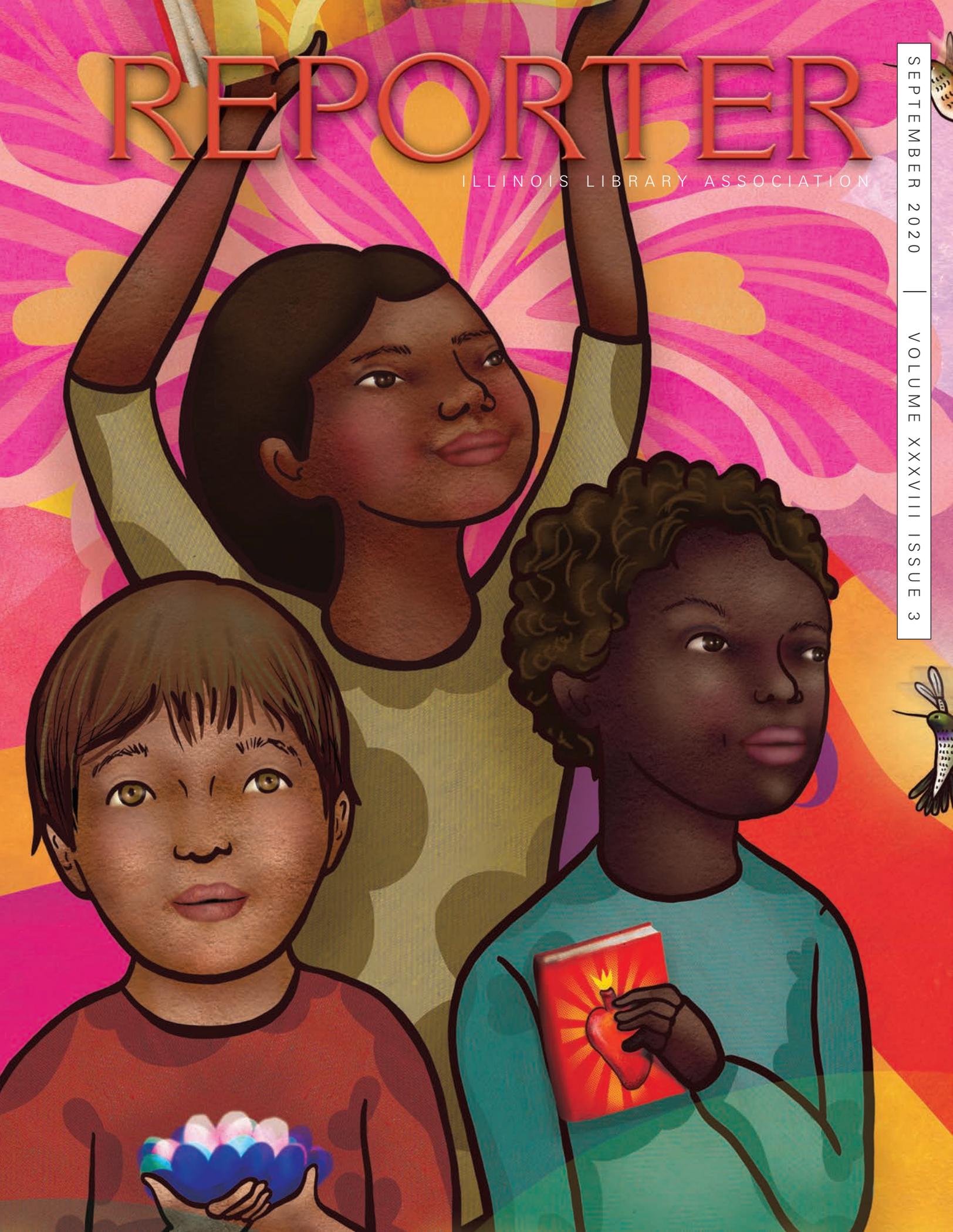


# REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

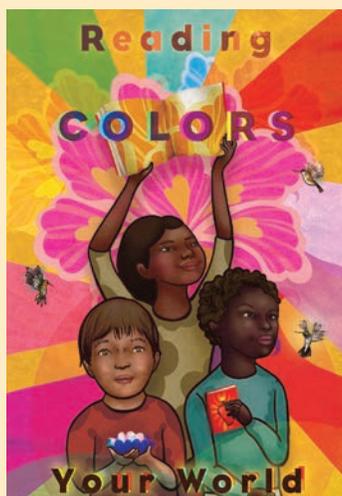
SEPTEMBER 2020

VOLUME XXXVIII ISSUE 3



# The Illinois Library Association Reporter

is a forum for those who are improving and reinventing Illinois libraries, with articles that seek to: explore new ideas and practices from all types of libraries and library systems; examine the challenges facing the profession; and inform the library community and its supporters with news and comment about important issues. The *ILA Reporter* is produced and circulated with the purpose of enhancing and supporting the value of libraries, which provide free and equal access to information. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people.



## ON THE COVER

### Reading Colors Your World: iREAD 2021

Yuyi Morales' vibrant artwork serves as one of the focal points for the 2021 iREAD summer reading program theme: "Reading Colors Your World," launching this month at [ireadprogram.org](http://ireadprogram.org). This theme lends itself to a wide range of interpretations and vibrant graphic presentation and provides a context for exploring humanity, nature, culture, and science, as well as developing programming that demonstrates how libraries and reading can expand your world through kindness, growth, and community. Library patrons, young and old, will be encouraged to develop creativity, try new things, explore art, and find beauty in diversity. Illustrations and posters will tell the story: "Read a book and color your world!"

Yuyi Morales grew up in Xalapa, Mexico, surrounded by the vibrant colors of lush gardens and moss-covered walls. When she moved to the U.S. with her husband, Yuyi knew very little English, but she learned by reading picture books to her young son. After countless trips to the local library, Yuyi was inspired to create her own illustrations, which pushed her to buy a set of paints and brushes. Today, Yuyi illustrates books that celebrate Latino culture, introducing children from all different backgrounds to important figures like Cesar Chavez and Frida Kahlo, as well as the Spanish language. Above all, Yuyi's illustrations capture the beauty of everyday life in Latin America and beyond. Her vibrant cast of characters include Niño the lucha libre wrestler, Abuelita the doting grandmother, and Señor Calavera the trickster skeleton, among others.

Some of Yuyi's most popular books are Belpré Medal winner *Dreamers/Soñadores*, (Holiday/Neal Porter, 2018); *Little Night/Nochecita* (Roaring Brook/Neal Porter, 2007; bilingual edition, 2016, Square Fish), *Viva Frida* (Roaring Brook/Neal Porter, 2014); and the Trickster Tale series. She's also illustrated stories for other authors, such as *Todas las buenas manos* (Harcourt, 2002), by F. Isabel Campoy; *Los Gatos Black on Halloween* (Square Fish, 2016), by Marisa Montes; and *Georgia in Hawaii: When Georgia O'Keeffe Painted What She Pleased* (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2012), by Amy Novesky. You can learn more about Yuyi at <http://www.yuyimorales.com>.

The Illinois Library Association is collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois, providing leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the United States, with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. Its 3,000 members are primarily librarians and library staff, but also trustees, publishers, and other supporters.

The Illinois Library Association has five full-time staff members. It is governed by a sixteen-member executive board, made up of elected officers. The association employs the services of Blaida and Associates for legislative advocacy. ILA is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization.

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See ILA calendar for submission deadlines for the *ILA Reporter*. Copy should be submitted by email to [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org). You are encouraged to include press-ready digital photos (300 p.p.i.) and graphics with your articles, which will be included on a space-available basis.

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Illinois Library Association

33 W. Grand Ave., Ste. 401 | Chicago, IL 60654-6799  
phone: 312-644-1896 | fax: 312-644-1899  
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# You Know You Want Volunteers: Successful Strategies to Achieve Effective Volunteer Assistance

**W**hile library staff are answering phones, providing readers advisory, teaching computer classes, and running craft programs; shelves start to get untidy, DVDs need cleaning, and homebound patrons are waiting for deliveries. For a library with limited resources and over-stretched staff, volunteers can be like a breath of fresh air. With a wide range of experiences and skills, they are ready to lend a hand. With proper planning, management, and recruitment, your library can build a team of volunteers who become treasured community collaborators.

## NEW ROLES FOR LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers' work includes tasks such as the traditional shelf-reading, dusting, disc cleaning, craft programs preparation, helping with events, summer reading program registration, pick lists, straightening shelves and books, and wiping down computers and tables. But while volunteers shouldn't be expected to take on the responsibilities of experienced library professionals, it is important to remember that volunteers have a wide range of skills that can and should be implemented.

Libraries are taking a new direction in tasking volunteers with roles that are more diverse and unusual, such as tutoring, landscaping, collection management (weeding, inventory, statistics recording, and displays), book club service (gathering, organizing, and preparing groups of materials for outside book clubs), and home bound deliveries.

This is the case with the Prospect Heights Public Library District, where high school volunteers tutor at the Library's Study Buddy Homework Center and assist with the Library's Marvelous Math programs as math tutors. The Gail Borden Public Library District also utilizes volunteers' talents for various non-traditional tasks. Five volunteer pianists play the piano for an hour on a weekly basis, entertaining patrons. In addition, the library's outreach programming serves the community by going into various facilities for help with memory care, brain trauma, senior and developmental care. This service is staffed by one library professional and the rest of the team is made up of volunteers who receive training prior to being assigned to these activities. Another team of volunteers brings stories, dramatic play, crafts and music to daycares, preschools, local parks, and laundromats. And the library's volunteer-supported program, Device Advice, provides help with technology questions.

[continued on page 6]

“Volunteers shouldn’t be expected to take on the responsibilities of experienced library professionals.”



While there is much discussion in the library field whether libraries should be run entirely by trained staff or with help from passionate volunteers, libraries with limited resources and over-stretched staff have no choice but to rely on volunteers' work. At the Mississippi Valley Library District, in addition to the more traditional tasks of overseeing book sales and prep for children's crafts, volunteers help with landscaping job duties and genealogy projects, such as local history indexing—jobs that are typically reserved for trained professionals at libraries with healthier budgets. At the O'Fallon Public Library, volunteers play a large role in managing library donations and hosting book sales. "Volunteers sort the items and list them for sale on Amazon," says a staff member. "Our volunteers bring in more than \$20,000 for us annually through Amazon sales and traditional book sales. If it wasn't for them, I'm not sure how we would manage the constant flow of donations."

Keep in mind that some libraries may not allow certain tasks to be performed by volunteers, so before assigning non-traditional tasks, check with the library director, or have a solid policy on hand to prevent legal issues.

## RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

While some libraries don't need to recruit volunteers (typically libraries are known to draw volunteers without actively recruiting), others seem to prefer more established methods of inviting people to consider library volunteering in order to attract people with a wider spectrum of skills. Newsletters, social media, email blasts, and volunteer forms on libraries' websites are some of the methods libraries use to recruit volunteers. Volunteer Paloozas, Volunteer Fairs, and Volunteer Fests are also ways libraries bring attention to their communities. According to staff at the Morton Public Library, simple word-of-mouth is also an effective form of volunteer recruitment. The O'Fallon Public Library also has many volunteers who are active members of their Friends of the Library group, and new volunteers are often friends of those members.

Regardless of recruitment methods, meeting with volunteers before bringing them on board is important. Some libraries have an established process for hiring volunteers. The Vernon Area Public Library District utilizes a five-step process for hiring volunteer candidates: 1) Interested candidates are initially considered via an application, submitted either electronically through the library's homepage or as a hard copy available at the circulation desk. 2) Volunteers complete a personal interview with the volunteer coordinator, either one-on-one or in small groups. 3) Volunteers must pass a mandatory background check and returning references is customary. 4) Volunteers attend orientation and training with departmental staff, related to each open position best suited to, or of interest to the volunteer. 5) Volunteers are hired upon completion of training, providing the volunteer is well suited to position needs.

"Libraries are taking a new direction in tasking volunteers with roles that are more diverse and unusual"

## RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

How do you create and maintain an atmosphere where volunteers wish to continue to contribute their time and skills? The Arlington Heights Memorial Library has found that posting open opportunities on [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org) has helped with both recruiting and retaining volunteers. This website matches nonprofit organizations with people who are passionate about volunteering and are committed to their work; therefore, they are more likely to stay longer at the library.

Also, make a personal connection with each volunteer. Let them know they matter and that they make a difference in your library and in your community. The Mississippi Valley Library District finds that volunteers who feel valued "are more committed to supporting the library in other ways." Treating volunteers as valuable assets to the organization, planning an annual recognition dinner, encouraging staff to make volunteers feel as if they are part of the team, and being flexible with volunteers' schedules are some of the approaches the Round Lake Area Public Library and the Morton Public Library take to retain volunteers.

"Our volunteers are our biggest advocates. They take time out of their busy day every week to help make our library better," explain staff at the Morton Public Library. "In return, we make an effort and find ways to let them know they are making a difference and that we appreciate them."

At the Gail Borden Public Library District, the volunteer coordinator creates a volunteer spotlight poster to show pictures of volunteers serving the community. For every four hours of service, each volunteer receives a "Gail Sale Book Buck" to use in the book sale room. The library also organizes a volunteer celebration each year to honor the many hours volunteers contribute to the library.

## CHALLENGES IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

What are some of the challenges libraries have experienced when working with volunteers? For starters, effective communication is not to be taken for granted. A well-planned volunteer program requires a good communication plan in place in order for library professionals to schedule and manage volunteers. Some of the online software tools for volunteer management known to libraries are SignUpGenius.com (New Lenox Public Library), Volgistics (Round Lake Area Public Library, Vernon Area Public Library District, Gail Borden Public Library District), Wufoo (Park Ridge Public Library), and libraries' event pages (Prospect Heights Public Library District). Volgistics is the preferred software tool because of the ease of use to maintain all the aspects of volunteer management according to the Gail Borden Public Library District, including assigning opportunities, keeping track of hours and creating reports for board and staff statistics.

Other common challenges are “too many volunteers interested in the same position” and “too many volunteers and not enough positions.” Needless to say, having too many volunteers can be chaotic, causing frustration for both volunteers and library staff.

### Tips to eliminate these challenges:

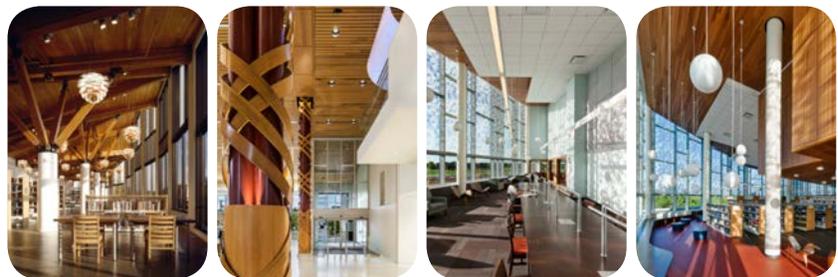
- Evaluate your current needs before recruiting new volunteers.
- Think about your future projects and events.
- Reach out to all staff and ask if they need assistance with projects.
- Make a list with assignments for volunteers and determine how many volunteers you will need for each assignment.
- Create a wait list for volunteers.

Also consider the following: Are there any new programs that you have been wanting to do but never had the time to plan and organize? Is there a project that you have been wanting to complete but never had a chance due to lack of time and/or staff? Perhaps it is now the time to look at your pool of volunteers and see if they are able to help.

Other challenges include last minute requests for community service, failure to commit to scheduled hours, and lack of passion to complete assignments. The Mississippi Valley Library District is among the libraries that have experienced inconsistent volunteers, both in performance quality and commitment. Also, many volunteers are very short lived. There are volunteers who don't stick around long enough to properly train or invest in. Some of them need only few hours of community service but staff still need to provide them with training. This adds to the workload of already over-stretched staff and it is a common issue for most libraries.

Failure to fully understand the work environment is another challenge libraries face when it comes to volunteers. Coming from outside the organization, volunteers don't always understand what type of work is available to them. Many volunteers want to do very specific jobs like “answer phones” or “read to children,” explain O'Fallon Public Library staff. Similarly, the Morton Public Library had volunteers who wanted their time volunteering to be social and didn't realize that their tasks would be solitary. Not surprisingly, the best volunteers the Morton Public Library has had are retired library staff because they already have understanding of the work environment.

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These challenges can be eliminated by having a solid volunteer policy in place. Do you have a probation period? Have you set expectations of appropriate behavior and performance levels? What about volunteer dismissal? Volunteers bring varying work ethics to the job. Some view it as a time to socialize, while others are just trying to get the necessary hours to graduate or fulfill requirements. As one library puts it: “The biggest issue is when parents ‘make’ teens volunteer. I can tell right away they are being forced. Also, when they call on Wednesday and need 15 service hours done by Friday! Ouch!”

## SOLUTIONS IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Most libraries seem to have some sort of a volunteer policy or procedure in place that includes things such as training points and orientation checklist. At the Mississippi Valley Library District, volunteers are subject to the same policies and procedures as library staff. The Gail Borden Public Library District’s policy includes a waiver and release to allow those under 18 to volunteer to help with outreach programs. Along with a background check, the library also asks volunteers to sign a release for media consent. In addition, the library’s volunteer application has a disclaimer on it for the expectations of a person as a Gail Borden volunteer. At each interview, volunteers are given a Volunteer Handbook which outlines policies, procedures and expectations.

While issues with volunteers are rare, they shouldn’t be ignored, especially if volunteers need extensive training, staff intervention and supervision to complete assignments. Volunteers bring different skill sets or lack of skills to the job. What may seem like simple tasks for one volunteer can be very difficult for others. Knowing your volunteers and having that personal connection with them is something volunteer coordinators seem to find helpful, in addition to having the ability to deal with a diverse range of people.

And there are also situations where volunteers feel they are better equipped than staff members to perform certain tasks, such as leading library programs, especially when the volunteer is a retired teacher, instructor, or professional in that area. In cases like this, a conversation is needed to remind volunteers of their boundaries. Libraries have also let volunteers go because of conflicts with staff members. To prevent from such issues, especially when a large body of volunteers is involved, at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, each volunteer role has a staff member who oversees the day-to-day work of volunteers in that department. And what about volunteers who become staff members but want to continue in their volunteer roles? Make sure that there is a great enough difference in the duties of their paid and unpaid roles so there is no conflict.

## WHY LIBRARIES NEED VOLUNTEERS

While the volunteer may come to the library to fill a specific need, like completing community service hours, the library also benefits from having volunteers. As multiple library staff note in the survey responses, volunteers allow libraries to expand their programs and offer more personalized service to those who attend. “Using the high school and middle school volunteers as program assistants allows staff to open program attendance to a greater number and participants seem to love the extra help and attention,” explain Prospect Heights Public Library staff. Volunteers can also bring skills and experiences not present in current library employees. “Their experiences are priceless. Their time and talents seem endless when I call upon them,” says another respondent from Gail Borden Public Library. Volunteers can also have a lasting effect on the library they serve and eventually become paid staff or have community connections that benefit the library in other ways, such as bringing awareness to services and programs. Volunteers often become passionate advocates who help libraries meet the needs of their communities by recognizing and offering advice on local issues or by helping staff identify the need of a new service. Volunteers also bring to libraries new perspectives, fresh ideas, and perhaps—most importantly—the unique opportunity



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for human collaboration and connection. “Learning and experiencing our volunteers’ life story is a rewarding benefit,” says a staff member at the Vernon Area Public Library. “As volunteers provide much needed assistance and lightening workloads, appreciative staff form and strengthen community bonds, library advocacy, and friendships.”

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Why do people seek out volunteer opportunities in their local library? For some, it’s an opportunity to remain active or use their professional skills again after retirement. Others may see volunteering in libraries as a way to get involved in their community and help out with community events through library work, perhaps at a local festival. For some volunteers, helping with a specific program, like a computer class, can enhance their own skills. For younger volunteers, helping with certain tasks can give them a chance to become involved in a real-world work environment. It can also expose them in new ways to other people and ideas. For example, involve your teen volunteers with a technology program for seniors, or your older volunteers with a storytime program for toddlers.

Opening your library to volunteers is a rewarding experience for the library, its staff, the volunteers, and your community. Get to know them so you can assign them tasks that match their interests and skills. Create policies and set expectations to minimize problems. Most of all, let your volunteers know they are appreciated!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank staff members from the following libraries for taking the time to complete our survey and to share their experience and knowledge with us: Addison Public Library, Arlington Heights Memorial Library, Gail Borden Public Library District, Mississippi Valley Library District, Morton Public Library, New Lenox Public Library, O’Fallon Public Library, Park Ridge Public Library, Prospect Heights Public Library District, Round Lake Area Public Library and Vernon Area Public Library District.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased Coverage and Limits
- More Control
- Decreased Cost
- Return on Surplus
- Safety and Training Programs
- Fully Transparent

## MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

*“Because of my association with LIRA, I am a more sophisticated professional and steward for the library and community. I’ve learned more than I had in almost 30 years working in libraries about safeguarding community assets as a direct result of my involvement with LIRA. Hopefully, additional Illinois libraries will come to understand LIRA is more than insurance; it’s a community pulling for each other, contributing to a greater good, and ensuring all are stronger, safer, smarter, and better as a result.”*

– Tina Hubert, Six Mile Public Library

For additional information visit [www.lirapool.com](http://www.lirapool.com)

# Introducing ILA's Students and New Professionals (SANP) Forum

ILA is committed to supporting students and library workers who are new to the field. This is shown through its robust annual award program, which includes the Crosman Memorial Award recognizing library workers who are new or relatively new to the field; the Valerie J. Wilford Scholarship Grant for Library Education; and the Sylvia Murphy Williams Award, which provides support and encouragement to Illinois recipients of ALA's Spectrum Scholarships. However, there has not been a year-round professional development networking group at ILA that targets students and new professionals—until now. Following the success of existing ILA forums in providing members engaging, dynamic, educational, and social platforms, a new Students and New Professionals Forum (SANP) is a natural progression.

SANP represents the interests of students and new library professionals in Illinois, provides a forum for students and new professionals to discuss issues of particular interest to their demographic, and encourages active participation in Illinois library organizations. Any ILA student or personal member who is currently enrolled at a college or university in a program related to the library and information field, such as MLS/MLIS, Library Technical Assistant Certification, school media program, a recent graduate, or has been employed in a library or an information service organization for less than seven years, as well as staff from ILA institution members who fit the above criteria, are welcome to join the forum. SANP aims to bond this demographic through providing timely support and practical leadership opportunities. The forum also strives to lift up the diverse voices in librarianship and advocate for best practices in student support and career preparation.

Launched in February 2020, the forum is the brainchild of Tamara Jenkins, ILA's Communication & Engagement Manager. She suggested that the Association create a forum or committee for students shortly after receiving her position in 2018. However, it wasn't until last year when ILA partnered with the American Library Association for its joint student membership program that ILA staff revisited Jenkins's idea. "It was a great time to create something that would allow students to become more involved and more connected with ILA," said Jenkins.

Around the same time, ILA pondered how to enhance services for newer professionals who were no longer students. "...That stage can sometimes feel like career limbo," said ILA Administrative Coordinator and then-SANP staff liaison Kendall Harvey. "We want to be able to provide resources for all ILA members, and we realized that this could be a way to better serve this particular demographic."

Adds Jenkins, "I believe all organizations should look to the future and question what they are doing to ensure sustainability for themselves and for the profession they serve. It only makes sense to give students and young professionals a seat at the table, because that is the future of the profession."

The Association started a petition for the formation of SANP, as well as the Small and Rural Libraries Forum, at the October 2019 Annual Conference. The petition also appeared on the ILA website and in our e-newsletter. More than 150 members signed it in support. A month later, the Executive Board approved the creation of both forums. In early January 2020, staff sent individual inquiries to some ILA members to determine whomight have been interested in serving as SANP forum managers. Two candidates from neighboring libraries, Carol Ng-He and Anjelica Rufus-Barnes, accepted the leadership roles.



Carol Ng-He

Carol Ng-He is both a student and a new LIS professional. Currently the exhibits coordinator at Arlington Heights Memorial Library, she is seeking her MLIS through San Jose State University's online program. At the school, she became eager for opportunities to join a local community with like-minded people and grow her professional support network. As a veteran arts and museum educator, she believes it is important to be connected and engaged with a community of learning. She attended her first ILA conference in 2019. "I am always interested in finding ways to get creative inspiration that I can integrate in my work, and continuously learn from and collaborate with others whenever possible," Ng-He said. "I am motivated to help others by creating meaningful, relevant, and accessible learning experiences to meet their needs."

Anjelica Rufus-Barnes is a reference librarian at Prospect Heights Library District, a role she began shortly after graduating from Dominican University in 2018. Like Ng-He, Rufus-Barnes consistently seeks ways to learn from and collaborate with others in the field. While attending Dominican, she became a board member of the school's student organization for library and information science. That led to volunteer committee work for ILA and ALA that has evolved from groups she was curious about in college to ones of present interests. "When I started graduate school, I had zero library experience and an uncertainty about how I would fit in. Participating in committees gave me confidence and helped me realize that it's not how I fit in, but what fits me," said Rufus-Barnes. "SANP can be a resource and outlet for students, recent graduates, and new professionals to figure out what fits them."



Anjelica Rufus-Barnes

Ng-He and Rufus-Barnes have been developing plans to build membership and organize initiatives to engage members. Current task priorities include establishing SANP's branding and enhancing public visibility. A social media committee is being formed and marketing strategies are developed. Through support from the ILA staff, collaborations with other forums are underway to engage seasoned professionals in talks about career pathways and to develop networking events.

**There are a few ways to get involved:**

1. Log in to your ILA profile and update your forum interests.
2. Participate in upcoming SANP meetings via Zoom. Visit the ILA website and select Students and New Professionals Forum (SANP) under the Forum section for the date, time, and meeting link.
3. Start and serve on a SANP committee.
4. Join the SANP Facebook page and/or Google Group to keep in touch and stay current on forum activities.

As aspiring librarians and information professionals embark on their professional journeys, SANP can offer a safe, supportive and important space for them to grow and thrive. "I think, or I hope, that the ILA Student and New Professionals Forum will serve as an introduction to a professional association," said Jenkins. "I believe that students and new professionals can gain relevant experience about their profession as well as learn about the inner workings of a professional association." 

# SANP Member Spotlight Q & A with Patricia Chavez



Patricia Chavez is a library research information specialist at the Library of Rush University Medical Center who received her MLIS from Dominican University in 2016. Here, she discusses her path toward her present role and why she is one of the original members of SANP.

**Q:** How has your experience been between graduating and receiving your first position?

**A:** A little bit of a wild ride, but very fun! I had begun an unpaid internship in archives while I was still in school, and I continued to do that after I graduated while simultaneously working full time in retail. About four months after graduation, I got offered a full time temporary job at the University of Chicago. I was one of two project assistants, and our main task was to help supervise the moving of books from one library to another. After that project was finished, I returned to the archives world as an Archives Assistant at DePaul University's Special Collections and Archives. I spent two years there, and just began my current position as a reference librarian at Rush this past December. I'm really grateful that I have experience in both libraries and archives, and have enjoyed working in both!

**Q:** Why are you a member of SANP?

**A:** Networking is simultaneously both one of the hardest and one of the most necessary parts of librarianship. It is something that I have always struggled with, and going straight into other forums or committees with people who have been in the profession can sometimes be overwhelming. By joining SANP, I hope to be able to connect with others who are new to the profession in order to share experiences and advice.

**Q:** Why do you believe others should become active members?

**A:** For students, it's always a good idea to try and both get as much practical experience and make as many connections as possible, but this is not always easy. Even when there isn't a global pandemic going on (at press time), students often have other obligations such as work and family. SANP, I think, is a good, relatively low-stakes way to get connected with others in the profession. Because ILA is statewide, most of our meetings are virtual, which makes it easy for anyone to attend.

**Q:** Is there anything I should've asked you but didn't?

**A:** You didn't ask about my cat! His name's Alfie, he's approximately two years old, and, despite me being a librarian, he is completely illiterate.

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Illinois Library Association

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and consider sharing your ideas! Send submissions to [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org).

# Libraries Emerging from COVID-19: Budget and Funding Concerns

**A**s of the time of this writing, the state of Illinois is in Phase 4 of Governor Pritzker’s “Restore Illinois” plan; on the federal level, the U.S. House and Senate have been unable to come to terms on the next COVID-19 relief bill. Most public libraries across the state have resumed some in-person public services, in addition to continuing robust virtual services that had continued during the stay-at-home executive orders this past spring. Libraries are not specifically mentioned in “Restore Illinois,” and in fact, have not been explicitly named in any of the Governor’s executive orders throughout the COVID-19 pandemic response; this enables local decision-making depending on local circumstances, but can also be a source of frustration for libraries and boards seeking to rely on a firm legal foundation. Library decisions regarding programs and services have an impact on future library budgets: If the library is closed physically to the public, we risk a public perception that the library is not offering services, which is not the case. At the same time, libraries are very aware of the pressures felt by Illinois residents, many of whom have lost jobs or income themselves; and library staff remain focused on the need to balance public safety with public service.

The Illinois Heartland Library System and the Reaching Across Illinois Library System have been soliciting and sharing information about what libraries across the state are doing as we begin to emerge from the strict statewide stay-at-home orders. ILA has issued statements and recommendations regarding libraries’ physical buildings closing and/or re-opening, but those do not have the force of law. ILA, the Illinois State Library, and the systems have all shared information about developing

legislation and executive orders as they are implemented; ILA has also developed the “Bigger than a Building” campaign to give library directors and boards the tools needed to make an effective case for libraries, even if the physical building is either closed temporarily, or open in a limited manner for the time being.

The budget picture for Illinois public libraries is complex, with differences between district libraries and municipal libraries, and further differences on the individual library level. There have been a number of COVID-19 relief bills on the federal level, including the first one to include dedicated funding to libraries, the CARES Act, which provided \$50 million for libraries nationwide through IMLS’ Grants to States program. To date, the United States House of Representatives has passed the HEROES Act, which includes an additional \$5 million. This is far short of the \$2 billion the American Library Association seeks in its advocacy for the Library Stabilization Fund Act, which has bicameral sponsorship including from Illinois U.S. Representatives Janice Schakowsky, Bradley Schneider, Cheri Bustos, and Raja Krishnamoorthi. ILA is advocating in collaboration with ALA for this act.

In addition to relief funding dedicated to libraries, ILA and ALA are supporting the Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act, which would provide relief funding to special districts, including fire districts, park districts, mosquito abatement districts, water reclamation districts, and yes, library districts. It currently has one sponsor from Illinois: U.S. Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi.

[continued on page 16]



While vaccines and effective treatments are in development, it is likely libraries will need to wrestle with questions about their services and budgets for the foreseeable future; and it's possible the state will revert to Phase 3, or an even earlier phase, of "Restore Illinois." Here is a roundup of current and potential budget concerns from public libraries around the state, municipal and district. This is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list but rather a snapshot of some illustrative examples. Directors interviewed are those who are serving as sources for budget-related questions in Director's University, a collaborative initiative of ILA, the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and the Reaching Across Illinois Library System.

## REVENUES

On the revenue side, most Illinois public libraries are funded primarily by local property taxes. Budget processes and concerns differ a bit between library districts and municipal (city, village, etc.) libraries. Revenue challenges related to property taxes will be realized in the medium- to long-term rather than immediately for libraries of both types, given that property taxes had already

been collected for the fiscal year during which the stay-at-home order was in place. Concerns include the rate at which taxpayers, under pressure themselves from layoffs and furloughs, may default on property taxes, and the lengthening of time to pay tax bills with no penalty, as counties seek to offer taxpayers some relief. A director at a northwest suburban city library states, "As a city library in a home rule municipality, I anticipate that the city would like to keep their 2020 levy increase as low as possible. They may consider increasing the city's portion of the aggregate levy to make up for lost sales tax income, etc., and need to decrease the Library's portion. This is concerning because the Library would be dependent on the city using its home rule privilege to rebound the levy in the future, and as a component unit, the Library then falls into direct competition with important priorities like police and fire." At the Effingham Public Library, a city library in southern Illinois, "Our loss of revenue is much more likely to be felt in the coming years," says director Amanda McKay. "For us, the biggest revenue challenge is that our tax receipts for this year will be delayed...we anticipate that we won't see our full allotment until March 2021, with one month remaining in our fiscal year." District libraries share this concern for the long term, cited by the director of a library district in southern Illinois, near St. Louis: "We receive almost

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97% of our revenue from property taxes. And, luckily property taxes are being paid, especially if they are in escrow. But, I don't know how long taxes will continue to be paid if the economy continues on a downward trend. In our county taxes can now be deferred to the next payment cycle without penalty—and some people have elected to do that, which has a direct impact on our revenue and cash flow.”

District libraries, while not as directly dependent on their local municipality, also expect pressure from residents to keep their levies flat this year, which has repercussions in future years as future increases are on based on a percentage of each prior year. The director of a central Illinois district library says, “At our last board meeting, we discussed our levy for FY22. We are tax-capped in our county and in the past our public has been supportive when we've sought to increase our levy beyond the cap via a truth-in-taxation process, but for this upcoming levy, we are considering getting under that 5% cap because of the concerns from the public.” This isn't unique to libraries, according to this director: “I think all public bodies are going to face some members of the public who are upset about having to pay property taxes, but not getting all of the services we typically provide during COVID.”

Other sources of revenue for libraries include copier/fax charges, passport renewal or auto license sticker renewal fees, donations, investment income, Illinois' “Personal Property Replacement Tax (PPRT)” received by some library districts and municipalities, fees for non-resident library cards, funding via the LSTA Grants to States program, and a few others. Most of these sources have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, particularly PPRT. The Urbana Free Library, a city library in central Illinois, has already

made cuts based on an expected drop in PPRT revenue. According to director Celeste Choate, “Urbana Free was advised by the city that instead of an approximately \$10,000 increase in PPRT in fiscal year 2021, we should expect a 30% decrease. Overall, that's an approximate \$40,000 swing from plenty to deficit. We already made that cut to our budget, and it hurt.” Another central Illinois city library expects a 7% decrease in PPRT, and Leander Spearman, director of the Bellowood Public Library, a city library near St. Louis, says he expects up to a 66% decrease in the non-property tax revenues for his library, which overall make up 20% of his budget, including PPRT, fines and fees, passport fees, interest income, sales of used books and branded merchandise, and nonresident cards. The director of a public library district in the south Chicago suburbs concurs: “Declining PPRT is a huge concern in addition to declining tax revenue,” she says.

Passport application and other fees were noted by a number of directors, including Alex Todd of the Prospect Heights Public Library, “As libraries open to the public, they do bring in copier and other in-house fees, but it will still be less than when we were fully open. The newest, largest outside source of income is passport application fees;” and the director of a public library district outside St. Louis: “Another source of alternate revenue for us is our role as a Passport Application Acceptance Facility—every passport application that we process gets the library \$35.00 in revenue. Additionally, we budget for revenue from photocopies and faxes. While physically closed those were zero revenues.” Directors look to these sources of revenue to provide some relief for their local taxpayers. According to this same director, “At our library, we have been actively pursuing alternate revenue sources. Just before the library closed to in-person

[continued on page 18]

public services mid-March, we had begun selling license renewal stickers. Each renewal sticker we sell at the library gets us about \$6.25 in revenue—revenue that hopefully eventually will allow us to flatten tax levies.” Todd is taking a similar tack: “A flat levy is something many libraries are exploring, including Prospect Heights Public Library District. While the impact of this move won’t show upon tax bills until the fall 2021 bills, it is a worthwhile gesture of showing empathy with our taxpayers.”

This acknowledgement extends to local businesses as well, many of whom typically support their area libraries with sponsorships and donations. According to Bobbi Perryman of the Vespasian-Warner Public Library District in Clinton in central Illinois, “We typically rely on local businesses for support for summer reading club and other programs, but we have been reluctant to ask for any sort of donations given the current circumstances. For many smaller libraries, business support is the only way they can host programming. Our friends group hasn’t been able to have their sales due to COVID, so we are losing that money as well.”

It is important to note that while pressure on future levies is a medium- to long-term budget concern, the lowered revenue from fees and business support or donations have already had an immediate impact on library revenues while libraries were closed to in-person public services, and open now in a limited manner.

## EXPENSES

A complete budget picture includes both revenues and expenses. Libraries are seeing increases in unbudgeted expenses for cleaning supplies, building Plexiglas barriers at public service desks and construction costs for redesign of these areas, PPE for staff and patrons, additional signage, additional electronic resources, devices to enable self-service such as self-checkout stations, and legal fees, among other costs. Here in Illinois, where a minimum wage increase is continuing to be phased in, there is additional pressure from staffing expenses; at the same time, libraries can’t operate without a full complement of staff.

The tension between re-opening to in-person public services and the imperative to keep library staff and patrons safe and continue to help mitigate spread of COVID-19, has real costs. Kate Hall, executive director of the Northbrook Public Library, a village library in the northern Chicago suburbs, quantifies some of these costs: “We are certainly seeing an increase in costs due to COVID. From March-July we spent \$22,000 on PPE and materials to get the building reopened. We have had two positive cases of COVID in the library and had to pay \$2,000 each time to do a deep clean of the building. The costs for certain PPE are on the rise. When we originally purchased gloves back in April, they were about \$8 a box and have now increased to \$12-\$15 a box.” Hall is also supporting her staff who have been working remotely, noting “We are also reimbursing people for their work from home expenses for technology and expect to spend about \$10,000

this year on that.” Costs for PPE, cleaning, and technology are ongoing operational expenses that are expected to carry into future years; this year, libraries have also incurred capital expenses for reconfiguring public service desks. Leander Spearman of Bellwood Public Library describes some measures his library has taken already: “We have had to totally re-imagine how we provide library service and redirect a lot of what we offer to a self service model. I purchased an internal book return so patrons can return material without staff interaction. Two self-checkout stations were installed so patrons can checkout their own material. Self-service payment terminals are being considered so patrons pay fines and fees without staff interaction. OPAC computer terminals are being replaced with tablets that can be more easily sanitized.” All told, he has incurred about \$15,000 in unbudgeted expenses to date. That is the approximate spent cost also cited by two city libraries, one in the northwestern Chicago suburbs and the other in central Illinois, both of whom hope to recoup some of these expenses by working with their municipality to apply for reimbursement through Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency (CURE) Support Program, funded by federal CARES Act relief for municipal units of government. A central Illinois library director also cites increased “legal fees to review all the emerging COVID-19 legislation, executive orders, emergency rules, and so on” as a large unbudgeted expense.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Library directors and library boards continue to work together to craft solutions that address taxpayer relief while not causing a budget crisis in the library, resulting in staff or service cuts. Worries about the budget and concerns for taxpayers under pressure, who are after all librarians’ neighbors as well as our patrons, are necessarily balanced with overlying fears about public health and a high priority on serving our publics during this time. As Janet Cler, director of Tolono Public Library in central Illinois eloquently says, “For my library, and other libraries in tax-cap counties, my concern centers around what happens when residents are unable to pay their real estate tax bills. At the same time, we have increased funds spent on COVID related items to ensure the safety of our staff and our public. Libraries are vital to small communities, especially during these uncertain times. In smaller libraries, we are often the sounding board for those residents who are concerned with what is going on in everyday life. We are stable in our communities and looked upon with a favorable view. We want to be here to offer services that will help with job searches, resumes, and unemployment filings via the computers.” Cler points out that in smaller communities in particular, “Funding of libraries is essential for the recovery that will be needed to move communities forward. While I understand so many entities are vital to communities such as fire stations, police stations, churches, and schools, libraries are right up there too.”

# The CARES Act

The Illinois State Library (ISL) recently sent information to potential applicants about grants that will be funded using federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds. CARES Act funding is provided through the ISL from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and is administered as an extension of the Library Services and Technology Act program.

All applications are due September 30, 2020 with more information at <https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/home.html>

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Public libraries may apply for up to \$500 per eligible public library building to address the proper handling of library materials and to purchase PPE to ensure the safety of staff and patrons.

## Digital Network Access

The purpose of the Digital Network Access grant offering is to assure displaced students and disadvantaged library patrons, who do not have Wi-Fi or broadband availability at home, have ongoing access to this technology for library services/information and support of their education. Public libraries, school libraries, and community college libraries, especially in areas of demonstrated need, may apply for up to \$10,000 to upgrade or extend the library's Internet service for broader access to online education and essential digital services.

## E-Books

During the state's closure, the regional library systems reported a significant increase in patron registrations for E-Book access. The regional and public library systems and The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) may apply for \$100,000- \$125,000 for E-Books. This should allow the broadest access possible to Illinois residents by focusing E-Book purchases at the consortia level.

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# ILA Welcomes New Members

On behalf of the ILA community, Executive Board, and staff we would like to welcome our recent new members. We hope as a member of ILA you contribute, grow, and thrive within the library profession and the ILA community; and support ILA's continuing efforts to create and promote the highest quality library services for all people in Illinois.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**IHC Construction Companies**, Elgin

## INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

**Stinson Memorial Public Library District**, Anna

## PERSONAL MEMBERS

**Rosie Camargo**, Evanston Public Library  
**Lora Del Rio**, Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville  
**Maureen Garzaro**, Roselle Public Library District  
**Rochelle Hartman**, Lincoln Library, Springfield  
**Elizabeth Hartman**, Carbondale Public Library  
**Amanda Keen**, Bartlett Public Library District  
**Annette Maguire**, New Lenox Public Library  
**Corrie Maulding**, Iroquois County CUSD #9, Watseka  
**Yumarys Polanco-Miller**, La Colectiva de Delaware, Plainfield  
**Firouzeh Rismiller**, DePaul University, Chicago  
**Lisa Williams**, Moline

## TRUSTEE MEMBERS

**Janell Cleland**, Highwood Public Library  
**Bonita Drew**, Crystal Lake Public Library  
**Sharon Frey**, Maryville Community Library District  
**Lucy Hospodarsky**, Highwood Public Library  
**Dana Krippel**, Limestone Township Library District, Kankakee  
**Stacy Lorenz**, Crystal Lake Public Library  
**Rebecca Masik**, Antioch Public Library District  
**Arun Pinto**, Peoria Public Library  
**Vivian Rutherford**, Peoria Public Library  
**Cary Waxler**, Crystal Lake Public Library

## STUDENT MEMBERS

**Maureen Bocka**, Elmwood Park  
**Lauren Byrd**, Urbana  
**Rachel Eichert**, Berkeley  
**Jen Einoris**, Marengo  
**Danielle Golding**, Lake in the Hills  
**Greta Heng**, Chicago  
**Kim Hiltwein**, Evanston  
**Katherine Howell**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
**Ani Karagainis**, Clarendon Hills  
**Kyra Lee**, Chicago Public Library  
**Jessica Licklider**, Chicago  
**Xingyu Liu**, Champaign  
**Eileen Lopez**, Chicago  
**Grace Menary-Winefield**,  
**Olivia Palid**, Champaign  
**Lena Parsons**, Oak Park  
**Stephanie Scilingo**, Wheaton  
**Emilia Scofield**, Evanston  
**Shannon Speshock**, Chicago  
**Laura Swangin**, Bellwood Public Library  
**Jessica Tarnowski**, Schiller Park  
**Andie Townhouse**, Chicago



## CONFERENCE PREVIEW

### 2020 Illinois Library Association Virtual Conference

**Conference Dates:** October 20-22

For full conference information and to register online: [ila.org/conference](http://ila.org/conference)  
#ILAAC20 #WeAreILA

On behalf of the 2020 ILA Conference Program Committee, we are looking forward to welcoming everyone to the first-ever ILA Virtual Conference:

## **Many Libraries, One State: We Are ILA**

When the first stay-at-home orders took effect in Illinois, it seemed impossible to believe that things wouldn't be back to normal by Annual Conference in October. But as time went on it became clear that this year's committee would have to rethink our plans to meet together in Springfield. The thought that we would not be able to meet in person seemed almost incomprehensible. Yet, not unprecedented. The very first issue of *Illinois Libraries*, from 1919, notes that the annual statewide meeting would be cancelled due to the influenza outbreak, replaced by a series of smaller regional meetings. Who could have imagined that a century later the Illinois library community would find itself facing a similar dilemma. Much like we did in 1919, we adapted. Instead of gathering in one location, this year, we'll convene online, network electronically in real time, and visit exhibits in a virtual marketplace. While the way we meet has changed, what hasn't changed is the array of high-quality topics and content you've come to expect.

Eric Klinenberg, author of *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (Crown, 2018), will present the keynote, focused on libraries as healers of our divided, unequal society. LaShawnda Crowe Storm and Phyllis Viola Boyd will present the President's Program. Storm is a mixed-media artist, activist, community builder, and occasionally an urban farmer. In her spare time, she is the Community Engagement Director for Spirit & Place, at Indiana University-Purdue University, which utilizes the arts, humanities and religion as a catalyst for civic engagement, critical community dialogue, collaboration and experimentation. Boyd, an artist and urban strategist, serves as the Executive Director of Groundwork Indy, a non-profit organization that employs youth to work on community-based projects that equitably enhance environmental, economic, and social well-being.

In addition to these programs, you'll have an opportunity to attend a combination of live and recorded sessions, visit your favorite exhibitors at their virtual "booths," and celebrate the ILA Award Winners on the closing evening.

In times of uncertainty, it is comforting to know that we are not alone. From large university libraries to one-person special libraries, from sprawling urban systems to rural one room storefronts, come what may, we are in it together. We are resilient, and we are strong. Many Libraries, One State: We ARE ILA.

Mark your calendars for October 12-14, 2021, currently slated to take place in Peoria. No matter what 2021 brings, we'll convene again one way or another.



Veronica De Fazio  
ILA President

Darnetta Bolton  
Conference Co-Chair

Sarah Sagmoen  
Conference Co-Chair

# Featured Speakers

## Eric Klinenberg - Keynote

Tuesday, October 20, 12:00 - 1:30 P.M.



Eric Klinenberg is Helen Gould Shepard Professor of Social Science and Director of the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University. He is the author of *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (Crown, 2018), *Going Solo: The Extraordinary*

*Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone* (The Penguin Press, 2012), *Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media* (Metropolitan Books, 2007), and *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), as well as the editor of *Cultural Production in a Digital Age*, co-editor of *Antidemocracy in America* (Columbia University Press, 2019), and co-author, with Aziz Ansari, of the New York Times #1 bestseller *Modern Romance* (The Penguin Press, 2015). His scholarly work has been published in journals including the *American Sociological Review*, *Theory and Society*, and *Ethnography*, and he has contributed to *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, and *This American Life*.

## LaShawnda Crowe Storm & Phyllis Viola Boyd - President's Program

Wednesday, October 21, 12:00 - 1:30 P.M.



Phyllis Viola Boyd is an artist and urban strategist, and LaShawnda Crowe Storm is a community-based artist, community organizer and urban farmer. They are both community activists and social entrepreneurs, working to find creative solutions for the most pressing concerns in many of our communities. Their work is grounded within the context of arts-based community development, trauma-informed community building, healing historical harms, and other methodologies to guide how we work in community in order to do no harm.



## Jon E. Cawthorne - IACRL President's Program

Wednesday, October 21, 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.



Jon E. Cawthorne is President of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). He serves as dean of Wayne State University Library System and the School of Information Sciences, a position he has held since 2017. Prior to this, Cawthorne served as dean of libraries at West Virginia University (2014-2017),

as associate dean of public services and assessment at Florida State University (2012-2014), and as associate university librarian for public services at Boston College (2011-2012). Cawthorne holds a M.L.S. degree from the University of Maryland, and a Ph.D. in managerial leadership in the information professions from Simmons College.

## James A. Bowey - DiversiTEA

Wednesday, October 21, 4:15 - 5:15 P.M.



James A. Bowey, MFA, is a Chicago-based documentary artist whose work explores issues of human rights and social connection. He has spent his career covering a wide range of global and national stories from the war in Bosnia to Hurricane Katrina. His photography and writing have been featured in

*The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *the Associated Press*, as well as in numerous exhibitions. Building on his career as an international photojournalist, editor and professor of art and media, Bowey creates what he calls "interactivations" that combine documentary storytelling, visual art and live programs in an art form that promotes empathy and bridges social divisions. His current projects about refugees and race in America have been presented in dozens of libraries around the country.

# Awards Ceremony

**Thursday, October 22, 5:30 P.M.**

Join us at our first Virtual Awards Ceremony. This has been a challenging year for everyone, so let's take this opportunity to celebrate our colleagues and friends within the Illinois library community at this special ceremony.

This year, as with previous years, we will honor and recognize the best in librarianship throughout the state. The ceremony will be free to attend, but space will be limited, so please look for registration details from ILA. This is an event you won't want to miss!

## Program Schedule at a Glance

**Tuesday, October 20**

11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
NOON – 1:30 P.M.	TBS Opening Session, featuring Eric Klinenberg
1:45 – 2:45 P.M.	Program Session 1
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 2
4:15 – 5:15 P.M.	Program Session 3

**Wednesday, October 21**

11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
NOON – 1:30 P.M.	Membership Meeting & President's Program
1:45 – 2:45 P.M.	Program Session 4
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 5
4:15 – 5:15 P.M.	Program Session 6

**Thursday, October 22**

11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
NOON – 1:00 P.M.	Program Session 7
1:15 – 2:15 P.M.	Program Session 8
2:30 – 3:30 P.M.	Program Session 9
3:45 – 4:45 P.M.	Program Session 10
5:30 – 6:30 P.M.	Awards Ceremony

## Exhibits

The Virtual Exhibit Hall will be open 11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. each day of the conference. Be sure to make time to visit our exhibitors.



# Registration Rates & Deadlines

Your full conference registration includes access to all sessions, the exhibit hall (virtual marketplace), and attendee lounges. The virtual conference features live and taped program sessions that will be available for viewing later; Keynote, President's Program, and Membership Meeting general sessions, and a virtual marketplace, featuring our exhibitors.

Register online at [ila.org/conference](http://ila.org/conference). Questions? Email [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org)

	Early Bird	Advance	On-site
<b>Full Conference Registration</b>	by 9/21	by 10/12	after 10/12
<b>ILA Member</b>	\$100	\$125	\$150
<b>Non-member</b>	\$150	\$175	\$200
<b>Full-time Student/ Retired/ Unemployed Member</b>	\$50	\$75	\$75

## Cancellation Policy

All refund requests must be received in writing by October 12, 2020. No telephone cancellations/refund requests can be accepted. Please email refund requests to [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org).

**No refunds after October 12. All cancellations are subject to a \$15 processing fee.**

**If you have any questions regarding registration, please email [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org).**



Illinois Library Association

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