

MARYLAND STATE LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER

Annual Plan FY 2026

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Overview

Although the Maryland State Library Resource Center (SLRC) has been flat funded for fiscal year 2026, we are certain that this will be a breakthrough year. Each division has spent months figuring out how to cut the budget in ways that will not or will only minimally impact our customers. Additionally we have spent more time than ever engaging with our customers and stakeholders, and have created new programs and opportunities for statewide education, access, and support. SLRC and the entire Enoch Pratt Free Library experienced tremendous change last year, and the changes are continuing. Now, however, as some of the churning has died down, we can see the line of where we are headed and we are excited about it! Part of our focus this year will be devoted to working with the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) and the SLRC Oversight Commission to begin working on the next SLRC strategic plan. Another focus will be to continue to discover and advocate for more funding in the years ahead. But beyond that, at the ground level, we will be building better, more responsive, and more useful resources for the libraries and residents of Maryland.

Organizational Effectiveness

This year we are dedicated to ensuring that we are moving toward the best possible staffing structure for providing both very deep expertise and broad access to all of our services and materials. Some of this will be helped along by new leadership and other organizational changes at the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

SLRC Public Services: We are adding a SLRC Office and Operations Coordinator. We are replacing all Librarian I positions as they become available in order to create a more effective workflow. We will hire more Library Associates, who will be assigned to specific departments but who will be flexible and will spend more time doing general reference and subbing when needed. Librarian IIs will be subject specialists who do more in-depth reference, and plan and deliver statewide programs and trainings. We will replace outgoing Librarian Is with either Librarian IIs or LAs, with generally more LAs on staff to free up time for the Librarian IIs to do more state-focused work.

Facilities and Security:

The new COO is in the process of identifying procedural changes that will have a positive impact on the budget without downgrading services. He will give regular updates on his progress at the quarterly meetings.

Office of Finance and Procurement (OFP):

Under the leadership of our new CFO, Sri Veeramachaneni, we have begun making the budgeting process much more transparent. In previous years the State money was allocated to the various Divisions based on the MOU-specified amounts and budget requests, and each Chief or Division Head worked in isolation to distribute the funds among their various needs. In FY25 some Chiefs

were able to collaborate for the first time in the budgeting process, allowing everyone to make difficult financial decisions that benefit the entire SLRC. In FY26 with the majority if not all Leadership positions filled, we will be able to become fully collaborative and strategic in our budgeting process. This will result in better services and less waste for years to come. The SLRC Project Implementation Manager, Megan Heburn, has been working closely with OFP and across the organization to ensure that all SLRC budget holders are working together, understand the entire budgeting and expense process, and that all money is being spent fully and appropriately.

- Positions to be filled at EPFL in FY26 (as of this writing, some titles are still subject to change):
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - Executive Director of the Office of Equity and Fair Practice
 - Chief People Officer
 - Executive Director of Collections, Programs, and Branches
 - Executive Director of Marketing and Communications
- SLRC-specific positions to be filled in FY26
 - SLRC Office and Operations Coordinator
 - Librarian II in Business, Science, and Technology
 - Several Library Associate positions across departments

Awareness

Last fiscal year, SLRC staff began directly reaching out to more of our secondary and post-secondary colleagues. We have already raised significant awareness in the Baltimore region; this year we will expand that reach with statewide institutions.

This Fall the Enoch Pratt Free Library is presenting the [House of Melo](#) experience. This will drive increased visits to the Central Library/State Library Resource Center from around the state, and will expose many new customers to the resources that we have available.

We will also:

- Have a designated staff person join ACRL in order to learn more about the needs of institutions of higher learning

- Have a designated staff person join MASL in order to learn more about the needs of K-12 librarians
- Several SLRC leaders will participate in the MD250 Committee
- The Chief of SLRC will attend all MAPLA meetings as able and will also meet regularly with the Directors of the Regional Libraries
- Host personal tours for elected officials and other VIPs
- Have a strong presence in the Maryland Library Association where SLRC staff:
 - Serve on the Executive Board
 - Chair the Legislative Panel
 - Chair the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association
 - Serve as the Conference Director
- Have a strong presence in statewide communities of practice, interest groups, and other professional committees
- We are expanding training and outreach to public libraries and K-12 schools in support of our new SAILOR database suite.

Technology

Systems: This year Enoch Pratt Free Library and State Library Resource Center is migrating from Google to Office 365. We anticipate some initial hurdles, but this will eventually allow us to manage our communications more effectively and at a lower cost. We are also looking into other software solutions for project management, financial processes, and elsewhere to ensure that staff can spend more time serving the community and less time managing multiple systems and paperwork solutions.

SAILOR network costs rise annually due to increased bandwidth required from customers. The Chief of Networks and Engineering, Mike Brown, is looking at ways to help our customers identify and share plans to upgrade in advance so we can budget more strategically.

Our IT department is also testing alternatives to our current VMWare servers that, if determined to meet our needs, have the potential to save significant money over the next three years.

Public Service: Our Fall SLRC Conference has the theme *Convergence: Technology, Equity, and the Future*. We will host sessions that explore appropriate use of technology in library settings, a look into what tech may be coming our way soon, how to best utilize tech resources to facilitate access

by disabled members of our communities, how to prepare our customers for the education and workforce changes that will emerge due to technological advances, and how technology is doing harm by incorporating human biases into their very core functions - and if there's anything we can do about it.

We will continue the Maryland Statewide Lending program, which allows libraries to borrow tech to explore, use with customers, and determine if it's a good fit for their institutions.

Collections and Access Services: We will continue to offer a full suite of electronic resources through the SAILOR Database Project including GALE education resource, Mango Languages, and HeritageQuest Family History for the statewide consortium, even as we cut costs locally by eliminating Hoopla.

We will migrate the Marina Interlibrary Loan resource sharing platform from Relais D2D to SHAREit. Implementation will begin in Winter 2026 with a July 2026 rollout.

A search is being done to find alternate content management systems for Digital Maryland. Many libraries and archives are moving away from OCLC's CONTENTdm because of its poor searchability, customization, and search engine optimization (SEO).

Training Resources and Services

As always, we will provide tailored content to all libraries in Maryland in terms of by-request staff training and public services. We are implementing new procedures that will give us greater control and flexibility when designing these programs, and will update the catalogs more frequently than in the past. We are instituting cost-saving measures by focusing more clearly on what our customers need access to that is in short supply or not available elsewhere.

Conferences: This year we are cutting the full Spring SLRC Conference in order to save money. We are, however, adding two new smaller spring conferences that provide training and resources specifically requested by our statewide customers. The Conferences we're offering this year are:

- Mencken Day, featuring historian Ed Larson, September 13, 2025
- Fall 2025 SLRC Conference: Convergence: Technology, Equity, and the Future
October 27-28, 2025
- Public Service Staff/Circulation Conference: Title still in progress February 24-25, 2026
- SAILOR Resources Symposium TBD - Winter 2026
- LATI full day tour and training with LBPD, April 1, 2026
- Special Collections Symposium, May 20, 2026

- Genealogy Conference TBD - Spring 2026

Digital Maryland: Digital Maryland is participating in the Maryland State Archives planned statewide support network for community and participatory archives. SLRC will be the primary option for digitization projects developed through the system.

We are also creating workflows and standards documentation for our partners.

DeWayne Wickham Room of Maryland Journalism: (Name pending final approval). This November we will transform the current Mencken Room into the DeWayne Wickham Room of Maryland Journalism. This will offer customers a good space to work quietly, access the Wickham audio collection and other materials, study the history of Maryland Journalism, and read local newspapers. The grand opening will be held on November 12, and will feature Dr. Carla Hayden in conversation with Mr. Wickham. [Appendix A](#) contains our talking points about this shift.

Trainings and Public Programs: We will continue to provide statewide trainings and programs on request, in-person and virtually.

- National History Day: We are creating a National History Day form and will be limiting the number of requests we can honor. To mitigate this shift, we will create an asynchronous virtual training that can be used by K-12 schools whose visits we cannot accommodate.
- We are also creating a new process for staff creation of SLRC programs that should lead to better efficiency and managerial oversight resulting in the best programs being created and taught by the correct staff.
- We have added portable exhibits to our offerings! The first exhibit, featuring a history of Malcom X, will be visiting Baltimore County Public Library, Montgomery County Public Libraries, Charles County Public Library, and St. Mary's County Library in FY26. We will be adding two new exhibits this fiscal year, and they will be available to check out quarterly on MyTurn, the statewide library lending platform.
- We are collaborating with Maryland Humanities to distribute book club kits of the One Maryland One Book to libraries via MyTurn.

Appendix A

Shift from the Mencken Room to the DeWayne Wickham Room:

- The room is changing from the H. L. Mencken Room to the DeWayne Wickham Room of Maryland Journalism (title still pending).
- We are not getting rid of any of our Mencken collection or artifacts. They will be housed in our Special Collections department and are viewable upon request. The items in the current Mencken Room are also only available to view or study upon request except for one day a year.
- H. L. Mencken is a legendary Baltimore journalist. He was intentionally controversial during his career, and continues to be controversial to this day. We continue to wrestle with his writing and his legacy each year during our day-long Mencken Day conference.
- Each year we get fewer requests to view and study the Mencken collection. While we recognize the importance of Mencken's contributions to Maryland and American journalism, we do not receive enough interest to reserve an entire room of the Central Library for the exclusive use of studying the collection of his works, letters, and artifacts.
- DeWayne Wickham is also a legendary Baltimore Journalist. He was born in Sandtown-Winchester and has lived in Cherry Hill, Forest Park, Woodlawn, and Owings Mills. He has worked for: The Evening Sun, USA Today, CBS News, Black Enterprise, BET, and U.S. News and World Report, where he had an ongoing opinion column for 30 years. He taught media ethics at Delaware State University and North Carolina A&T State University. He was the founding Dean of Morgan State University's School of Global Journalism & Communication. He's the co-founder and former president of the National Association of Black Journalists. He was a part of the press corps who accompanied Nelson Mandela on his 1992 US Tour, and was one of 12 journalists who accompanied Jean Bertrand Aristide back to Haiti in 1994. He was a Sergeant in the Air Force during Vietnam. He is the recipient of the Award of Special Merit from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the Fellow of the Society Award from the Society of Professional Journalists.
- Dr. Hayden was instrumental in working with Wickham to allow Pratt to house his collection of writings, recordings of interviews, and other materials.
- It took many years to get the collection in order.
- We will use the DeWayne Wickham Room of Maryland Journalism to recognize both Wickham and all important Maryland journalists and publications, both historic and contemporary. There will be listening stations where researchers can listen to Wickham's interviews and other recordings.
- Unlike now, the room will be open to the public for regular use as well as reserved for library events. Currently, we have to keep the room locked because of the monetary value of some of Mencken's artifacts.

- We are working directly with Wickham to ensure that the room is both a fitting access point for his collection and a useful resource for all who are interested in learning more about Maryland journalism and journalism in general.
- This is the perfect time for this switch. The Enoch Pratt Free Library stands up for the Freedom of the Press and recognizes that accurate, unbiased, uncensored, and investigative journalism are crucial to the success of our democracy. The dedication of this new room will highlight these resources and will inspire current and future journalists to report the truth.