LIBRARY COOPERATIVES of Michigan

Working Together to Empower Libraries!

Report to Library of Michigan Board of Trustees
August 2025

This month the **Library Cooperatives of Michigan (LCM)** will hold our annual Cooperative Directors retreat. We are looking forward to reviewing our past year and planning for the future.

Attached, please find summary reports included from various cooperative libraries.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven K. Bowers
President, Library Cooperatives of Michigan
Executive Director, The Library Network

Detroit Library Cooperative
Library of Michigan
August 5, 2025

Life Planning & Legacy Workshops

The Neighborhood Legal Services' Elder Law & Advocacy Center conducted free will preparation and estate planning workshops at multiple DPL locations from April through August. The workshops were aimed at protecting the generational wealth of Detroit families and reducing the number of "heirs' properties" in the city. "Heirs' properties" are properties that have been passed down to a family member without a clear title/deed.

Desktop Video Magnifier Donation

The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, located in the Douglass Branch at 3666 Grand River, received a donation of a new, full -sized digital magnification system from Henry Ford Health System's Center for Vision Rehabilitation. The magnifier dramatically enlarges documents, newspapers, photos and more, to make reading small text easier. Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped customers who have low-vision challenges, will benefit from this service enhancement. This system was donated by Henry Ford Health System's Center for Vision Rehabilitation in memory of Ms. Wanda Smith, a Center employee.

Celebrating National Poetry Month

On Tuesday, April 1, 2025, more than 150 people attended a presentation by Detroit Poet Laureate, jessica Care moore. The program, held in the Clara Stanton Jones Friends Auditorium, launched DPL's celebration of National Poetry Month. Several poetry programs were held throughout the Library system during April. A celebration of the poetry of Nikki Giovanni was held on April 10, 2025, at the Lincoln Branch (1221 E. Seven Mile). Poet Brittany Rogers, a Michigan Notable Books Award recipient for her debut poetry collection, *Good Dress*, was at the Parkman Branch (1766 Oakman Blvd.) on April 12, 2025.

Detroit Opera Partnership 2025

DPL hosted the Detroit Opera's Storybook Opera program at five locations during the months of April, May and June. The operatic performances included the familiar tales, "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Three Little Pigs." Each performance was developed to appeal to children in grades K-3. The Children's Library performance was held on April 11th. Other performances were held at: Chaney (16101 Grand River) on May 5th, Parkman (1766 Oakman Blvd.) on May 8th, Conely (4600 Martin) on May 19th, and Lincoln (1221 E. Seven Mile Rd.) on June 4th. Each location invited neighboring schools to attend these special cultural events.

Save Our Children Gun Safety Program

On Saturday, April 26, 2025, the Parkman Branch Library (1776 Oakman Blvd.), hosted "Save Our Children: A Community Conversation on Gun Safety." The program was initiated by Hope Village Revitalization, a Parkman Branch community partner. Approximately 90 people attended the event which featured a panel discussion that included Todd Bettison, Detroit's Chief of Police, Raphael

Washington, the Wayne County Sheriff, along with health care and mental health professionals. Free gun locks were provided and a raffle drawing included gift cards to local businesses as prizes. WDIV-Local 4 provided coverage on the evening news broadcasts.

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson @ Main Library

On May 7, 2025, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson visited Main Library for a discussion about her new book, *The Purposeful Warrior*. Businessman Dennis Archer Jr. moderated the conversation about her life and public service career. Approximately 90 people attended the event.

2025 Java Jazz Series

International singer, songwriter and independent recording artist Thornetta Davis kicked off the 2025 Java and Jazz Series on Tuesday, June 17 at 6 p.m. We were excited to begin the season with "Detroit's Queen of the Blues" in a concert in the Clara Stanton Jones Friends Auditorium. All concerts are free and open to the public with complimentary refreshments.

Accounting Aid Society 2025

The Accounting Aid Society will continue to provide tax preparation assistance at Main Library on Mondays and Thursdays from May 5 – November 15, 2025. While walk-ins are possible, customers are encouraged to make an appointment by phone, 313-556-1920, or on the Society's website, accountingaidsociety.org.

The Accounting Aid Society prepared 2,111 tax returns at Main Library during the 2024 tax season. The refund amount totaled $2,473,677, with $633,300 in savings from commercial tax preparers. There were 426 Earned Income Tax Credit clients who received credits of $782,421.

2025 Summer Reading Kick-Off

The Detroit Public Library and the Detroit Lions celebrated Summer Reading 2025 at the Kick-Off Party on June 5th. One hundred and eighty 2nd and 3rd graders from DPSCD's Earhart Elementary and Middle School, Hamilton Elementary and Middle School, Sampson-Webber Leadership Academy, and Schulze Academy for Technology and Arts, enjoyed fun educational experiences presented by Detroit PBS Kids, Wayne RESA, Drone Camp Rebels and the Detroit Opera, all designed to encourage students to continue reading and learning this summer.

Detroit PBS Kids Partnership

PBS Kids offered "ODD SQUAD" and "Peg + Cat" experiences at several DPL locations throughout the summer. These are two popular PBS educational programs that help children learn math concepts while solving strange and hilarious cases by using video clips and books.

PBS Kids sponsored screenings of the documentary "Building the Reading Brain" for parents and caregivers with children learning to read. This documentary helps adults learn how the brain's neuropathways are built and their impact on early childhood literacy, skill development, and school readiness.

Vision to Learn Partnership

Vision to Learn partnered again with DPL to provide children with free eye screens, eye exams, and free glasses. Last summer Vision to Learn visited 16 DPL locations and provided 390 eye screenings and 199 eye exams. Children were provided with 194 pairs of glasses. Appointments for this summer were made by calling 313-413-4899.

2025 African American Booklist: "Voices Heard"

The 2025 African American Booklist is now available at all library locations and on the Library's website, detroitpubliclibrary.org. This year's theme is "Voices Heard: African American Young Adult Authors." The Booklist includes an essay on the history of African American teen/young adult literature by Dr. Pauletta Brown Bracy, a professor in the School of Library and Information Science at North Carolina Central University, and Ms. Deborah Taylor, retired coordinator of school and student services for Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library. Much of the artwork was provided by a young Detroit artist, Kyle Blessett, whose style is influenced by manga and comics.

LAKELAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE
LEADING • LEARNING • LENDING

Our new mobile app is up, as are new features within our patron interface. Patrons can use the app or the web browser to suggest materials, check out Overdrive materials and connect with Hoopla, place holds, read reviews etc.

Our longtime lead book sorter is retiring after 25 years. Brian Gale will step down on August 8th. We are so grateful for his service and wish him well as he starts this next chapter!

We have wonderful new directors at Cedar Springs (James Pugh) and Saranac Clarksville (Alex Larson). Sadly, the new director at Patmos gave notice after only 6 weeks. I continue to work with boards in my service area to help them understand the roles and responsibilities of the board, board members and the director. The cooperative directors are working on this all over the state of Michigan.

Lakeland is hosting the Library Cooperatives of Michigan members in August for a 2 day retreat in Muskegon.

Our budget is moving forward for 2024-25. We are so very appreciative of the additional state aid. We will use this funding to fund a variety of services for libraries and their patrons including online library card registration and renewal among other initiatives, services and projects. Thank you to all the legislators, advocates and the Library of Michigan.

We have staff visiting libraries, embarking on many training initiatives and we just started an adult services group after a bit of an absence due to Covid and other barriers. We now have Youth, Adult, Digital, Circulation and Cataloging Committees.

Lakeland serves are members by meeting their individual and collective needs. We look forward to another fiscal year as we embark on year 3 of our strategic plan and we pursue new projects to help those who live in the communities that we serve!

Carol Dawe
Director
August 1, 2024

LM update from MMLC
August 2025

Lapeer District Library (LDL) is still looking for a director. They have hired a recruiter from California to find their new director. There has been limited information regarding the search. I have attended several of their meetings and they are very interesting. Their next board meeting will be in September, hopefully they will have more information on the director's search.

Gloria Coles Flint Public Library Director Taliah Abdullah has left the library for new director's position in her hometown in Illinois. The Gloria Coles Flint Public Library Board of Trustees has appointed Ann Manko as the Library's Interim Executive Director, effective July 11, 2025.

Bay County Library System long term Director, Trish Burns retired at the end of July. The Board has interviewed a couple of candidates and is currently negotiating a deal with one of the candidates.

Most of my members have finished or about to finish up with their Summer Reading Programs. The members I have spoken with reported that it has been a busy summer for and there has been an uptick in traffic in the libraries.

MMLC Overdrive Group has our annual meeting with Katie Strong from Overdrive to speak with the group. Katie reported that we should have a 4% increase in checkouts by the end of the year and a 14% increase in holds by the end of the year. She also told us that eBooks are preferred over Audio, but the margin is shrinking.

Cooperative Report to the Library of Michigan Board
Jennifer Balcom, Director
Summer 2025

- MMLL has officially completed its branding initiative. The Cooperative unveiled a refreshed logo and launched a new WordPress website, marking a step forward in its public-facing identity.

- The MMLL E-Resource Committee is currently evaluating the addition of Niche Academy to the Plan of Service. Member libraries have expressed a strong interest in customer service and de-escalation training for staff. Jennifer recently spoke with Beth Wahler and learned that several of Wahler's trauma-informed library service trainings will be added to Niche Academy this fall, strengthening its relevance and appeal. The Board will review the proposal at its September meeting.

- It's renewal season for several MMLL's vendors: BookPage, Syndetics, Swank Movie Licensing, and Transparent Language. Jennifer has been actively managing contract negotiations and vendor communications. The contract for Employee Assistance services has officially ended.

- MMLL Monthly Advisory Council meetings continue to feature a continuing education component. Recent presenters include: Michelle Bradley from LOM Development, Cory Walker of Emergency Geek tech support, and Karen Hall from the Attorney General's office who joined us to discuss the Address Confidentiality Program.

- Member Library Updates:
  The Wheatland Township Public Library in Remus, Michigan, after a narrowly defeated millage renewal in November 2024, successfully passed their renewal millage in May 2025. The Manistee County Public Library celebrated their 120th anniversary on June 7th by dedicating their newly installed StoryPark. The Shelby Area District Library celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Shelby Friends of the Library organization with a Garden Party on Saturday, August 2nd. The Cadillac Wexford Public Library opened a newly constructed Manton Branch Library in July. The Leland Public Library has completed Phase I of their renovation project with a new main area and bathrooms. Phase II, which is the construction of the new children's area on the south side of the building, has begun and will be completed this fall. Tom Shilts, Director of the Bellaire Public Library has resigned to accept the position as Director of the Dowagiac District Library.

- The MMLL Annual Luncheon (Meeting of the membership) is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Fox Hill Event Center in Cadillac. This year we are excited to welcome Dillon Geshel, Interim Director of the Michigan Library Association, who'll share updates and insights on MLA's services and support. We'll also hear from Angela

Semifero and Shauna Swantek of Marshall District Library, who will share their innovative approaches to community engagement.

Library of Michigan Report
Northland Library Cooperative
August 2025

- Virtual Northland Chats:
  - Directors met to discuss federal budget issues
  - Directors met to share grant opportunities
  - Circulation staff met to continue work on a common circulation practices document and how to use GIS mapping created by LCM
- Accepted the North Central Michigan College library as a new associate member of Northland.
- Attended regional meeting of academic librarians looking for avenues of cooperation
- Orientation of new interim library director at the Crooked Tree District Library
- Collaborated with the Great Lakes Center for the Arts to bring a traveling actors theatre presenting Winnie the Pooh, to 6 area libraries.
- Researching new ILS options for the Wolverine Area Library. Their current antiquated system is not compatible with Melcat.
- Met with staff at Crooked Tree District Library, Boyne District Library, Fife Lake Public Library and Charlevoix Public Library to discuss various issues.
- Board Development meeting at Suttons Bay Bingham District Library
- Developed FY 24-25 budget amendments and FY 25-26 Budget for review at the August NLC Board meeting. Fine-tuned the services for next year based on results of member survey and usage statistics,
- Processed NLC enhancement grants for 16 of the 24 libraries.
- Distributed summer reading grants for all member libraries to be used for programs and supplies
- Federal budget issues are a continued concerns for all libraries.
- Monthly Northland News eNewsletters to all libraries
- Provided consulting services to directors and trustees: 91 contacts March-July. Example of consulting service: Understanding ESTA compliance, understanding FOIA requests, roles of director/Board, etc. Support and networking continue to be a valued service of the cooperative.

Suburban Library Cooperative

- In an effort to encourage patrons to take advantage of their library's membership in the Co-op, we are hosting a passport program. Patrons get prizes after visiting 8 libraries and after completing all 21, plus an entry to a grand prize drawing at the end. The program started June 2 and runs through the first week of January. Reception has been very positive so far.
- The Co-op is currently in the process of hiring its next intern. The SLC internship is a one-year-long paid opportunity for a current Master's student which rotates between four member libraries. This gives the students an opportunity to see different types of libraries and work on diverse projects. This will be the sixth year of this internship program.
- This past spring, SLC hosted a training aimed at Trustees and Friends of the Library focused on advocacy. Larry Neal, director of the Clinton-Macomb Public Library, was our speaker and nearly 60 people attended.
- Next month SLC will be hosting ZingTrain (of Ann Arbor's Zingerman's) for their "Art of Giving Great Service" workshop. This is available to all member libraries.

Activities Report
Steven K. Bowers
August 2025

TLN Union Contracting

The Library Network is pleased to have tentative agreements with both unions representing TLN employees. Once ratified by vote the contracts will be in place for the next three fiscal years. The unions ensure that TLN employees have fair representation and compensation for delivery of services through the cooperative.

TLN Substitute Pool Services

TLN is continuing development work for TLN Substitute Pool Services. A searchable app has been developed for phase one of the service, which will allow libraries to search substitute candidate information for hiring. We have begun testing the app with libraries this summer and we plan to have a beta launch of the app by early fall.

Summer 2025 Go Places with MAP: Transportation Services

This summer Michigan Activity Pass and The Library Network have partnered with Wayne Metro Community Action Agency to provide transportation services. MAP provides Michigan library cardholders the opportunity to discover and explore participating cultural destinations, parks, and recreation areas in the state at a discounted rate. This summer we are also offering transportation to make MAP more accessible to individuals over age 60 in Macomb, Oakland, or Wayne counties. More information online at: MiActivityPass.org



White Pine Library Cooperative

August 2025

- Working on the OCLC ILL program and searching for an existing program or a web developer to create a platform to replace our Peabody ILL system.
- Welcomed and met with three new Directors to explain Cooperative services and to offer Board Development.
- Met with a Trustee from a member library whom I will be helping with their director search.
- Completed our Plan of Service Survey with members.
- Getting all things finalized for our Annual Meeting on October 1, which will be at Saginaw Valley State University.
- Attended the renovation of the Bad Axe Area District Library, which was also the start of their Summer Reading Program.
- Provided a Stop the Bleed Training at our April Advisory Council meeting in April which was held at Merrill District Library. Each attendee received a free Stop the Bleed kit for their library.
- Participated in the MLA Podcast with Briynne McCrea, Bad Axe District Library Director
- Hosted an ASLdeafined information webinar for member libraries.
- Hosted a Book Repair Workshop with Demco at Bullard Sanford Memorial Library in Vassar.
- Hosted Maura Fulton, Population Health Leader, from Molina Healthcare HIDE-SNP Community Grant Funding Program to share information about grant opportunities for members.
- Hosted Denelle Philemon, Community Navigator, from 211 Northeast Michigan and Thumb Cares, who provided information about resources for patrons in our Cooperative area.
- I continue to provide information in weekly updates, virtual chats when needed, and traveling the Cooperative to visit our members!