NETWORK CONNECTION

Official Newsletter of the New York State Library Assistants' Association *Jan.- Mar. 2026 Vol.38, No.1*

New York State Library Assistants' Association 45th Annual Conference

NYSLAA: 45 years of Leadership, Learning, and Library Excellence

The 45th Annual NYSLAA Conference will be here before you know it! We look forward to seeing everyone in Corning, New York on May 27th - 29th.



Register early for the best price!
The Radisson will hold rooms in our block until April 26, 2026.

Community outreach donations will be collected for Paws n' Purrs Animal Rescue and the Corning Community Food Pantry. Please see the insert in the conference brochure for more information.

Arrive on Wednesday and visit the Corning Museum of Glass for only $16 by showing your conference lanyard or brochure.

Gather with like-minded library paraprofessionals for a variety of workshops.

Stay for Friday's keynote speaker and awards luncheon. Will you win one of our wonderful basket raffles?

Join the fun at our Meet & Greet dinner!



Join our white elephant gift exchange! Bring a gift ($15 max value) and get a gift during our Meet & Greet dinner on Wednesday evening.

INSIDE: Annual Reports (page 3-5)... Membership (page 6-7)... Fundraising (page 7)... Award and Scholarship Nominations (page 8).

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Donations Chair (vacant)

Public Relations Chair (vacant)

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Melissa Tidd
Suffern Free Library
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Conference Committee
Chandra Best
NYPL - Mott Haven Branch

"We would like to see a library community in New York State where library assistants have a voice in decisions that affect their future, are valued for their contributions, recognized and rewarded appropriately, and where there is equitable access to professional development opportunities."

NYSLAA'S MISSION

"The mission of the New York State Library Assistants' Association is:

1. **To enhance the professional image and status of NY State's library assistants.**
2. **To further their professional growth.**
3. **To provide a network for communication to our members and the profession on library and library assistant issues.**
4. **To network and cooperate with library organizations on local, state, national, and international levels."**

CHECK OUT NYSLAA'S WEBSITE: nyslaa.org

Join NYSLAA's electronic listserv (NYSLAA-L) and follow us on Facebook.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the NYSLAA listserv, simply go to nyslaa.org, click on "Join Our Email List" and follow the instructions.

Find us on Facebook

Search for: **New York State Library Assistants' Association**

The ***NYSLAA Network Connection*** is published four times a year by the New York State Library Assistants' Association. Articles may be reprinted with the permission of the editor.

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Next publication date: May 8, 2026
Submission deadline: April 30, 2026

NYSLAA Annual Reports for 2025

President

Cheryl Marriott

The Bedrock of the Library: A Big Thank You to Our Support Staff

In the library world, we often use the words "support staff." Some people might think that means your job is less important, but the truth is just the opposite. Support is another word for "foundation." Just like a building needs a strong base to stay standing, a library needs you to function. As we celebrate over 45 years of NYSLAA, we want to recognize that you are the heart and soul of everything we do.

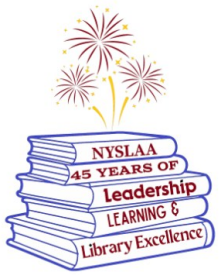
Being "foundational" means you are the first person a patron sees when they need help. You are the hands that keep the books organized so they can be found. You are the experts who fix computer problems and keep the library running smoothly. Whether you are a clerk, a technician, or a page, you aren't working "behind the scenes"—you *are* the scene. Every time someone checks out a book or feels welcome in our space, it is because of your hard work.

There is a special kind of leadership in what you do. It's called "service leadership." It takes a lot of patience to help a frustrated patron and a lot of skill to keep track of thousands of items. You have shown that library assistants are lifelong learners who keep our libraries relevant and helpful.

As your President, it has been a true pleasure to serve through our many fundraisers throughout the year. Your participation makes our work possible. I also want to say how much we appreciated the wonderful attendance at our 2025 conference! That meeting proved that our group is stronger than ever. Now, we are looking for even "bigger and better" things in 2026 as we head to Corning, NY. Our theme for the year is **"Leadership, Learning, and Library Excellence."**

We want you to be there in Corning. Your voice and your presence are what make NYSLAA work. You are the reason libraries stay open and helpful for everyone in New York State. You don't just "support" the library; you *are* the library.

Thank you for being the foundation we all stand on. Your hard work has kept us going for 45 years, and it will lead us into a great future. Keep learning, keep leading, and remember that you are the most important part of the library story. We can't wait to see you in Corning!



NYSLAA: Celebrating 45 Years

Empowering Library Workers to Lead, Learn, and Excel

Certificate of Achievement Review Board



Melissa Tidd

The NYSLAA Certificate of Achievement Review Board is looking for many members to join! If you like helping people, now is your chance to help them work toward their goals!

Meetings would be conducted either by email or Zoom. For further questions or if you are interested, please reach out to Review Board Coordinator Melissa Tidd at mtidd@suffernfreelibrary.org

NYSLAA Annual Reports for 2025

Vice President
Le'Andre Peoples

This will be my first year serving as Vice President of NYSLAA. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such a dedicated Executive Council and look forward to continuing our work together in the year ahead.

As we are currently in the process of planning NYSLAA's 45th Annual Conference, I am especially excited about the opportunities this event provides for connection, collaboration, and professional growth. I look forward to meeting many of our members who will be attending the conference.

I am also pleased to be presenting at this year's conference, *Revitalizing and Re-Engaging Support Staff to Enhance Professional Development*. This session reflects an issue I am passionate about, and I hope many conference attendees will be able to participate. Supporting, empowering, and re-energizing library support staff is essential to the continued success of our libraries and our profession.

As a member of NYSLAA, I truly value the organization's mission and its ability to bring together paraprofessionals from across New York State. NYSLAA supports its members through professional development and collaboration.

I look forward to continuing my service as Vice President and to working closely with the Executive Council and membership in the coming year.



Treasurer
Heather Gad

Since the Network Connection Newsletter is online, we will not post our financial report on the web. The 2025 Treasurer's Annual Report is subject to our CPA's approval. Our books will be finalized shortly and the taxes filed. All NYSLAA members are entitled to see a full report. If you are interested in seeing it after our CPA has approved them, contact me at Heather.Gad@oneonta.edu.

Recording Secretary
Patty Jackman

2025 was my first full year as part of NYSLAA's Executive Council. I proudly completed the official duties of the Recording Secretary; recording and submitting the minutes from our monthly meetings. Meeting via Zoom makes it easy whether I'm at home or work.

The Recording Secretary also compiles, edits and publishes the NYSLAA Network Connection newsletter four times a year with the assistance of the Newsletter Committee. I am thankful to Cheryl Paine and Heather Gad for their help and excellent proofreading skills.

This past year, an odd year, I served as Elections Committee Chair. In August, I sent an email to all members requesting nominations for the positions of President, Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary. This information was in the September issue of Network Connections along with the nominations form. Although we did not receive any nominations for these positions, Le'Andre Peoples let us know that he was interested in the position of Vice President. Since that position was vacant, the Executive Council was able to appoint him as Vice President.

Thank you to our members that have sent submissions for the newsletters. We like to hear what you all are doing in your libraries!

Please email me at jackmanpatricia@mcplibrary.org if you have an interest in writing for our newsletter.

NYSLAA Annual Reports for 2025

Conference Coordinator

Wendy Freier

I helped Shai-Ana organize the 2025 conference held in Binghamton. There were great workshops and nice events allowing for plenty of time to re-acquaint ourselves with old friends and meet new ones.

Josiah Brown, The New York Sherpa, was our keynote presenter. He talked about how we, as libraries and library support, need to understand the community and the trends that happen in our community in order to find ways to market our library to meet those needs.

I have been helping with the 2026 conference to be held at the Radisson, in Corning, NY. The Executive Council has been working hard to organize the workshops and fundraisers.

Chandra Best has stepped up to be mentored in the role of Conference Coordinator. We have just finished the conference brochure and are in the process of proofing it. It will be sent out to you soon via email.

Just a reminder, this year the conference will be held earlier than usual, due to the hotel's available dates.

The conference dates are **May 27-29, 2026**. The ripple effect of the earlier date is that the due dates for registration will also be earlier. In addition, you will need to have your hotel room booked earlier as well. Check your brochure in detail for this information.

If you have any question, please contact me at wfreier@owwl.org. Hope to see you there.

Corresponding Secretary

Cheryl Paine

I have served as the corresponding secretary for NYSLAA since the late fall of 2023 for the 2024-2026 term. One of my duties is to inform the winners of awards and scholarships. There have been no nominations for The Craig Koste Award for Outstanding Service, the Ray Murray Award or the Eileen Lemley scholarship award.

Early in 2025, letters were sent to invite 2025 conference speakers. E-mail correspondence was conducted to state and federal library sources at request of NYSLAA Executive council. Post conference, I sent thank you letters to 16 speakers and 33 notes to those who gave basket donations. Late in 2025, I helped to find speakers for a 2026 conference workshop.

The Corresponding Secretary also heads the NYSLAA elections committee for the Executive Council during even years. I will look forward to seeing your Nominations in the fall of this year.

- If you have been a member of NYSLAA for at least one year, please consider becoming more involved: serving on a committee or running for an office. We need more members to step up to strengthen our organization. Many of our current council members have extended their term to ensure that we continue to have the annual conferences that continue to be beneficial and inspiring.

If you would like to donate a raffle basket or item(s) for the 2026 conference in Corning, NY please direct inquiries and information to me at: cpaine@owwl.org



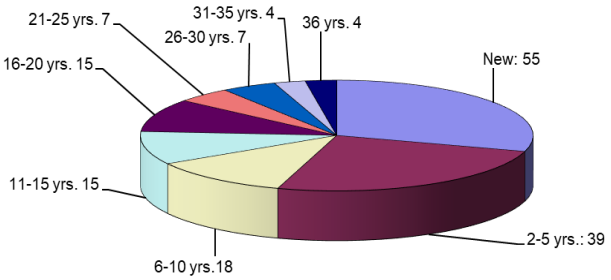


Membership Secretary

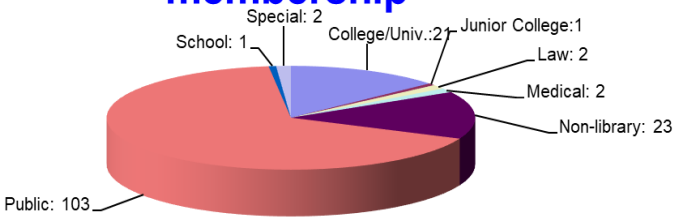
Donna Hanna

The 2025 membership year ended at 155 members. We have 128 regular members and 27 associate.

Years of membership in NYSLAA for 2025 members

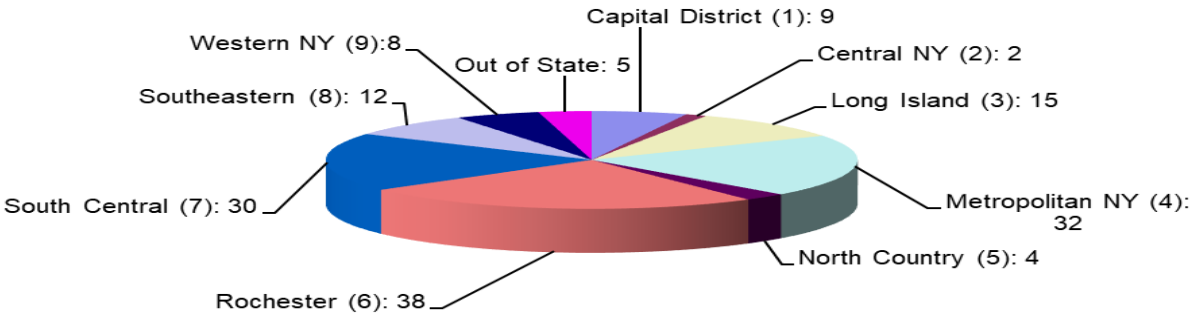


Types of institutions and numbers represented by 2025 membership

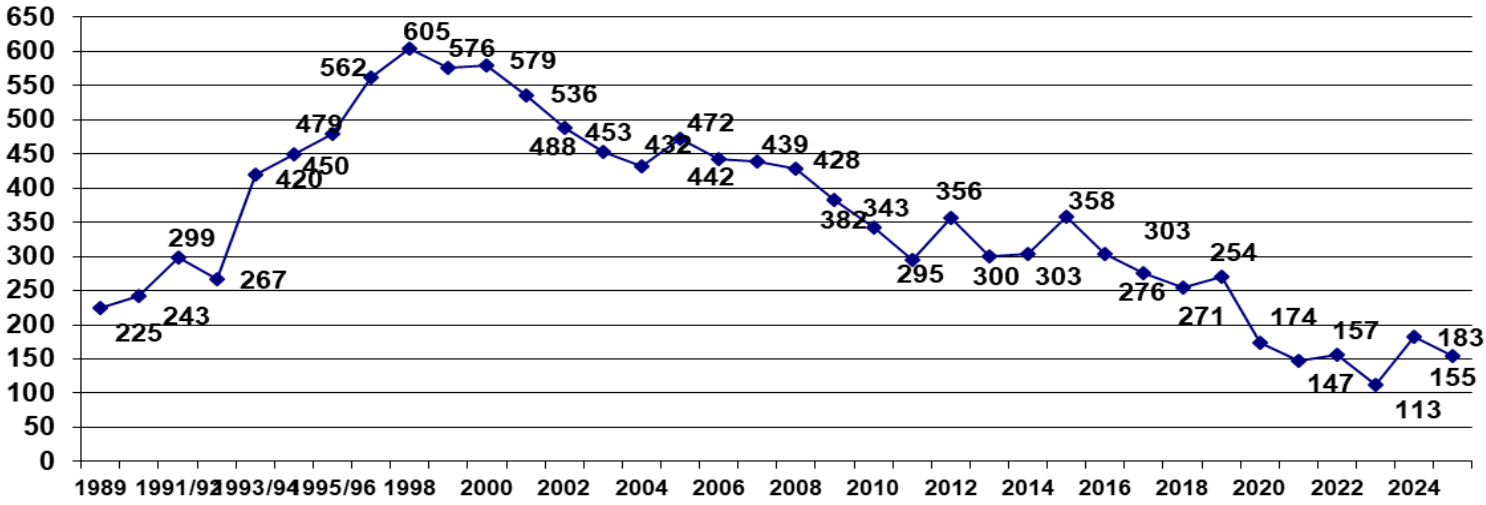


Regional representation of 2025 membership

(regional library council number)



NYSLAA'S Membership Growth 1989-2025



Respectfully submitted, Donna Hanna, Membership Secretary

Membership Secretary

Donna Hanna

We had 155 members for 2025. Twenty-seven of our members hold associate status. Forty-six of our members were new in 2025!

Membership cards/letters and renewal reminders for 2026 have been electronically sent for those I have emails for. If you did not get yours please let me know.

Membership forms are available on our nyslaa.org website under the "Membership Application" on the right. You can fill out your renewal and mail it in with your check or you can renew via the "tools and resources" tab and following the directions. If you renew using this method, you do not need to send a membership form. Just email me if any of your information has changed. As a reminder, membership cards/letters are mailed electronically to anyone who has an email.

We still offer the NYSLAA Membership Year Buy-Back program. For this program you would be able to buy back years of NYSLAA membership where you have had a gap and missed renewing for a particular year. The only stipulation is that you cannot buy membership for years prior to the first year you were a NYSLAA member. Please contact me, hanna@geneseo.edu, to find out what years you are missing and how to go about buying them back.

If you move or your email has changed, please be sure to alert me of these changes. This will help avoid unnecessary delays in receiving your membership information.

As always, if you have a question regarding your membership or if you need a letter verifying your years of NYSLAA membership for the Certificate of Achievement Program please let me know via hanna@geneseo.edu.

END OF ANNUAL REPORTS

National Library Week

National Library Week is April 5-11, 2026. NYSLAA is offering a **free 2026 membership** to anyone who has **never** been a NYSLAA member and joins during this week. Visit our website for membership form https://www.nyslaa.org/membership.html. Then, fill out the membership form and mail or scan to email it before April 11th to take advantage of this offer.



Membership Update - as of Feb. 5th, 2026

Donna Hanna

We have 56 members who have renewed for 2026 so far. Ten of our members hold associate status.

Renewal reminders and membership cards/letters for the 2026 membership year, were sent electronically in January.

If you renewed and have not yet received your membership card for 2026, please let me know via hanna@geneseo.edu.

Have you participated in our fundraisers?

We can all help to lower costs of our annual conference when we buy some tasty treats!

https://www.yumraising.com/store/spring-2026-nyslaa-bf5d/Heahea82915

Be on the lookout for future fundraisers!

Check our Facebook page for info!

Award Nominations

Each year, NYSLAA seeks nominations from its members for each of these awards. The Executive Council reviews the nominations in April of each year and notifies the recipients. The awards are presented at the annual conference in June. Please submit your nomination for the following awards:

Craig Koste Award for Outstanding Service

In 1992, the Executive Council created "The NYSLAA Award for Outstanding Service" specifically for New York State library assistants who are members of NYSLAA. In 1995, its name was changed to honor Craig Koste, a library assistant who passed away and bequeathed an endowment to NYSLAA. The award recognizes those library assistants who have distinguished themselves by their service to our organization and to the library assistants of New York on either a state or local level. A stipend of $100 will be given to the library of the winner for collection development.

Ray Murray Award

In 1989, the Ray Murray Award was created to honor Ray Murray, a librarian who opened the door for the creating of the annual library assistants conference, thereby laying the groundwork for NYSLAA. The Ray Murray Award is given to librarians, library directors, trustees, board members or others who have contributed to the recognition and/or professional growth of library assistants. Craig Koste & Ray Murray Award Nomination Process Each year, NYSLAA seeks nominations from its members for each of these awards. The Executive Council reviews the nominations in April of each year and notifies the recipients. The awards are presented at the annual conference in June.

To nominate, please compile a packet including: your nomination letter, supporting letters, and any other pertinent documentation. Please include the name of the nominee's supervisor for notification. For full information go to: nyslaa.org/awardsnominations.html.

Deadline for submission this year is April 3, 2026

Send nomination packets (or questions) for either award to the NYSLAA President:

Cheryl M. Marriott, DRE NYSLAA President
SUNY Downstate Medical Research Library
450 Clarkson Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11203
Phone: (718) 270-7409
FAX: (718) 270-7468

Apply for the Eileen Lemley Conference Scholarship

The Eileen Lemley Conference Scholarship (ELCS), previously known as the NYSLAA Conference Contest, was renamed to honor the memory of Eileen Lemley who passed away while attending the 2014 conference. Eileen loved working in the library and attending NYSLAA conferences. The recipient will receive a full conference registration, up to two night's lodging, the mixer, and one tour of your choice. **Entries will be accepted from March 1st to March 31st.** Applicants must complete a form and write an essay on "what NYSLAA means to me and why I want to attend the annual conference." Only members who do not receive any funding from their library may apply.

The **application form** for the scholarship and more information is available at: **nyslaa.org/scholarships.html**.