

PCBL *news*

Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries

In This Issue

Friends & Trustees Institute

Page 2-3

It's Award Season!

Page 3

National Library Week

Page 4

Become a Board Member

Page 4

2026 Ask for Public Library Subsidy

Page 5

Membership Info

Page 6

Upcoming Dates:

May 20, 2026:
PaLA Headquarters,
Mechanicsburg
PCBL Board Meeting

August 19, 2026:
PaLA Headquarters,
Mechanicsburg
PCBL Board Meeting

October 4-7:
PaLA Annual Conference
Hilton Harrisburg
Cheers to 125 Years!

A Message from the President



Hello PCBL Members,

Good Wishes for a fulfilling 2026. My name is Susan Tracey, and I am the new President of the Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries. I have been on the PCBL board since 2019. I live in Southwestern PA and have been the President of the Friends of the Mt Lebanon Public Library since 2021.

As a strong library supporter, I value what PCBL can do for Friends groups throughout the Commonwealth. Currently, our board has eight members. Our bylaws allow for twenty-one board members. If you are looking for a way to be more involved in helping Pennsylvania libraries flourish, please consider becoming a PCBL Board member. For more information and the application, please go to our website at pcblpa.org/board-members.

Until April 30, we are accepting nominations for our Annual Library Friend of the Year and the Annual Friends Group of the Year. Please visit pcblpa.org/annual-awards to find the application(s). It will allow you to have a Friend or a Friends group recognized for their good works.

Susan Tracey - PCBL President

Friends & Trustees Institute

A summary: Held on March 7, 2026



On March 7, 2026, PCBL partnered with the Pennsylvania Library Association to present a virtual Friends & Trustees Institute. Topics covered included advocacy, succession planning, and when to hire a lawyer. PCBL presented two sessions titled: **Book Sales for Vintage Books** and **Friends: The Basics**.

Board Members Brandt Ensor and Marcia Wilson, along with Executive Secretary Sue Miller, presented on **Friends: The Basics**. Here is some of the information that was offered:

All PCBL Board members and the executive secretary have an affiliation with Pennsylvania Libraries. We are librarians, library administrators, and Friends members with a wealth of combined experience. We are available to help guide and advise Friends members on best practices. But we are not accountants or tax experts. We are not lawyers or legal experts. In answering questions from our Friends, we often have to refer to our tax and legal experts for advice, so we may be learning with you! We recommend you consult a lawyer or CPA in cases of legal and tax matters.

Charging Sales Tax:

One of the many questions we receive from Friends groups is about charging sales tax on book sales. Nonprofits are not exempt from paying sales tax to the state, and must charge a 6% sales tax on book sales and other fundraising items (that rate is 2% higher in Philadelphia and 1% higher in Allegheny County). Other fundraising items may include tote bags, t-shirts, and other swag sold by the Friends to raise money.

However, there is an Exception. Under current Pennsylvania Law, there is a provision for "isolated sales" - defined as fewer than seven days each year - where sales tax does not need to be collected. In other words, if you confine your book sales to less than seven days a year, you do not need to charge sales tax to the consumer and pay that tax to the state.

Insurance:

For insurance such as event or general liability insurance, Friend Groups should check with their libraries to see if they can be added as an "Additionally Insured" organization. Most insurance companies will include Friends groups for an extra fee to the library, and it is much cheaper than getting your own policy.

(continued page 3)

(continued from page 2)

These are two separate policies that all nonprofits should consider having by themselves.

- Directors & Officers - Protects the decision-making board of the nonprofit and its officers against lawsuits made against the organization. Protects the individuals within the board.
- Workers' Compensation Insurance - Must have to protect the organization for accidents and injuries in the workplace if you have paid employees

What is an MOU or MOA?

A Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement is a formal written agreement between two parties, clearly stating the expectations of each, who is responsible for what. One definition would be "A multi-party relationship-focused framework for ongoing cooperation; not a legally binding agreement, but one of cooperative activity." It provides clarification of what each party has agreed to do, such as: The library will provide space for a book sale twice a year; the book sale will be organized and run by the Friends group; all proceeds from the book sale will be given to the library for the purchase of children's books.

The document is signed by a representative of each party, and copies are kept by both parties. It becomes a binding agreement between the parties until and unless discontinued or voided by one or both parties. An MOU can be very formally written or less formally, more like a letter, so long as it's signed by both parties.

It's Award Season!

There is still time to nominate a Friend member or group for PCBL's Friend of the Year and the Friends Group of the Year. Applications can be found on our [website](#) and [here](#). You need to hurry, however, as applications are due by April 30!

Award Categories are:

Friend of the Year. Award given to a citizen who has made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of a local library, group of libraries, or libraries in general throughout the State during the past two years. The Friend must be a member of a Friends Group belonging to PCBL or an individual member of PCBL.

Friends Group of the Year. Award given to a Friends group that has provided significant assistance to its library. Assistance may be monetary contributions, assistance in raising funds, promoting the library and its services, or providing an advocacy effort on behalf of the library. The Friends Group must be a member of PCBL.

National Library Week



National Library Week 2026 will be held April 19–25 with the theme "Find Your Joy". The theme encourages people of all backgrounds to discover what sparks joy in them at the library, highlighting the vital, uplifting role libraries and library workers play in communities.

Key Details for [National Library Week 2026](#)

- **Honorary Chair:** The beloved librarian, author, and "Reading Rainbow" host, [Mychal Threats](#), will serve as the 2026 Honorary Chair.
- **Theme Focus:** The theme emphasizes finding joy through library resources, services, and community connections.
- **Key Calendar Dates:**
 - Monday, April 20: Right to Read Day (fight against censorship)
 - Tuesday, April 21: National Library Workers Day
 - Wednesday, April 22: National Library Outreach Day
 - Thursday, April 23: Take Action for Libraries Day [*see page 5, "2026 Ask for Public Library Subsidy," for a perfect way to honor this day!*]
- **Celebration Activity:** The [American Library Association](#) (ALA) encourages highlighting library joy, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of the ALA.

Become a PCBL Board Member

Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries (PCBL), our state's network of library friends working to achieve and maintain dedicated funding for public libraries and free access to library services for all, is seeking volunteers to join its dynamic board of directors. More information can be found at www.pcbllpa.org.

Board members serve for three years and are actively involved in organizational governance. The Board meets five times a year, frequently at the Pennsylvania Library Association headquarters in Mechanicsburg, PA, with a virtual option available.

The board needs various skills and library experience from library staff and Friends group members. At least one-third of board members are Friends group, affiliate members.

[Click here to apply](#). Questions? Email pcbllpa@gmail.com or call 800-870-3858.

2026 Ask for Public Library Subsidy

Pennsylvania libraries are asked to contact their state-level legislators - Representatives and Senators - to share this ask for an increase in the public library subsidy as part of the state budget.



Pennsylvania
Library
Association

220 Cumberland Parkway, Suite 10 • Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717-766-7663 • www.palibraries.org

A Chapter of the American Library Association

Public libraries are asking for an increase of \$7.3 million to the public library subsidy.
Currently, the subsidy is \$75.47 million.

With more than 4 million library card holders, the current funding is roughly \$18.63 per library card holder.

Libraries encourage reading and lifelong learning, with essential access to resources.

- ✦ Reading materials from books, e-books, and audiobooks for all ages are free with a public library card.
- ✦ Homeschool and cyber study families are frequent users of public libraries for both reading and teaching materials and community spaces.
- ✦ Adults sometimes use electronic library materials as their primary access without going into the physical library space. Subscriptions such as Libby and Hoopla are costly but make reading items more accessible.
- ✦ Seniors often use the library space both for reading, but also as a vital social connection to others through programs and activities. Homebound seniors have access to delivery of library materials through mail or outreach programs depending on their local library services.
- ✦ Technology support is heavily used at libraries and ranges from computers, Wi-Fi, hotspots, and databases such as NewsBank (free newspaper access), and Ancestry.com, all with helpful library staff.

The need for public libraries is great, but volatility and cuts in funding mean fewer materials, and reduced hours.

- ✦ The number of e-books were reduced by 46% from 2023 to 2024 due to increasing costs, but demand/circulation increased by 20%!
- ✦ More than 20 non-profit libraries had to stop offering passport application services, a financial loss ranging from 1% to 20% of their annual operating revenue – with no clear way to recover.
- ✦ Free library cards are available to residents of communities that support libraries through local donors and municipal support. If a community doesn't contribute to free library access for its residents, an annual subscription fee may be charged to a family or individual. Quite simply – a free public community library is not guaranteed for all PA residents.

Our PA Forward* initiative recognizes: Literacy is POWER, libraries provide the fuel!

- ✦ **Literacy starts with reading – and often that starts at the public library!** Will you please add \$1.80 per library card holder (\$7.3 million) so we can sustain libraries and reading materials in Pennsylvania?

Questions? Christi Buker, Executive Director, christi@palibraries.org, 717-766-0142.

Membership Fees & Application

We'd love to have you join us! To become a member, download the membership application and submit it to the address on the form.

Individual Membership

- Benefactor: \$1,000
- Patron: \$500
- Sponsor: \$125
- Sustaining: \$60
- Personal: \$25

Organizational Membership

- Patron: \$500
- Corporate: \$250
- Sponsor: \$125
- Friends Group: \$50

Affiliate Membership

- 501c3 Affiliate: \$150
- Affiliate membership requires approval from the PCBL Board after a series of paperwork is completed.



Contact Us:

pcblpa.org

pcblpa@gmail.com

800-870-3858

PCBL BOARD MEMBERS

President: Susan Tracey, President of the Mt. Lebanon Public Library Friends

Vice President: Denise S. Sticha, Retired Library Director

Treasurer: Brandt A. Ensor, System Administrator, Wayne Library Alliance

Secretary: Jairee Counterman, Advancement, Cumberland County Library System & Foundation

Deborah J. Dorshimer, Friends of the Upper Darby Township Public Libraries

Sue Erdman, Retired Library Director

Stephanie Thompson, Education Librarian/Assistant Professor, Millersville University & Friends of the Lancaster Public Library

Marcia Wilson, Friends of the Littlestown Library

PCBL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Sue Miller, MSLS, Independent Librarian in reference and research