

NHLA Executive Board Strategic Plan Survey

Please complete this survey by Wednesday 11/10 at 4 pm, from the perspective of being a member of the NHLA Executive Board. Your input will help inform NHLA to create its first strategic plan, and help address needs of librarians across the state.

To what Cooperative does your library belong? Check here if you're not sure!

*

<https://www.nh.gov/nhsl/lids/cooperatives.html>

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- Hillstown Cooperative
- Librarians of the Upper Valley (LUV)
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- Nubanusit Library Association
- Rochester Area Librarians (RALI)
- SCROOGE & MARLEY
- Seacoast Library Cooperative
- Suncook Interlibrary Cooperative (SILC)
- West of the Merrimack

How many years have you worked in the library profession? *

- 1 year or less
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 10-20 years
- 20+ years

Using the data located at <https://www.nh.gov/osi/data-center/population-estimates.htm>, what * is the population of your library's service area?

- Less than 1,000
- 1,000-1,999
- 2,000-4,999
- 5,000-9,999
- 10,000-19,999
- 20,000 or more

How many employees are at the library where you work (both full-time and part-time)? *

- 0-3
- 4-12
- 12-20
- 20-30
- 30+

Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

On the executive board, to give back to my profession

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Advocacy (for individual libraries & the profession); Funding; EDI issues/challenges

What does NHLA do well?

Keeps abreast of legislative issues in NH through our lobbyist

What does NHLA do poorly?

Communication - there needs to be a communication plan that is shared among all sections and committees, so that everyone following the same process and we are reaching our members on a consistent basis. In addition, we have to resolve the web site issue - it is crazy that we are going on almost 6 months without a useable web site...that cripples our member's access to information.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

I think as an all-volunteer-run organization we are pretty choosy about what we focus on at the EB level. I can't think of anything we should stop doing at this point.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

I think we're doing all we can - but we need to communicate better about what we are doing!

Any additional comments?

Because we are all-volunteer, we truly do have to be focused on what our priorities are. As a next step after the initial strategic plan, I suggest we look at our mission and rework it to be resonant for the 21st century, and perhaps hire a consultant to help us with a broader approach to input among our library community towards a second strategic plan

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

To contribute to the profession.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Advocacy for finances and support, staffing development, and smaller libraries feeling isolated by lack of resources (incl. staff and time).

What does NHLA do well?

Advocacy and communication at the state and national level. Offering programming to support library staff over a variety of issues. We have pivoted well to online platforms.

What does NHLA do poorly?

I wouldn't say poorly but we need to continue to recruit new board and committee members especially from our newer librarians. We also need to make sure that NHLA is an inclusive and equitable organization. Whose voices aren't being heard? How can we make sure there is space for all?

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

We should not even consider a return to regular online governance meetings. The online format allows for greater participation. We should continue to look for ways people can fully participate without having to drive hours.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

We should continue to look for ways to make our website more reliable and accessible. We also need to continue to look at the long term financial picture. How do we assure the sustainability of the organization?

Any additional comments?

I would like to emphasize the importance of committee and board recruitment. Having a healthy turnover on committees is important to the richness of our organization.

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I am currently the Chair of a section, but I have been involved with NHLA on and off for many years. I feel strongly about the importance of our professional association and was very happy to have the opportunity to serve on the Board again.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Retention and hiring, value of the library to the community and how we reach our community members in this "new normal", censorship and the movement on local levels to dictate policy in schools and I believe libraries will be next in efforts to marginalize segments of our communities - I don't think we realize this is one of our top issues yet, but it's looming.

What does NHLA do well?

Support its sections, provide advocacy information to all members and encourage members to take action when needed.

What does NHLA do poorly?

I don't think we engage our members in the happenings at the Board level enough, publicizing what is happening within the association itself, sharing our minutes and communicating changes to all members.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

Sending Board minutes to all members via email? It might just be me that wants it in my inbox, but I have found when I share minutes from NHLA & other organizational meetings with my staff they take the time to read them and ask questions.

Any additional comments?

Thank you to the Strategic Planning Committee for taking on this important work.

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

To participate in the larger NH Library community. It is a great way to network with other Librarians and continue learning and growing in the profession.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Finding and retaining staff members, evolving services due to Covid (i.e. online services expanded - chat reference, Zoom programming, curbside pickup by appointment, etc.), how to remain relevant in our communities.

What does NHLA do well?

Advocacy and education about important issues and trends. Provides high-quality and accessible continuing education opportunities.

What does NHLA do poorly?

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

More outreach to attract new members and participation in the organization.

Any additional comments?

Working with NHLA leadership is extremely gratifying. Really appreciate the time and effort everyone contributes to the organization and NH Libraries.

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

Wanted to collaborate with colleagues in the profession and contribute to the NH library community.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: co-liaison from EDI Task Force/Ad Hoc Committee

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

inequity of resources across our communities reflected in library workers' salaries & library services/collections/open hours; challenges re: intellectual freedom & collections; lack of state funding for library services.

What does NHLA do well?

provide opportunities for NH librarians and library staff to be involved in a professional organization and develop/practice leadership skills. Especially for library workers in smaller & more rural locations, a chance to connect with other library workers, problem-solve, learn and collaborate to help each other and our communities.

What does NHLA do poorly?

I don't have anything to report.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

not that I can think of

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

no ideas right now

Any additional comments?

glad a strategic plan to guide the future of the organization is being developed, thanks for your work on this project!

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I am the president of one of NHLA's sections

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Staying relevant, navigating divisive issues, holding steady when everything else is chaotic

What does NHLA do well?

Responsive to issues of the times - e.g. creation of an EDI section, sponsoring a workshop on pronouns. The NHLA Board also did a great job at transitioning in new officers when I first began serving. I've also experienced very helpful and quick responses to the inquiries I've had on the Google Group, but also from Amy, Yvette and Lori. Thank you!

What does NHLA do poorly?

I feel like there is often a scramble to get volunteers to serve on the NHLA Board and also sections boards.... not sure if there is anything that can be done about that.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I want to support our professional organizations and be a part of our community to provide better services to our state.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Funding sources, staffing/pay rates, divisive topics and how to balance information around them.

What does NHLA do well?

How it is run.

What does NHLA do poorly?

Not poorly done, just a comment that NHLA should continue to make sure the annual budget is a balanced and not taking from "contingency" to cover any differences.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Offering Educational loans depending on restrictions and switch those to scholarships!

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I enjoy learning from and working with my colleagues.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Staff retention; ability to perform our jobs/present programs in the face of politically radicalized patrons or residents; funding

What does NHLA do well?

Act and work as a support system and resource for all library staff in NH. I've been impressed with the passion and responsiveness of my colleagues on the Board.

What does NHLA do poorly?

The same people serve on the Board and Committees - it's the 80/20 rule where 20% of the available population serve 80% of the time. The current people serving are wonderful but to prevent burnout we need to continue to recruit new people to serve.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

no suggestions at this time. I've experienced the Board reassessing our resources and focus and trimming and adding where needed.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

no suggestions at this time.

Any additional comments?

Good questions!

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

After attending NELLs, I understood that I had an obligation to help my state association. Also, when I looked at the roster of librarians already in leadership positions for NHLA, I knew that I would gain valuable professional experience by participating at the executive board level.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: First READS president-elect then and elected officer

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

1. staff retention re wages/benefits and the public-facing nature of our work; 2. staying relevant to our patrons/voters in the face of commercial content providers

What does NHLA do well?

The level of professionalism in NHLA, especially given it is a volunteer-run organization, is commendable.

What does NHLA do poorly?

I think we could do a better job recruiting participation from a more diverse range of library staff. By diversity, I mean geographic, size of library, years in the profession and professional interests.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

No.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

I would like to see NHLA open a conversation with the State Library around what it might look like to implement some state-wide library "best practices." Many of us do better when we are driving at a goal as opposed to having to first articulate the goal, then get there. I think it would especially provide some smaller libraries with some optional guidance and some reasoning to advocate for more services, more staff hours, new spaces, etc.

Any additional comments?

I feel there has been great benefit to my participation in NHLA, both for my library and myself. I think it would be great if we could promote more the professional benefits to participation in NHLA, I think it would stimulate participation.

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

Networking with colleagues, use my strengths where I can to develop others

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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Being nimble as we emerge from COVID restraints; staff retention and recruitment, advocacy and support of libraries at the state level.

What does NHLA do well?

Great leadership, and strong sections with lots of professional development opportunities

What does NHLA do poorly?

Website has been an issue this year and hopefully will be resolved soon

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

Consider legislative efforts at the local level to build advocacy across the state

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

To join the Paralibrarian Section and attain professional growth and a better understanding of library stewardship.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

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What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Space, In-person programming, funding

What does NHLA do well?

NHLA offers a variety of sections to address the concerns of today's libraries as well as professional growth opportunities.

What does NHLA do poorly?

Unfortunately, many of the opportunities provided are not conducive to include all levels of library staff.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

Any additional comments?

Being relatively new to the Executive Board, I don't have as much insight to offer additional feedback or make specific recommendations however the more I learn about NHLA and all its facets the more impressed I am.

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How many employees are at the library where you work (both full-time and part-time)? *

- 0-3
- 4-12
- 12-20
- 20-30
- 30+

Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

My library encourages professional development.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

1. We are underpaid given the educational expectations of our field. This is true across the board in our field, but it is particularly grotesque in NH.

I recently saw an ad for a job where the hourly rate with a master's degree was 90 cents more than without one. And the highest starting rate was absolutely abysmal. But this is pretty typical.

We are expected to be therapists, social workers, maintenance workers, politicians and, apparently, public health experts in addition to being librarians. We administer Narcan. We clean up shit and vomit and blood. We comfort people. And many of us do it for not much more than minimum wage. And we are told, often by trustees and directors, to be thankful that we get to do it at all.

It's a huge problem. We need to organize, and we need good benefits. We need time off. Real time off; not "I'm on vacation but I'll be checking my email." We are not self-abnegating saints, and the work we do is worth something, and by something I mean CASH. We need to get trustees and directors on board with this, or it is never gonna happen.

Regarding EDI concerns, if we ever want to address the big diversity issues that New England librarians have, we need to be paying the kinds of wages that would attract people to move here from elsewhere for a job. All the diversity training are nice, and the antiracist reading lists, and the putting in of pronouns into email sign offs, but it doesn't pay the bills. It's great stuff, but it won't get your kid braces, or make a difference if you want to buy a house in an expensive town with a great school system.

We are not gonna solve the big problems of racial and religious and and cultural homogeneity in New Hampshire overnight, and we are definitely not gonna do it if we don't give people real material reasons to take a chance on our communities and move here.

2 We need to help libraries be more savvy about recruiting trustees. One bad trustee, who does not believe in public libraries and what we do, can destroy an institution. There are some real sickos out there who would like to dismantle anything resembling the public good, and we should be on high alert about them infiltrating Boards of Trustees in order to destroy libraries in pursuit of some ideal of individual liberty and low taxes. I know this sounds kind of paranoid, but New Hampshire is a weird place, and getting weirder all the time.

3. The challenges of providing streaming services, ebooks, and audiobooks digitally will continue to mount. They are expensive and getting moreso. The consolidation in the publishing industry, as well as the dominance of streaming services that habituate our patrons to instant gratification, and remove the act of curation from our work, is huge. We are not coming back from this stuff. What then, is collection development, when you don't own, and have so little control over, your collections? What do our collections even mean, when we do not describe them or choose what to include and exclude? If large corporations are cultivating audiences among our patrons, and they choose the content and can add to and subtract from it at will, what does this say about censorship? Is it censorship? How does this effect intellectual curiosity, the so-called "freedom to read", and the representation of eccentric opinions and interests?

What does NHLA do well?

Conferences! These last few years have been weird for obvious reasons, but generally speaking, they are good. Even the zoom ones, for what they are, have been pretty good.

What does NHLA do poorly?

Advocating for library workers, particularly those without masters degrees. I worry that the paralibrarian certification thing is kind of a scam – not because the info is bad, but because out of state, or in a setting where job requirements list an MLIS, it can prove to be useless in terms of improving your chances of moving up in the field.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Raising money from librarians instead of corporate sponsors

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

Recruiting sponsors to shower us with gargantuan heaps of cash and buy us lunch.

Any additional comments?

So many of our biggest issues are massive structural ones that have to do with the general decay of faith in ANY kind of institutions that are supposed to be working for the common good. Public libraries in particular are impossible to imagine being established in our current individualized economic and political climate. We need to re-center that stuff. The idea that we are good because we are a physical representation of the will and desires of a community is powerful. If librarianship is a profession, then we should have something to say, right?

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How many employees are at the library where you work (both full-time and part-time)? *

- 0-3
- 4-12
- 12-20
- 20-30
- 30+

Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

Professional development and the opportunity to work with librarians outside my library and consortium

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Staff, budget cuts, and visibility in the community.

What does NHLA do well?

Advocacy for NH libraries, responding to issues in a timely manner.

What does NHLA do poorly?

Communication about the NHLA website being down.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

No

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

Communicating with the membership more frequently.

Any additional comments?

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I knew it would help me become more involved with the library profession!

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

1) Lack of diversity; 2) low pay; 3) staff retention

What does NHLA do well?

Plan events

What does NHLA do poorly?

Communicate with its members about what the Exec. Board does regularly (it's done periodically, but not regularly).

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Not sure of the efficacy of having a Fall Conference every year. Not against it, but still not sure it's useful?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

Encourage it's librarians and directors to recruit diverse librarians from across the country.

Any additional comments?

Thank you for your service!

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I wanted to be in-tune with librarians across the state, and I felt that it was a way to also give back to the profession.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other:
I was asked to chair ULAC by the ULAC members, because the prior chair had been doing it for a while. I agreed. :-)

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

I'm going to ask that you please refer to my response that I gave for ULAC.

What does NHLA do well?

Offering good workshops & classes; hosting conferences; providing a springboard for conversations through the various groups (such as ULAC).

What does NHLA do poorly?

Since I've been back aboard at DPL, I would have to say maintaining a functional website. (But I know that's being addressed.)

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Nothing jumps to mind at the moment!

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

I think that a regular email to the membership at large, with invitations to join sections, or to serve in various roles could be helpful. I wouldn't envision anything weekly - but possibly once a month? I think that many people have memberships to NHLA because their respective libraries are encouraging it... but then they don't actively engage. I think that a regular check-in with the non board members would be good.

Any additional comments?

Thanks for seeking my input! :-)

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

Professional development and to support the NH library community at large

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

- Elected officer
- Chair of subcommittee
- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: Chair of sustainability subcommittee as a non-voting executive board member

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Staff retention and burnout; financial ability to provide certain resources such as downloadables, hot spot devices, etc.

What does NHLA do well?

Coordinate subcommittees that provide workshops and other professional development opportunities

What does NHLA do poorly?

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

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- 12-20
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- 30+

Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

Wanted to provide service to the profession and meet other librarians outside of my workplace

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

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- Volunteered to serve as one of non-voting board members (Wild Apricot, Webpage etc)
- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

1. Staffing levels, funding 2. COVID related issues 3. Continuing to stay relevant

What does NHLA do well?

Workshops and conferences are well planned and run.

What does NHLA do poorly?

At times communication can be a bit garbled.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

No.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

When it's safe, resuming casual NHLA sponsored gatherings would be great.

Any additional comments?

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

I believe it is my responsibility as a librarian to support, and advocate for, libraries and other librarians. I believe NHLA does this well and I want to support the effort.

How did you come to serve on the Executive Board? *

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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

Legislation and public perception. I realize this is only two, but I really think they are the most important.

What does NHLA do well?

I think NHLA is aware of the issues facing libraries and library staff and works to keep ahead of them.

What does NHLA do poorly?

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

I can't think of anything. I believe NHLA uses its time and resources wisely.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

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Why did you become involved with NHLA? *

It was an expected part of my job

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- Other: _____

What are the top three issues facing New Hampshire Librarians and Library Staff today?

False information, rising tensions in 'us vs them' and identity politics, targeting library trustee positions to advance far right ideologies

What does NHLA do well?

Camaraderie amongst library professionals, advocating for capital L Libraries

What does NHLA do poorly?

I don't feel like I have enough experience with NHLA to give a good answer to this.

Is there anything that NHLA should stop doing?

I don't feel like I have enough experience with NHLA to give a good answer to this.

Is there anything that NHLA should start doing?

There are lots of things I think NHLA should start doing, but they all reflect my personal ideas about librarianship, the harm of neutrality, and my fairly radical ideology. Most of my ideas would almost certainly get us sued. For right now, I think NHLA does a pretty good job, and most of my implementable ideas would go to specific sub-committees.

Any additional comments?

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