

Maryland State Library Agency  
2024 Annual Report



ARE FOR EVERYONE



Maryland  
State Library  
Agency

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Public library cards of Maryland.

## Mission

The mission of the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is to provide leadership and consultation in technology, training, marketing, funding, resource sharing, research, and planning so that Maryland libraries can fulfill their missions now and in the future for the people of Maryland.

## Message from the Maryland State Librarian

Morgan Lehr Miller



Enter any of the 193 public libraries in Maryland and you will find your place of belonging. This is the shared goal of the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) and our partners throughout the state. Over the past year, we have collectively strived to make Maryland’s libraries places where every member of the community can read, learn, connect and grow. We are delighted to share the highlights of this work throughout these pages.

Our proudest achievement has been the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBDP) being named the National Library Service’s Library of the Year. In the words of its Director John Owen, “We are the Library of the Year every year because we have to be. Our customers are depending on us.” The dedication of our LBDP staff guarantees that everyone has the opportunity to access and enjoy reading. Last year, the LBDP connected blind and low vision Marylanders with more than 350,000 materials in accessible formats, not to mention providing countless programs, services, and inclusive outreach events for all-ages.

In Spring 2024, Maryland made history with the passage of the Freedom to Read Act. MSLA was pleased to work alongside legislators and library advocates to pass this groundbreaking piece of legislation, which establishes state standards for school and public libraries that ensure every citizen



and student has access to the widest array of books, information, and perspectives, in addition to protecting librarians and library workers.

Freedom to Read Act signing in Annapolis.

We are thrilled that MSLA's investment in public libraries has helped to drive increased use, access, and innovation. Our competitive federal grant program provided funds to 15 public library systems to expand services in a multitude of ways, including telehealth, Wi-Fi in public parks, books by mail, community culinary education, mobile libraries outfitted with technology, learning opportunities for senior citizens, and new programs for children and teens. Three new extraordinary libraries opened to their communities through the support of MSLA's County Library Capital Grant Program: Riviera Beach in Anne Arundel County, the Twin Beaches Branch in Calvert County and the Middletown Branch in Frederick County.



State Librarian Morgan Miller reads to children for a storytime program at Anne Arundel County Public Library.

A key part of MSLA's role is to distribute state and federal aid to county public library systems. These critical investments are yielding outstanding returns across the state. According to the most recent Maryland Public Library Statistical Survey (FY23):

- Public libraries experienced a 78% increase in the number of programs offered with a corresponding 83% increase in program attendance.
- Public libraries saw an 89% increase in the number of children's programs offered with a corresponding 101% increase in program attendance!

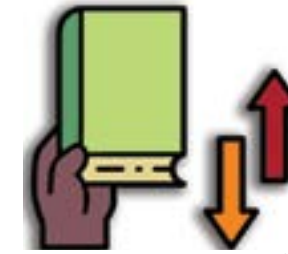
Our staff and board do not take up this work alone. We are very grateful to our many partners throughout the state, including the 24 county public library systems as well as the Maryland Library Association, the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators, the Maryland Association of School Librarians and Citizens for Maryland Libraries. We are especially grateful to the Moore-Miller Administration and the Maryland General Assembly for their steadfast support. Together, we are working to make all Libraries, and thus all of Maryland, a place for everyone.

## Maryland Public Libraries At-a-Glance

Note: Data is from FY2023.



Library Cards  
**3.2M**



Items Borrowed  
**52M+**



Library Event Attendees  
**1.8M+**



Library Visits  
**15.9M**



Questions Answered  
**3.5M**



Library Funding  
**\$380M+**

### Public Library Awards & Accomplishments

- Untia D. Bigelow, Wicomico County Free Library, won the Eloise Greenfield Children's Poetry Advocate of the Year Prize from the Children's Book Council and HarperCollins Children's Books.
- The Maryland State Fair, in partnership with the Maryland State Library Agency and Baltimore County Public Library, was awarded first place and division champion (Agricultural Program/Exhibit Category) by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions for the Barnyard Bedtime Tales program.
- Charles County Public Library won the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature 2024 Día Book Grant with an African American Focus.
- Shirley Mason, Baltimore County Public Library, won the Baker and Taylor/American Library Association Library Support Staff Award.
- Allegany County Library System was named Non-Profit of the Year by the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce.
- M'Balu Bangura, Enoch Pratt Free Library, was named one of the Baltimore Sun's "25 Women to Watch".
- Maryland Library Association President and Calvert Library Reference Supervisor Tif Sutherland, and Bowie State University Library Associate Etana Laing were named 2024 Conable Conference Scholarship recipients by the Freedom to Read Foundation.

## Expanding Access to 21st Century Libraries through the County Library Capital Grant Program

In 2008, the Maryland General Assembly partnered with library advocates and MSLA to launch the County Library Capital Grant program, a match-based program that encourages local jurisdictions to support public library facilities development across the state. Since the start of the program, state matching funds have grown to \$7.5 million awarded annually. Most critically, all 24 public library systems have now benefited from this program.

Since FY 2008, \$101,829,000 in state grant funds has been authorized through the General Assembly, generating an estimated \$380,000,000 in local matching funds. The program has funded not only important renovations but also supported the opening of an astounding 21 new libraries. In FY24, three new state-of-the-art library facilities were completed in Anne Arundel (Riviera Beach), Calvert (Twin Beaches) and Frederick (Middletown) counties.



*A new library in Twin Beaches opened as part of Calvert Library system in 2024.*



*The new Middletown Branch Library is part of Frederick County Public Libraries and opened in 2024.*

## Public Libraries and State Networking Branch

The Public Libraries and State Networking Branch (PLSNB) provides leadership and direction to advance public library services across the state, mainly through targeted staff development activities and the administration of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds that support innovative programs and initiatives statewide.

PLSNB continued to support public libraries in their services to Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) through collaboration with the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families. A Summit of public library SMVF liaisons was held in October that included updates from the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, and Maryland Department of Health's Maryland's Commitment to Veterans. This partnership also led to several public library systems offering special reading programs to military families this spring in acknowledgment of the Month of the Military Child and Military Appreciation Month.



*SMVF Summit participants network and collaborate.*



### PLSNB Statistics



Continuing Education Programs  
Number of Events

**65**



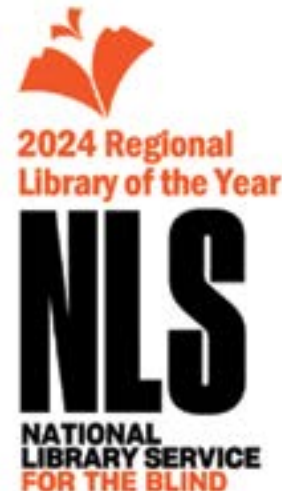
Total Attendance  
at Events

**2,262**

## Library for the Blind and Print Disabled



L-R: Jason Broughton, Director, NLS; Mary Ramos, Assistant Director, LBDP; Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress; John Owen, Director, LBDP; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian



The Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD) was named the 2024 Regional Library of the Year by the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) for excellence in fulfilling NLS' mission and standards. This is the highest honor for state libraries serving blind, visually impaired, or print disabled readers and speaks to the commitment, ingenuity and hard work of LBPD staff.

### Patrons & Collection

- 6,514 active registered users
- 458 new patrons
- 612,000 items in collection
- 30,000 items circulated monthly in every Maryland county
- 340 LBPD-produced books on the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service
- 7,578 braille books in electronic and printed braille formats

### Library Events & Programs

- LBPD-produced podcasts received over 960 listens
- Monthly LBPD Guest Hour podcasts explore topics for independent living
- 1,709 patrons attended 474 programs, events and assistive technology classes
- Maryland Center for History and Culture hosted a tactile tour for LBPD patrons
- Technology User Group highlighted music apps, AI and assistive technology gift ideas
- Computer accessibility tools available on computers in 12 public library systems
- Virtual Inclusion Showcase with the Department of Disabilities and 11 library branches statewide introduced services available to disabled Marylanders.

## Maryland Accessible Textbook Program

The Maryland Accessible Textbook Program (MAT) furthers LBPD's mission by working with Maryland college students who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to convert their course materials to accessible formats. MAT team members partner with the disability services offices at colleges, universities and community colleges, both public and private, to identify eligible students who need their textbooks in readable formats through assistive technology.

MAT is committed to providing a seamless book acquisition process for everyone who uses its services. This year, MAT served 74 college and university students in Maryland, converting 1,314 chapters of textbooks and Open Educational Resources (OER).



MAT Program Associate Lisa Washington, MAT Program Coordinator Joseph Beckett, and MAT Program Associate Brittany Grasser outside the University of Baltimore Student Center. The MAT Team serves blind, low vision and print disabled students at colleges and universities in Maryland.



## Spotlight On: LaShawn Myles, *Library Journal Mover & Shaker*



LaShawn Myles, Youth Services Librarian at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD), was named a 2024 Library Journal Mover & Shaker. This prestigious national award honors library professionals who are shaping the future of libraries. Myles has been a member of the staff at LBPD since 2017, helping to connect more than 6,000 active users throughout the state with life-changing resources. A former teacher and librarian in the Baltimore City Public School system, Myles prioritizes diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion as part of a concerted effort to serve all members of the community.

“To be a ‘Mover’, you need force,” Myles said. “Within my years at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, that force has come from conversations, shared knowledge, handshakes and partnerships from the community I serve. It is a privilege to work alongside others to remove barriers to access. Onward and upward!”

Myles facilitates the Inclusion and Accessibility Community of Practice, which joins people from public and school libraries to implement best practices for youth programming. She also helped lead librarians through the DEI programs Project Ready, focusing on anti-racism, and Project ENABLE, focusing on disability awareness. Her innovative programs have included a drum circle and camping demonstration to support summer reading. She participates with the Maryland School for the Blind during their Regional Braille Challenge and with the National Federation for the Blind through their BELL Academy promoting braille literacy.

## Project ENABLE

Project ENABLE (Expanding Non-discriminatory Access By Librarians Everywhere), funded through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, provides free, foundational training designed specifically for public, academic and school librarians to help them gain the knowledge and skills needed to create inclusive and accessible libraries.

Staff from the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) and Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD) led a statewide study from November 2023 to May 2024 that explored these six curriculum modules spanning all libraries and service areas: disability awareness, disability law and policy, creating an accessible library, planning inclusive programs and services, assistive technology, and targeting autism in libraries.

In May 2024, MSLA and LBPD led a “Next Steps” training session for participants to develop strategies around extending their learning within their own organizations. MSLA and LBPD also organized a Project ENABLE Speaker Series to augment the asynchronous learning and monthly discussions of the statewide study. The Speaker Series showcased experts on the Project ENABLE Module topics.

## Maryland State Library Resource Center

In partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL), MSLA provides significant funding support to operate the State Library Resource Center (SLRC). SLRC provides cooperative, cost-effective services to public, academic, school and special library customers across the state that enrich Maryland libraries and empower an educated and informed public. In 2024, SLRC experienced impressive growth across several key programs

- 154 training and educational programs delivered statewide to 5,778 participants, nearly double the amount in 2022.
- 284,039 in-person visitors to SLRC, an increase of 32% from 2023.
- The statewide digital preservation program Digital Maryland saw 681,076 online visits, a 26% increase from 2023.
- 300,897 reference questions were answered, an 11% increase from 2023.
- A staggering 612,306 items were loaned and borrowed statewide through the SLRC operated MARINA inter-library loan network.



*The Central Branch of Enoch Pratt Free Library serves as headquarters for the Maryland State Library Resource Center.*

# Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library

More than 1.2 million Marylanders identify as Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (MDCDL) is dedicated to providing resources about Deaf Culture, acquiring and preserving Deaf resources in digital formats, offering access to information regardless of location and providing assistance to Maryland residents and library staff.



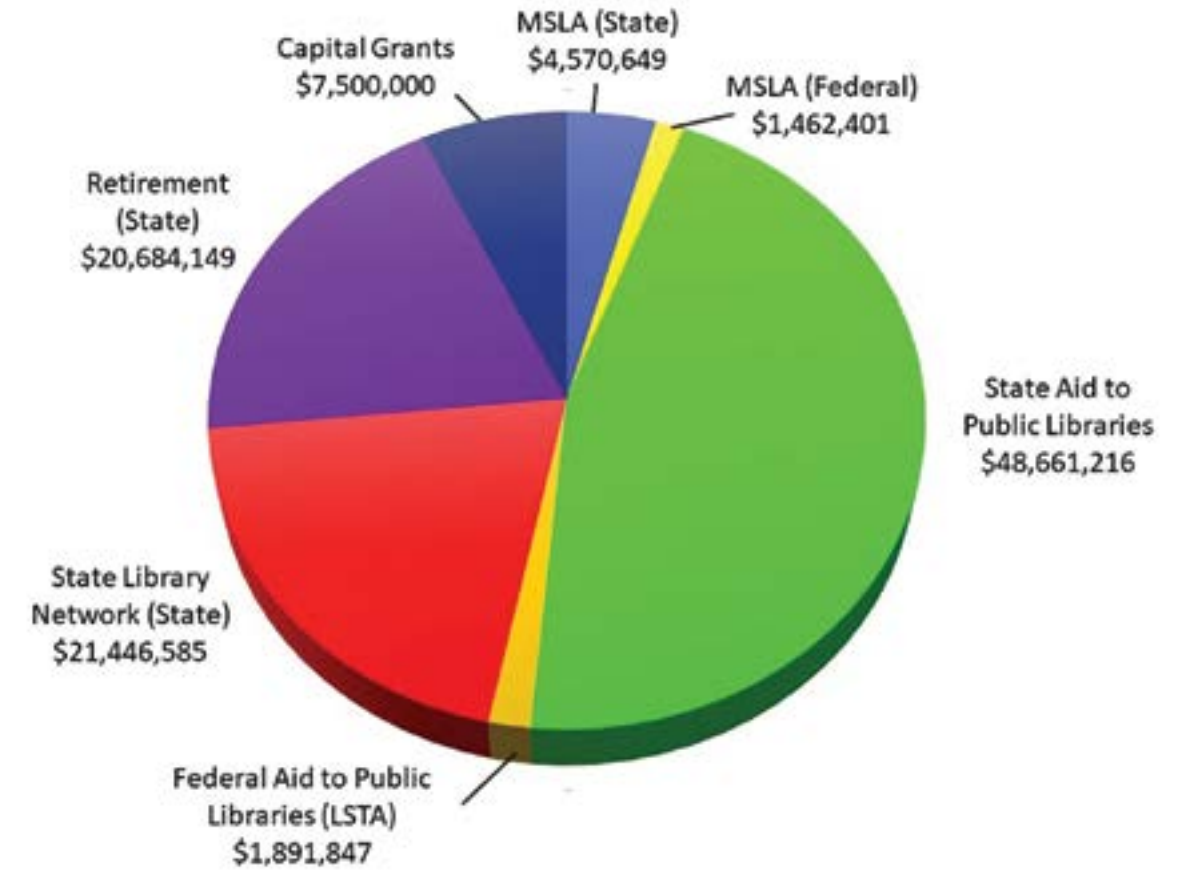
In FY24, MDCDL expanded its services with many new materials and resources. It also exceeded post-COVID performance baselines for the number of MDCDL-involved and sponsored library programs, presentations, conference attendance and collection circulation.

The MDCDL added 84 new digital titles in an effort to create one of the best collections of Deaf Culture materials and offer a wide range of genres and subjects. The MDCDL also enhanced its website with new resources and digital content, improving the experience and accessibility for patrons and librarians. As a result, the MDCDL website saw an 18% increase in online visits in FY24.

Over the coming year, the MDCDL will continue to expand library programs and awareness statewide to Deaf organizations, non-profit organizations, public libraries and schools.



# Budget 2023



The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) administers state and federal funds to support Maryland libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources and programs and to provide excellent customer service. MSLA Headquarters and the Public Libraries and State Networking Branch funding includes a combination of state and federal funds. State funds support the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library, and Maryland's public libraries. These funds also support the State Library Network, a consortium composed of the State Library Resource Center and three regional libraries (the Eastern Shore Regional Library, the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, and the Western Maryland Regional Library), as well as programs to facilitate interlibrary loan and the Library Associates Training Institute. In addition, the Enoch Pratt Free Library receives supplemental state funding for increased operating hours.



*In Federal Fiscal Year 2023, MSLA received \$1.6 million in federal Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) funds that were distributed to public libraries to support staff development, digital equity, community collaboration, infrastructure and lifelong learning.*

# Highlighting Maryland Libraries

## Competitive Library Services and Technology Grant Awards 2023-24

### Baltimore County Public Library, Library By Mail

Baltimore County Public Library created a Library By Mail program to provide delivery services for customers who are unable to go to the library.

### Cecil County Public Library, Community Culinary Classes

To improve community skills around healthy cooking and nutrition, Cecil County Public Library launched a mobile kitchen cart and held cooking classes for children, teens, adults and families.

### Charles County Public Library, Intergenerational Play Time

Games and furnishings were purchased to support families playing together as a form of wellness for this monthly program held in Charles County Public Library.

### Harford County Public Library, Futures Thinking

Harford County Public Library created a program to guide library staff through the process of thinking and planning for the future of libraries.

### Howard County Public Library, TeenLIVE & KR Readiness Booklet

In service to youth, the Howard County Public Library created a very successful Teen LIVE program on Saturday nights at the library. This teen-driven program featured a dance party, art projects and laser tag events. The Kindergarten Readiness program created a brochure for new parents that provides guidance on how to instill a love of reading and literacy from an early age.

### Kent County Public Library, Mobile Community Computer Lab

To improve outreach to the community, Kent County Public Library outfitted a mobile library with computers for patron use as well as Wi-Fi. Also designed for teens, this program increased digital literacy and programming.



*TeenLIVE in Howard County Public Library provided activities and enrichment for teens and their families.*

### Montgomery County Public Libraries, Blerdtino

As part of Montgomery County Comic Con, this one-day event for teens was aimed at engaging Black and Latino youth in the library through the comic book, gaming and pop culture industries.

*At Blerdtino in Montgomery County Public Libraries, teens had the opportunity to engage with professional musicians.*

### Prince George's County Memorial Library System, Ask a Librarian Reimagined

Grant funding upgraded and improved the phone-based reference service, "Ask a Librarian."

### Queen Anne's County Public Library, Empowerment Library

This creative program provided funds for the Queen Anne's County Public Library to purchase and provide books that focused on self improvement, job skills and recreational reading for inmates at the Queen Anne's County Detention Center.

### St. Mary's County Library, Memory Lab for Digital Preservation

St. Mary's County Library purchased hardware and software to convert old family photos and movies into contemporary formats.

### Talbot County Free Library, Digital Access and Literacy

Talbot County Free Library purchased a Wi-Fi extender for a local park. The program also included digital literacy and technology skill classes for library customers.

### Washington County Free Library, Telehealth at the Library

A privacy pod was installed to provide customers with a place for telehealth sessions in partnership with local healthcare providers.



*Creative Aging at Worcester County Library engaged senior citizens and their caregivers in meaningful and fun activities.*



*Intergenerational Playtime was a program at Charles County Public Library designed for children, parents, and grandparents.*

### Western Maryland Regional Library, Safety and De-Escalation Training

This program was aimed at educating library staff about best practices for handling conflict peacefully and respectfully. Western Maryland Regional Library partnered with a local agency to provide training for Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties.

### Wicomico Public Libraries, STEAM Studios

Wicomico Public Libraries purchased new computers and equipment for all-ages Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics programming in a dedicated space.

### Worcester County Library, Creative Aging With Care

This innovative program provided targeted activities for seniors and their caregivers by delivering a series of speakers, film and comedy.



## Maryland State Library Board

Kristen Pironis, Chair, Member at Large  
Mychelle Farmer, Vice-Chair  
Wilson Parran, Member at Large  
Lynn Wheeler, Professional Librarian  
Melissa Riccobono, Library for the Blind and Print Disabled  
Nicholas Brown, Member at Large

### Ex Officio Members

Tif Sutherland, President, Maryland Library Association  
Bea Hardy, President, Congress of Academic Library Directors  
Darcell Graham, Interim CEO, Enoch Pratt Free Library  
Keith Marzullo, Dean, University of Maryland College of Information Studies  
Brittany Tignor, Maryland Association of School Librarians  
Kimberly Cowles, MSDE Representative





### MSLA Representatives

Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian  
John Owen, Director, Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled  
Tamar Sarnoff, PhD, Director, Public Libraries and State Networking Branch



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This project was made possible in part  
by the Institute of Museum and Library  
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