



Sustainable Libraries Initiative

**Annual Report
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022**



Our Mission

2022 Annual Report | Sustainable Libraries Initiative

A message from Co-Founder & Board President, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

2022 was a tremendously exciting year for the Sustainable Libraries Initiative. As I reflect back on the long list of headlines for the year, what I see is not only years of vision and hard work coming to life, but more people seeing what our board has seen for years: Libraries ARE sustainability leaders.

In March 2022 we opened up our public library Sustainable Library Certification Program nationally and over 30 libraries from across the country jumped right in ([member map](#)). In 2022 we also saw our first academic library certified, our first public library system certified, and three more school librarians certified. These are the early adopters, the library leaders that are creating new pathways in their own brains, their organizational culture, and the profession to bring hope for a brighter future to our communities and our profession.

The other major SLI storyline of 2022 is the list of folks that stepped up to help library leaders do this work, I think of the groups listed below as the “Accelerators.” They see the potential of the work and are putting their resources towards the strategic goal of helping libraries create paths to sustainability, resilience and regeneration that will serve not only the library community, but those we provide library services to.



2022 Accelerators



- Thanks to OCLC we relaunched our mobile app with updated information;
- The American Library Association partnered with the SLI to offer the first ever eCourse on Sustainability and featured the SLI in the April 2022 briefing: Sustainability in Libraries: A Call to Action;
- Library Journal renewed their commitment to featuring a Sustainability column featuring the work of the SLI;
- The New Jersey Library Association became the first statewide association to sign a memo of understanding with the SLI, enabling every NJLA Member to become an SLI member; and
- The California State Library named the SLI As a Community Connection and highlighted the Sustainable Library Certification Program as a recommended approach through their Sustainable California Libraries Grant program.



This is a highlight reel.

What is unseen here is the hard work and dedication of a volunteer board, a crew of volunteer mentors, our wonderful partner the Suffolk Cooperative Library System that is helping to underwrite the work of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, and the staff of the SLI that partner with the board to create something wonderful for the library world and, hopefully, the wider world.

I'd like to close by saying thank you.

Thank you to everyone who stepped up, rolled up their sleeves, and started. There is no perfect path forward, no easy answers, but there is hope. And that, my friends, is something to treasure.

-Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System, MLS, LEED AP, co-founder of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and a co-creator of the award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program.

**Numbers from
January 1, 2022 -
December 31, 2022**

2022 Sustainable Libraries Certification Program Completions:

Geographic Reach:

9 members achieved their certification in 2022 including:

- 4 Public Libraries
- 1 Library System
- 1 Academic Library
- 3 School Librarians

68 total new members in 2022:

- 32 Public Libraries
- 4 Academic Libraries
- 3 Library Systems
- 2 School Librarians
- 27 Member-only

Members located in 19 States

California	New Jersey
Connecticut	New York
Florida	North Carolina
Iowa	Pennsylvania
Maine	Texas
Massachusetts	Utah
Michigan	Vermont
Minnesota	Washington
Missouri	Wisconsin
New Hampshire	



Testimonials from people who completed in 2022

▶ Comsewogue Director, Debbie Engelhardt, “Everything we do now is looked at differently. Purchases, procedures, policies are put through the Triple Bottom Line lens. We want to be Environmentally Sound, Socially Equitable and Economically Feasible in our decision making.”

▶ Matthew Bollerman, CEO Hauppauge Public Library states that this certification process, “has allowed our staff who makes decisions, which is all staff, to share a framework, vocabulary and understanding of how those choices reverberate in our world.”

▶ Dean of Libraries, Michelle Young, Clarkson University, “This certification brought renewed excitement about the University Libraries and a revitalized realization about the Libraries' connection to sustainability and related initiatives.”

Testimonials continued

Paula Michalak, District Librarian at the Silver Creek Central School District in Silver Creek, NY “I believe a school librarian has a unique responsibility to always be current in teaching trends, collection development needs, technology, advocacy for literary needs, while also keeping a birds eye view of the curricular needs throughout the grade levels. School librarians can speak to vertical and horizontal alignment in a way many people cannot, and have a unique ability to see trends within student learning to help students achieve... the school library is a great place to develop connections with students and families through programs created and run by the school libraries, like the High School Internship Program or MS Minecraft Club or Elementary Lego Robotics or Newspaper Club...The SLCP helped me clearly articulate the many aspects of being a school librarian and the clear benefit of a school librarian in any school.”

Haverstraw King’s Daughters Public Library, in Garnerville, New York, Library Director, Claudia Depkin “Once the concept of the Triple Bottom Line Sustainability was established as the baseline for this work, it was clear to us that every single area of the library would improve with this effort. The pandemic slowed us down a bit, but we’re excited to move forward using the sustainability lens for decision-making and relationship building.”





Testimonials continued

Aileen Basuljevic and Beth Green, School Library Media Specialists

Wappingers Central School District, Beth states, "Along with the environmentally friendly changes, I have also done self-reflection about what truly matters for my students and THEIR library space. If I am able to provide a safe space where students WANT to be, then at the end of my service at Wappingers Junior High School, then I have truly done my job."

Brentwood Public Library, Library Director, Thomas Tarantowicz, states:

"Sustainability is an essential and conscious decision when doing business today. As a public library, through staff and community interaction we have developed new ways to explore sustainability. As we look to the future, we will continue to implement sustainability in the workplace. As we develop library programming for the community and plan future building and property renovation projects, we will incorporate environmental sensitivity into our design."

Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) in Poughkeepsie, New York, "Our team is

proud of our work on topics large and small, from how we clean our facility, source local products, and conserve energy to our board's impressive work on topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, financial planning, and ensuring our staff is paid a living wage," said **Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Director**, "One of the many strengths of this program is how it has helped to change our organizational culture. We make better decisions for our workers, the planet, and our member libraries thanks to this experience."

Some things we can all do to help with climate change:

▶ Turning your thermostat up just a few degrees in the summer and down in the winter can help our environment as well as save you money! It is estimated that raising or lowering your thermostat in the summer and in the winter by even 1 degree can save you 1% on your energy bill. These changes will also impact your carbon footprint as a 1 degree change can equal more than 700 pounds of carbon per year!

▶ Print Releaf Impact Statement - paper consumption, help reforestation efforts

▶ Change your shower head. Investing in an aerated shower head can make a real difference in energy and water consumption!

▶ Reduce plastic usage in your bathroom! Many bar soaps, shampoos, and conditioners work equally as well as the bottled choices. Swap tubes of toothpaste for tablets and powder. Swap out your toothbrush for one made of bamboo. Pick a razor with changeable blades.

▶ Lock up carbon in your garden! The more vegetation you have, the more carbon you are storing. The fuller your garden the better, even if it looks a bit overgrown.

▶ Invest your money wisely! Have a conversation with your financial advisor and request that your funds be invested in companies that are ethical, responsible and sustainable.

▶ Practice the 6Rs: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair





Sustainable Libraries Initiative

Advisory Board as of December 31, 2022

- ▶ **Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, President, Co-founder & Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System**
- ▶ **Matthew Bollerman, Vice President, Co-founder & CEO of the Hauppauge Public Library**
- ▶ **Janet Scherer, Director of the South Huntington Public Library**
- ▶ **Roger Reyes, Treasurer, Assistant Director of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System**
- ▶ **Lisa Kropp, Director of the Lindenhurst Memorial Library**
- ▶ **Annie Gersztoff, School Library System Director at Capital Region BOCES**
- ▶ **Dr. Jen Cannell, Supervisor, School Library System at Southern Westchester BOCES**
- ▶ **Jennifer Ferriss, Assistant Director at the Saratoga Springs Public Library**
- ▶ **Margaret Woodruff, Director of the Charlotte Library**
- ▶ **Claudia Depkin, Director at the Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library**



Connect with us

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