Summer reading participants will have an opportunity to win a "Detroit Lions Experience."

Summer Reading Button Exchange

The Guild of Library Makers, a network for library professionals in Michigan formed in 2024 to support library makerspaces, sponsored its first ever Summer Reading Button Exchange. DPL was one of 53 libraries and cultural organizations across the state that designed buttons that will be exchanged during the summer.

2026 Juneteenth Programs

In celebration of Juneteenth, the Midwest Invitational Rodeo returned to Main Library to offer its Annual Juneteenth Kids Rodeo on June 10, 2026. More than 500 people enjoyed an afternoon of pony rides, a petting zoo, games and crafts, along with an opportunity to sign up for Summer Reading.

LAKELAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE
LEADING • LEARNING • LENDING

July 31, 2026

Members of the Board of the Library Michigan,

In June the Lakeland Library Cooperative Board voted unanimously (with one absent due to the vacancy of the director at the Muskegon Area District Library) to migrate in September, 2027 to the full suite of Innovative's Polaris/Vega products from Innovative's Sierra ILS which has served us for over 20 years. This endeavor will provide enhanced functionality and service to our 1.4 million residents (800,000 who are on the shared ILS and those that use it as a supplement to their own systems at Grand Rapids Public and Kent District.) This endeavor is possible due to a strong fund balance. No additional costs will be assigned to the libraries and there will be significant cost savings once the project is complete.

It was also announced in June, that the Lakeland Library Cooperative director will retire in September of 2027 after the migration. This long period of transition is not optimal but with a migration, it has to be all hands-on deck with as few distractions as possible. A succession plan is in place and the personnel committee will begin their work in the new fiscal year.

We have completed 3-months of out-sourced delivery. It was a huge change but I must give all the accolades to the member libraries and their staff members who have been patience, kind and proactive. The LLC sorters, especially our lead sorter, have also been exemplary.

I continue to be amazed by these libraries and the Lakeland staff, board and council, my cooperative director colleagues, and MLA and LM colleagues. What a privilege it has been and continues to be.

Our budget process is complete. We truly appreciate the additional state aid. Every penny or 8/10th of a penny helps! It all adds up and we put it to good use for services to our members.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and FY26-27 here we come!

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dawe
Director

Mid-Michigan LIBRARY LEAGUE

Report to the Library of Michigan Board

Jennifer Balcom, Executive Director
August 2026

Much of MMLL's recent work has centered on helping member libraries navigate governance and operational challenges. This has included assisting a library that needed to adjust its millage timeline because of an error in ballot language; providing guidance following a legally established school–public library's decision to discontinue services to the public; and supporting a library experiencing the unexpected loss of its director.

I continued participating in the Library of Michigan's QSAC Revision Committee. The committee is working to update Michigan's public library standards while making the QSAC process useful and manageable for libraries with different staffing levels, resources, and community needs.

What I learned through the *Conversations Worth Having* certification training is becoming a practical part of MMLL's work with library directors and boards. Its focus on asking better questions, working from strengths, and navigating difficult conversations is informing MMLL's board development and continuing education work.

As chair of Library Cooperatives of Michigan, I continue to support communication among cooperative directors and statewide library organizations. Recent conversations have focused on RIDES, continuing education, and more consistent ways to share information with cooperatives and member libraries.

Planning is well underway for the September 15 MMLL Annual Meeting at Caberfae Peaks. This year's theme is **Building Stronger Libraries Together**. Andrea Vernola will lead a session on *Conversations Worth Having*, and Kate Pohjola Andrade will present on building strong relationships between libraries and their boards. Table talks will also give attendees opportunities to exchange practical ideas and connect with colleagues.

Recent Advisory Council continuing education included a presentation on staff turnover by Andrea Ingmire, Director of Peter White Public Library. MMLL is also developing a calendar of future training topics to help member libraries plan.

Through Round 2 of its Mini Grant Program, MMLL awarded $16,690.59 to 19 member libraries. The grants support technology, programming, collections, outreach, facility improvements, and staff development.

Work continues on shared services and contracts, including Swank Movie Licensing, BookPage, and Syndetics. MMLL is also developing its FY2026–2027 budget and preparing for increased audit, insurance, technology, and website accessibility costs.

Suburban Library Cooperative

Library of Michigan Report
August 2026

- Member Library News
  - The cooperative libraries were able to purchase children's books with a $6,000 grant from the Mount Clemens Rotary Foundation. Book plate stickers were adhered to the books before the books were sent out to the member libraries for distribution.
  - Member libraries will be upgraded from EnvisionWare PC Res and printing services to EnvisionWare's Cloud Nine services beginning in August.
  - Warren Public Library is building a new library branch. The Richard L. Palmer Branch Library will be located in the southeast corner of Warren.
  - Sterling Heights Public Library is creating a 24/7 satellite library in the Red Run Park. This will feature 600 items, 9 sorting bins, and a place where patrons can pick up their holds.
- Advocacy Day
  - Kathy McKinney was able to attend Advocacy Day on April 28, 2026. She was able to meet with staff from State Senator Paul Wojno's office and State House of Representative Ron Robinson. It was great to see so many member library staff at the event.
- Workshops
  - Book Doctor Workshop was held at the Roseville Public Library on May 28, 2026. Member libraries were able to attend. The workshop covered basic book repair skills and book processing. We received positive feedback from all in attendance.
- Meetings
  - Kathy McKinney is meeting with all member library directors to get a feel for what they want out of the cooperative. The information gathered will help shape future plans of service and strategic plans.
  - SLC is looking internally at services used to maintain the cooperative.These services include: payroll, life insurance, accidental death & dismemberment insurance, short term disability, long term disability, health insurance, internal delivery service, etc. SLC has an updated internal handbook with many new policies.
- Fiscal Year
  - SLC is nearing the end of its fiscal year. The budgeting process is in full swing for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. A preliminary budget will be ready for member libraries

and SLC Board members to look over in August with a final approval of the 2026-2027 budget coming in September.

- MI Library Card
    - SLC is working on updating the MI Library Card logo and policies for this program. We are working with TLN to ensure this program makes sense for libraries to participate and be successful.

Library of Michigan Report
7/30/2026

SMLC takes a break from meetings in the summer months, but here are some recent updates:

- The 2026 budget included an increase in cooperative grants – all libraries received $6000 in grants from the cooperative for use in any of the following areas: technology, professional development, and/or collection development, digital collections, and recently added Capital Improvements as a grant option as well.
- We successfully added all member libraries except one (due to their township declining) to ACH for grant payments.
- Our Youth and Adult Program Roundtables have been growing. We also have a small Tech group running.
- We have multiple new Directors again. We meet with our new Directors on Zoom and have a veteran director chat on a topic, with time to share and answer questions.
- We are partnering with MCLS for some training this fall in Middle Management and Leadership.
- SMLC has contracted Todd Hunt for our SMLC Front Lines Workshop this fall for the topic of Communication.
- The past couple years, we have sent out an ALA professional development book to each library on a training topic for that year.
- Dillon Geshel from MLA, is slated to join us for Advisory Council on August 27. Also looking forward to our annual Ask-an-Attorney Chat with Anne Seurynck in September.
- Members who are a part of the SW MI Digital Library (a separate group from SMLC but made up of many SMLC library members) were able join RLA in the past year and we just had a new Coordinator start in the Overdrive Coordinator role: Joe Biggs, Asst. Director at New Buffalo Twp Library.

Superiorland Library Cooperative
Library of Michigan Report, August 2026

Director's recent activities:

- Attended monthly meetings with the Library Cooperatives of Michigan group.
- Attended Library of Michigan LSTA Advisory Council meeting and grant review training session. Serving as peer reviewer for this year's round of LSTA grant applicants.
- Attended UPRLC Board meeting.
- Attended several e-Rate meetings with Pam.
- Attended ABL quarterly meeting.
- Held a finance group meeting to facilitate collaboration among SLC member library finance staff.
- Met with Andrea Vernola from Library of Michigan to discuss training opportunities for Superiorland libraries.
- Visited libraries: McMillan Township, Wakefield, Bessemer, Ontonagon Township, Carp Lake Township, and Ironwood Carnegie.
- Attended Library of Michigan Director Meeting.
- Attended Conversations Worth Having Bootcamp – based on appreciative inquiry. Designed to improve communication skills, problem-solving, conflict resolution.
- Attended Conversations Worth Having Trainer Certification – Following the training, participants have one year to complete a portfolio and 2 projects to become certified trainers. Will present a breakout session at UPRLC Conference based on CWH with Lisa Waskin.
- Attended 2-day MLA Intellectual Freedom Advocacy Summit.
- Attended Professional Development Committee meeting.
- Attended UPRLC Policy Review Committee.
- Attended UPLINK Board Meeting
- UPRLC Conference Planning – visited NMU Northern Center and held planning committee meetings.
- Interviewed and hired new GLTB Reader Advisor.
- Hired new recording director to work with volunteer readers to record new Upper Peninsula-themed audiobooks for NLS.
- Attended training sessions for KLAS, BARD, and other Great Lakes Talking Books duties.
- Facilitating Molina Healthcare of Michigan Grants to Libraries program.
- Working on FY27 Schedule of Services.

In addition to assisting member libraries with technical issues, cataloging and database management and ILS support, here's what SLC staff have been up to:

Ellen Moore, Databases and Cataloging, is reviewing UPRLC's cataloging policies with a goal of establishing clear expectations and avenues for support. She has assembled a Cataloging Policy Review Committee and held a review summit on July 8th in the SLC conference room. She has compiled a rough draft of the new policies. In addition, more individual libraries are using OverDrive Advantage accounts which allow them to purchase their own titles. She is available to assist them with collection development.

Jeremy Morelock, ILS Administrator, is monitoring the progress of the server migration – SirsiDynix is migrating our SaaS-hosted server to a new location – from Atlanta to Des Moines. He has also been enabling push notifications in the patron app for holds, pickups, and overdue items.

Gordon Tellefesn, Systems Administrator, has been exploring options for a new phone system and PC management software. A new vendor, IPfone, has been selected and will be installed soon. Micah Milano, our new IT specialist, is off to a good start working and learning alongside Gordon. Both Micah and Gordon are looking at Patron PC Management software.

Art Mendoza-Ballesteros, our new GLTB reader advisor, is seeking out new outreach opportunities like the local farmer's market, festivals, and senior centers to raise awareness about the GLTB services. She has volunteered with GLTB for the past several months facilitating a monthly support group for people with vision impairment both on-site in the SLC conference room and via Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

Report to Library of Michigan

June - July 2026
Steven K. Bowers
TLN Executive Director

Rural Library Grant Program Update

In June, TLN announced the 2026 grantees for the Rural Library Grant Program, funded by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation. TLN is managing the program awarding a total of $500,000 to libraries this year.

To see a list of grant awardees and projects, visit the grant program information website, online at: TLN.org/wilson



This Conference is for Everyone - TLN EDI Forum 2026

Registration is now open for TLN's annual forum on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, to be held on August 20th. Registration and info link at: TLN.org/specialevents



TLN Delivery Visits Summer Kids Events

TLN has been out and about at several municipal and library "touch-a-truck" events. Kids love checking out the TLN Delivery truck along with all the other fun service vehicles at events. Keep an eye out for the next stop! Thanks to the **Delivery Team** for putting in some extra hours on the weekend!

TLN Annual Luncheon Draws a Crowd

The TLN Annual Luncheon was held on June 5th at the Lakeshore Park Pavilion, in Novi. This year **Amber Sheerin,** Program and Event Director for Michigan Library Association (MLA), provided a presentation overview on Michigan Right To Read (mirighttoread.com). The event was also a great opportunity to have some fun, enjoy some recreational activities, and to connect with everyone in the cooperative.



Motor City Pride Parade

TLN marched in the Motor City Pride Parade again this year, to highlight library support for the LGBTQ+ residents served by our libraries. It is always a thrill to hear the crowd cheer for libraries when we march in the parade. We had over two-dozen marchers join us in the parade to represent The Library Network and our member libraries.



Presenting For WSU SIS Online

TLN Executive Director, **Steven K. Bowers**, guest lectured for the Wayne State University School of Information Sciences *Information and Society* course this month, speaking on advocacy and networking within the information sciences profession. The online class was also an opportunity to promote the cooperative, letting students know what The Library Network is and what we do. The presentation slides are available: Here on Canva

White Pine Library Cooperative

July 2026

• Supported the Board Search Committee throughout the hiring process for the new Director of the White Pine Library Cooperative. The new Director will begin in mid-September.
• Successfully transitioned from the Peabody OCLC ILL platform to Clio OCLC ILL. Provided webinars for members on the functionality of the new platform and will host an additional webinar for Superiorland members, as well as other cooperative members interested in using our portal for interlibrary loan requests not available through MeLCat.
• Served as the guest speaker for a local organization, sharing with seniors how to navigate digital library resources.
• Presented at a member library that received a $10,000 Molina Health Care Grant, highlighting how the Cooperative supports digital resources and providing one-on-one assistance to attendees with their devices.
• Provided board development support to the St. Charles District Library and orientation support for a new Trustee at the Caro Area District Library.
• Worked with the Board of Trustees at a member library to develop a hiring process for a new Director, coordinated the interview process, and met with the newly hired Director multiple times to provide an overview of Cooperative services and assist with an employee-related issue.
• Attended several Summer Reading Program events at member libraries.
• Attended the Grand Re-Opening of the Sherman Township Library in Weidman.
• Participated in the Traveling Librarians visit to the River Rapids District Library in Chesaning, where 18 library directors toured the facility and engaged in meaningful discussions about current challenges and opportunities facing libraries.
• Completed the Plan of Service Survey and will present the results to the Board for approval at the August meeting.
• Looking forward to August presentations from Follett and Michigan Class for member libraries.
• Finalizing presenters, programming, and sponsorships 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