

## State Librarian Highlights January 2026

### I. Learn and Participate

#### Teaching Information Literacy

Funding for NJSL's IMLS supported Teaching Information Literacy project was reinstated in July. You can learn more about this important and impactful project, [on our website](#).

Phase One of the project included live online trainings and was based on 4 Pillars of Information Literacy.

Phase Two of Teaching Information Literacy will support the implementation of Learning Activities based on the state's new Information Literacy Student Learning Standards.

[Visit LibraryLink NJ's website](#) for five asynchronous online modules that introduce basic information literacy concepts.

In conjunction with these trainings, the State Library is sponsoring monthly virtual Community of Practice (CoP) meetups on the topic of Information Literacy. You'll find links to register for those meetups [on our website](#).

#### Expanding Digital Literacy

We offered a new grant opportunity for public libraries called Expanding Digital Literacy. Public libraries could apply for up to \$25,000 to develop digital skills programs with a focus on underserved population.

#### Digital Skills User Group

We host a monthly Digital Skills User Group that supports library staff members helping patrons with a variety of tech support. Anyone wishing to join this informal group should contact Andrea Levandowski: [alevandowski@njstatelib.org](mailto:alevandowski@njstatelib.org)

#### Interlibrary Loan Focus Groups

Three public library ILL focus groups started in 2025. A focus group for academic libraries will start in 2026. The groups discuss, share, and evaluate ideas related to JerseyCat, the



statewide interlibrary loan program provided by the New Jersey State Library. If you have questions, you can contact Michael Maziekien: [mmaziekien@njstatelib.org](mailto:mmaziekien@njstatelib.org).

## Regulatory and Legislative Updates

State regulations regarding State Library Aid and Grants and Library Network Services were re-adopted in October. Throughout 2024 two working groups met to read, revise, and update both sets of regulations.

In 2026 we will be reviewing the Library Construction Bond Act regulations that expire in November 2026. Keep an eye open for opportunities to comment and provide input on those regulations.

The State Library released model policies and procedures for public libraries in accordance with the new Freedom to Reach Act. All are available on NJSL's [Freedom to Read Act webpage](#).

## Presentations

Staff from the Research Library presented a session titled "Trials and tribulations: Making historic court records freely accessible to all," at the ALA Annual Conference in late June. They were then asked to repeat the program for Federal Depository Library Program members later in the summer.

A staff member also co-presented at the ALA's Rare Books and Manuscript Section Conference. That session addressed the nature of cataloging special collections materials.

## NARA Grant Completed

The Research Library celebrated the successful completion of a National Archives and Records Administration grant, which included in-house digitization of over 100,000 pages from its historic collections, creation of metadata for hundreds documents, and presentations on the grant-funded project.

## II. Serving Libraries and Patrons

### JerseyClicks

The State Library entered into 1 year contracts for a suite of JerseyClicks databases, with an option for one year renewals through 2028. JerseyClicks is paid for with IMLS funds.

## New Digital Players at TBBC

TBBC began shipping a new digital player called the DA2. It features Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capability and has storage capacity for downloaded content. The DA2 also supports the digital cartridges currently produced by TBBC.

## BARD 2.0

In addition, the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, launched BARD 2.0 in 2025. BARD stands for Braille and Audio Reading Download and is the platform for downloading audio and Braille titles for use with personal devices. BARD 2.0 offers improved user experience around searching and managing preferences.

## Revolutionary War LibGuide

Because 2026 is a big year for Revolutionary War history, staff at the Research Library created a [Revolutionary War LibGuide](#) that highlights some items from our map, genealogy, NJ history, and US document collections.

## Digitized Historical Paper Collection

The Research Library team also digitized its complete, and very fragile, collection of the [New Jersey Gazette](#), which was the historical paper of record for New Jersey during the Revolutionary War and into the early 1800s. Those papers are in our Digital Jerseyana collection.

## NJ Department of Transportation Research Library

The NJ Department of Transportation Research Library was decommissioned at the end of September. The Research Library has taken in its collection of New Jersey documents and other unique materials from its reference and general transportation-related collection.

## III. Retirements and Staff Updates

After 18 years with the Talking Book & Braille Center, Director Adam Szczepaniak retired on November 1<sup>st</sup>. He led TBBC through many changes in the areas of technological advancements and partnerships with libraries around the state.

Lorraine Jenkins, who worked on the Research Library's ILL team, retired as of Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. During her 25 years with the State Library, Lorraine was active in the NJ Association of Library Assistants and held various leadership roles in that organization.

We will miss both Adam and Lorraine and we wish them well in their post-retirement lives.

Following Adam's retirement Elizabeth Burns was named the new Director of the Talking Book and Braille Center.

# Coming in 2026

## Introducing Money Smart for Life

The State Library will promote financial literacy for all ages during Financial Literacy Month in April 2026. Money Smart for Life is NJSL's statewide initiative to showcase how libraries support financial education and wellbeing in their communities.

More on this on our website. [www.njstatelib.org/moneysmart](http://www.njstatelib.org/moneysmart).

## NJ250 Digital Exhibits

Research Library staff will launch digital exhibits to promote historic research collections of the State Library to encourage NJ citizens to engage with their history. We will begin uploading content in the first quarter of 2026. Check our [exhibits website](#) to see a preview with a display of [A New and Accurate Map of the Present Seat of War in North America](#) as part of our [NJ250: Living Documents; Evolving Rights Digital Exhibit](#).

## Teaching Information Literacy – Phase Three

For Phase Three of Teaching Information Literacy, we are actively planning a National Forum on Reimagining Information Literacy to be held online July 14 and 15, 2026. Speakers and topics are under discussion; more information will roll out early this spring.