



**THOMASTON PUBLIC LIBRARY RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES**  
***\$20,000 Grant Will Help the Library Work with Residents with Disabilities to Improve Physical Accessibility, Community Conversation to be held on October 11***

THOMASTON, ME — Thomaston Public Library has been selected as one of 240 libraries to participate in Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities.

The competitive award comes with a \$20,000 grant that will help the library improve access for patrons with physical disabilities and mobility issues.

“We are so proud to be chosen for this amazing opportunity,” said Head Librarian Caroline Ward-Nesbit. “This grant will allow our library to get to know our residents with disabilities better. It will help us improve our services to ensure this population feels welcome and comfortable in our space.”

As part of the grant, Thomaston Public Library staff will take an online course in how to lead conversations, a skill vital to library work today. Staff will host a conversation with residents about physical accessibility on Wednesday, October 11 at 4 pm in the Lura Libby Room at the Thomaston Municipal Building at 13 Valley St. The community conversation will be offered online simultaneously, and residents interested in participating virtually via Zoom can contact the library at [library@thomastonmaine.gov](mailto:library@thomastonmaine.gov) to register.

The Thomaston Public Library is located in the historic Thomaston Academy Building, which was built in 1847 as the town’s school. “We love this space,” Ward-Nesbit said, “because of its history, its beauty, and its charm, but we recognize that historic buildings can be challenging at best to people who use mobility aids or have other physical disabilities. This community conversation will allow us to have an open dialogue with our residents about their priorities for improving accessibility in the library, and the best way to use these grant funds to address those priorities.”

Thomaston Public Library’s mission is to be a community resource center that actively provides materials, programs, and services to bring people, information, and ideas together. The library strives to be a warm and welcoming community living room where all gather to learn, connect, discover, create, and inspire.

Since 2014, ALA’s Libraries Transforming Communities initiative has re-imagined the role libraries play in supporting communities. Libraries of all types have utilized free dialogue and deliberation training and resources to lead community and campus forums; take part in anti-violence activities; provide a space for residents to come together and discuss challenging topics; and have productive conversations with civic leaders, library trustees and staff.

Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL).