

# NJSL DIRECT

Weekly News Updates for New Jersey Libraries  
*September 5, 2023*

## State Library Updates

### **Baker & Taylor is Sunsetting the Legacy Axis 360 App and Transitioning Users to Boundless**

We are alerting all New Jersey Libraries who utilize the eBooks platform Axis 360 by Baker & Taylor that they'll be rebranding to Boundless as of September 30th, 2023. If there are sections of your website that link to or reference Axis 360, be sure to change the language and links to reflect the transition to Boundless. Learn more about this change, and access marketing asset downloads, [here](#).

---

### **New Marketing Campaign Content: Libraries are for... FUN!**

In our final week of the statewide marketing campaign, we've added new downloadable graphics and a video emphasizing all of the fun things that public libraries offer that people might not know about! [Click here to view](#). We hope you've been sharing and will continue to share these marketing materials to show your local communities that Life Happens @ Your Library.

---

## Bridging The Digital Divide In New Jersey Communities

The New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) featured an article in their *NJAC County Biz* September issue highlighting two important initiatives currently available to NJ libraries through the State Library: **Community Center Digital Connect**, a competitive grant opportunity, and **ACP Connects NJ**, a broadband affordability initiative. Read more about both programs [here](#).

---

## JerseyClicks Webinars

- HeritageQuest Online Introduction - **Sept. 7, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.**
- Get to Know the Updated Gale Presents: Peterson's Test and Career Prep - **Sept. 26, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.**

[Click here to register for upcoming webinars.](#)

---

## Get your construction or building improvement project funded through the Capital Projects Fund!

[Click here](#) to access the grant webpage where application materials, technical assistance resources, Q&A documentation, and other information can be found. **Applications are due September 25.**

---

## Webinar - Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience

Join us on **Sept. 26th, 2:00-3:00pm**, for a webinar with the Sustainable Libraries Initiative. Panel discussion topics will include traditional disaster preparedness, business continuity planning, community resilience work, and preparing communities for severe weather events and the increased likelihood of food supply interruptions. [Click to learn more and register.](#)

---

**News from Around the State**

## NJ's Office of Broadband Connectivity Feedback Session

New Jersey's new [Office of Broadband Connectivity](#) is currently developing the state's first ever Digital Equity Plan, and is seeking feedback from people with disabilities and/or their parents, guardians, teachers, and caregivers about their experiences, including challenges, with using the internet, accessing devices and learning digital literacy skills. This meeting on **September 19th at 1 p.m.** will be hosted by the Office of Broadband Connectivity and the New Jersey State Library and we encourage you to invite your patrons to participate and share their thoughts and experiences. [Click here for the registration link.](#)

---

## Register Now for LibraryLinkNJ's Fall Literacy Conference

Registration is now open for LibraryLinkNJ's one day, virtual fall conference taking place **September, 27th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** This year's conference theme is Literacy, and the conference will be a full day of learning on a wide range of topics related to literacy in libraries of all types. [Visit the conference webpage](#) for more information and registration!

---

## National Opportunities

### September is Library Card Sign-up Month!

Since 1987, Library Card Sign-up Month has been held each September to mark the beginning of the school year and make a national effort to ensure every child signs up for their own library card. The American Library Association puts together shareable resources, tools, and social media graphics each year to help libraries spread the word. This year's theme features characters from the Disney & Pixar film *Elemental*. "Get in your Element" and [download marketing assets here!](#)

---

## Grant Opportunity: Howard County Library System Project Literacy - Pathways to Success Program

Would your library like to join Howard County Library System's Pathways to Success: Professional Development for Skilled New Americans library cohort? Pathways to Success mitigates unemployment and underemployment by expanding services customized for skilled immigrants. The secondary goal of the program is to train other libraries to adapt this model (or parts thereof) to start their own program serving New Americans in their communities. [Click to learn more and apply.](#)

---

## Professional Development Opportunities

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

[Click here for a monthly national list](#) of NJSL and National CE and Professional Development opportunities for librarians, trustees, and library staffs.

---

## 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:

- [Tips for Consistently Engaging Facebook Content](#)
- [Introducing Instagram Threads](#)
- [Design Tips for Social Media Graphics](#)
- [Busting Social Media Myths](#)

Download marketing resources from State Library Vendors & Partners [here](#).

---

[Click to Connect with the NJSL Library  
Development Unit](#)

*Connecting people with information through libraries.*

New Jersey State Library | [Website](#)



## Baker & Taylor is Sunsetting the Legacy Axis 360 App and Transitioning Users to Boundless

September 1, 2023

*Tiffany McClary*

[About the State Library](#) | [Library Development Bureau](#) | [Services for Libraries](#)



We are alerting all New Jersey Libraries who utilize the eBooks platform Axis 360 by Baker & Taylor that they'll be rebranding to Boundless as of September 30th, 2023. If there are sections of your website that link to or reference Axis 360, be sure to change the language and links to reflect the transition to Boundless.

### What is Boundless?

Boundless is Baker & Taylor's reimagined digital service for libraries. An ecosystem that provides patrons with digital content like ebooks and audio as well as programming like never before. Built from the ground up on the latest app and web technologies, Boundless is intuitive, easy to use and fun, helping libraries meet the reading and learning needs of their communities.

For staff looking to learn more about Boundless by Baker & Taylor, and for logos and other marketing asset downloads, [\*\*click here to view their resources page.\*\*](#)

## What is the next step in the transition to Boundless?

We are working closely with the Baker & Taylor team to prepare for the migration. End users of Axis 360 will receive in app messaging to alert them of this change so they can prepare. As the transition gets closer, app messaging will be updated to give users a final reminder to download Boundless. After the library's collection is moved to Boundless, users who try to access our library's collection in the Axis 360 app will see a message informing them they need to install and log in to Boundless.

## Will Boundless be a separate mobile app?

Yes, Boundless will be a new app. Once our library transitions to Boundless, users should download and install the Boundless app on their devices. Users at libraries who have not yet transitioned to Boundless will continue using the Axis 360 app.

## What will happen to Axis 360 site URLs?

Your current Axis 360 library prefix will be retained, but your website URL format (xxxx.axis360.baker-taylor.com) will be changing to (xxxx.boundless.baker-taylor.com)

Users navigating to your digital collection homepage via the Axis URL, or a stored link, will be automatically redirected to your new Boundless site after your library's transition. It is recommended that library staff, faculty, patrons, and students change stored browser bookmarks to the updated Boundless URLs.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Michael Maziekien, NJSL's Project Specialist of Shared Services at [mmaziekien@njstatelib.org](mailto:mmaziekien@njstatelib.org).

## Statewide Digital Marketing Campaign

# Life Happens @ Your Library

*Venture beyond the bookshelves*

Use on-demand, and customize for your library!



Libraries are much more than just simply repositories for books. We serve every walk of life, we help NJ residents address a wide range of needs, and we offer a wealth of resources, services, assistance and support to our communities. This marketing campaign is designed to speak to the various “user personas” who may or may not know what the library has to offer. Life happens at the library, and we want to remind some – and introduce others – to this reality. Contact us with any questions, concerns or ideas: [marketing@njstatelib.org](mailto:marketing@njstatelib.org).

# Community Center Digital Connect

A CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND (CPF) GRANT OPPORTUNITY



## Welcome to the Community Center Digital Connect grant page.

This grant aims to support the construction or improvement of buildings that enable work, education, and health monitoring in communities with critical needs

Our mission is to empower communities by providing access to high-quality modern infrastructure, including broadband, essential for accessing critical services.

### Grant Purpose

### Eligibility Criteria

### Eligible Communities

### Application Process

Step-by-step Breakdown: 1. Review the grant guidelines and eligibility criteria. 2. Prepare the required documents and application form. 3. Submit your application by the deadline of September 25, 2023. 4. Await notification of grant award decisions.

## Timeline:

- Application Guidelines Available July 10, 2023
- Technical Assistance Webinar July 25, 2023
- Questions Due August 25, 2023
- Responses to Questions Posted July 18, 2023 – September 8, 2023 (weekly)
- Applications Due September 25, 2023
- Awards offered November 22, 2023
- Project Technical Assistance November 22, 2023 – February 15, 2024
- Pre-Award Risk Assessment November 22, 2023 – December 22, 2023
- Grant Agreements sent out February 15, 2024
- Projects start March 1, 2024

**Apply Here**

Foundant online grant management system, where applicants can submit their grant applications.

- [Foundant Link](#)
- [Creating a New Account in Foundant \(PDF\)](#): Step-by-step instructions for creating a new account in the Foundant system.
- [Submitting an Application in Foundant \(PDF\)](#): A guide to submitting a grant application through the Foundant system.

## Climate Action Planning (Part 2): Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience

August 28, 2023

*Julia Giantomasi*

[About the State Library](#) [Library Development Bureau](#) [Services for Libraries](#)

Part of a series, this webinar with the Sustainable Libraries Initiative will feature library practitioners who will discuss how they have prepared both libraries and communities for the impacts of climate change.

This panel discussion will feature practitioners with deep experience in preparing both their libraries, and their communities, for the impacts of climate change. Our panel will speak to traditional disaster preparedness, business continuity planning, community resilience work, and preparing communities for severe weather events and the increased likelihood of food supply interruptions. While libraries are not first responders, they should be connected with the emergency management community and be positioned as part of both the short-term and long-term “first restorer” network as disruptions amplified by climate change happen with more frequency.

**[Click here to register.](#)**

**When:**

**September 26, 2023, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Presented by:**



**Rebekkah Smith Aldrich(MLS, LEED AP), Executive Director, Mid-Hudson Library System (NY), Co-founder/Current President, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI), and author**

---



**Keith Adams, Executive Director, New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster**

---



**Michele Stricker, Deputy State Librarian, Library  
Development Bureau, New Jersey State Library**

---



**Deborah Costa, Region 2 Community  
Preparedness Officer, FEMA**

**NJ Office of Broadband Connectivity**



**CONNE**



[@NTIAgov](#) announced [#NJ](#) will receive \$263.7 mil from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to implement the [#InternetforAll](#) initiative. These new investments will ensure that we connect all of the unconnected to make the most of affordable, reliable high-speed Internet.

**The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will be allocating \$263.7 million to New Jersey to help improve access to affordable, high-speed, reliable internet in unserved and underserved communities across New Jersey**

**The funding allocation will essentially be the program budget for developing and deploying the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program in New Jersey and ultimately implement the state's plan.**

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**When will funding be available?**

We are currently in the program planning and development phase. The federal deadline

for the state's 5-Year Action Plan is August 28, 2023. Then the Initial Proposal for spending is due December 2023, and late 2024 for the Final Proposal. After the Final Proposal is approved by the NTIA, the program is expected to be implemented over the course of four years and is tentative to be completed in 2028.

### **Who is eligible for funding?**

This will be developed as part of the State Action Plan under development now for the BEAD funding. [Here is a one-pager from the U.S. Department of Commerce.](#)

### **What can the funding be used for?**

BEAD funds can have many uses, but there is a great need in the state, and broadband deployment will be a priority for funding. Examples of eligible funding uses include:

- Planning for the deployment of high-speed Internet, including conducting research, collecting data, outreach, and training
- Deploying or upgrading Internet in unserved or underserved areas or improving service to community anchor organizations
- Installing Internet and Wi-Fi in multi-unit residential buildings
- Adoption and digital equity programs
- Workforce development programs and vocational training programs

### **2023 Program Projected Launch Timeline:**

**Digital Equity (DE)** – Funds awarded for development, implementation and oversight of digital equity planning; Q2 2024

**Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD)** – Priority funding to expand broadband access for unserved and underserved locations; 2024-2025

\*Timelines are approximate and contingent on rollout of Federal programs and therefore may be subject to change

## **Thank you for joining us at the Internet for All: New Jersey Local Coordination Workshop on April 17.**

Below are links to the recording and presentations:

Recording - [Internet for All: New Jersey Local Coordination Workshop](#)

[View Presentations](#)

## **Ensuring Every American has Access to Internet**

The mission of New Jersey's Broadband Office is to ensure that our residents, businesses, and communities have equitable access to affordable broadband service. Broadband connectivity provides high-speed internet necessary for economic growth and innovation, education, emergency services, healthcare, and telecommunications infrastructure. Access to high-speed internet helps to ensure public safety, increase

opportunities for our businesses and workforce and provide equal opportunity for students.

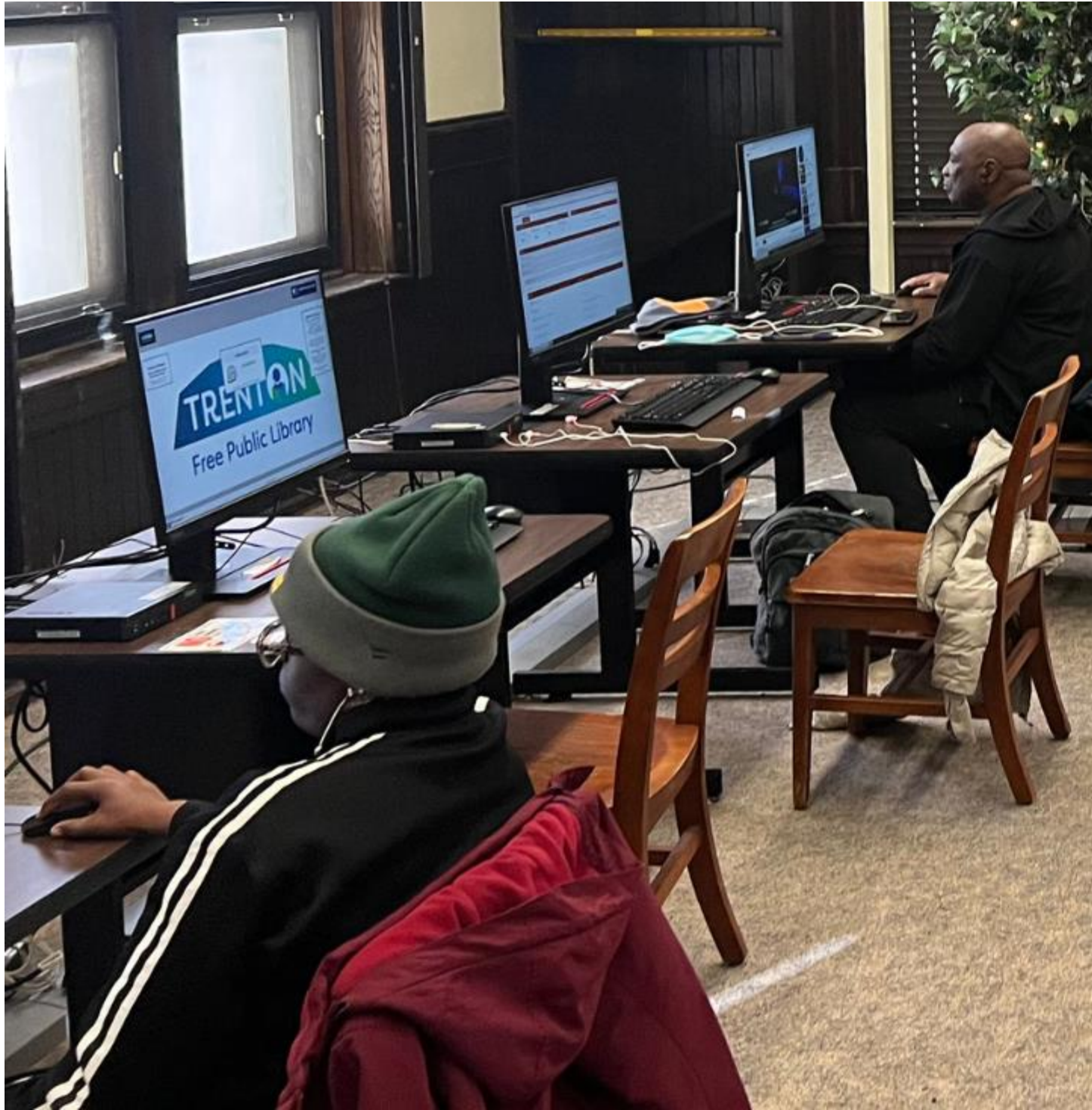
“In this day and age, everyone should have high-speed Internet through which they can access remote education opportunities for themselves and their children, take advantage of telehealth, or work from home. There are still far too many New Jersey residents and businesses who don’t have access to high-speed internet and it is the Murphy Administration’s goal to make sure that they do as quickly as possible.” **Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities**

## **News and Events**



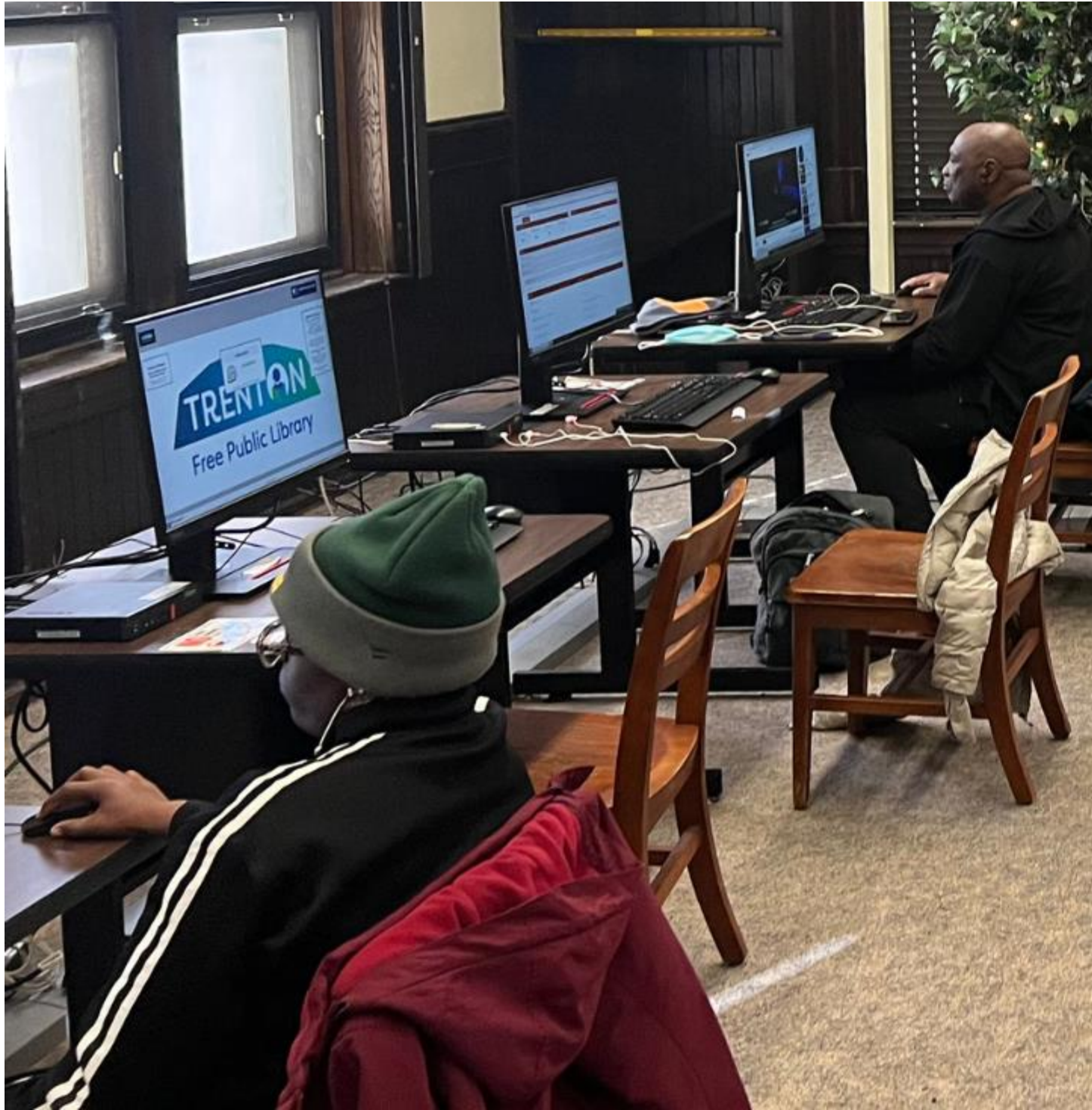
Event on September 6, 2023

[September 2023 New Jersey Internet for All Public Outreach Meeting](#)



February 1, 2023

[Board of Public Utilities | NJBPU President Appoints Director of Broadband Office](#)



December 20, 2022

[Biden-Harris Administration Awards More Than \\$6 Million to New Jersey in 'Internet for All' Planning Grants](#)



December 13, 2022

[Broadband Access Study Commission Encourages all Residents to Take Broadband Survey](#)

## Fill out the questionnaire to contribute to our statewide community resource guide.

[Answer questionnaire to contribute to our statewide community resource guide.](#)

## STAY CONNECTED

Fill out the application to find out if you qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program.

[Apply for the ACP](#)

## Take our New Jersey State Broadband Survey

The Broadband Access Study Commission (BASC), which is charged with developing recommendations to help the State achieve affordable and equitable broadband access for all residents and businesses, is asking all New Jersey residents to take the State's broadband survey.

The survey will assess existing broadband speed and usage in addition to identifying where gaps in broadband service and access exist. The results of the survey will help the State pursue federal broadband funding.

[Take Survey](#)

## New Jersey's Broadband Grants

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes a historic \$65 billion investment to expand affordable and reliable high-speed Internet access in communities across the U.S. NTIA recently launched a series of new high-speed Internet grant programs funded by the law that will build high-speed Internet infrastructure across the country, create more low-cost high-speed Internet service options, and address the digital equity and inclusion needs in our communities.

New Jersey is receiving \$6,098,830.90 in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed by President Biden, to plan for the deployment and adoption of affordable, equitable, and reliable high-speed Internet service throughout the state.

### Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program

The BEAD Program provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed Internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs.

New Jersey will receive \$4,922,089.90 to fund various activities including:

- Research and data collection, including initial identification of unserved locations and underserved locations;
- Publications, outreach, and communications support;
- Technical assistance to potential subgrantees, including through workshops and events;
- Surveys of unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities to better understand barriers to adoption.

### Digital Equity

The Digital Equity Act provides \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy. The first part of NTIA's execution of the Digital Equity Act is to fund digital equity planning efforts.

New Jersey will receive \$1,176,741.00 to fund various activities including:

- Closing the digital equity gap and the development of a Statewide Digital Equity Plan;
- Staff recruitment and development.
- Community and stakeholder engagement.

### Contact Us

## **About the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU)**

NJBPU is a state agency and regulatory authority mandated to ensure safe, adequate and proper utility services at reasonable rates for New Jersey customers. Critical services regulated by NJBPU include natural gas, electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and cable television. The Board has general oversight and responsibility for monitoring utility service, responding to consumer complaints, and investigating utility accidents. To find out more about NJBPU, visit our website at [www.nj.gov/bpu](http://www.nj.gov/bpu).



## Grant Opportunity – Howard County Library System Project Literacy – Pathways to Success Program

August 24, 2023

*Julia Giantomasi*

**About the State Library Services for Libraries**

### **This project is open to any library serving a diverse community.**

Would your library like to join Howard County Library System's Pathways to Success: Professional Development for Skilled New Americans library cohort? Pathways to Success mitigates unemployment and underemployment by expanding services customized for skilled immigrants. The secondary goal of the program is to train other libraries to adapt this model (or parts thereof) to start their own program serving New Americans in their communities.

If your library is in a diverse community, Pathways to Success is an opportunity for you to improve services for that community. Howard County is an extremely diverse county. Over 20% of Howard County residents were born outside of the country (Institute for Immigration Research, 2022). Unfortunately, 40% of immigrants (vs. 29% of U.S.-born workers) still hold jobs that require mechanical skills and are not necessarily high-wage jobs (Bennett, 2020). Immigrants are still not attaining well-paying jobs at comparable rates to the native born, and limited English proficiency is correlated with lower wages (Bernstein & Vilter, 2018).

The four basic service levels of the Pathways to Success model are as follows: English classes, comprehensive English classes, job search & networking classes, and workforce preparation. Participants also meet 1:1 with instructors to focus on projects, resumes, interviews, job searches, and anything that is difficult to pursue in class. Desirable outcomes for participants include finding a well-paying job in their field of training or expertise, finding a job that is better than their current job, preparing to find a job, or preparing to return to postsecondary education or training.

- Cohort libraries receive a \$2,000 stipend.
- Cohort libraries must:
- Commit to the project for one year.
- Have support to apply knowledge gained from the project in their own library.

## Cohort libraries are expected to:

- Complete the training from October 2023 through May 2024. Each member should plan on devoting about three hours a month to the project

## Training includes:

- Taking part in one 6-hour training to learn about the four service models
- Attending a minimum of three advisory board meetings and participating in three intake interviews of skilled immigrants
- Observing a minimum of three one-hour language and/or workforce preparation classes
- Meeting with the Project Team bimonthly to draft and refine plans for local implementation of service models
- Completing an evaluation questionnaire of the training at the conclusion of the project, and a follow-up survey 12 weeks after the training

## Key Dates:

- September 22 – deadline to apply
- Week of September 25 – HCLS interviews library applicants
- October 8 – libraries will be notified of acceptance

**If you think your library would like to join this cohort, please [complete this application](#) by September 22nd.**

Post navigation

[Solar Eclipse Activities for Libraries \(SEAL\) Program for NJ Libraries](#)

# Tips for Consistently Engaging Facebook Content

August 17, 2023

*Julia Giantomasi*

**Marketing Blog**

Even amidst this era of change across social media platforms, the one constant has been Facebook. It may not be as “cool” as the others, but roughly 2 billion people still log into Facebook every day. That’s a pretty big audience for your library’s content and we’ve collected some tips to make sure you’re getting maximum engagement.

## Understanding the Algorithm

**Facebook’s news feed algorithm** focuses on a few key elements. Users that interact with your library’s page by liking or commenting on posts will see more of your posts in their newsfeed. The idea is that those who show interest in your content are prioritized. This is why engagement is so important because those who regularly interact with your posts will continue to see more of them, plus the more engagement, the further a post reaches. Understanding when this audience is typically online will also play a factor. If your followers are typically liking posts at lunch time, catering future content to this timeframe will ensure they see it quickly – and hopefully they will like or comment, magnifying it to others. Lastly, the algorithm observes what user engagement habits are, and will optimize for their behaviors. Guessing how long a user might watch a video for, or if they’ll comment on a story, will play a factor in how the content is presented in the newsfeed. The algorithm is always evolving and more recently has been focused on video, so creating reels or short video clips will expand your page’s reach.

## Get to the Point

The optimal length of a post is between 25 to 55 characters. Attention spans are short and getting to the point quickly is the best way to reach your audience. Also, in the mobile app, posts are shortened after 80 characters with a “see more” prompt to open the post up for all of the text. Since many people are typically viewing their newsfeed through the Facebook app, it’s good to have key details in the first sentence. Typically, you’re guiding someone to click a link for more information anyway, so the rest of the post doesn’t need to be wordy.

In addition to **writing zippy copy**, the posts that seem to have the most value for Facebook followers are images and videos. Scrolling can be fast-paced and posts are much more eye catching to stop the scroll when they’re unique graphics or a short-form video. Always keep in mind what type of content resonates most with your audience and consider if it can be relayed visually.

## Maintain a Schedule

If you're just starting to generate content for your Facebook page, aim for three posts per week and move up to daily posts from there. The best times to post according to **Sprout Social** is morning hours, Monday through Friday. Those who posted at 3am saw the highest number of engagements, possibly because not many other pages are posting at that time and the content was fresh at the top of user newsfeeds whenever they first log on in the morning. Keeping an eye on when your audience is typically engaging with your posts will also help determine the best timeframe. Once posts are out there, checking back at intervals throughout the day will help you stay on top of any follower engagement. You can quickly reply to comments or messages, which will boost the reach of that particular post.



I've had opportunities throughout my career to coordinate marketing and social media for live events and small businesses across various industries. I've enjoyed keeping up with the trends and using social media to not only promote quality services but create a sense of community. As the PR & Marketing Coordinator for the New Jersey State Library I can draw from these experiences in order to provide tips and best practices for libraries handling their own marketing and social media. I hope that I can be a resource to libraries across New Jersey as they engage with their communities.

[View all posts by Julia Giantomasi](#) →

## Post navigation

**[Recap: Researching Revolutionary and Civil War Service Records for NJ Residents](#)**  
**[Featured Print Books \(August 18, 2023\)](#)**

# Introducing Instagram Threads

**[July 7, 2023](#)**

**[Julia Giantomasi](#)**

**[Marketing Blog](#)**

As Twitter has undergone some changes over the past year, many social media users are looking for alternatives to use for short text-based posts geared toward public conversations. Introducing “Threads” created by Meta (Facebook & Instagram.) **[The app](#)** became available on July 5<sup>th</sup> and had over 10 million signups upon its launch. Although social media platforms – much like fashion trends – can come and go, we’ll share the basics of what Threads offers and you can check it out and decide for your library if it’s worth the switch from Twitter.

The app enables users to sign up straight from their Instagram accounts. In the top right corner of your Instagram app are three horizontal lines. Once you open that menu, you'll see that there is an option for "Threads." Clicking on that will download the Threads app and setting up a new account is intuitive. You can bring your profile photo, bio, link and followers over from the Instagram app, which eliminates any need to take time to build a new profile.

Threads then opens up to a scrollable feed of short-form text similar to the layout of Twitter. Your feed will consist of content from accounts you already follow plus creators suggested by the platform's algorithm. Unlike Twitter, which only allows 280 characters and 4 photos or videos, Threads posts allow 500 characters and the ability to add up to 10 photos, and videos up to five minutes in length. Users can engage by liking, commenting, reposting, quoting and sharing each "thread" to their Instagram story or feed. Since Meta created Threads, it's intended to work smoothly with both Instagram and Facebook for cross-platform sharing. The interface looks very similar to Instagram's, so users of that app will be familiar with the same heart, comment, and share icons as well as the layout of the different page tabs.

In addition to moving the same username and followers over from Instagram, any accounts that your library has blocked on Instagram will be automatically blocked on Threads. Those who wish to limit interactions can choose in settings whether to allow replies from everyone, accounts they follow or even restrict comments altogether. The security settings will be similar to Instagram where users can report one another for violations and specific words or phrases can be hidden from a feed. Threads will also include features such as direct messaging, trending topics, and an "improved" search function.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg hopes to see the Threads community grow to over one billion members. If your library is looking to move away from Twitter, it doesn't hurt to give Threads a try and see if it's the right fit for the content that you'd like to share.



I've had opportunities throughout my career to coordinate marketing and social media for live events and small businesses across various industries. I've enjoyed keeping up with the trends and using social media to not only promote quality services but create a sense of community. As the PR & Marketing Coordinator for the New Jersey State Library I can draw from these experiences in order to provide tips and best practices for libraries handling their own marketing and social media. I hope that I can be a resource to libraries across New Jersey as they engage with their communities.

[View all posts by Julia Giantomasi](#) →

# Design Tips for Social Media Graphics

June 22, 2023

*Julia Giantomasi*

**Marketing Blog**

It's not always feasible for a library to have a full-time graphic designer on staff, but with a little guidance, anyone can whip up a graphic for social media. Using free design tools like **Canva** is a great first step as there are templates available and each one is already sized to the correct social media format. Beyond the basics, we've gathered some creative tips for making your designs stand out on social media.

## Use Texture

Textures can add a tactile quality to your designs and create a sense of depth. Visual texture is achieved through lines, shading, and use of color. Pre-set background options available through templates can create a paper, fabric, or metal look to your graphics and make them more interesting. Texture can also create a specific mood or feeling. There are **many different ways to incorporate texture into a design** that can be eye-catching to followers as they scroll their feeds.

## The Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is a principle that divides a canvas into three even rows and three even columns. Used in photography and art, this rule creates a balanced design by placing important elements at the four central intersecting points. These are the "hot spots" where a person's attention immediately lands. **Here are some great examples** of the rule of thirds used properly in designs.

## Gradients

Using a **gradient** is a great way to jazz up a basic social media graphic. Having a subtle change in the hue of a background color can give an image depth without being overpowering. This could be a nice option for a graphic with a lot of text, to make it more visually interesting. On the other hand, gradients can also be used in a bold way, with bright colors, when you're trying to make a statement.

## Use Templates

Depending on the type of social media posts that you're creating, if you've found one style that works best, there's nothing wrong with reusing it multiple times. Look at it like you view your branding colors or guidelines, it can add a uniform element to your posting or tie themes together. You can also make small tweaks to the posts through images or coloring but keep the overall template the same. Not every post has to be a completely unique design and templates can be recycled if they've performed well.

## Experiment

Using templates can make creating a graphic more efficient, especially when something needs to be posted on the fly, but don't be afraid to try new designs in moments when you have more time to create. Test out different layouts, colors, and styles to see what resonates the most with your social media followers. We recently created graphics fit for Instagram Stories to promote the NJ State Library sessions at NJLA's annual conference. Each session covered a different topic, so I used Canva to play around with different design elements to make each one unique. The examples of my designs below show that you don't need to be a graphic designer to create pieces that will get the information you need out there in a visually pleasing way.

Telling Stories that Matter: Sharing the Impact of Library Business Services  
Thursday, June 1, 2023  
4:10pm to 5:00pm

### ATTN NJ LIBRARIES!

Learn how to adapt outreach to these different audiences based on priorities:

- BUSINESS OWNERS/ ENTREPRENEURS
- BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS
- ELECTED OFFICIALS
- COMMUNITY LEADERS

Join this session to hear success stories that prove library services for businesses make a difference.



## POSTER SESSION

### TBBC at the Local Library: BARD Library Pilot Program

Thursday, June 1, 2023  
3:00pm to 4:00pm



Do you have a patron who requires audiobooks to read and cannot get enough of them?



Your library should consider signing up for the New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center's BARD Library Pilot Program!

STOP BY THIS POSTER SESSION TO LEARN HOW TO SIGN UP!



Fabulous Fun Facts about the NJ State Library Talking Book & Braille Center  
Friday, June 2, 2023  
3:30pm to 4:20pm

You may think you already know all about TBBC, but you might be surprised by what you discover!

- ☀ The BARD Mobile App has both audiobooks and braille books - and no waitlist!
- ☀ People with reading disabilities qualify for TBBC services
- ☀ TBBC does a lot of outreach--if you'd like a visit from our staff, reach out!

JOIN THIS SESSION TO HEAR ALL 12 FABULOUS FACTS!



On the Same Page: Multigenerational Book Discussions  
Friday, June 2, 2023  
9:00am to 9:50am



### TIME TO UPDATE YOUR READING LIST!

Join to hear the top books that embody this year's Summer Reading Program's theme selected by the 2023 Statewide Summer Reading Committee.



Serving Your Community in the Intersection of Social Work and Libraries  
Thursday, June 1, 2023  
9:00am to 9:50am

SWILIBS-NJ was developed to strengthen the capacity of public libraries to provide social work informed library services for their communities.

JOIN THIS PROGRAM TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SWILIBS-NJ!



8 GREAT GAME PLANS 4 GRANTS  
Wednesday, May 31, 2023  
2-5 p.m.

- ✓ FIND OUT WHAT FUNDERS ARE LOOKING FOR
- ✓ TURN DATA INTO STORYTELLING
- ✓ LEARN BEST PRACTICES FOR BUDGETING & SUSTAINABILITY

Get hands-on grant application experience in this workshop!





I've had opportunities throughout my career to coordinate marketing and social media for live events and small businesses across various industries. I've enjoyed keeping up with the trends and using social media to not only promote quality services but create a sense of community. As the PR & Marketing Coordinator for the New Jersey State Library I can draw from these experiences in order to provide tips and best practices for libraries handling their own marketing and social media. I hope that I can be a resource to libraries across New Jersey as they engage with their communities.

[View all posts by Julia Giantomasi →](#)

## Busting Social Media Myths

May 18, 2023

***Julia Giantomasi***

**Marketing Blog**

There's a lot of information out there about what best practices are for social media marketing. Among the good tips that are based on analytics, there is also misinformation that can stop small organizations that don't have a dedicated marketing team from wanting to even bother with social media. Social media may be free, but behind the scenes, we know that it costs a lot of time and energy. We're here to bust those social media myths and let you know that any effort your staff puts into your social media strategy will be worthwhile in the long run.

## Myth #1: Be on every platform

There are so many **social media platforms that cater to different user demographics**, and new ones crop up all the time. Don't feel like you need to master each platform. The best way to approach social media marketing is by truly knowing your audience. Once you know who you're sharing your information and content with, that should narrow it down to which channels you use to deliver your library's message. Focus only on the social media platforms that your audience consistently uses and interacts with. Even if that's just one platform, narrowing your content to a place where your followers engage with it the most will be time well spent.

## Myth #2: Post multiple times a day

It can be easy to get caught up in the high expectations for frequency of posts. Some organizations post multiple times a day, but that doesn't mean they're more successful at marketing on social media. It's not about the frequency of posts, it's about being consistent. Creating meaningful content that connects with your patrons is the priority for social media marketing. Another myth that's out there is that using scheduling tools can hurt post performance. Scheduling tools are vital for small teams like those at public libraries. They're a great time saver and way to plan out weeks or months of content to be ahead of the curve. When **researched further**, it was found that using a scheduling tool does not have an effect on engagement.

## Myth #3: Images & Videos must be perfect

The best thing about social media is that looking authentic is more relatable than looking polished. Staying true to your organization's brand standard is important, but beyond that, create the kind of content you enjoy and have the time to create. Not every image needs to be photoshopped and not every video needs to be professional. Patrons will connect with the creativity and the message more than how that message is packaged. This type of marketing is interactive and can be fun and engaging for your community, so don't put pressure on making every post perfect. Give your staff room to try new things and see what clicks with the audience most. Feel free to check out **easy tips on how to enhance your visual content**, but there is no need to conform to the myth that every graphic needs to be flawless.



I've had opportunities throughout my career to coordinate marketing and social media for live events and small businesses across various industries. I've enjoyed keeping up with the trends and using social media to not only promote quality services but create a

sense of community. As the PR & Marketing Coordinator for the New Jersey State Library I can draw from these experiences in order to provide tips and best practices for libraries handling their own marketing and social media. I hope that I can be a resource to libraries across New Jersey as they engage with their communities.

**[View all posts by Julia Giantomasi →](#)**