



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Illinois Library Association

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**Yesenia Benavidez Selected as 2025 Recipient of the Illinois Library Association
Crosmen Memorial Award for New Library Workers**

The Illinois Library Association announces Yesenia Benavidez, Social Services Specialist at the Addison Public Library, as the recipient of the 2025 Crosmen Memorial Award for New Library Workers. The Crosmen Memorial Award for New Library Workers is named in memory of Alex Crossman, director of the Peoria Public Library at the time of his death in 1986. The award, sponsored by the Dominican University School of Information Studies, recognizes the achievements of library workers who are new or relatively new to the field and encourages continued involvement in the profession. Other awards honor those who have accomplished a great deal over a long period of time; this award is to honor someone who has accomplished a great deal in a short time.

Yesenia Benavidez joined the Addison Public Library in April 2023 and quickly became a passionate advocate for the community. By meeting one-on-one with patrons, assessing their needs, and connecting them to resources ranging from housing assistance to Medicaid support, Benavidez has built a strong patron following in her role as Social Services Specialist. In the first four months of 2025 alone, Benavidez conducted 239 individual appointments, 75% of which were in Spanish.

Outside of appointments, Benavidez has built relationships with community partners like People's Resource Center and the DuPage Health Department, as well as taking library services to new locations such as the local food pantry. In January 2024, Benavidez launched Addison Public Library's first MLK Day of Service, combining a donation drive with a drop-in volunteer event. This year, over 570 items including pet toys, greeting cards, and mental health kits were collected to be distributed to neighboring organizations.

While this is her first job in a library, Benavidez has embraced the Addison Public Library's mission and values of the organization. The library's director describes Benavidez as a special person ready for anything, resourceful, and resilient. From Veterans Resource Fairs, first aid and basic lifesaving skill classes with the fire department, and WIC Mobile Clinics to in-office phone calls and applications, Benavidez ensures that every patron leaves feeling supported and one step closer to a solution.

The Illinois Library Association Crosman Memorial Award for New Library Workers will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2025 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 14-16, 2025, in Rosemont, Illinois.

For more information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

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About the Illinois Library Association

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization that represents Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. Founded in 1896, it is the third-largest state library association and serves as a chapter within the American Library Association. ILA is comprised of 2,000 personal and more than 500 institutional members, made up of public, academic, school, and special libraries, as well as librarians, library staff, trustees, students, and library vendors.