

LIBRARY WORKS

Facility | Construction | Security | Technology

FLA Hurricane Relief Fund

The Florida Library Association (FLA) is now accepting applications for hurricane recovery funding. Applications are due November 8th, 2024.

For more details:

[Florida Library Association](#)

ALA Disaster Relief Fund

The American Library Association (ALA) Disaster Relief Fund provides emergency and recovery funding to libraries in the US and around the world. ALA is currently accepting donations monetary donations to help damaged or destroyed libraries in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

Follow the link below for additional details:

[ALA Disaster Relief Fund](#)

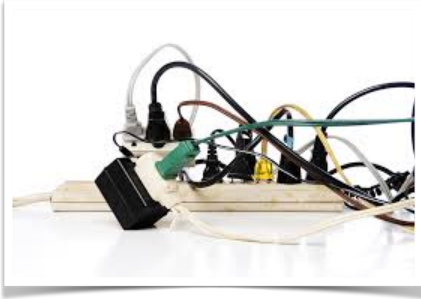


CENTRALIZED MAINTENANCE - HOW TO ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS

Many libraries rely on centralized facility maintenance like a city or county Public Works (PW) department for their building needs rather than in-house library maintenance staff. Centralized maintenance offers dedicated services, decreased costs due to economies of scale, and maximization of resources. However, using PW for maintenance doesn't come without drawbacks for libraries.

Continued on page 2





Five Library Fire Code Violations

Fire inspections are a critical part of library safety. Here are five typical violations found in libraries:

- Daisy-chained power strips or extensions.
- 18 inches of clearance from ceilings
- Expired fire extinguishers
- 36 inches of front clearance from electrical panels
- 30 inches of side clearance space at either side of electrical panels

Maintenance Tips

As winter fast approaches,

- Clear all roof drains and gutters
- Clear landscape drains and gutters
- Test sump pumps for proper operation
- Remove built-up debris around library building in gardens, planters, etc.

PW typically has certified MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) trade professionals, as well as carpenters, painters, and others who are employees of the larger city or county entity. In well-run PW shops, tradespersons typically have skill levels matching or exceeding privately-run companies because of their varied experience, continuous learning, and regular new technology implementations. They are experts in their crafts.

Using a PW shop for maintenance offers dedicated services, reduced costs, and maximization of resources. They have institutional knowledge and know the history of your building(s), understand existing building systems, and locations of critical building infrastructure. Beyond their knowledge base, a PW/Library partnership will reduce costs by taking advantage of economies of scale or bulk pricing. For example, rather than buying a few light fixtures for one building, PW can buy 'in bulk' for many buildings throughout city or county facilities, thereby reducing overall cost. Finally, a PW/Library partnership can maximize resources by having multiple trade disciplines under 'one roof,' quickly overlapping trades as needed for a project, and doing away with multiple private company contracts for the same services.

Continued on page 3



However, there's no doubt using PW can be challenging. First of all, PW staff work off of a central schedule that can be hard set and inflexible. Because of their large scope of service to many city or county departments, purchasing policy requirements, and master plans, PW schedules are set years in advance and may have little room for adjustment. On the other hand, libraries tend to have shorter timelines for programming that can conflict with PW schedules, not to mention that the public relies on consistency of library services. Frustrations can rise when PW crews show unannounced at a library location to start a loud and disruptive roofing project.

Which brings up my next point, communication. Again, due to their large scope of services and rigid schedules, PW is primarily focused on 'getting the job done' and may have little if any time to communicate intentions. This lack of communication can often be misconstrued for a superiority complex or lack of consideration. But most often, good intentions are at heart to move as quickly and efficiently as possible according to a preset schedule. It's helpful to understand that, logistically, PW must coordinate not only labor schedules, but also material acquisition, budgeting timelines, staffing shortages, unscheduled priority/emergency calls for service, and many other conflicts; contributing to the need to move quickly as soon as all the conditions are prime for the library project. *Continued on page 4*

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

NEW CANAAN LIBRARY, NEW CANAAN, CT



ARCHITECT:

Centerbrook Architects,
Centerbrook, CT

CONSTRUCTION:

Turner Construction Co.,
New York, NY

ENGINEERING:

Kohler Ronan, Dansbury, CT

LANDSCAPE:

Stimson Studio, Cambridge,
MA

COMPLETED: FEB 2023

COST: \$39.5 million

COLLECTION: 100,000

PROJECT WEBSITE:

Centerbrook - New Canaan

How can libraries work more efficiently with PW?

There are several strategies that libraries can adopt to improve conditions in a Library/PW facility maintenance partnership.

- 1. Communicate** - Communication is not a one-way road. Take the initiative and be the first to reach out!
 - *How* - Most often, communication protocol with PW requires submitting a request for service through a ticketing system. However, giving PW a heads up of a coming ticket is helpful to streamline the process and mutually work out concerns before the official ticket gets submitted. Once the ticket gets submitted, periodic informal communication with key department staff regarding the ticket keeps it fresh in their minds, helps libraries understand reasons for delays, and provides opportunities for negotiations to expedite the service.
 - *When* - There's never an ideal time to communicate with PW because of their ever-changing workload, but knowing when is a better time is key. Avoiding busy times like budget season, special events, or before a major rain storm can help.
 - *Whom* - Get to know the people involved at all levels and understand their role in the process. Yes, communicating with the PW Director is important for large-scale matters, but it may not be the most efficient or effective way to communicate regarding a project underway. Talking to the department director about scheduling a project won't necessarily help. Talking to the project manager or the even the work crews may be a better choice.
- 2. Participate** - Understanding the PW planning process and taking an active role is critical. If you have a pending project, ask to be part of the planning discussions at their inception to better understand what you can do to help move it along. There's no need to necessarily take an advocacy stance. Just listen and learn. The right time for voicing your thoughts and concerns will become apparent. However, be ready to participate when the time comes and answer questions or ask questions regarding budget, timelines, process, etc.
- 3. Anticipate** - Having participated you can now anticipate projects, obstacles, and potential disruptions to library services. Be prepared to take the PW perspective into consideration. For example, libraries will always look for ways to stay open during building improvement projects and not close. However, the PW perspective will tell you that closures drastically reduce project timelines, cost, and risk. Crews can work freely and more efficiently without concern for the safety of staff and the public. Be the one to take the PW perspective into account and create a viable plan to close, if needed.
- 4. Collaborate** - Take the 'high road' and get rid of long-standing negative attitudes towards collaboration with PW. Negativity is easy to perpetuate and can be felt in communication. Having a positive 'lets-get-thing-done-together' attitude helps break the vicious cycle.



Carlos Baffigo has over 30 years of management experience in library administration, facility management, technology implementations, and security operations. Prior library positions include: Deputy Library Director, Pasadena Public Library, Pasadena, CA and Deputy Library Director, Glendora Public Library, Glendora, CA.

In 2022, Carlos Baffigo started Building Basics for Libraries (BB4Libs) to provide library-specific management, maintenance, security, technology, and construction education to libraries. He initially partnered with the California State Library, California Library Association, and InfoPeople to educate

California libraries through the California Libraries Learn (CALL) program.

Since then, Carlos has consulted and collaborated with numerous libraries, library associations, municipal agencies, and architectural firms nationwide.

BB4Libs
Building Basics for Libraries

W: <https://bb4libs.com/>
E: bb4libs@gmail.com
T: 909-569-2461