



Sustainable Libraries Initiative

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Mid-Hudson Library System is Certified Sustainable

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative recognizes the Mid-Hudson Library System as a leader in sustainability.

Suffolk County, New York – November 16, 2022 – Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) in Poughkeepsie, New York, is the first public library system to be certified sustainable through the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative's](#) award-winning Sustainable Libraries Certification Program. This one-of-a-kind program guided MHLS through an in-depth look at their policies, operations, and practices in providing support for 66 member libraries in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, and Ulster Counties.

“The Mid-Hudson Library System continues to be a leader in applying the triple-bottom line to serving their members,” said Sustainable Libraries Initiative co-founder, Matthew Bollerman. “Evidenced in their submission is a strong commitment to raising all served libraries, library staff, trustees, and communities' ability to confront and survive climate adversity.”

The Mid-Hudson Library System regularly highlights sustainable choices and programs through highlights in their newsletter and educational programming.

“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.”

MHLS has provided leadership in the three pillars of triple bottom line sustainability through their role of providing support to their member libraries. Their [Library of Local project](#), created in partnership with Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley, exemplifies how a library system can help their members connect with the community to help promote local resilience. This program offers participating libraries collections of books, audio-visual materials, tools, seeds, and programming to foster

deeper connections to one another while organizing around climate adaptation work. This project is an example of how preparation for the effects of climate change can be effectively addressed on a local level with community-driven solutions led by libraries.

International Impact

Mid-Hudson Library System is among the first to participate in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program, the first of its kind in the world. This benchmarking program was developed to assist libraries of all kinds - public, academic, and individual school librarians - to create opportunities to make better choices on behalf of the local and global community.

The International Federation of Library Associations recognized the program at their 2019 World Congress in Athens, Greece, becoming the first program in the United States to be honored through their “Green Libraries” Award.

Comprehensive Approach

With categories of actions focusing on each of the three pillars of triple bottom line sustainability such as Energy, Transportation, Continuing Education & Consulting, and Resilience Planning, this comprehensive process leads a library toward institutional change that shifts the rationale for every decision to consider the local and global impacts. Through this program, libraries work with their communities to listen and learn, allowing local needs to be identified and addressed. Strengthening the relationship between the library and the community they serve builds resilience through stronger connections with many organizations and increased access to information.

The path to certification through the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program is designed to be flexible for libraries of different types, sizes, and budgets and guided by the communities they serve. Each library that completes the program will select the benchmarks that best fit the needs of their library and community, resulting in a uniquely sustainable organization. Find out more information through our website (<https://sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org>) or contact sliadmin@suffolknet.org.

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative is now enrolling public libraries throughout the United States. Seventy public libraries and four library systems are currently enrolled in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program. Mid-Hudson Library System is the thirteenth organization to be certified through this program.

For more information, please contact:
Annemarie Gordon, Sustainability Coordinator
Sustainable Libraries Initiative
Suffolk Cooperative Library System
631-286-1600 x1355
sliadmin@suffolknet.org