NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION

2026 Spring Conference & Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

LIVE FREE & GROW: How the New Hampshire Library Community Will Survive & Thrive

Welcome to the 2026 Annual Conference! This year's conference is designed to ground us in the realities facing public libraries in New Hampshire, while welcoming returning speakers alongside new, first-time presenters.

Mindy Atwood, Administrator of Library Operations and Assistant State Librarian at the NH State Library, our keynote speaker, will offer up-to-date information on how current events are affecting NH public libraries, as well as how state and federal funds are used to support them. She'll also be doing a Q&A session highlighting the good things happening in libraries in our state.

The conference will be held at DoubleTree by Hilton Manchester Downtown, Manchester, NH, again this year. We heard your feedback regarding the food, as well as the audio visual – adding more audio and screens for the keynote. Library RSA's are back in the workshops this year, as well as topics such as grant programs, writing an RFP, legislative updates, using AI (Artificial Intelligence), caring for historic libraries and more.

We're increasing the number of passport card winners to six: four will receive a $50 cash prize for their library and two will receive a free print or digital subscription to Bookmarks Magazine. In addition, the League of Women Voters will be offering three civic books – one children's title and two adult titles – at no cost to interested libraries.

We look forward to seeing you in Manchester on May 27 – as always dress warmly!

REGISTER ONLINE at nhlta.wildapricot.org/event-6505905

Registration deadline: Friday, **May 8, 2026**

$75 NHLTA members; $90 non-members. One submission per person.

Payment is due at time of registration. If you have questions, please contact Ashley Methot at: **nhlibrarytrustees@nhmunicipal.org**

CANCELLATION POLICY: After May 8, 2026, no refunds will be issued for conference cancellations. However, you may designate a substitute to attend in your place. If you are unable to attend and need to transfer your registration, please notify us at **nhlibrarytrustees@nhmunicipal.org** as soon as possible. No walk-in registration will be accepted on the day of the conference.

PARKING: A parking garage is located adjacent to the DoubleTree Downtown Hotel. With ticket validation, parking is paid for by the Conference. Attendees staying overnight at the hotel may park overnight. **To validate your parking ticket, you must bring your parking ticket with you into the hotel to be validated at the conference registration area located in the assembly area.** Sponsors and exhibitors are responsible for their parking fee.

NHLTA
2026 Spring Conference & Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2026
DoubleTree Downtown
700 Elm Street
Manchester, NH

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DrummondWoodsum
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

7:30–8:30 am
Registration & Assorted Breakfast Pastries/Beverages
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8:30–8:45 am
Welcome & NHLTA Business Meeting

8:45–10 am
Keynote: Live Free and Grow: How the New Hampshire Library Community Will Survive and Thrive
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SMP Architecture

10:00–10:30 am
Break/Visit Exhibitors

10:30–11:45 am
Workshops 1–5

11:45–12:45 pm
Plated Lunch
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12:45–2 pm
Workshops 6–10

2–2:30 pm
Dessert Break/Visit Exhibitors
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OCLC

2:30–3:45 pm
Workshops 11–15

Wednesday, May 27, 8:45–10:00 am

Keynote: Live Free and Grow: How the New Hampshire Library Community Will Survive and Thrive

This presentation will offer a brief overview of the key events of 2025 that have shaped the landscape for public libraries, providing a context for how we can move forward – together, with intention and purpose. Public libraries in New Hampshire are treasured public institutions and community anchors. So, why then, are libraries being forced to reduce public service hours? Public libraries have long been seen as a cornerstone of our democracy. Yet too often this lofty narrative is lost in the day-to-day efforts to keep the library operational – the lights on and the Legos off the floor. How can we, as a passionate and dedicated library community, effectively convey the importance of the public library in New Hampshire? And can we do it without overwhelming our already busy library professionals? I believe we can. Let's talk about it!

Mindy Atwood *has more than 15 years experience working in New Hampshire public libraries. She is currently the Assistant State Librarian for the New Hampshire State Library where she leads a team of 30 dedicated staff members who work tirelessly to meet the informational needs of New Hampshire state, county, and municipal governments and to promote excellence in libraries and library services in the state. She holds a B.A. from Middlebury College and an M.S. in Library and Information Science from Clarion University.*

10:30 am–11:45 am

1 Grant Writing: A Practical Guide for Grant Writing Success

This session is designed for librarians and library trustees who want to build confidence and skills in securing grant funding. This session breaks down the grant writing process into clear, manageable steps, from finding the right funding opportunities to writing strong narratives and measuring success. Participants will learn practical strategies, real-world tips and common pitfalls to avoid, with a focus on the unique challenges and strengths of small and rural libraries. Attendees will leave with tools they can use immediately to strengthen their grant applications and increase their chances of funding success.

Caitlin Frost *is a rural library director and grant writer with a heart for small libraries and big ideas. As director of the New Durham Public Library, she has been awarded over $100,000 in grants and led multiple successful grant-funded projects focused on access, community impact, and growth.*

2 EmPOWERing Your Library

If your library staff and trustees aren't already talking about energy costs, savings, and outreach opportunities, now is the time. Granite Staters are increasingly concerned about energy costs and many NH library buildings are aging and inefficient. Clean Energy NH is a nonprofit working with libraries across the state, offering free support on energy-related projects. Join us to learn what other libraries are doing to reduce energy use, lower energy bills, add on-site and back-up power and engage residents with critical resources and information to address their home energy costs.

Katrin Kasper *is currently supporting 208 active projects in 43 municipalities across Rockingham and Strafford counties. Projects include solar energy generation, battery storage, heat pumps, energy audits, building envelope upgrades and public outreach efforts. Katrin lives in Lee, where her local library recently installed solar with battery back-up.*

Sarah Brock *leads a team providing no-cost technical assistance to municipalities, libraries, small businesses and farms across New Hampshire on projects related to clean energy, energy efficiency, and electrification. Sarah lives in Warner, where her local library has completed weatherization and installed heat pumps.*

3 Navigating Difficult Conversations with Confidence

This interactive training session is designed to help library trustees confidently and constructively engage in challenging conversations with library directors. Using realistic scenarios, guided practice, and collaborative discussion, participants will learn techniques for clarifying expectations, addressing sensitive issues, and communicating with respect and transparency.

Trustees will leave with practical tools to strengthen their working relationships with directors and support effective, mission-aligned leadership within their libraries.

Carol Kilmister *is a Senior Human Resource Consultant in the Legal and HR Services Department at Primex3 where she provides training, guidance and support to Property & Liability members. She is a graduate of Rivier University with a Master of Science degree in Human Resource Administration and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Plymouth State University. She serves on the board of directors of the Greater Concord HR Association of SHRM (HRAGC) as well as the Association of NH Public Employer HR Administrators (ANHPEHRA).*

4 RSAs & Hot Legal Topics

This presentation will focus on the fundamentals of RSA chapter 202-A, pertaining to municipal libraries, and incorporate discussion of related statutes, such as RSA chapter 91-A, the Right-to-Know Law. A special emphasis will be placed on hot legal topics that arise with libraries and library trustees.

Jonathan Cowal *provides legal services to NHMA's member municipalities, including legal advice, training programs, and educational publications. Before joining NHMA, Jonathan served as a prosecutor in both Rockingham and Hillsborough County in the special victims unit. Jonathan received his bachelor's degree from Bridgewater State University and his law degree from New England School of Law. Jonathan writes the Legal Q&A column for the NHLTA newsletter.*

5 Library Employees and Contracts

Effective employee management starts at the beginning of the employment relationship. Setting forth the terms, conditions, and expectations between both the employer and employee is vital to long-term, productive affiliation. Clear, fair employment contracts can assist trustees and library directors to start employment relationships off on the right foot and, in hopefully few cases, can also be useful for transitioning an unsuccessful employee out of the workplace if necessary. This program will discuss the best practices of initiating/negotiating, drafting, and administering contracts for library employees.

Hannah Devoe *is a Labor and Employment Attorney at Drummond Woodsum. Hannah advises and trains employers on obligations and matters under a variety of federal and state laws including employee leave, accommodation, wage/hour and more. She represents employers in collective bargaining negotiations, grievance and arbitration proceedings and facilitates internal investigations.*

Anna Cole *is the Co-Leader of the Labor and Employment Practice at Drummond Woodsum. She provides counseling services in all aspects of employment law to public and private employers. Anna advises and trains clients on workplace issues related to employee leaves of absence, discrimination, disability accommodation, wage/hour and workplace misconduct matters.*

12:45 pm–2:00 pm

6 How to Survive and Thrive

This participatory workshop will seek to "crowd-source" good news and good ideas – what is already working in our wonderful New Hampshire public libraries. The goal will be to leave this session with at least one actionable item to bring back to your library community. Please come ready to listen and learn from each other!

Mindy Atwood *See keynote bio.*

7 Onboarding Your New Library Trustee

The session will cover the basics of bringing on a newly elected library trustee, what he/she needs to know, mentoring, library staff relationships and will also touch on Trustee 101 – the fact-filled NHLTA handout which introduces what a trustee's job entails.

Marcia McLaughlin *is currently the president of the NHLTA board and is serving her sixth year on the board, fifth as president. Formerly a trustee at the Weeks Public Library, Greenland, NH, she served as the chair for six years prior to moving to South Carolina in 2024.*

8 Risk to Resilience: Cybersecurity Defense and Fraud Prevention Controls

Libraries of all sizes are facing growing threats from cybercriminals targeting sensitive data. Join us for an in-depth session on real-world risk management, practical strategies and field-tested solutions to help you foster a "Zero Breach Mindset". The information shared is not bank-specific; these lessons are applicable regardless of your banking partner.

Katherine Heck, *TD's Government Banking Relationship Manager for New Hampshire, has 21 years of expertise in finance, accounting, and treasury management.*

9 Artificial Intelligence Demystified through Public Libraries: Teaching Patrons the Basics

Public librarians have a leading role to play in helping people understand, evaluate, and use Artificial Intelligence. Based on a well-received series of AI seminars they presented at the Kingston Community Library (KLC), the speakers will discuss the benefits of AI, as well as its scary scenarios, focusing on the importance of basic information literacy skills to take thoughtful advantage of useful tools, and to avoid deep fakes and scams. Presenters will share and teach selections from the learning series they have developed. They will also discuss ways librarians can learn about AI and types of programs they can develop to introduce it to their own patrons.

Melissa Mannon *is the KCL Director. She has a background in archives management, reference and school libraries. Melissa developed a special interest in information literacy while working with teens at Goffstown High School. She developed an interest in AI as a tool for spreading misinformation, and works to promote understanding to enhance individual security and ensure that democracy can thrive.*

Michelle Cole *is the Assistant Director of the KCL. She takes a special interest in technology, providing tech support for library patrons and serving as KCL's 3D printing guru. She is the 2023 NHLA READS Award of Excellence winner for outstanding contributions by an individual who has been instrumental in improving library services to adults. Her interest in AI grows from a curiosity in how it can improve lives and how she can help patrons avoid its pitfalls.*

10 Raising Big Money in a Small Town: Insights from a Successful Library Capital Campaign

Small-town libraries can achieve remarkable fundraising results with the right strategy, structure, and community engagement. In this session, Andrews Coaching & Consulting and the Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation will share how a volunteer-driven board built strong local support and long-range momentum for their new library. We'll explore practical, repeatable strategies including: wealth screening to understand donor capacity; developing a compelling case for support that resonates locally; creating thoughtful naming opportunities that inspire leadership gifts; empowering supporters to serve as effective ambassadors; and hosting intimate gatherings to share information and build momentum and enthusiasm. Attendees will leave with clear tools, real examples, and proven approaches they can apply to strengthen fundraising and campaign planning in their own communities.

Sarah Andrews *has 20 years of nonprofit leadership and fundraising experience, specializing in capacity building, campaigns, partnerships and major gifts. Since founding Andrews Coaching & Consulting in 2016, she has helped more than 100 nonprofits strengthen their boards, deepen donor engagement, and accelerate organizational growth.*

Amanda Young *serves on the board of Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation (MVLCF) and is a library trustee alternate at the Daland Memorial Library. As part of the Andrews Consulting team, she helps other nonprofits strengthen their fundraising, engage donors, and reach their goals with clarity and confidence.*

Cindy Raspiller *is Board President of MVLCF and Chair of the Daland Memorial Library Board of Trustees. She successfully spearheaded the capital campaign for her town's new library and continues to lead with steady, community-focused guidance.*

2:30 pm–3:45 pm

11 From Draft to Decision: Using AI to Write and Review Effective Library Policies

As library trustees face new challenges, artificial intelligence offers a powerful and accessible tool to support responsible policy development. This session introduces NH library trustees to practical, ethical ways to use AI as a policy-writing assistant, research partner and useful planning tool. Participants will learn how AI can help draft clearer policies, compare sample models, identify gaps, assess risks and strengthen a board's decision-making processes while maintaining full trustee control and oversight. Attendees will also explore best practices for responsible use aligned with NHLTA standards, state guidelines and community values. No technical background required.

With a library career spanning over 23 years, **Mark Glisson** *currently serves as the Assistant Director of the Hooksett Library. He is a passionate advocate for digital literacy, providing essential technology support and training for librarians and patrons alike. As the Co-Chair of the NHLA-ITS Section, Mark helps lead the conversation on emerging tech, focusing on how tools like AI and cybersecurity practices can improve user engagement and institutional safety.*

12 Caring for Your Historic Library Building

In communities across New Hampshire, many libraries are housed in cherished historic buildings built of stone

or brick, often with marble or limestone details. As these structures age, library staff and trustees are increasingly faced with masonry deterioration, roof issues and water infiltration. In this session, you will learn how the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance supports libraries and other community institutions in understanding, caring for and reinvesting in their historic buildings. The presentation will share examples of successfully restored and renovated libraries, with a particular focus on masonry issues and practical strategies for addressing them. Participants will also learn why a building assessment and a realistic maintenance plan are essential tools that help prevent small issues from growing into costly, urgent projects. Attendees will leave with clearer guidance on where to begin, how to plan and how the Preservation Alliance can connect them with the right resources to move forward confidently.

Martha Cummings *works statewide to connect communities with resources for restoring and reusing historic landmarks, offering technical assistance, preservation strategies, and fundraising guidance. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from Principia College and a master's in historic preservation from Plymouth State University. Her role at the Alliance includes working with communities, offering practical advice in preservation, fundraising guidance and assistance with finding the resources to save and reuse historic landmarks.*

Beverly Thomas *manages the Alliance's Old House and Barn program and administers the Alliance's barn assessment, planning study and bricks and mortar grants programs. She coordinates the biennial Old House & Barn Expo and provides technical assistance, referrals and resources to old house and barn owners. She lives in Bedford, where she has been a member of the Historic District Commission and is on the board of the Bedford Historical Society. Beverly is co-chair of the Stevens-Buswell School Rehabilitation Project and chaired the successful town-wide effort to build the Bedford Village Common.*

13 2026 Legislative Update

An update on all the state legislation relevant to local officials, tailored for library trustees and library directors.

Brodie Deshaies *works as a Legislative Advocate for the NH Municipal Association, providing advocacy services to NH cities and towns before the state legislature and other state policymakers. Brodie's previous experience includes working as the Communications & Policy Manager for NH Hunger Solutions, being a political consultant and serving as a NH State Representative.*

14 The Library Trustee's RFP Cookbook: Recipes for Writing a Request that Works for You

Library trustees, directors and staff wear many hats in service to their communities – and soliciting professional design services is often a task that may fall to them. Where to start? In this session, architects experienced with design and planning for libraries will share lessons from years responding to municipal and private Requests for Proposals (RFPs). We'll examine and reframe the RFP process from what could be a tedious burden, to a powerful tool for getting what you want!

Alyssa Murphy *is an architect and co-founder of Placework, a Certified B Corporation based in Portsmouth. She has worked with numerous libraries, municipalities, and non-profit organizations to provide feasibility studies and designs that bring their visions to life. Alyssa is the founding editor of Forum, the magazine of AIA New Hampshire, is a past president of AIA New Hampshire, and member of the national AIA Strategic Council (2023-2025).*

Josh Lacasse *is an architect and Associate at Placework. He has a passion for adaptive reuse of existing buildings to confront new requirements regarding technology, climate and social issues. Josh's experience in library design and planning includes public schools, higher education and special collections libraries, including celebrated modernist buildings at Phillips Exeter Academy and Somersworth, NH.*

15 Creative Aging in Action: Expanding Library Impact for Older Adults

As New Hampshire libraries navigate shifting demographics, funding landscapes and community needs, this session explores how creative aging – evidence-based, professionally led arts education for adults 55+ – can help libraries strengthen community connection, address social isolation and demonstrate public value. Grounded in real-world library practice and cross-sector partnerships, this session highlights scalable approaches that align with state and federal priorities, offering trustees and library leaders practical insights into how creative aging can advance mission-driven service and community impact across New Hampshire.

Heather Ikemire, Ph.D *is Executive Director of Lifetime Arts and a nationally recognized leader in creative aging. With nearly two decades advancing arts and aging initiatives nationally, she champions partnerships that advance creative aging's role in improving health, social connection and livable communities.*

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