



Enoch Pratt Free Library and State Library Resource Center Winter 2026 Public Services Conference

Tuesday, February 24 & Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Day One: Virtual - Tuesday, February 24, 2026

09:30 AM - 10:30 AM:

Wellness and Balance in Public Service: Supporting Maryland's Library Workforce

Welcome: Paul Chasen, State Library Resource Center Training and Reference Services Coordinator, Enoch Pratt Free Library

Keynote Speaker: Loida Garcia-Febo, International Library Consultant and Past President, American Library Association (ALA)

Library workers today navigate increasing demands, shifting expectations, and challenges that can affect both their wellbeing and their connection to the mission of their work. In this session, Loida Garcia-Febo explores practical approaches to self-care, wellness, and finding balance as public service professionals. Addressing the realities of anxiety, uncertainty, and rapid change in libraries, Garcia-Febo shares tools to help staff manage emotional strain and respond with strength and clarity. Participants will learn strategies to maintain their resilience and sense of purpose in the face of current pressures affecting libraries, drawing on Loida's extensive experience with self-preservation, navigating uncertainty, and supporting staff in high-demand environments.

This session offers tools, reflection, and encouragement designed to help library employees sustain themselves and their vital work, even as their professional landscape continues to evolve.

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM:

Maryland Intellectual Freedom Helpline

Speaker: Tif Sutherland, Reference Supervisor, Calvert Library

In 2024, the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom chose the Maryland Library Association as one of ten pilot sites for its new Intellectual Freedom Helpline program. This grant enabled the Maryland Library Association to establish a confidential reporting system to address censorship attempts and promote intellectual freedom. In this session, we will review this valuable resource, discuss the progress made on the project, and explore how it can support library workers at all levels and in all types of libraries throughout Maryland.

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM:

The Changing Landscape of Interlibrary Loan in Maryland

Speakers:

- Emma Beaven, Manager, Maryland Interlibrary Loan Organization (MILO), Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Hannah Brady, Office Supervisor, Maryland Interlibrary Loan Organization (MILO), Enoch Pratt Free Library

This session will train attendees how the statewide interlibrary loan service, Marina, currently works. The session will also review how the service will migrate from OCLC's WorldShare to Soutron Global's SHAREit.

For more information, please contact: slrcprogramsandtraining@prattlibrary.org or visit <https://www.slrc.info/professional-development/conferences/public-services-conference>.



Enoch Pratt Free Library and State Library Resource Center 2026 Public Services Conference

Tuesday, February 24 & Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Day Two: In-Person - Wednesday, February 25, 2025

08:00 AM: Doors open for registration and breakfast

09:00 - 10:00 AM: Welcome and Keynote Session

Welcome: Liz Sundermann-Zinger, Chief of the Central Library & State Library Resource Center

Keynote Speaker: Morgan Lehr Miller, State Librarian, Maryland State Library Agency

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM: Session One (Choose One)

1a: DEI Panel Discussion

Speakers:

- Dr. Emil Cunningham, Interim Executive Director, Office of Equity and Fair Practice, Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Cassie Miller, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Baltimore County Public Library
- Dr. Kelly Clark, Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Officer, Howard County Library System

Join three DEI leaders in public libraries as they discuss their primary roles and responsibilities in their library systems and counties, and how public services staff can carry out their projects and initiatives.

1b: The Changing Landscape of Interlibrary Loan in Maryland

Speakers:

- Emma Beaven, Manager, Maryland Interlibrary Loan Organization (MILO), Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Hannah Brady, Office Supervisor, Maryland Interlibrary Loan Organization (MILO), Enoch Pratt Free Library

This session will train attendees how the statewide interlibrary loan service, Marina, currently works. The session will also review how the service will migrate from OCLC's WorldShare to Soutron Global's SHAREit.

1c: While You're on the Desk: Meditation and Mindfulness (Maximum Capacity: 30 Attendees)

Speaker: Melisa Mitchell, The Space Within

This session will focus on the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, the tenets of a good practice, some guidance for how to start one, a short guided mindfulness practice, and a longer guided meditation practice.



1d: While You're on the Desk: Tai Chi & Qigong: Healing Arts for the Community (Maximum Capacity: 30 Attendees)

Speaker: Baba Ausar Winkler, Martial Artist • Teacher • Healer • Elder of Culture

Tai Chi and Qigong are ancient practices that bring strength, balance, and harmony to the body, mind, and spirit. These arts were designed not just for warriors, but for entire communities—elders, adults, and young people growing together in health and awareness.

Today, in a world full of stress, fast movement, and constant distractions, these practices offer a powerful medicine: slow, mindful movement that restores the inner rhythm of life.

1e: Tour of Circ (Maximum Capacity: 25 Attendees)

The Tour of Circ highlights the importance of having dedicated circulation departments within libraries. Our Central Circulation staff handles tasks ranging from registering for library cards to checking out materials, as well as assisting patrons in locating departments and digital resources. Our department is likely the first desk you will speak to when entering the library, and the last place you will stop when checking out an item. We handle direct customer service and behind-the-scenes tasks such as returned mail and checks, books by mail, games, class applications, MILO returns, and missing and damaged books. During this guided tour, you will get a glimpse behind the circulation desk and gain insight into how the Circulation Department functions, and why it's an essential part of the library experience!

11:15 AM – 12:30 PM: Session Two (Choose One)

2a: The NeuroMagic of Customer Service: How Language Shapes Calm, Connection, and Confidence

Speaker: Jennifer Hopwood, Ed.D, Learning and Development Facilitator, Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA)

What we say to patrons—and what we say to ourselves—can transform even the toughest service moments. In this interactive session, discover the neuroscience behind communication, emotional regulation, and customer behavior. Learn how simple shifts in language can calm the nervous system, prevent escalation, and boost your own confidence. Through demonstrations and scalable activities, you'll walk away with practical “words that work” and self-talk strategies you can use immediately.

2b: How to Handle Contaminated Materials

Speaker: Chris Cannon, Library Resource Supervisor, Stacks & Shelving Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library

The purpose of this course/class is to understand the policy and procedures of EPFL for handling contaminated materials. We will discuss rodents, insects, and molded materials and how to contain and dispose of these materials properly.



2c: While You're on the Desk: Hands Off the Books, Hands in the Ink (Maximum Capacity: 30 Attendees)

Speaker: Heather Kerner, Fine Arts & Music Librarian/Artist In Residence Coordinator, Enoch Pratt Free Library/SLRC

While you were checking out books, the art world didn't stand still! Step away from the circulation desk and dive into a playful, hands-on exploration of creative printmaking techniques you might have missed. Dive into four creative stations packed with color, texture, and shape! Experiment, play, and walk away with your own one-of-a-kind prints on paper, fabric, and more! Perfect for all skill levels.

Stations include:

- *Linoleum Block Printing – Try your hand at carving bold designs and printing them by hand.*
- *Playdough Impression Printing – Roll, paint, and pull one-of-a-kind painterly prints.*
- *Styrofoam Printing – Press textures and designs into foam for quick, fun prints.*
- *3D Glass Form Printing on Fabric – Explore texture and layering using glass objects to print directly onto fabric.*

2d: Tour of SLRC (Maximum Capacity: 20 Attendees)

Join SLRC staff for this tour of SLRC. View building highlights, and find out how SLRC can support your work with programs, training and materials.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM: Lunch

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM: Session Three - Choose One

3a: Setting Boundaries, Part I

Speakers:

- Jayne Walters, Assistant Library Manager, Severna Park Library, Anne Arundel County Public Library
- Jeanette Thayer, Library Associate, Glen Burnie Library, Anne Arundel County Public Library

Someone is hovering at the desk and telling you their life story. Another calls you “honey” or “sweetie”. Someone insists that you’re the only person that can help them with the copier. We’ve all been in these types of situations, and maybe we’ve even silently wished a coworker would come and save us. In this presentation we’ll delve into setting healthy workplace boundaries; how to set the expectations early, how to enforce them, and how to rescue a coworker in need. All of it starts with being aware of your surroundings, reading others’ body language, and recognizing how our body language can be interpreted.

3b: While You're on the Desk: Build Your Own Journal/Planner (Maximum Capacity: 25 Attendees)

Speaker: Alisa Brock, Drama MaMa Bookshop

Join local artist, bookbinder, and shop owner, Alisa Brock of Drama MaMa Bookshop for a Build Your Own Journal/Planner workshop. Attendees select everything from their book cover to page inserts, adding decorative elements to further customize their creations, concluding the practice with the satisfaction of personally binding their own book. All supplies included.

3c: While You're on the Desk: Budgeting and Investing for the Terrified

Speaker: JP Krahel, Allender Endowed Chair of Accounting at Loyola University Maryland

Finances are a challenge during good times, and these are not good times! Learn how to prioritize your dollars, how debt repayment can be made easier, and why a dollar not lost is often better than a dollar earned. We just might even get into helping your young loved ones start saving for retirement.



3d: We Keep Us Safe: Community Building as De-Escalation in Library Settings

Speaker: Mariel Sass, LCSW-C, Social Work Supervisor | Outreach and Mobile Services, Enoch Pratt Free Library

This program will center community building and trust as some of the most effective strategies for creating safe, inclusive environments inside libraries. We will explore how deepening relationships with self, co-workers, and patrons can result in not only more successful de-escalation attempts, but also reduced frequency/intensity of disruptive incidents. The program will build on theories of conflict transformation, restorative practices, and human-centered approaches to responding to harm. Real life scenarios and success stories will be shared.

3e: Tour of SLRC (Maximum Capacity: 20 Attendees)

Join SLRC staff for this tour of SLRC. View building highlights, and find out how SLRC can support your work with programs, training and materials.

2:30 PM-3:30 PM Session Four - Choose One

4a: Setting Boundaries, Part II

Speakers:

- Jayne Walters, Assistant Library Manager, Severna Park Library, Anne Arundel County Public Library
- Jeanette Thayer, Library Associate, Glen Burnie Library, Anne Arundel County Public Library

Someone is hovering at the desk and telling you their life story. Another calls you "honey" or "sweetie". Someone insists that you're the only person that can help them with the copier. We've all been in these types of situations, and maybe we've even silently wished a coworker would come and save us. In this presentation we'll delve into setting healthy workplace boundaries; how to set the expectations early, how to enforce them, and how to rescue a coworker in need. All of it starts with being aware of your surroundings, reading others' body language, and recognizing how our body language can be interpreted.

4b: Beyond Books: Empowering Public Librarians to Advocate for Unhoused Patrons

Speaker: Laura Toner, Youth Services Library Associate, Wicomico Public Library

Developed as part of her MLIS coursework at the University of Maryland, College Park, under the guidance of Ryan O'Grady, Laura Toner's presentation equips public library staff with the knowledge, empathy, and confidence to better serve patrons experiencing homelessness. This session explores the library's ethical responsibility, as outlined by the American Library Association, to ensure equitable access to information for all. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the barriers unhoused patrons face and learn practical strategies for providing trauma-informed, compassionate service while maintaining professional boundaries. The presentation will also examine how policies and advocacy efforts can extend support beyond library walls and help shift community perceptions. Attendees will leave with actionable tools, recommended resources, and a guided reflection to inspire continued growth and advocacy within their own libraries.

4c: Assistive Technology Overview

Speaker: Erin Kelly, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of Equity and Fair Practice, Enoch Pratt Free Library

Learn about different types of assistive technology and how they are used by people with disabilities. Discover software for screen reading and screen enlargement, built-in accessibility features of computers, and other assistive devices, available at your library and beyond.



4d: Rhythm of Leadership: Libraries, Teams, and the Power of 'The One'

Speaker: Steve Mangum, Programming and Outreach Coordinator, Anne Arundel County Public Library

Leaders from any position will gain strategies for managing projects, energizing teams, and fostering collaboration that keep the library's projects and programs moving forward. Explore how James Brown's concept of "The One" informs leadership style and program planning. Like a strong beat anchoring a funk groove, a clear vision unifies library teams through individual contributions, drives initiatives, and ensures alignment across services in the face of changing demands. Whether you're leading programs, maintaining a collection or engaging with the community, this session offers practical insights toward focus and success in your library work.

4e: Central and Teen Workshop and Tour (Maximum Capacity: 20 Attendees)

Speakers:

- Barnard Smit, Best & Next Department Manager, Enoch Pratt Free Library/SLRC
- Donaven Bunting, Creation Station Coordinator, Teen Center, Enoch Pratt Free Library/SLRC

Learn more about how makerspaces for teens and adults can be developed for your library's audiences. Leave with a creation in your hands.

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM: Social Activity

Join us for our Networking Hour & Public Services Social at the end of your conference day! We will be providing sweet & savory snacks alongside hot beverages. In addition to an opportunity to network with your peers and build new connections, we will have representatives available from MLA, NAMI, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Services, Cash Campaign of Maryland, and our own Peer Navigators to chat with you about resources available to public services staff members. There will also be an opportunity to view a demonstration from our library's Hackerman Artist in Residence, Annie Howe, and the chance to make your own piece of art in collaboration with your peers with the DrawTogether Strangers activity brought to us by Heather Kerner, our library's Fine Arts & Music Librarian/Artist In Residence Coordinator. Come for the fun, to connect, or just to get informed!

For more information, please contact: slrcprogramsandtraining@prattlibrary.org or visit <https://www.slrc.info/professional-development/conferences/public-services-conference>.