

NJSL DIRECT

Weekly News Updates for New Jersey Libraries

January 20, 2026

State Library Updates

Money Smart For Life - New Video and Professional Development Webinars!

[Money Smart for Life](#) is a new initiative from the New Jersey State Library designed to help libraries educate their communities on the skills needed for long-term financial well-being. [Check out this 10-minute video](#) to hear from your NJSL colleagues, Sharon Rawlins and Andrea Levandowski, as they discuss some of the reasons why financial literacy is an important topic for all ages. Please note that we've organized the video into chapters so that you can more quickly jump to the sections that you are most interested in.

Upcoming Professional Development Webinars

Sign up now for Money Smart for Life webinars for library staff. Learn about money skills, resources, and ideas for your library's financial literacy programming.

- [There is More to Money Than Spending Part I](#) - Jan. 27, 11 am
- [There is More to Money Than Spending Part II](#) - Jan. 29, 11 am
- [The Librarian's Tax Toolkit: Essential Federal and State Resources](#) - Jan. 29, 11:30 am
- [Fraud Watch: Vigilance Against Cybercrime and Government Imposter Scams](#) - Feb. 2, 10 am
- [Public Benefits for Older Adults and Understanding Social Security](#) - Feb. 3, 10 am
- [Understanding Types of Investments](#) - Feb. 4, 10 am
- [The Power of Investing Over Time](#) - Feb. 5, 10 am

During Financial Literacy Month in April 2026, all New Jersey public libraries are encouraged to showcase their financial education programs, events, and collections. An [interest form for Money Smart for Life](#) is available for you to share your upcoming events and programs for NJSL to promote through a shared calendar and on social media. You can also provide speaker and website details if you want to recommend financial literacy resources for other libraries.

If you have questions, contact Andrea Levandowski (alevandowski@njstatelib.org) or Sharon Rawlins (srawlins@njstatelib.org).

NJSL Presents: A Black History Month Special Event

Please join the New Jersey State Library in celebrating Black History Month on **Saturday, February 21st, 2026** for an in-person screening of the 3-part, New York Emmy Award-nominated PBS documentary, “The Price of Silence.” Join us at the New Jersey State Museum Auditorium in Trenton, NJ, from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. The event is **FREE** and registration is encouraged as space is limited.

Upon conclusion of the documentary screening, we will hold a panel discussion with producer Ridgeley Hutchinson and documentary contributors Dr. Linda J. Caldwell Epps, Beverly Mills, Toni Hendrix, Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter, and Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji.

[Click here to learn more and register.](#)

Please help us spread the word about this special event by sharing this flyer ([PDF](#) or [JPG](#)) within your communities!

News From Around the State

LibraryLinkNJ New Categories Added to LearningSpace

Explore professional learning at your own pace on LibraryLinkNJ's LearningSpace, now with two new categories designed to support you both professionally and personally. Check out resources and learning opportunities on the following new topics:

- [Cybersecurity](#)
- [Everyday Well-Being](#)

Statewide EDI Resource Solicitation Form for NJ Libraries

As part of the larger [Strategic Roadmap](#) project, led by NJSL, NJLA, and LLNJ, we are conducting an audit of the equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) resources currently being used across New Jersey libraries.

If you or your organization have participated in an EDI training, workshop, or program—or if you’ve come across a resource you believe is valuable and

worth reviewing—we invite you to share it with us through this [EDI Resource Solicitation Form](#). Your input will directly inform this audit and help strengthen collective EDI efforts statewide.

Questions? Contact edi@librarylinknj.org.

National Opportunities

New Field Guide Available for Libraries to Prepare to Serve Their Communities During Crises

A new national resource is now available to help libraries prepare for major community emergencies, including pandemics, natural disasters, and societal crises, before they hit. Centering Community: Library Staff Responding to Crisis – A Field Guide, developed through the Ready NOW project, provides practical strategies and examples to help libraries support their communities before, during, and after disruptions of varying scale. [Download the Field Guide](#).

ALA Virtual Event - Recharging in Challenging Times

Across libraries, many professionals are navigating heavy workloads, rising expectations, and the emotional demands of serving their communities. Recharging in Challenging Times: An ALA Virtual Event takes place **Tuesday, February 10th, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** This event is designed to support you with practical ways to protect your energy, set boundaries, and make the work feel more sustainable. Registration also includes on-demand access through May 10, 2026. [Register here](#).

2026 AARP Community Challenge

AARP has officially launched the 10th year of its Community Challenge grant program, which funds quick-action projects that make communities more livable and spark long-term change!

Key Details:

- Application Deadline: March 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
- Submission site: AARP.org/CommunityChallenge
- Project Completion Deadline: December 15, 2026
- Eligibility: 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6) nonprofit organizations, government entities, and other organizations on a case-by-case basis

2026 Grant Opportunities:
Flagship Grants

- Support projects that improve public places; transportation; housing; digital connections; and disaster resilience. Awards range from a few hundred dollars to \$15,000.

Capacity-Building Microgrants

- \$2,500 grants paired with expert support, webinars, and cohort learning. Focus areas include walk audits, bike audits, HomeFit® Guide modifications, and disaster preparedness training.

Demonstration Grants

- Designed to replicate promising local efforts. Topics include pedestrian safety (funding support from Toyota Motor North America), high-speed internet (funding support from Microsoft), and housing design competitions. Awards typically range from \$10,000-\$20,000, and will not exceed \$25,000.

[AARP Community Challenge Flyer](#)

[New Jersey Fact Sheet](#)

Questions? Email communitychallenge@aarp.org.

NJSL Presents Events

Our NJSL Presents Webinars are free and open to anyone interested in attending. Registration is required in advance and [all webinars are recorded and posted to our YouTube page](#) afterward. You can also [check out event recaps on our blog](#)! Here's what we have coming up, feel free to share within your communities.

- [Gentle Yoga to Lift the Mood](#) - January 29th @ noon
 - [Simple Steps to Successful Networking Opportunities](#) - February 4th @ noon
 - [Know Your Rights Part 2 - Housing](#) - February 10th @ noon
 - [The 1759 Vought House: A Loyalist Homestead in Revolutionary Hunterdon County](#) - February 19th @ noon
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Professional Development Opportunities

Visit the State Library's [CE Training webpage](#) for a variety of Continuing Education training opportunities for New Jersey librarians, library support staff, and trustees.

[On-Demand Training Portal](#) in the LibraryLinkNJ LearningSpace and [a list of training programs](#) currently being offered.

[Professional Development Links](#) and [Webinars and Other Training Events](#) from the NJLA Professional Development Committee.

Check out the upcoming LYRASIS CE opportunities on their [calendar here](#).

[Click here for a monthly national list](#) of CE and Professional Development opportunities.

Library Marketing Resources

If your library is looking for marketing tips, best practices and inspiration, [check out our Marketing Blog](#) updated monthly. Here's our most recent blog posts:

- [A Guide to YouTube Shorts for Libraries](#)
- [Five Free Library Content Ideas You Can Post This Week](#)
- [The Secret to Social Media Hooks](#)
- [Refresh Your Library's Approach to Email Marketing](#)
- [How to Create Better Hyperlinks for Accessibility](#)

Download sharable social media graphics and videos from the [Statewide Digital Marketing Campaign](#).

Also, you can [download marketing resources from State Library Vendors & Partners](#).

Connecting people with information through libraries.

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