



Irene M. Padilla
Maryland State Librarian

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Maryland State Librarian Set to Retire After Distinguished Career

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BALTIMORE — The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) today announces the retirement of State Librarian and Chief Operating Officer Irene Padilla, effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Padilla’s retirement caps a long and distinguished career, including nearly 22 years of service to the State of Maryland. A committee will lead a nationwide search in the coming months to select Ms. Padilla’s replacement. The Maryland Senate must approve the search committee’s recommendation.

“As I look ahead to the next chapter of my life, I’m most proud of the tremendous positive impact MSLA has had on Maryland’s libraries and librarians,” Ms. Padilla said. “Our libraries are changing, but at their core, they still serve the same essential purpose as when I started in this profession nearly 50 years ago. It has been an honor to serve the State of Maryland and do my part to ensure our libraries and communities have access to the resources they need to succeed.”

Ms. Padilla has led MSLA since 2002 and oversees the administration of State and federal programs to improve library services in the 24 public library systems in the State of Maryland, the State Library Resource Center (SLRC), and the SAILOR broadband and Regional Resource Center programs. She also oversees the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD) and the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library. In addition, she provides leadership for library services in Maryland, coordinates development and implementation of Maryland’s Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) five-year plan, and serves as an advocate for all types of libraries and their contributions to literacy, information acquisition and lifelong learning.

Ms. Padilla’s vision of providing leadership and guidance for the development of collaborations across multi-type libraries has helped develop dialogue and partnerships within the library community to sharpen and prioritize shared challenges, increase the potential for expanded resource sharing and to build the case for supporting Maryland libraries. She strongly supports libraries’ roles in promoting intellectual freedom through an impartial environment where individuals and their interests and inquiries are brought together with ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions.

Over the past two decades, Ms. Padilla oversaw many changes in library service across the state as they moved to enhanced digital collections and became integral to providing digital equity through public access computers, lendable computers and Wi-Fi hotspots, as well as Wi-Fi extenders on

building and mobile libraries, to ensure the provision of key library services beyond the library's branches.

Ms. Padilla successfully established the Maryland State Library Agency as an independent unit of State government under the direction of the 12-member Maryland State Library Board following historic legislation passed unanimously in April 2017 by the Maryland General Assembly. This placed the State Library on an equal footing with K-12 and higher education and gave public libraries a distinct identity within the Education Article. She oversaw the transition of executive direction, policy development and organizational structure from the Maryland State Department of Education.

With the passage of SB 419, a minimum State funding amount was established for the Maryland Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD), beginning in fiscal 2016, allowing for the reorganization of this service to include 10 additional state funded positions. The additional personnel enhanced the Maryland Accessible Textbook Program, Youth Services, the Adaptive Technology Education Program, the Digital Recording Studio, Facilities Maintenance and technical services.

Other accomplishments include the development of a statewide library card and, in order to meet customers' needs where they live, work, and play, the award of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support the purchase of 14 mobile library vehicles for libraries across the state, including bookmobiles, specialized service vehicles for job seekers, and vans to provide neighborhood services.

Before arriving at MSLA, Ms. Padilla served as deputy director and director of the Harford County public library system from April 1990 through June 2002. In that capacity, she led the system through a period of rapid growth. She developed and managed an annual budget of \$10.6 million, plus a capital improvement budget of \$10.5 million. Prior to that, Ms. Padilla worked in libraries in Virginia and Michigan as a school librarian, corporate archivist, regional library projects manager and a public library administrator.

Ms. Padilla has a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English Literature and Library Science and a Master of Library Science (MLS) from Western Michigan University. She also holds a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) from George Mason University.

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