

An Introduction to the Sustainable Library Certification Program

During this webinar, you will learn about the Sustainable Library Certification Program. A panel of speakers whose libraries completed the SLCP will describe their journey and share their library's experiences.

- SLI launched 2015.
- Start from a fresh mindset, make informed decisions, think practically, be intentional with your actions
- Sustainable libraries: strong & authentic, catalyst for social cohesion and civic participation, work on climate mitigation, actively participate in climate adaptation.
- TBL: environmentally sound, socially equitable, economically feasible
- Discounted rate (25%) for cohort libraries
- Pricing includes: Step by step formatted goals, guidance from a mentor, built in resources, community of practice of other libraries going through process
- Public Library Systems areas targeted: Organizational commitment, energy, land, & water use, waste, recycling & purchasing, partnerships, community involvement, social equity, community resiliency, financial stability, collections
- Action item and responses form: no wrong way to answer, all libraries different.
- SLCP provides: a cO2 calculator (greenhouse gas emissions tracking), a mentor (helps with guidance, support, help with expectations, encouragement)
- **National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries Implementation Guide**
 - Clear direction for movement, climate mitigation, adaptation, and justice.
- Tell our library's story: certification presentation (have access to other presentations for review and guidance). Good way to network, to show off our library
- Possibility of becoming SLI presenter in future, further promoting our system
- SLCP meetups: allow members to connect, discuss topics
- Benefits of certification: provides clear path forward, reflective process, transform services, community building, professional development and engagement, creating partnerships, raising library profile as a "recognized leader on the topic of climate action and community resilience.
- **Free membership: visit SLI website, click participate --> SLI membership, fill out form, how did you hear about us = other = enter "I am a member of a participating library (enter which membership) association" in the notes field.**

Panel discussion:

Janet Scherer, Director, South Huntington Public Library, SLI Advisory Board (cert 2021, start in about 2017, family and community important library values)

- About library: public library, pop about 38,000, building 48000 sq. ft. Staff 70 ppl, diverse community, newcomers
- Benefits of SLCP: shifting mindset, view of community and staff, perspectives on intentionality, collaborative growth, better able to understand and serve community, important to prepare communities re climate events (fires, storms, pandemic, etc.)
- How to put together team: presentation re SLI and SLCP, put out to staff, volunteer/interest based, their team: about 6-7 people across depts.
- Challenges faced: COVID, admin in charge (too busy to dedicate enough time),
- Advice: When presenting to admin/board, make sure to highlight fiscal data to improve chances of committee takeoff
- Addtl. notes: Just get started. No rush. You'll get there.

- **Synopsis: 2017-2021 (4 yr) process for this library; 6-7 interest/volunteer-based folks on SLCP team; research fiscal benefits for admin; program helps to shift mindset and better and more intentionally serve diverse community**

Lisa Jacobs, Library Director, Longwood Public Library, SLCP Mentor (cert 2021, start 2020ish leed platinum), due to community interest)

- About library: public library, large school district, about 70,000 ppl, very diverse community, many languages: Spanish and Haitian speakers, etc., staff: 125.
- Benefits of SLCP: new lens to evaluate community and service, overall department connection, breaking down of “silos”, more library wide programing, new level of engagement from community, better promotion, more fun
- How to put together team: n/a
- Challenges faced: COVID, timing, group size (too small)
- Advice: When presenting to admin/board for buy in- make sure you consider your audience and their goals (fiscal, etc.), sustainability saves money over time, get folks behind stats and realistic gains of not interested in philosophy,
- Addtl. notes: About the process, not the product. Make sure to be intentional.
- **Synopsis: 2020-2021 (1 yr) process for this library; very small group; fiscal benefits: sustainability might present upfront costs, but saves significant money over time; SLCP helps “break down silos” and facilitates better communication and engagement between departments, allows to better serve full community; intentionality most important, no need to rush process.**

Lisa Kropp, Library Director, Lindenhurst Memorial Library, President-New York Library Association, SLI Advisory Board (cert 2019, start abt 2015: in wake of financial issues, gave an avenue for community engagement)

- About library: community about 42,000 residents, 15% pop Spanish speaking, 10-15% pop polish speakers, collection development reflects community, staff: about 49, 23 full time, more attempts at outreach. 50 families displaced from Ukraine
- Benefits of SLCP: philosophy of service shift, able to better embody sustainable practices throughout service (i.e., language shifts in documentation, better policy/procedure/strategic plan alignment, etc.), improved community resilience, reinvigoration of activity in regard to community partnerships and/or groups (chamber, Kiwanis, etc.), increased community buy in,
- How to put together team: n/a
- Challenges faced: Keeping momentum, organization, things never done before (i.e., waste audit)
- Advice: Personal interest -> bring to admin = usual process, however, staff don't get full picture of admin workload or issues, might feel dismissed (no time) = advice is bring to admin with solutions to overwork or to overwhelm of time, (pilot program?) go with plan in place, look for community organizations that already do work in those areas to create firmer foundation to show initiative to board/admin.
- Addtl. notes: Full 100% buy in from staff at this location, all staff recognized importance to them. No timeline takes the pressure off. No need to do in certain time frame. Best to do this thoughtful and intentionally, no need to rush, every place is different as far as needs and timelines and staffing.
- **Synopsis: 2015-2019 (4 yr) process for this library; positive shift in philosophy of service; keeping momentum is difficult, so pace yourself; look for community orgs that already do**

work in certain areas and think re partnership; benefit: improved community resilience and reinvigoration of activity re other orgs.

General notes from seminar:

- SLCP works for libraries of all sizes
- 16,000 pop for free library (not panel), how to encourage involvement at all levels, (hurdle not convincing staff, but how will it be feasible overall due to small size of pop and library) answer from panel: meetups between mentors and/or other groups working on this effort in other libraries.
- Libraries with multiple locations, cert for whole system or one particular library, answer: can certify by one, but suggestion is to schedule zoom call with SLI to dig in, usual is to do system. Depends on structure of library system set up.
- Sustainability practices might incur small cost increases upfront (switch to energy efficient devices, different product choices, etc.), but over time savings add up, very worthwhile. Plans could be 3,4,5 years down the road, does not need to be changes immediately, just formulate the “road you are on”.” Do not need to be there immediately, but commit to that road.
- Makerspace which incurs waste, sustainability program still possible? Answer: yes! Still possible. Think about things to do with waste (trashin’ fashion= garbage fashion show, other ideas), things can be made with maker space instead of bought imported/etc., which can work in sustainable ways.
- Consistent improvement, not perfection.
- SLCP process, help qualify for grant opportunities? Answer, nothing specific, however, it helps preparedness for grant applications, etc. “These are the strides we’ve made” etc.
- **Synopsis: libraries are all different so specific format/timing will be unique to our needs/demographics; SLCP can present upfront cost increases but can help save money over time, as well as benefit us in grant applications, to show measurable progress we have made, etc.; consistency and intentionality very important; journey/improvement focus is better than goal/perfection focus**