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**KEEP YOUR LIBRARY’S GOLD STAR SHINING: NEXT STEPS FOR PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION’S PA FORWARD STAR LIBRARY PROGRAM**

Gold stars achieved by December 31, 2019 valid for three years; Gold stars achieved after January 1, 2020 are valid for one year

Mechanicsburg, PA (April 22, 2019) – Beginning January 2020, once a library achieves the Gold level of the PA Forward Star Library program, libraries will now be able to take steps to maintain their PA Forward Gold Star status. The Pennsylvania Library Association is proud to announce the Maintaining Your PA Forward Gold Star program.

With the initial Star Library program, once achieved, the PA Forward Gold Star was valid for three years. Since the program launched statewide in January 2017, the first round of Gold Stars will expire as of January 2020. This meant the Association needed to determine what happened after the library’s gold star expired.

“Working with a group of up and coming library leaders, a plan has been developed to help libraries maintain their PA Forward Gold Stars,” said Christi Buker, Pennsylvania Library Association Executive Director. “The Association thanks Maggie Albro, Sarah Fetzer, Jacqueline Laick, DeAnne O’Brien, and Alice Pakhtigian for their work in creating the Maintaining Your PA Forward Gold Star plan. The time they spent working through this with the PA Forward Training Team was invaluable to the overall Star Library Program.”

“We are not adding additional levels to the original program,” said Joann Eichenlaub, Assistant Director of the Madigan Library at Penn College of Technology and Chair of the PA Forward Training Team. “As we worked through this process, we realized the Gold Star is that top level, but it is not a final achievement. We want libraries to continue incorporating PA Forward in their programs and outreach because it adds another dimension and additional value to all that libraries offer through various opportunities at their individual locations. The Star designations connect libraries even more with their local communities and celebrate a strong commitment to lifelong learning which will benefit everyone in today’s technological and diverse world.”

To maintain the Gold Star, libraries will complete four core actions, three literacy actions per literacy and two bonus actions on an annual basis. Just as with the current program, materials will be uploaded to a shared drive folder and libraries will then submit for the renewal star via the Star Library website.

“When you consider that libraries are now in a routine of applying the PA Forward framework to their programs and supporting outreach materials, there isn’t any additional work involved,” said Paula Gilbert, Director of Youth
Services with York County Libraries and Chair of the PA Forward Steering Committee. “You’re not doing anything you haven’t been doing to begin with. All you’re doing now is keeping your Gold Star shining.”

**What does this mean for the initial Star Library Program?**

As previously noted, the first round of PA Forward Gold Stars expires January 2020.

What this also means is that as of 2020, ALL stars will expire one year from when they were awarded. The bronze star award was only ever valid for one year. So, there will be no change there. The one-year rationale is now being applied to all star levels as of January 2020.

*However, for any library that achieves the Gold Star by December 31, 2019, they will be grandfathered into the original program, meaning their Gold Star is valid for three years. Any gold stars achieved after that date will automatically be on the yearly cycle for renewal.*

“When the PA Forward Star Library Program began in 2016, we didn’t realize how much the program would grow over the course of the next few years,” Buker added. “PA Forward provides a unified voice for our libraries, helping us make stronger impacts throughout Pennsylvania. The Star Library Program elevates the work of all Pennsylvania libraries.”

The Gold Star designation and any subsequent renewals will remain contingent upon the library having current institutional membership or a staff person having personal membership in the Pennsylvania Library Association. Membership must be current during the time the library submits for the star. Current trustee membership can be considered as well.

For a list of the types of actions for the Gold Star renewal, visit [www.paforwardstarlibraries.org](http://www.paforwardstarlibraries.org). Questions can be directed to [paforward@palibraries.org](mailto:paforward@palibraries.org) or 717-766-7663.

To date, the Star Library Program has more than 200 participating libraries of which more than 70 have reached the Gold Star level.

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