



2026 – 2031 Strategic Plan

Planning Consultant
Stephanie Chase, Constructive Disruption

MLS Executive Director
Sarah Sogigian

MLS Executive Board President
Allyson Malik

MLS Executive Board Past President and Task Force Co-Chair
Hope Houston

Letter to Our Members

Welcome to the Massachusetts Library System's Strategic Plan for 2026 – 2031!

With this roadmap, we're excited to continue the excellent work we've done over the past 15 years. The time ahead will be crucial for our profession, and a streamlined yet flexible plan will ensure our continued success.

The purpose of this plan is to provide focused initiatives and goals so MLS can continue to be mindful of our mission and purpose. Through our conversations with members, it also became clear that MLS would benefit from clearly stated values. To that end, we are pleased to present a new mission statement and core values that you can find later in this document.

MLS worked with Stephanie Chase, Founding Consultant at Constructive Disruption, and a task force made up of member library staff and MLS staff representatives. Their voices were critical in the creation of this plan.

Through our process, many of you shared your positive thoughts and suggestions for MLS to grow and thrive. We began in fall 2025 with an organizational assessment, which gave us time to reflect on our structure and identify ways we can guarantee the organization is situated to best fulfill our mission.

Thank you to all who participated in one of our town hall sessions, interviews, and surveys. Your input was crucial to help shape this plan.

While our world and our profession are in a constant state of change, we commit to ensuring that our services will continue to evolve and adapt to the needs of your communities. We will remain model stewards of public funds and strengthen our standing as one of the nation's leading library support organizations.

Thank you!

Sarah Sogigian, MLS Executive Director

Allyson Malik, MLS Executive Board President

Hope Houston, MLS Executive Board Past President and Task Force Co-Chair



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Mission

The mission of the Massachusetts Library System is to empower libraries across the Commonwealth through innovative and responsive services.

Mission: Shorter Version

Empowering libraries across the Commonwealth.

Core Values

- **Member Focus.** Our members are our top priority. We meet their needs through high quality services and continual improvement.
- **Equitable Access.** We use our state funding to support equitable access to our services for all member libraries, in recognition of the critical role libraries of all types play in building strong, thriving communities.
- **Building Community.** We foster connections among our member libraries, experts, and supporters to ensure a strong and collaborative library community.

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative 1

MLS will implement an equity-based lens to its services, refocusing its efforts to support specific library types currently in the most need.

Goals

1. Reintroduce the membership to all MLS staff by prioritizing in-person, cross-type, and personalized engagement opportunities.
2. Develop and implement a multi-year engagement approach focused on service and support to small public libraries as defined by statute; solo special and academic libraries; and school libraries, specifically at high schools.

Strategic Initiative 2

MLS will continue to invest in and collaborate on opportunities that benefit the library community across the Commonwealth.

Goals

1. Continue the work prioritized in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan by researching and implementing recommendations for policy writing, hiring processes, and workplace culture to member libraries.
2. Prioritize and support collaboration, coordination, and cooperation with other statewide library organizations and among Massachusetts libraries of all types.
3. Ensure MLS maintains its statewide role leading the development of best practices, experimenting with new collaborative services, and other initiatives to move library services and libraries forward.

Strategic Initiative 3

MLS will ensure its resources are aligned to best support its initiatives and its member libraries.

Goals

1. Engage in an in-depth assessment of each of MLS' core services, ensuring internal resource allocation for staff, space, training, and budget align with member needs.
2. Continue the work prioritized in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, guided by trusted experts, by reviewing and implementing internally-focused recommendations, especially around MLS' own policies.
3. Improve internal and external communications to better help member library staff and MLS's own staff best engage with the resources available.

With thanks to our Strategic Plan Task Force:

Hope Houston, Task Force Co-Chair, Bentley University, Waltham	Sarah Jackson, Boston Public Library
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Nancy Hughes, MCI-Norfolk	Brad Schmidt, MLS Staff
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