

Calendar of Events

July 16, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Practical Budget Management: How to Avoid Disaster, Make Smart Moves, Report Responsibl

Online
Via Zoom

,
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Whether you're a newly minted library staffer responsible for the budget for Summer Reading, a Director concerned with making the most of your budget, or have budgeting responsibilities somewhere in between, budgeting can be intimidating. Join Wendy Bartlett, Collection Development & Acquisitions Manager for Cuyahoga County Public Library, and learn basic budgeting do's and don'ts, how to be ready for unexpected decreases in funding, how to cope if you mess up, and how to educate yourself about the bigger budgeting picture. You'll leave with practical ideas (and tools!) that will make working with the budget a pleasure rather than a chore.

Learning Objectives:

Basic budgeting do's and don'ts
Prepare for the unexpected
How to handle a mistake
Understanding the bigger budgeting picture

Presenter:

Wendy Bartlett serves as the Collection Development & Acquisitions Manager for Cuyahoga County Public Library, a position she has held since 2009. Before that, Wendy was the branch manager for the Beachwood Branch of CCPL, and before that, the Assistant Director of the Kent Free Library. Wendy was the Regional Manager of the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Borders stories before joining the library world. She also served as a Councilperson for the Village of Lodi, her hometown in her twenties, where she first learned about budgeting for government agencies.

July 22, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Confident and Clear: Building Effective Communication in the Library

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Effective communication is vital for collaboration, patron service, and a positive workplace environment. In this webinar you will learn communication skills to build confidence, respond intentionally in workplace interactions, and enhance your listening skills. We will explore common causes of communication apprehension, understand the importance of giving and receiving feedback, and learn strategies for becoming more attentive and empathetic listeners.

Learning Objectives:

Understand communication apprehension and apply techniques to manage it in professional settings.

Demonstrate intentional communication practices when giving and receiving feedback with peers and patrons.

Apply active listening strategies to enhance team collaboration and patron engagement.

Presenter:

Dr. Stevie M. Munz is an award-winning teacher and researcher with 13+ years of experience in the communication field. She has led hundreds of discussion forums, presentations, trainings, and workshops. As a published author, her work appears in numerous peer-reviewed publications and popular press outlets.

As a communication expert, she is passionate about developing your communication power skills. From public speaking to relationship communication, conflict, group communication, and so much more—Dr. Munz supports you in transforming your personal and professional communication life!

July 23, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Chair Yoga for Library Workers Series: Mindful Awareness

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

Support your well-being with this chair yoga series designed specifically for library staff. Each session combines gentle physical postures, breathing techniques, and basic meditation practices to help ease tension, manage stress, and build flexibility. Whether you're new to yoga or a seasoned practitioner, this series welcomes all levels and abilities—no special clothing or equipment required. Just bring yourself and a chair!

Learning Objectives:

Learn basic techniques for mindful awareness, including guided breathwork and intentional noticing, to manage workplace stress more effectively.

Develop body awareness by exploring gentle yoga postures tailored to reduce tension commonly associated with desk work and shelving.

Enhance mental clarity and focus through mindfulness techniques that support sustained attention in a library setting.

Foster emotional resilience by practicing mindfulness techniques that promote calmness and balance during high-demand times or difficult patron interactions.

Presenter:

Hillary Brown, Program and Services Associate, NEO-RLS, is also a certified yoga teacher and former children's librarian with over a decade of experience in public libraries. She specializes in making yoga accessible to all and is passionate about supporting the well-being of library workers through mindful movement, meditation and breath work. Hillary believes that, like libraries, yoga should be welcoming to everyone.

July 29, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Stress Management for Real Life: Evidence-Based Ways to Heal, Recharge, and Find Balance
Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

It's a stressful time to be a library worker, with increasing demands, public pressure, and rapidly changing environments. This session offers an evidence-based approach to understanding stress, preventing its escalation, and fostering sustainable well-being. Participants will learn practical strategies to build resilience, develop healthier work habits, and achieve a better balance between their professional and personal lives.

Learning Objectives:

Identify the signs and symptoms of chronic stress and explain their impact on personal and organizational well-being.

Apply evidence-based strategies to prevent the accumulation of chronic stress and support sustainable well-being.

Develop a personalized plan to manage stress and maintain balance through proactive, daily practices.

Presenter:

Bobbi L. Newman is a librarian, Certified Wellness Practitioner, workplace well-being consultant, and advocate for healthier, more inclusive, and productive workplaces. She is passionate about fostering environments where individuals and teams not only work but thrive. With nearly a decade of experience, two published books on workplace wellness, and a Certificate in the Science of Well-Being from Yale University, Bobbi's approach is evidence-based and grounded in real-world experience. She writes for libraries at librarianbyday.net.

July 30, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Supporting Neurodivergent Colleagues and Staff

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

How can you support neurodivergent colleagues and staff? How can you advocate for your own needs as a neurodivergent person? This presentation will discuss some of the experiences of neurodivergent library workers and barriers to inclusion that exist in many libraries. Leave with meaningful practices you can build into your management or work style to foster a culture of neuroinclusion at your workplace.

Learning Objectives:

Attendees will understand relevant language and information to discuss disabilities and neurodiversity.

Attendees will learn at least five unique needs of neurodivergent colleagues and staff may have in your organization.

Attendees will gather at least five strategies and practices for supporting neurodivergent individuals at your workplace.

Presenter:

Renee Grassi, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Speaker

Librarian, author, trainer, administrator, teacher, and consultant Renee Grassi is an advocate for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in libraries, schools, and communities. As a neurodivergent librarian herself, Renee has worked in public libraries for nearly twenty years, developing award-winning library initiatives that welcome, support, and welcome disabled residents and their families and caregivers. Learn more at reneegrassi.com.

August 5, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT): Historical Romance

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Modeled off the Chicago-area Adult Reading Round Table, the Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT) will lead library staff through an in-depth genre study. Over the course of a year, we will explore historical fiction, with a specific focus on the biographical, fantasy, literary, mystery, and romance subgenres. This antepenultimate session will explore historical romance through guided discussions to identify popular authors, titles, tropes, & trends. A reading list & questions will be supplied; while it is not required, it is recommended to read through some of the titles and questions. The GRRT is dedicated to the development of readers' advisory skills and the promotion of reading for pleasure.

August 6, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Excel Drop-in Q & A (Excel Nerds and Novices welcome)

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Join us for a session to have your Excel questions answered. Here is an opportunity to share tips and ask questions about Excel. Do you want to learn more about quickly navigating in Excel? Excel formula basics? Using automatic color coding to create a printable work schedule based on staff availability? Summarize data you've exported from another system like your ILS? Power Query basics? You may email questions and files ahead of time to Melissa Lattanzi or just join us on Zoom for the conversation. Keep in mind when sharing your files to protect the innocent.

Facilitators:

Scott Trimmer currently serves as the Director of the Learning Commons at Cuyahoga Community College's Eastern Campus, where he has been since 2014. Scott enjoys helping people use technology to meaningfully improve their lives. His staff jokes that there's very little Scott doesn't try to organize in a spreadsheet. While serving for more than ten years as the go-to person to answer Excel questions at a 1000+ employee University, he picked up a number of Excel tips and tricks. In recent years, Scott has developed or assisted in the creation of variety of Excel tools to facilitate administrative tasks and dashboards, simplifying workflows and making data available to less tech-savvy folks in the organization.

With a degree in Computer Science and an MBA in Organizational Leadership, Scott has effectively used Excel to enhance data accessibility in a manner that benefits his organizations.

Melissa Lattanzi, Continuing Education Coordinator, NEO-RLS

August 7, 2025
- November 30, -0001

How Libraries Can Build Connections to Combat Loneliness

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Libraries save lives. Loneliness and social isolation are so rampant in America that the Center for Disease Control calls loneliness an epidemic, exacerbated by COVID. Using programming, community resources, and collection development and display, libraries can address this significant mental (and physical) health condition. This on-demand webinar guides you on how to develop these tools and create a culture of empathy and action by developing micro-communities to combat loneliness.

Learning Objectives:

Identify existing programs that combat loneliness and modify existing programs to add a social component;

Utilize, at no cost, outside agencies, institutions, organizations, and businesses to develop a coordinated series of programs both in and outside the library building; and

Identify areas where staff training can prepare them to help patrons in need of socialization.

Presenter:

Tony Iovino (he/him) is the assistant director of the Oceanside (NY) Library, a position he has held since January 2015. Prior to joining the Oceanside Library, he was the head of litigation and managing partner of a medium size law firm he co-founded in 1986.

Tony received his BA from the University of Richmond (History and Economics) in 1979, his Juris Doctorate from St. John's University in 1982, and his MLIS from the University of Kentucky in 2020, where he was the recipient of the Melody Trosper Award for excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service.

Tony has lectured locally and throughout the United States on library topics. He is the chair of the Membership Committee of the New York Library Association and is a published author and poet. He has received a number of awards for his service to the community.

August 7, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Jamborees and Gentle Reminders: Bolstering Usability of LibGuides Through Employee Development via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

In this webinar, one academic librarian will relate her experience overhauling her institution's LibGuides interface, developing resources to guide creation and formatting, and attempting creative approaches for encouraging ongoing maintenance, all with the goal of improving the usability of online research guides. Participants will learn of some practical strategies for reinvigorating LibGuides at their institution through the librarian's experimentation with "LibGuide Editing Jamboree" events, "soft review cycles" with her colleagues, and the lessons learned along the way.

Learning Objectives:

*Explore best practices for user experience in the LibGuides interface.
Understand the benefits of providing development opportunities for guide owners.
Discuss creative ways of building community and establishing routine for guide owners to improve usability and maintenance of LibGuides.*

Presenter:

Karli Cotton (she/her) is the Online Learning Librarian and an Assistant Professor at the University of Montana's Maureen & Mike Mansfield Library. In this role, she works to expand her library's offering of digital learning objects that assist with the delivery of information literacy instruction. Her recent interests have centered on AI literacy and creative techniques for online asynchronous library instruction. Karli received her Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Washington.

August 12, 2025
- November 30, -0001

From Conflict to Collaboration: A Practical Guide for Communicating Through Disagreement
Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

This webinar equips you with essential communication skills to navigate disagreements productively and collaboratively. Learn practical techniques for active listening, clear articulation, and identifying common ground. You'll leave with concrete strategies for effective communication, negotiation, and problem-solving when working with individuals holding diverse perspectives, ultimately fostering understanding and shared success.

Learning Objectives:

Know how to identify common ground and utilize collaborative problem-solving strategies to work towards shared goals with individuals holding diverse perspectives.

Discover practical negotiation and communication strategies to navigate conflict productively and foster understanding in situations involving differing viewpoints.

Learn the communication skills that will allow you to effectively communicate your own perspective and understand differing viewpoints during disagreements.

Presenter:

Mary Frankenfield has worked in the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library system for more than 20 years. During her time at MRCPL, Mary has worked as a page, a clerk, a children's librarian, and a branch manager. She has been in her current position as Deputy Director for a little over seven years. Among her many other duties, Mary has an active role in employee training and development and has presented workshops for NEO-RLS, OLC, and the MRCPL staff.

August 20, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Time Management: Scheduling and Prioritization

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Do you ever feel like there aren't enough hours in the day? This session helps participants take back control of their time by learning how to schedule effectively and prioritize what truly matters. With practical tools and strategies, attendees will learn to break overwhelming workloads into manageable tasks. By understanding the difference between urgent and important, and applying proven prioritization techniques like the Eisenhower Matrix or ABC method, participants will be better equipped to align their daily actions with long-term goals. Expect a high-impact hour full of actionable insights.

Learning Objectives:

*Learn to assess daily responsibilities based on urgency and importance
Identify common scheduling mistakes and how to avoid them
Practice prioritization techniques for smarter task management
Build a framework for consistent daily planning*

Presenter:

Amy B. Shannon, President, Pinnacle Leadership Solutions, LLC, and a Partner in Your Partner in HR has specialized in Organizational Development, Human Resources and Training for over 25 years. For the past 13 years, Amy has been an Organizational Development consultant working with clients in manufacturing, service, financial and healthcare industries. Most recently, Amy served as the Executive Director II/Vice President of Corporate College where she built robust leadership training curriculum to serve her clients. Amy also holds certifications with numerous nationally known training vendors. She is a regular speaker at national conferences such as The Corporate University Week at the Disney Institute. She is a seasoned speaker for the HR Star Conference Cleveland. As a result of her high ratings, she has also been a key speaker at the HR Star Atlanta and received the Gold Medal Award three years in a row for best session speaker. Amy was a recipient of the 2015 HR Awards presented by ERC & CSHRM.

August 27, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Chair Yoga for Library Workers Series: Change the Narrative by Cultivating Opposite Thought

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

Support your well-being with this chair yoga series designed specifically for library staff. Each session combines gentle physical postures, breathing techniques, and basic meditation practices to help ease physical tension, manage stress, and build flexibility. Whether you're new to yoga or a seasoned practitioner, this series welcomes all levels and abilities—no special clothing or equipment required. Just bring yourself and a chair!

Learning Objectives:

Explore the yogic principle of pratipaksha bhavana (cultivating opposite thought) to reframe internal narratives and foster a more compassionate inner dialogue.

Apply mindfulness and reflection exercises to real workplace scenarios.

Identify thought patterns that contribute to stress, self-doubt, or burnout, particularly in service-oriented work environments.

Practice physical postures that embody balance and help cultivate a balanced mindset.

Presenter:

Hillary Brown, Program and Services Associate, NEO-RLS, is also a certified yoga teacher and former children's librarian with over a decade of experience in public libraries. She specializes in making yoga accessible to all and is passionate about supporting the well-being of library workers through mindful movement, meditation and breath work. Hillary believes that, like libraries, yoga should be welcoming to everyone.

September 3, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Cybersecurity for Library Staff

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

Be Aware and Be Prepared - Learn the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the current cyber security risks, attacks, concerns and what you can do to protect not only yourself, your company but also your family, friends and other relations from becoming a statistic. For all library staff.

Presenter:

Ed Slusarski, President of Regarding Your Systems, LLC (Cyber Consulting Company) - He graduated college with a triple major in Accounting, Finance, and Management and a minor in Computer Science. He started his business career in public accounting, serving very diverse set of clientele. In his career, he continued to focus on becoming an integrated consulting expert as he progressed through various industries - manufacturing, financial, retail, and mining - which were US and internationally based companies. He continued to refine his skills by: 1) obtaining his MBA/MSMIS degree from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management; and 2) conducting research, analysis, and studies in the business, operational, and IT fields with the culmination of certifications in key IT security and governance, risk management, and business management fields. He continues to learn and adapt to the ever-changing business/IT environment by obtaining training and seeking certifications in his areas of study and interest (Dark Web, Artificial Intelligence, IoT devices, quantum computing). While his consulting practice does address large companies (Eaton, Timken Steel, Hyster Yale), he strives to help the medium to small businesses the most.

September 10, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Lead with Clarity: Intentional Communication for Library Supervisors

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Supervisors and leaders set the tone for communication in the workplace. This webinar focuses on strengthening leadership communication through intentional dialogue, supportive feedback, and responsive listening. You will learn how to reduce communication apprehension (for you and your staff), navigate challenging conversations with empathy and clarity, and foster a culture of open, respectful feedback.

Learning Objectives:

Recognize and address communication apprehension to foster a more open communication environment.

Use intentional communication techniques to give developmental and appreciative feedback effectively.

Model and promote active listening to support staff engagement and conflict management.

Presenter:

Dr. Stevie M. Munz is an award-winning teacher and researcher with 13+ years of experience in the communication field. She has led hundreds of discussion forums, presentations, trainings, and workshops. As a published author, her work appears in numerous peer-reviewed publications and popular press outlets.

As a communication expert, she is passionate about developing your communication power skills. From public speaking to relationship communication, conflict, group communication, and so much more—Dr. Munz supports you in transforming your personal and professional communication life!

September 11, 2025
- November 30, -0001

The Power of Civility: Elevating Standards and Transforming Service

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Tired of workplace friction impacting productivity and morale? The solution lies in embracing a revitalized understanding of civility. This isn't about superficial niceties; it's about deeply respecting the diverse perspectives, needs, and identities of your colleagues while honoring your own. As discourtesy increasingly disrupts our workplaces, leading to turnover and poor performance, embedding internal customer service standards that are rooted in civility can make a powerful difference. This workshop offers the next critical step towards strong internal customer service skills: learning what this new civility means, why it's indispensable for a positive and productive environment, and how you can actively cultivate these vital skills.

Learning Objectives:

Attendees will have a deeper knowledge of the modern definition, and role, of civility within the scope of internal customer service.

Attendees will understand the skills necessary for a workplace that prioritizes civility.

Attendees will be able to develop their own civility skills and know how to put them into practice in the workplace.

Presenters:

Mary Frankenfield has worked in the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library system for more than 20 years. During her time at MRCPL, Mary has worked as a page, a clerk, a children's librarian, and a branch manager. She has been in her current position as Deputy Director for a little over seven years. Among her many other duties, Mary has an active role in employee training and development and has presented workshops for NEO-RLS, OLC, and the MRCPL staff.

Beth Donaldson started her library career as a page in 2006 at Westlake Porter Library. She worked her way up to Children's Services and earned her MLIS in 2010. Currently she is a Branch Manager with Mansfield-Richland County Public Library as well as a Customer Service trainer for new hires. She likes to say that she learned about the importance of Internal Customer Service the hard way, and she's here today to share some insights and a story or two.

September 17, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Canva II: Designing Impactful Flyers and Print Materials

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Print materials remain essential tools to inform, engage, and inspire their communities. This intermediate-level course focuses on creating effective, professional-quality print pieces such as flyers, posters, and other print materials using Canva.

We will explore layout strategies, content development, and visual branding techniques to produce materials that stand out. Whether promoting events, services, or seasonal campaigns, you'll gain the skills to create polished print materials that reflect your library's mission and voice.

This course is beneficial for those with basic Canva knowledge.

Learning Objectives:

Design visually appealing and brand-consistent flyers using features like custom templates, brand kits, and Canva elements.

Optimize print layouts for different formats such as letter-size flyers, half-sheets, posters, brochures) to meet varied library needs and display spaces.

Incorporate design best practices including visual hierarchy, accessibility, and layout techniques to improve flyer readability and effectiveness across print and digital formats.

Presenter:

Heather Feenaughty is the PR/Marketing Manager at Westlake Porter Public Library. Heather brings over 14 years' experience in marketing and public relations. She served as a Public Affairs Broadcast Journalist in the U.S. Army for five years and spent seven years at Case Western Reserve University's Undergraduate Admissions marketing team. Heather has been in the library world for almost 3 years and plans to add many more. Heather has yet to receive the prestigious Cannes Lions Award for Creative Effectiveness but is a five-time local scarecrow contest winner (should be six), won a Rosette at the Cuyahoga County Fair in the crochet division, and spear-headed WPPL's 2024 Westlake in Bloom first place win.

September 23, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Introduction to Storytime: Planning for Success

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

This webinar will help you build the skills and confidence needed to deliver successful storytimes. Whether you are a brand new storytime leader or a seasoned pro looking for a fresh approach, this session will guide you through the process of planning an engaging storytime, including selecting great books, incorporating early literacy practices, and using interactive elements with different age groups.

Learning Objectives:

Identify the core components of an effective storytime, including early literacy practices and age-appropriate activities.

Develop a structured storytime plan with interactive elements that can be delivered confidently and adapted on the fly.

Explore a variety of practical tools, tips, and resources created by librarians to support effective and engaging storytime.

Michelle Todd has worked in public libraries for over 20 years, specializing in children's services. She started at Lakewood Public Library, then moved to Cuyahoga County Public Library, working in several branches for 15 years, obtaining her MLIS, and finding her intense passion for children's programming – particularly in serving at-risk communities as a Children's Services Supervisor. Her passion for programming, early literacy, and helping children find the joy in reading infuses everything she does. Michelle has served on the Youth Services Advisory Committee of Northeast Ohio Regional Library System for a couple years, and presented at the 2024 School Library Journal Youth Leadership Summit.

September 24, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Chair Yoga for Library Workers Series: Roles and Right Actions

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

Support your well-being with this chair yoga series designed specifically for library staff. Each session combines gentle physical postures, breathing techniques, and basic meditation practices to help ease physical tension, manage stress, and build flexibility. Whether you're new to yoga or a seasoned practitioner, this series welcomes all levels and abilities—no special clothing or equipment required. Just bring yourself and a chair!

Learning Objectives:

Explore the yogic principle of dharma (right action) to reflect on healthy, sustainable ways to serve your community without experiencing burnout.

Examine the concept of “vocational awe” in libraries and its impact on personal well-being.

Use mindful movement and meditation to reconnect with intrinsic motivation, purpose, and inner alignment in one's professional role.

Develop tools for self-compassion and boundary-setting that support quality service while honoring personal needs and limitations.

Presenter:

Hillary Brown, Program and Services Associate, NEO-RLS, is also a certified yoga teacher and former children's librarian with over a decade of experience in public libraries. She specializes in making yoga accessible to all and is passionate about supporting the well-being of library workers through mindful movement, meditation and breath work. Hillary believes that, like libraries, yoga should be welcoming to everyone.

September 30, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Time Management: Overcoming Procrastination

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Why do we delay even the simplest tasks? This session explores the psychology behind procrastination and how to break the cycle. Through interactive discussion and self-reflection, participants will identify their personal procrastination triggers and the hidden costs of delay. Using practical techniques like time-blocking, the 5-minute rule, and accountability tools, this session equips attendees with the skills to turn intention into action. It's not just about getting things done—it's about building momentum and confidence in your workflow.

Learning Objectives:

*Understand the root causes of procrastination
Identify your procrastination patterns and triggers
Apply quick-start strategies to overcome task avoidance
Create a personal action plan to maintain motivation*

Presenter:

Amy B. Shannon, President, Pinnacle Leadership Solutions, LLC, and a Partner in Your Partner in HR has specialized in Organizational Development, Human Resources and Training for over 25 years. For the past 13 years, Amy has been an Organizational Development consultant working with clients in manufacturing, service, financial and healthcare industries. Most recently, Amy served as the Executive Director II/Vice President of Corporate College where she built robust leadership training curriculum to serve her clients. Amy also holds certifications with numerous nationally known training vendors. She is a regular speaker at national conferences such as The Corporate University Week at the Disney Institute. She is a seasoned speaker for the HR Star Conference Cleveland. As a result of her high ratings, she has also been a key speaker at the HR Star Atlanta and received the Gold Medal Award three years in a row for best session speaker. Amy was a recipient of the 2015 HR Awards presented by ERC & CSHRM.

October 2, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Cybersecurity for IT and Managers

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

Things to be Aware of Going Forward - Join us for a deeper dive for IT staff into what are the risks coming down the road for everyone (deep fakes, voice overs, AI attacks) and the compliance requirements that will be or are being imposed by the States, Governments and Nations that will impact everyone. For IT staff and managers.

Presenter:

Ed Slusarski, President of Regarding Your Systems, LLC (Cyber Consulting Company) - He graduated college with a triple major in Accounting, Finance, and Management and a minor in Computer Science. He started his business career in public accounting, serving very diverse set of clienteles. In his career, he continued to focus on becoming an integrated consulting expert as he progressed through various industries - manufacturing, financial, retail, and mining - which were US and internationally based companies. He continued to refine his skills by: 1) obtaining his MBA/MSMIS degree from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management; and 2) conducting research, analysis, and studies in the business, operational, and IT fields with the culmination of certifications in key IT security and governance, risk management, and business management fields. He continues to learn and adapt to the ever-changing business/IT environment by obtaining training and seeking certifications in his areas of study and interest (Dark Web, Artificial Intelligence, IoT devices, quantum computing). While his consulting practice does address large companies (Eaton, Timken Steel, Hyster Yale), he strives to help the medium to small businesses the most.

October 7, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT): Historical Literary Fiction

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Modeled off the Chicago-area Adult Reading Round Table, the Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT) will lead library staff through an in-depth genre study. Over the course of a year, we will explore historical fiction, with a specific focus on the biographical, fantasy, literary, mystery, and romance subgenres. This penultimate session will explore historical literary fiction through guided discussions to identify popular authors, titles, tropes, & trends. A reading list & questions will be supplied; while it is not required, it is recommended to read through some of the titles and questions. The GRRT is dedicated to the development of readers' advisory skills and the promotion of reading for pleasure.

October 8, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Doing What Matters: Values in the Library

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Our values are the lens through which we interpret the world. They are the principles that guide our thoughts, actions, and behaviors. When we consciously and intentionally leverage our core values in our work, it gives us a sense of confidence, meaning, and purpose. It also helps us navigate conflict and consensus with grace and courage. In this workshop, individuals will reflect on the core values they bring to their work and how to use their values with more intention. Walk away ready to plan for how to use values with more intention in communication, work activities, and interactions with others.

Learning Objectives:

- *Identify personal core values*
- *Plan for how to use core values in daily work for more meaning, satisfaction, and excellence*
- *Understanding and techniques for dealing with values conflicts*

Presenter:

Sharon Morris has worked in library development for over 20 years and conducts workshops, courses, and leadership institutes throughout the country. Her interests are leadership, research, management, supervision, communications, wellness & libraries, play, values, improv comedy, and insight. Sharon takes an asset-based approach to learning and invites all to engage. She has earned an MLIS and PhD in Managerial Leadership in Libraries. Her workshops and webinars are designed based on adult learning theory and include experiential learning, content informed by research, "fun" aspects, and time for reflection and planning to apply concepts in the workplace.

October 9, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Back to the Book XXIV: Blurred Lines: A Genre-Blending Discussion
Hilton Garden Inn
8971 Wilcox Dr
Twinsburg, OH 44087

09:30 AM - 04:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

We're thrilled to invite you to this year's Back to the Book, where we'll explore the exciting world of genre-blending in modern literature.

The day kicks off with Lainey Mays from HarperCollins, who will share insights into current trends in genre fusion and offer a sneak peek at what's next in the publishing world. Next, we dive into the comeback of Cozy Everything,

After lunch, we will have a collaborative brainstorming session where we'll exchange ideas on genre-blending and book discussions. Next, we will explore the ever-popular rise of romantasy—where romance meets fantasy in bold, unexpected ways.

We'll close the day with an exciting virtual author talk featuring Kara Loo and Jennifer Young, co-authors of Alice Chen's Reality Check, as they discuss their unique approach to storytelling and genre-crossing narratives. You won't want to miss this one!

Genre Bending

What makes a book stand out in its genre? Does it need to blend different tropes? Does it need a certain ending? Genre mashing is ever-present and won't be going anywhere soon. In this session, we will dive into some current trends in several genres and how they overlap. There will be a discussion of forthcoming books that fall into these categories as well as a display of all the FREE resources HarperCollins has for librarians to stay up-to-date on HarperCollins offerings.

Presenter:

Lainey Mays is the Assistant Manager for Library Marketing at HarperCollins Publishers. Originally from Mississippi, she came to New York to study for a Masters in Publishing. She enjoys reading any and all things as long as she can learn something new. She represents all adult titles for HarperCollins by scheduling author visits to libraries across the country, offering title presentations, and conducting author interviews. Her job allows her to hang out with librarians all day and talk about books...can life get much better than that?

Cozy Everything

Cozy is making a comeback and expanding beyond mystery into many other genres. The challenge for librarians and readers is finding a novel that celebrates the elements of cozy fiction while staying true to the things we love best about genre fiction. In this session, we will discuss the hallmarks of cozy fiction, take a fresh approach to the idea of cozy across genres, and build a book list of conceptually cozy reads for your patrons. (Spoiler alert: cozy horror is still horror.)

Presenter:

Mary Olson is Readers' Advisory Librarian at Medina County District Library. Her duties include training, direct service to book clubs, promotional writing, collection development, and programming. She is the 2015 Allie Beth Martin award winner and the 2016 Pat Carterette Award winner.

Your most popular holds lists, and E-book purchases are filled with fae, dragons, vampires, witches, and shifters. A beloved genre has seen new life thanks to an explosion of interest on social media. Romantasy readers savor a book where the love story is just as important as the world building and plot. In this session, we will discuss the tropes, acronyms, authors, and series that define romantasy. You will come away with a list of books to recommend, from introductions to popular series, to deep cuts for your most avid romantasy readers

Presenters:

Kelly Halleen is the Supervisor of the Brunswick Library Children's Department, a branch of Medina County District Library. She has worked 12 years at MCDL. She is currently the Assistant Coordinator of Ohio Library Council's Children's Services Division. She has presented at several OLC conferences including Convention & Expo, Storytime Foundations Workshop, and the Youth Services Conference. She loves cheering on her library staff, storytime, and connecting with all the families in her community. Beyond her children's experience, Kelly is a devoted reader of adult romance, fantasy, and excited to work with the "grown-ups" at this training.

Kaitlin Booth is the Collection Development Coordinator for Akron-Summit County Public Library. She supervises the librarians and support staff who select and manage ASCPL's physical and digital collections. She previously worked as a Collection Development Librarian at Cuyahoga County Public Library, an Acquisitions Librarian at Medina County District Library, and has been a librarian in the youth services, reference, and genealogy departments at Stark County District Library.

October 15, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Marketing and Outreach: Creating Engagement and Awareness

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:15 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Explore how library marketing and communications intersect with community engagement to build stronger connections with your audience. In this webinar, participants will identify goals for awareness, engagement, and usage while creating a comprehensive “map” of the library’s community touchpoints. Learn strategies to communicate consistently, craft compelling content, and strengthen partnerships for maximum impact. This session provides actionable steps to enhance engagement and ensure alignment with your library’s strategic priorities.

Learning Objectives:

Identify and define outreach, marketing, and engagement goals aligned with their library’s mission.

Map out key community touchpoints and explore techniques to build and sustain partnerships that increase visibility and usage.

Leave with practical tools and next steps tailored to their own library context.

Presenter:

*Cordelia Anderson has a strong reputation as a thought leader and communications professional in the library industry. She is the author of *Library Marketing and Communications: Strategies to Increase Relevance and Results* from ALA Editions, and has received recognition such as *Library Journal Marketer of the Year* (2016) and *John Cotton Dana* awards (2016 and 2006). She has served as a jury member for the *John Cotton Dana PR* award; an advisory board member for UNC Charlotte’s *Atkins Library*; and a board member for the *Library Marketing & Communications Conference*. Cordelia worked in public libraries for 15 years, serving for a decade as *Director of Marketing & Communications* at *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*.*

October 16, 2025
- November 30, -0001

A Deeper Dive into the Science of Reading-Repeated

Mentor Public Library

8215 Mentor Ave

Mentor, OH 44060

09:30 AM - 04:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

lattanzm@neo-rls.org

We will dive a little deeper into the actionable strategies for libraries to support the science of reading in their communities. Explore how libraries can integrate the key principles of phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension into programming and services. Learn how to create environments that foster early literacy development for children and caregivers through outreach, storytimes, resources, and other programming. You will leave with a toolkit of ideas and resources to help enhance your library's early literacy efforts.

Learning Objectives:

Understand what the science of reading is and what it tells us about how children learn to read

Learn how to share literacy messages with families in storytime and other programming

Discuss how libraries can support students, families, and schools through collection development and programming

***While it's not required, background knowledge of the Every Child Ready to Read program is encouraged or attending an Early Literacy 101 workshop in the past would be helpful. The EL101 (ECRR) workshop goes over the six early literacy skills which are also the main components behind the science of reading.*

The afternoon will consist of a round-table discussion of storytimes and sharing. Bring your best storytime to share with the group. Be prepared to share a storytime with a small group at your table.

Presenter:

Julia Shaheen is the Literacy Manager at Stark Library where she oversees the Ready for School program. Through this program, staff visit parents and caregivers to help prepare families for school. She oversees library literacy efforts by providing staff, parent, and educator workshops. She is an Every Child Ready to Read and Reimagining School Readiness trainer presenting workshops throughout Ohio. She provided storytime and other programming in both in-person and virtual capacities. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Education as well as several certificates in reading and early literacy education. She has presented at numerous regional, state and national conferences. She also presents for local schools and organizations and represents Stark Library on radio and television programming.

October 21, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Holding My Own: Lessons Learned as a Neurodivergent Library Leader

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Neurodivergent librarians face unique challenges in the workplace, particularly as they climb the leadership ladder. In this honest and straightforward conversation rooted in her real-world experiences, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Renee Grassi discusses lessons learned, navigating her nearly twenty years in libraries and thirteen years in management and administration. Whether you are a neurodivergent library leader yourself or supervise one as a Board Trustee, Director, or Manager, leave this presentation with new perspectives about the strengths and challenges of your neurodivergent peers and recommendations for advocacy and support.

Learning Objectives:

Attendees will increase awareness about relevant language and information to discuss disabilities and neurodiversity through the lens of the speaker's personal lived experiences.

Attendees will understand the benefits of a strengths-based person-centered approach to supporting, managing, and supervising neurodivergent library leaders.

"Attendees who identify as neurodivergent will leave with at least 5 strategies to assist themselves with being a neurodivergent leader."

Presenter:

Renee Grassi, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Speaker

Librarian, author, trainer, administrator, teacher, and consultant Renee Grassi is an advocate for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in libraries, schools, and communities. As a neurodivergent librarian herself, Renee has worked in public libraries for nearly twenty years, developing award-winning library initiatives that welcome, support, and welcome disabled re

October 23, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Safe Space - LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence Training

Twinsburg Public Library

10050 Ravenna Rd.

Twinsburg, OH 44087

09:30 AM - 12:30 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

lattanzm@neo-rls.org

LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence Training is designed to foster safer, more inclusive communities for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. This training equips participants with the knowledge and tools to recognize and address bias, understand current terminology, and engage in respectful and informed conversations around gender and sexuality. Upon completion, participants are invited to display a Safe Space Ally sign in their workspace—demonstrating visible support for the LGBTQ+ community and a commitment to inclusion.

No matter where you work or live, if you interact with others, you're likely to engage with individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Having a foundational understanding of inclusive language and what it means to be a supportive ally isn't just helpful—it's essential for fostering respect, equity, and belonging for everyone.

Learning Objectives:

Develop greater self-awareness of personal beliefs, stereotypes, and assumptions related to LGBTQ+ individuals.

Increase comfort and confidence in discussing concepts and using inclusive language related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gain knowledge of resources and services that support LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies.

Explore opportunities to build a network of community support that embraces all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Presenter:

Ken Ditlevson is a dedicated trainer and facilitator specializing in LGBTQ+ education and advocacy. He served as the inaugural Director of Kent State University's LGBTQ+ Center, a position he held for nearly 11 years. In this role, Ken led numerous initiatives to support LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty, building a more inclusive campus environment. Ken currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Students, and Director of CARES Center at Kent State University.

Ken is a two-time graduate of Kent State University, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Education in Community Counseling. Before joining Kent State, he spent nearly two decades working in mental health and social services, most recently serving as Assistant Vice President at Child Guidance & Family Solutions in Akron, Ohio.

A passionate advocate, Ken has received numerous awards for his leadership in LGBTQ+ advocacy and for developing innovative programs that foster inclusion and community support. He lives in the Highland Square/West Akron area with his husband of 25 years and their two dogs, Luna and Piper.

A passionate advocate, Ken has received numerous awards for his leadership in LGBTQ+ advocacy and for developing innovative programs that foster inclusion and community support. He lives in the Highland Square/West Akron area with his husband

of 25 years and their two dogs, Luna and Piper.

October 30, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Thriving at Work: Practical Strategies for Better Days in the Library

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Do your work days feel like a blur? Between patron demands, programming pressures, and shifting priorities, it's easy to fall into survival mode. This one-hour introductory webinar will offer practical strategies to help you reconnect with what you love about library work. We'll explore how to manage time and tasks, navigate workplace conflict, and rediscover purpose in your daily routine—so you can thrive, not just get through the day.

Learning Objectives:

*How to identify and reframe the parts of your job you enjoy.
Practical tips for managing time and tasks to reduce overwhelm.
A glimpse into resolving common workplace conflicts.
A foundation for thriving in your role and setting the stage for future growth*

Presenter:

*Crystal Trice, CSM, CSM@Scale, Library Consultant, Scissors & Glue, LLC
Crystal Trice, founder of Scissors & Glue, LLC, has over 20 years of experience in education and local government, with a focus on improving collaboration and handling challenging situations with patrons and coworkers. She is passionate about creating environments where people work together more effectively.*

With certifications as a Scrum Master and in Scrum at Scale for Government, Crystal holds a Master's in Library & Information Science and a Bachelor's in Elementary Education and Psychology. Her dedication to community enrichment fuels her work in supporting organizations to achieve their goals.

Crystal lives near Portland, Oregon, and enjoys organizing her thoughts (and tasks) with Sharpies, Flair pens, and sticky notes. She shares her home with her husband and a quirky mix of animals.

November 4, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Time Management: Eliminating Time Wasters and Staying Organized

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Time leaks can sabotage even the most productive days. In this session, participants will uncover the sneaky time wasters—both digital and interpersonal—that interrupt their focus and flow. They'll also learn how to manage interruptions with tact and clarity. Beyond identifying distractions, we'll explore systems to organize tasks, emails, and workspace for smoother, more efficient days. This training is perfect for anyone ready to reclaim their time and build sustainable habits for staying organized and in control.

Learning Objectives:

Recognize the top time-wasting habits in your workday

Learn strategies to manage and minimize interruptions

Discover tools to improve organization and workflow

Build a personalized strategy to reduce distractions and boost efficiency

Presenter:

Amy B. Shannon, President, Pinnacle Leadership Solutions, LLC, and a Partner in Your Partner in HR has specialized in Organizational Development, Human Resources and Training for over 25 years. For the past 13 years, Amy has been an Organizational Development consultant working with clients in manufacturing, service, financial and healthcare industries. Most recently, Amy served as the Executive Director II/Vice President of Corporate College where she built robust leadership training curriculum to serve her clients. Amy also holds certifications with numerous nationally known training vendors. She is a regular speaker at national conferences such as The Corporate University Week at the Disney Institute. She is a seasoned speaker for the HR Star Conference Cleveland. As a result of her high ratings, she has also been a key speaker at the HR Star Atlanta and received the Gold Medal Award three years in a row for best session speaker. Amy was a recipient of the 2015 HR Awards presented by ERC & CSHRM.

November 12, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Supporting Neurodivergent Library Users

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 02:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

How can you create neuroinclusive library experiences for your users? This presentation will discuss ways to make programs, collections, and services more accessible for neurodivergent people. Leave with ideas for how to create a welcoming environment at your library and an understanding of how to support neurodivergent people across the age span.

Learning Objectives:

Attendees will understand relevant language and information to discuss disabilities and neurodiversity.

Attendees will gather at least five strategies to make their approach to customer service more welcoming to neurodivergent users.

Attendees will learn at least five ideas to make library programs, collections, and services more inclusive to neurodivergent users

Presenter:

Renee Grassi, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Speaker

Librarian, author, trainer, administrator, teacher, and consultant Renee Grassi is an advocate for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in libraries, schools, and communities. As a neurodivergent librarian herself, Renee has worked in public libraries for nearly twenty years, developing award-winning library initiatives that welcome, support, and welcome disabled residents and their families and caregivers. Learn more at reneegrassi.com.

December 2, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT): Historical Fantasy

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Modeled off the Chicago-area Adult Reading Round Table, the Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT) will lead library staff through an in-depth genre study. Over the course of a year, we will explore historical fiction, with a specific focus on the biographical, fantasy, literary, mystery, and romance subgenres. This final session will explore historical fantasy through guided discussions to identify popular authors, titles, tropes, & trends. A reading list & questions will be supplied; while it is not required, it is recommended to read through some of the titles and questions. The GRRT is dedicated to the development of readers' advisory skills and the promotion of reading for pleasure.

December 10, 2025
- November 30, -0001

The Power of Storytelling and Empathy-Centered Communication

Online via Zoom

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

Storytelling and empathetic communication are powerful, often underestimated tools in marketing and outreach. Centering empathy for your patrons' needs and experiences in your communication strategies will enhance the efficacy of your reach and will help you better understand who you're serving. Applying storytelling best practices alongside empathy-centered communication will ensure you're drawing in your audience meaningfully and sustaining their engagement, and your patrons will better understand how your library can meet their needs. You'll leave this session with clear communication strategies and tools that simultaneously support your community and your services.

Learning objectives:

Identify your unique audiences.

Understand how to better communicate how your library can meet your audience's needs.

Gain confidence in interviewing and storytelling.

Presenter:

Deborah Hakes leads marketing and communications for Georgia Public Library Service, which was named Library Journal's 2020 Marketer of the Year. She is a communications leader with expertise in storytelling and building brands for nonprofits, public health, and libraries. Hakes has served on the board for the Library Marketing and Communications Group since 2021, including currently as vice president.

She has a passion for amplifying the voices of those who do good and telling stories that drive people to take action and has spent her career at state, national, and globally-focused nonprofit organizations. She began her career at The Carter Center in former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's communications office, telling stories and raising awareness of international programming. At Welcoming America, she built the communications department from the ground up for a growing, new nonprofit. Currently at Georgia Public Library Service, she works to broaden awareness of the value of public libraries to build engagement and support, and she provides counsel to libraries to build their own communications expertise.

December 11, 2025
- November 30, -0001

Life Art: A New Horizon, Library Edition

Online via Zoom

02:00 PM - 03:15 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

This presentation will plumb the depths of human potential by asking folks, what if we consider our contemporary society through the lens of living life as art? And what if libraries are the perfect synergistically aligned conduits for this enriching energy? What if art has been with us since the dawn of civilization as a gift just waiting to be opened completely and utilized to its fullest extent? What if the concept and practice of living life as art offers us a mind and heart opening portal to better understand the nature of reality and the full capacities that human beings hold within themselves?

Learning Objectives:

Learn about the very beginning of art history to our current day and age showing how art has gone through a transformation from object to concept to now possibly people as art

Explore how this eureka understanding unlocks an infinite well of powerful energy that can be harnessed to good ends to live one's life in the most inspired and fulfilling way

Begin to see how this gift energy can potentially strengthen, support, catalyze, revitalize, renew and supercharge library workers and libraries all around the world

Tap into the awesome power of the gift energy that the understanding and practice of life art truly offers and see how it aligns perfectly with the mission, vision and values of libraries

Presenter:

Jon Keppel holds a Bachelor of Fine Art in Sound Art from The Ohio State University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude with Distinction and a Master of Library and Information Science from Kent State University with a focus on adult services in the context of public libraries through the lens of living life as art. He is currently a librarian which is how he expresses his life art professionally in addition to independently inspiring through his writings, talks, guided meditations, music, and art.