

# REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2019

VOLUME XXXVII ISSUE 5



# 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

It's a great time to be a library and information science student in Illinois! ILA is launching a joint student membership program with ALA, designed for students in MSMLIS/MLIS, school library media, LTA, and other librarian-preparation programs. Please stay tuned for announcements. Congratulations to Chicago State University (cover), whose Master of Science in Library and Information Science degree program was recently granted initial accreditation by the American Library Association. Chicago State joins Dominican University (top left) and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (bottom left) among Illinois schools with ALA-accredited MS or MLIS programs; those schools are also making programmatic news, with Dominican's new Certificate in Executive Library Leadership and UIUC's new Bachelor of Science in Information Studies. Visit school websites to learn more:

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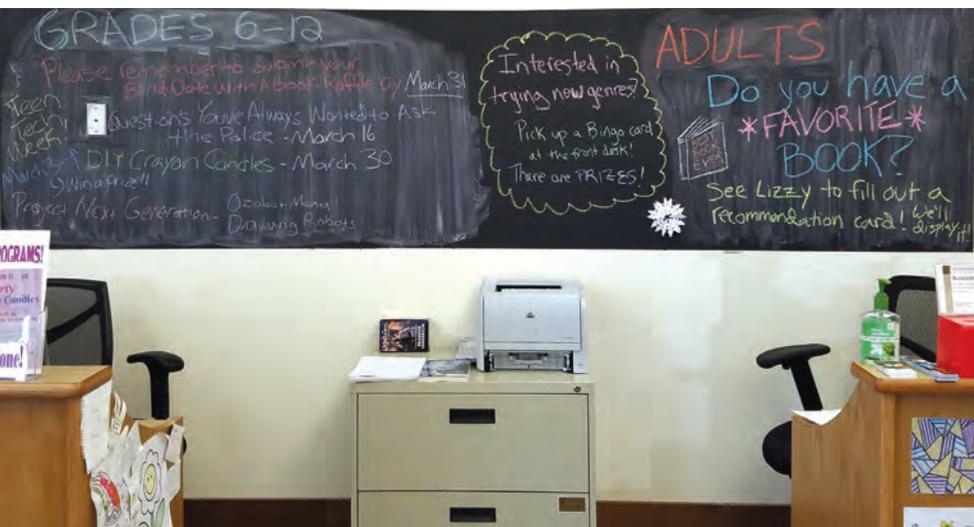
The Illinois Library Association is collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois, providing leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the 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.

The *ILA Reporter* is published six times/year (Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct., Dec.) and is a benefit of ILA membership; the subscription rate for nonmembers is \$25. ISSN 0018-9979. Designed by Verso Design Corp., Wheaton, Ill. Printed by Aspen Printing Services. Indexed by EBSCO in *Library & Information Science*. The *ILA Reporter* was first published in 1962.

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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# Intergenerational Programming in Libraries: Building Bridges Between Age Groups While Increasing Community Engagement

**H**olding library programming intended for just one age group can prove challenging enough. But what happens when programming includes multiple age groups or is open to all ages, and the activities need to appeal to people of widely differing knowledge levels, expectations, and life experiences? Although planning and implementing such programming might seem daunting at first, particularly if a library has limited staffing or resources, the benefits to not just the library's users and staff, but also the broader community, can prove substantial. Whether it is starting an intergenerational program from scratch or expanding an existing program to accommodate different age groups, the programming can help bridge the gap between individuals of different ages who might not have much experience interacting, while encouraging librarians to think creatively about how to make the activity a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for everyone.

## WHY MAKE PROGRAMMING INTERGENERATIONAL?

Why should a library consider planning an intergenerational program, given how challenging it might seem to devise an activity that appeals to all age groups? Members of one generation might express interest in an activity that the library originally intended for another age group, in which case the library can simply expand the scope of the program. A library can also incorporate an intergenerational program into an existing library service, such as readers' advisory. This is the approach the Eldorado Memorial Library took with its Dewey Decimators book club, which allowed people of multiple age groups to read and discuss books of various themes and genres.

In other cases, the intergenerational activity can arise almost by accident. At the Crystal Lake Public Library, the Adult Services Department had a Board Game Café, featuring various "classic" games of interest to all ages. Participants in a Youth Services Department program that ended at approximately the time the Board Game Café started would often come over to play the games, which prompted the Adult Services Department to expand the Café to all ages.

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Whether a library is starting an intergenerational program from scratch or redesigning an existing service, it is important to consider community needs and seek feedback from both regular library users and outsiders. Other library staff members may have received ideas, especially if they interact with the broader community on a regular basis. It might help to observe intergenerational-type events that already take place outside of the library, or even just interactions among generations in an informal setting.

## GETTING THE PROGRAM OFF THE GROUND

Planning and implementing intergenerational programming can prove challenging for any library, but this may be especially true if the library has a small staff. Collaborating with other library departments is an effective way to pool resources and ideas. Reaching out to a community group or organization is another option. It might prove beneficial to start with an organization or institution that is located near the library or shares a common interest. When the Vernon Area Public Library District launched its Digital Literacy Outreach Program, which familiarized residents at the senior center Sunrise of Buffalo Grove with smart phones and other electronic devices, it needed to find students who would be interested in teaching these skills. Stevenson High School, located just down the street from the Library in Lincolnshire, had a pool of potential volunteers through its Youth Rotary group.

In some cases, a grant can make the planning process easier, especially if funding is a challenge. That is the approach the Carbondale Public Library took when it successfully applied for an Ezra Jack Keats mini-grant. The grant allowed the Library to host book-making, intergenerational storytelling, and art exhibit projects with the Boys and Girls Club of Carbondale and Senior Adult Services.

## SCHEDULING AND ADVERTISING THE PROGRAM

Once the planning process is complete, the next step is to schedule and advertise the activity in a manner that draws as many attendees as possible from across different generations. Keep in mind that certain times of the year may not be as convenient for particular groups, especially younger people who are in school and have classwork, extracurriculars, and other activities during the academic year. Similarly, community organizations might have their own events scheduled. If possible, hold the program in the evening or on the weekend, when all age groups, including schoolchildren and working adults, are most likely to attend. Summertime is another option, although family vacations and other activities might interfere.

Connecting the program to an event or holiday can help draw more people. This is the approach that the Prospect Heights Public Library District and the Chillicothe Public Library District took for their respective events in which participants built gingerbread houses. A library doesn't necessarily need to tie the programs to the December holidays, however, as other ones, such as Halloween, offer opportunities for variations on the theme.

Spreading the word about the event is vital, especially if a library hopes to draw members of the broader community who rarely or never visit it in person. Use social media, local newspapers and television, the library's own publications, and other avenues for communication. Remember that word-of-mouth is also a very effective way to attract participants, especially if a program turns out to be particularly popular and current attendees are eager to tell their family and friends about it.

In advertising the program, a useful strategy is to emphasize whether or not the event is intended for particular generations. This will help ensure that the people who attend find the activities as interesting and worthwhile as possible. In some cases, though, it might be better not to advertise the event as strictly "intergenerational", especially if it is difficult to predict whether multiple age groups will actually come. It also helps to emphasize just what the activity will entail; a vague or inaccurate description might dissuade some people from coming, especially if the event is technology-oriented.



Sometimes, requiring registration is necessary, particularly if a library has limited space and supplies available. On the other hand, allowing anyone who happens to be in the library to participate can create a more spontaneous, less-structured environment conducive to creativity, while drawing more attendees. This is what the Normal Public Library discovered with its Art For All Ages events and Normal Public Library Tiny Book Concerts, which were “drop-in” activities.

Inviting families can be an effective way to bring in multiple generations. In some cases, it might even be possible to make the event family-specific. For instance, the Roselle Public Library District started a Grandparents Got Game event, consisting of board games, crafts, and snacks. Holding family events during the holidays (such as the aforementioned gingerbread-house-making workshops), when relatives are more likely to be visiting, can prove an especially effective way to draw people, including those from outside of the library’s core user group.

## ACCOMMODATING DIFFERENT GENERATIONS AND BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Getting everyone into the room together is just the first step in making certain the event proceeds smoothly and all participants have a good time. Members of one generation might not have much experience interacting with people from another generation, or they might hold stereotypes of particular age groups. Similarly, behavior one age group might consider normal, such as talking among teenagers, might prove distracting or annoying to older people, who may prefer a quieter environment. Making behavior expectations clear beforehand will help avert any uncomfortable situations and ensure a pleasant and worthwhile experience for all involved. Having an “icebreaker” activity can lighten the mood and help members of the different generations start becoming more familiar with each other.

Remember, also, that certain age groups might have particular needs. For instance, seniors, in particular, may be hard of hearing, so make certain any instructions that activity leaders give orally are clear and easy to follow. Transportation might be a challenge for children, especially if school is not in session, and also for seniors who no longer drive. Some age groups, especially seniors, might find visiting the library in person difficult, even if they do have transportation. This creates an opportunity to “go to them,” however.

When holding events outside the library, keep in mind that certain environments might not be suitable for particular age groups. For instance, senior centers may not be designed for small children, as the centers are usually not particularly roomy

“Collaborating with other library departments is an effective way to pool resources and ideas.”

or “child-proof.” It might be good to give the children an “orientation session” beforehand, to make them more familiar with the environment and help convey any expectations. The Vernon Area Public Library District found this strategy useful for its Oaks & Acorns storytelling and music program at Sunrise of Buffalo Grove.

Try to make the programming as interactive as possible. That way, everyone’s attention will be devoted to the activity, and all participants will find it more fun and worthwhile. Arts-type activities, in particular, can offer participants a “creative outlet” that might be hard to find elsewhere, especially in a smaller or rural community. In some instances, though, participants may simply feel more comfortable sitting and watching.

Make certain there are plenty of supplies for the activity, especially if it is a hands-on artistic or crafts endeavor. If the library cannot provide enough, encourage attendees to bring their own, if possible, so they can share. Try to avoid passing any costs along to participants, as this could discourage some people from attending. In certain cases, though, charging a small amount may be necessary, such as for sewing kits. If using technology, ensure that library staff have at least a basic understanding of it and can readily assist patrons (or, if not, know how to contact support services for the technology). In the event that any of the supplies could prove dangerous, such as sharp needles for a knitting project, make certain to emphasize this beforehand and provide appropriate supervision.

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## MOVING FORWARD WITH INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

After the attendees have left, and library staff and volunteers have finished cleaning up the event space, what is the next step? A library may discover that a particular activity turns out to be especially popular. Use feedback to consider how to make it appealing to even more people, especially if it included just certain age groups the first time. Conversely, if a program doesn't draw a high turnout or seem particularly worthwhile to those who do come, don't necessarily give up on it; use observations and suggestions to make it more interesting and worthwhile.

Most importantly, be willing to adapt, even during the programming itself. It may be challenging for library staff to think creatively about programs that will attract people of various age groups and interests, but this also presents a strong opportunity for greater collaboration and unity, both in the library itself and with the outside community. At all events, be willing to help participants, but also keep in mind that the activity should be "self-generating" and fun for everyone involved. In some situations, the librarian's role might be that of an observer, on call to assist as needed.

Libraries that have done intergenerational programming often find that participants give positive feedback. The events give the different generations an opportunity not just to interact, but also to learn from each other. Above all, such programming increases the library's profile in the community and clearly demonstrates its ongoing value as an educational and cultural resource open to everyone.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the following individuals for taking the time to share their knowledge and expertise: Jennifer Johansson and Diana Brawley Sussman, Carbondale Public Library; Gail Hintze, Chillicothe Public Library District; Felicia Murray, Eldorado Memorial Library; Kim Tipton, McHenry County College (formerly of Crystal Lake Public Library); John Fischer and Tori Melican, Normal Public Library; Sue Seggeling, Prospect Heights Public Library District; Christy Snyders, Roselle Public Library District; and Jen Ernsteen and Rachel Shulman, Vernon Area Public Library District. **ILA**



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# Strengthening News Media Literacy in Libraries

**I**n August 2019, Illinois Prairie District Public Library in central Illinois began a partnership with an organization by the name of NewsGuard, a news literacy startup committed to combating “fake news.” NewsGuard technology is being implemented on patron computers throughout all six of the library’s branches.

The purpose of NewsGuard is not to limit accessibility in any way, but to provide users with tools to assess the reliability of news websites, via a browser extension that can be installed on Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari browsers on any computer. NewsGuard analysts—a team of trained and seasoned journalists with varying backgrounds—monitor news websites and produce “Nutrition Labels” for each site, which serve as reviews of the credibility and transparency of the news provider. The browser extension then makes these reviews available to computer users.

The Nutrition Labels are named as such because they address several different factors when analyzing news and information websites. Websites will receive what is essentially a “pass” or “fail” rating based on the following criteria:

- Does not repeatedly publish false content
- Gathers and presents information responsibly
- Regularly corrects or clarifies errors
- Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly
- Avoids deceptive headlines
- Website discloses ownership and financing
- Clearly labels advertising
- Reveals who’s in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest
- Provides information about content creators

The rating process is designed to be apolitical. Analysts award weighted points to each criterion and then add up the points. If the total score is less than 60, the website “fails,” and earns a red flag, although it is not blocked. If the score is more than 60, the website “passes” and scores a green flag. These flag icons are displayed on the websites rated by NewsGuard, as well as in search results and social media feeds. Users are also able to read explanations of each rating.

Illinois Prairie District Public Library is the first library in Illinois to collaborate with NewsGuard. The library consists of six branches that serve eight townships in Woodford County; according to Director Joel Shoemaker, the partnership with NewsGuard will do “with online content what librarians have been doing with printed content since the invention of libraries—give readers the basic information they need about what they are about to read.”

Other public libraries throughout the country have also been partnering with NewsGuard. One such library is the Toledo Lucas County Public Library in Toledo, Ohio, which has been using NewsGuard’s free browser extension since November of 2018. According to the library’s digital strategist, Andy Lechlak, the library chose to collaborate with NewsGuard because “Libraries are a connector of people to information. We try to provide the best and most accurate information.” Lechlak noted that the library had been emphasizing web literacy in its programming for two years, so adding the NewsGuard extension to its computer browsers was a natural step. The Hawai’i State Public Library System also teamed up with NewsGuard in late 2018. There are 51 branches within this library system, and the NewsGuard extension has been installed on more than 700 computers throughout all branches.

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“The purpose of NewsGuard is not to limit accessibility in any way, but to provide users with tools to assess the reliability of news websites.”



According to a Gallup study released in early 2019, NewsGuard has been effective in “countering false information, misinformation, and disinformation” with its ratings of news websites. In fact, 91% of those surveyed found NewsGuard Nutrition Labels helpful, and 83% of respondents said that they want social media sites and search engines to integrate NewsGuard ratings and reviews into their news feeds and search results. Macaela Bennett, NewsGuard’s senior analyst and director of news literacy partnerships, confirms that NewsGuard also conducts its own feedback surveys among libraries with whom it has partnered. As of the most recent survey, 90% of library staff responded that NewsGuard helps them better understand news information websites, and 80% of library staff said that patrons better understand news information websites.

Bennett, herself a central Illinois native, emphasizes that NewsGuard is still a rather small start-up operation, which provides an advantage. “We strongly encourage our library partners to provide us with feedback, whether positive or negative—we want constructive criticism,” she says. “Because we are a start-up with a small team, we’re able to make changes and improvements quickly. Feedback from librarians about what their patrons find helpful is key.”

NewsGuard was first launched in March 2018, as the brainchild of longtime journalists and media entrepreneurs Steven Brill and Gordon Crovitz. Brill is the founder of the monthly magazine *The American Lawyer*, as well as the cable channel Court TV. Crovitz is a former publisher of *The Wall Street Journal* and a current and former board member of several high-profile journalism companies and publishers, such as Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Business Insider. In April 2019, NewsGuard expanded its ranking system to include major UK news websites. The browser extension also recently began providing informational ratings in German, Italian, and French. According

to Bennett, ratings in Spanish will be available in the near future. These upgrades could be particularly useful for libraries that serve diverse communities with multilingual patrons.

Despite its rapid growth and overall positive feedback from partner libraries, NewsGuard has faced some concerns from librarians and patrons as well. Bennett says the most commonly raised concern is that by using the NewsGuard browser extension, libraries are labeling content, and thus, not adhering to the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights. However, according to ALA’s *Labeling and Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, “labels on library materials may be viewpoint-neutral directional aids designed to save the time of users, or they may be attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to materials.” NewsGuard representatives stand firmly by the notion that their labeling system falls under the former description, rather than the latter.

This stance is backed up by the ways in which the organization makes clear its dedication to transparency and credibility. On its official website, NewsGuard plainly and explicitly lays out its rating process and criteria, credentials and backgrounds of all staff and contributors, and descriptions of updates made to specific news providers’ ratings. In addition to posting updates on its website, NewsGuard keeps all Nutrition Labels up to date. The website also includes details of past and upcoming library-centric conferences and events at which NewsGuard has been or will be present.

Overall, NewsGuard seems to be gaining traction within the library community, especially in an era during which libraries are increasingly prioritizing media and news literacy. Co-CEO Steven Brill has said that NewsGuard’s goal goes hand-in-hand with the purpose of libraries: “Giving readers information about sources of information is what librarians have always seen as their mission. That’s why these NewsGuard-library partnerships make so much sense and why they are now happening so quickly.”



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"Giving readers information about sources of information is what librarians have always seen as their mission."

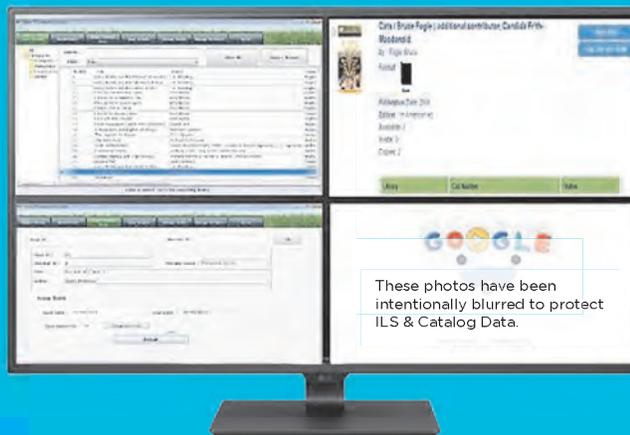
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# From Foe to Ally: the Role Libraries Can Play in Improving the Accuracy and Completeness of Information in Wikipedia

**W**ikipedia and librarians may not seem as if they are natural allies in improving access to information that is accurate and current. As with many online databases that the public has the ability to edit, Wikipedia has its drawbacks in the completeness and relevance of its content, especially if that content reflects primarily the specific knowledge, interests, and biases of those making the edits. But this doesn't mean that librarians should simply spurn Wikipedia. In fact, library staff and users can play an active role in editing Wikipedia, particularly by ensuring the accuracy of existing entries and adding new ones. While the process of improving Wikipedia's overall value as an online encyclopedia is often incremental, librarians and the broader community can use their knowledge, dedication, and enthusiasm to give that process a jump-start.

## WHY SHOULD A LIBRARY LAUNCH A WIKIPEDIA-EDITING PROGRAM?

One impetus behind a number of Wikipedia-editing projects has been to increase diversity, in not just the groups and individuals the online encyclopedia covers, but also the makeup of the editors themselves. A 2011 survey by the Wikimedia Foundation discovered that approximately 91 percent of editors were male. Ongoing work in improving Wikipedia strives to close this gap.

Devising a theme or topic around the library's collection is another useful starting point. Consult the library's resources and special collections to help determine what the focus of the project should be, and how the project could best benefit the library's staff and users. The Spurlock Museum of World Cultures, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, based its Wikipedia project on its W. Dale and Jeanne C. Compton Collection of Native American Art.

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“Library staff and users can play an active role in editing Wikipedia, particularly by ensuring the accuracy of existing entries and adding new ones.”



Regardless of the edit-a-thon's focus, it might help if the library connects the editing initiative with a larger event or project, especially as a way to promote it. For instance, the Illinois Institute of Technology's Paul V. Galvin Library linked its edit-a-thon (focusing on women in STEM fields, including members of underrepresented groups) to its Women's History Month celebration. Both the Spurlock Museum and Western Illinois University's Malpass Library drew inspiration from the Art+Feminism project. The project is a campaign of wiki-a-thons focusing on increasing the number of Wikipedia entries covering cis and transgender women, the arts, and feminism. The project encourages participation by all people, regardless of identity.

An edit-a-thon can also serve as an opportunity to improve students' knowledge of Wikipedia. For instance, a faculty member might want to have a wiki-editing assignment. The collaboration can then grow into a larger, campus- or community-wide event. In particular, students could benefit from learning how Wikipedia requires citations for its articles, especially if those students have a tendency to apply sources to papers or other assignments after completing them, instead of during the writing process itself.

It might even be possible to tie an edit-a-thon to a library project that is not strictly Wikipedia-related. For example, Milner Library at Illinois State University sought to add demographic terms to records in its catalog, which would make it easier for finding information on members of underrepresented groups. In the process of identifying the records to which librarians would need to add the terms, however, participants discovered that Wikipedia could serve as a useful source for compiling a list.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

Once a library has determined the focus of its Wikipedia-editing project, the next step is to compile a list of which entries to add or correct. The Pritzker Military Museum & Library used standard collective biographies for the subject matter (such as Reina Pennington's *Amazons to Fighter Pilots: A Biographical Dictionary of Military Women*) to determine if Wikipedia already had an entry on a particular person.

In deciding to focus on African-American authors and compiling as comprehensive a list as possible, Milner Library staff compared the Library of Congress criteria for applying the term "African-American" with the Wikipedia listing of authors identified as African-American. If there was a high correlation between the two lists, then that demonstrated Wikipedia's usefulness for identifying authors who are part of a particular demographic group.

## TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION

For the most part, a Wikipedia edit-a-thon should not require prior Wikipedia-editing experience on the part of volunteers. It is likely that volunteers will have experience using Wikipedia, but not actually editing it. That is why training is important. Wikipedia, while it may seem "user-friendly," is actually quite complicated. In particular, volunteers may not understand that, while entering an edit is straightforward, making certain that the information it contains follows all of the Wikipedia community's standards, while actually adding value to the body of knowledge on the particular topic, is significantly more difficult. Although the edit-a-thon should not require any formal knowledge of Wikipedia, participants can create their own Wikipedia accounts ahead of time. Depending on the equipment a library has available, participants might benefit from bringing a laptop or another device for making the edits.

Wikipedia makes available several resources that participants can use for training and guidance. The Wikipedia Adventure tutorial (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:TWA/Portal>) is a good place for interns and volunteers to start. As the project progresses, Wikipedia's Teahouse (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Teahouse>) can provide solutions to specific issues or problems as they arise. Participants should not rely on just these online resources, however, especially for problems specific to the particular library's project. That is why having peer mentors can prove helpful. This is the approach the Spurlock Museum took, devoting the first stage to recruiting women and female-identified students from the local high schools and colleges to learn about Wikipedia and serve as peer mentors. During the second stage of the project, which was open to the general public, the peer mentors helped teach participants how to make the edits and monitored their progress.

Similarly, once the training is complete and participants have started making the edits, library staff and others managing the edit-a-thon will need to provide active support, especially in ensuring that the information participants are entering is as accurate as possible. Galvin Library made available curated resources that participants could use to improve existing articles or write new ones, while also providing them with lists of which references to cite in particular articles.

One of the educational benefits for participants is that they not only learn the mechanics of editing Wikipedia, but also become more familiar with members of underrepresented groups (if that is the focus of the edit-a-thon), including people who are affiliated with a library's larger institution. For instance, participants in Galvin Library's event had the opportunity to edit an entry on alumna Gloria Ray Karlmark, who was also a member of the Little Rock Nine group of students who integrated Little Rock (Arkansas) Central High School. Similarly, participants in the Spurlock Museum's edit-a-thon learned about the Pueblo women artists whose works are in the Museum's collection.

## STARTING AN EDIT-A-THON AT THE LIBRARY

If a library is undertaking a Wikipedia edit-a-thon for the first time, it might prove helpful to contact institutions outside of the library, including in the broader community or campus that can provide guidance and expertise. Collaboration can not only pool resources, but also draw additional volunteers for the project. For instance, Galvin Library co-hosted its edit-a-thon with The Society of Women Engineers. Similarly, the Spurlock Museum collaborated with the University Library, the Native American House, and the Women's Resource Center on campus.

In choosing a theme, try not to make it overly broad. A general theme (such as "women" or "African-Americans") can entice students and other volunteers to join the edit-a-thon, but it can also confuse them, particularly if they are not aware of the scope of Wikipedia's coverage on a particular topic, or they are not particularly familiar with the topic in the first place. Leaving the topic completely open-ended might confuse them even more. That is why having a list of pre-selected subjects and resources to guide students and other participants in constructing the entries is important.

Once the library has chosen the theme of the project and constructed the list of entries to edit or add, planning the execution of the project itself is crucial. Make certain to allow adequate time to complete the work. Set aside a certain period of time each week for staff and volunteers to devote to the project, to ensure that the library doesn't neglect, or even forget about, the initiative. Similarly, create a regular schedule, so that everyone involved with the project will know when to participate. Having a "drop-in" policy can help attract more volunteers, but it can also create an environment in which participants are not dedicated to seeing the project through to its completion.

Most importantly, ensure that everyone involved in the project, from planning to editing, understands the "spirit" of Wikipedia. While Wikipedia may not be a perfect resource, the community of site managers and editors is dedicated to ensuring that the information it contains is as complete and accurate as possible. Unfortunately, there might always be people who intend to use Wikipedia for their own ends, however, including by "vandalizing" a page and leaving purposefully inaccurate, and even inflammatory, information. This is especially risky in the case of entries covering political figures or other polarizing individuals and groups. This is why it is important for the librarian leading the edit-a-thon to not just make clear what the expectations are at the outset, but to monitor the project throughout.

Regardless of the topic, the edit-a-thon should be a fun and educational event for everyone involved. Students or other regular library users will enjoy learning about the subjects that the edit-a-thon covers, and community members and other outsiders, including alumni, will value the opportunity to become more involved in the library and its projects.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the following individuals for sharing their knowledge and experience for the article: Christina Norton, Heartland Community College (formerly of Western Illinois University); Kimberly Shotick, Illinois Institute of Technology; Eric Willey and Angela Yon, Illinois State University; Teri Embrey, Pritzker Military Museum & Library; and Monica Scott, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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# Power to Your Staff: Mini-Grants at Your Library

Every library has a strategic plan that governs its initiatives, services, and mission. At many libraries, however, staff members are not always fully aware of their pivotal roles in helping the plan come to fruition. The process of including all staff members in feeling empowered to suggest ideas or improve library services for patrons may feel overwhelming, due to limited resources and time. Recently, the North Riverside Public Library's staff and trustees came up with an idea to allow the library to mindfully set aside both resources and time in order to encourage staff to think critically about library services and to propose new ideas and solutions.

## STRATEGIC PLAN MINI-GRANTS

The idea came to fruition as Strategic Plan Mini-Grants. Any staff member who has an idea for a library improvement or a solution to a problem they have observed can apply for a Mini-Grant. If the grant is approved, the staff member can then implement the project. This allows staff members to take full initiative and ownership throughout the process. The purpose of these grants is to focus all staff members' attention fully on furthering our strategic plan and allow them to pursue good ideas.

## THE SET-UP

North Riverside is a fairly small library located in the nearby suburbs of Chicago. Our community is made up of about 7,000 residents. Our annual budget is roughly \$1 million. In June of 2018, our library board officially approved our 2018–19 fiscal year budget with a \$4,000 line item for strategic initiatives. The line item funds the Strategic Plan Mini-Grants. Our Director created an application and forwarded it to all staff; she also requested that managers encourage their staff to apply.

## REVIEWING THE GRANT PROPOSALS

Each quarter, the Reviewing Committee is made up of different staff members. A staff member who serves on the Committee one quarter can still apply for the grant in a different quarter. Reviewers grant up to \$1000 per quarter, but individual grants cannot exceed \$500. Staff members can apply as many times as they wish, and if a project is not funded, the staff member is encouraged to re-think it and apply again. Each application requires that the staff member justify the proposal under the terms of our Strategic Plan.

As of now, the Reviewing Committee is always made up of members of our administrative team. Submissions are not anonymous, since the staff is small enough that it would be clear who had created an application. In the next fiscal year, however, our goal is to broaden the Committee's membership and find a way to anonymize the submissions fully. This will allow us to democratize the process even further.

[continued on page 20]

“Any staff member who has an idea for a library improvement or a solution to a problem they have observed can apply for a Mini-Grant.”



## THE RESULTS

The North Riverside Public Library has benefitted immensely from this new initiative. Every quarter, we receive far more applications than we can fund. Although it is sad to have to turn down applications, it shows that our staff has embraced the process. The ideas have been diverse and have improved our patrons' experiences, often in measurable ways. Some of the funded applications include:

- Whiteboards for our study rooms
- Magna Tiles for our Lego Club
- A train set for Youth Services
- A puppet theater for our Storytimes
- New displays to highlight YA books
- New tables for our YA section
- A chalkboard behind our reference desk to highlight programs
- Charging stations around the library

In cases where there is not enough money to fund strong applications, staff members are encouraged to apply again. In some cases, where appropriate, our Director has brought the request to our Friends group for it to consider purchasing.

In addition to empowering our staff, these grants also help administrators find out about sticking points or patron requests of which they were previously unaware. For example, our new study room whiteboards have proven to be incredibly popular, and we frequently hear from patrons about how happy they are with the addition. Without these Mini-Grants, the staff member who most frequently heard the request for whiteboards might have had no accessible avenue (or the financial resources) to make it happen.

## STRATEGIC PLAN MINI-GRANTS IN YOUR LIBRARY

Strategic Plan Mini-Grants are replicable by almost any other library. The grant allocation can be scaled up or down according to the size of the library and its budget, and the broader purpose of the grant can change too. The application, reviewing team, budgeting process, and anonymity of the applications can all be decided by the library trustees and administrators, depending on the needs of the library. The consistent factor is that instituting a program similar to the North Riverside Public Library's Strategic Plan Mini-Grants will empower your staff members to share ideas, make their voices heard, and bring positive change to your library and the community it serves.

Happy granting! 

## It's Great for Programs, Too!

The Schaumburg Township District Library realized that staff members of all levels, across the Library, were excited about programming and wanted to share their ideas. So they created a way to encourage this enthusiasm and innovative thinking.

Through an anonymous submission process, staff members send in their ideas for a new Library-wide program, something big that brings various departments together in the planning process and attracts all ages. Once a year, the Library's Program Advisory Group evaluates the submissions, based on organization-wide programming goals (such as creating a hands-on experience, having intergenerational appeal, or utilizing community partnerships).

Once the Program Advisory Group selects a winning idea, the staff member who submitted it is welcome to join the planning committee, if interested. The committee then has a budget of \$2,500 to create a fantastic new program that the community will love. Through this process, the Schaumburg Township District Library has hosted successful Culture Fest and Big Read events.

—Kate Niehoff, Schaumburg Township District Library

“In addition to empowering our staff, these grants also help administrators find out about sticking points or patron requests of which they were previously unaware.”



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# Making a Book Discussion Your Own

**T**hree years ago, the Fiction Department at the Schaumburg Township District Library encountered a situation that is certainly not unique to us. How does a book discussion facilitator navigate a smooth transition for a group that has already been established? This could occur as a result of organizational, personnel, or scheduling changes. In our case, we became responsible for facilitating several well-attended groups comprised of long-term participants who held deep affinity for the previous facilitators. The following observations became clear after navigating three cycles with two monthly discussion groups and connecting with library staff members from other libraries in similar situations:

**Relationships take time.** You can announce your credentials and experience, but until participants attend a discussion (or two or three) with you, that won't matter to them. They want to get to know you as well as the other participants. It takes time to learn the facilitator's style and personalities of the other group members. Adult services librarian Shoshana Frank of the Naperville Public Library shared that group members were hesitant when she assumed facilitating duties after a previous librarian led the group for seven years. Caitlyn Hannon, fiction and media librarian at the Northbrook Public Library, stated, "Book club members will probably tell you how much they miss the other person. Do not take this personally as a slight against you; everyone is simply adjusting to the change, including you." That is a good reminder, since it is hard to not take such comments to heart. View them as a compliment to the other person and not a critique of you.

Make it a priority to learn names. I use pre-printed two-sided name tents and ask if alternate spellings or nicknames are preferred. Always bring blank name tents and a Sharpie in case a newcomer unexpectedly arrives, coffee is spilled, or a tent is misplaced. As the months have progressed, I have learned

regular participants' names and call them by name upon arrival. This adds a personal element. Newcomers are always welcome, and I have found that it is easy to learn those names, since I am now familiar with the regulars' names.

**Consistently recruit.** Even though we are fortunate to have a core of long-term participants, we are always looking for new people to join. I do this by personally inviting patrons while working at the public desk, especially avid readers. Several of these patrons have never previously discussed books in a group setting—just casually with desk staff. Most people new to book discussions feel more comfortable if they know someone, even the facilitator, instead of just seeing an ad and registering. Also encourage members to invite friends. One of my groups has several new participants who were invited by someone in the group.

**Attend a discussion as a participant.** The experience of coming to a discussion as a participant is quite different from coming to facilitate. The facilitator is viewed as the "expert" on the book. There is a different level of enjoyment, relaxation, and socialization in attending simply to listen and share. You also learn first-hand what it is like to walk into a discussion as a newcomer. If you have the opportunity to observe a group you will be facilitating, take advantage of that. I was able to do this. Hannon attended a discussion that she would be facilitating in order to observe and introduce herself to group. You could attend a book discussion at another library or in your neighborhood. I learn from different facilitating styles and discover new questions to ask to integrate with my own. The Adult Reading Round Table (ARRT) Book Club Study is a fantastic venue for this type of experience.



**Always remember what it's like to be new.** Walking into a room where everyone seems to know each other can be intimidating, whether people are talking enthusiastically or the room is silent. At every discussion, I introduce myself and announce the expectation to be respectful of different opinions, responses, and reactions to the book. Diverse viewpoints make the discussion more interesting and rich. This provides a timely reminder for regulars and helps newcomers get acclimated. Frank announces to her group that all opinions are valid and valuable to the discussion, even if they conflict with personal views. Carrie Straka, Adult Services Department Head at the Itasca Community Library, started a discussion she is newly facilitating by stating, "I want to make sure that we hear from everyone in the group, so I ask that you don't monopolize the conversation, and let's be sure to hear from everyone who wants to share." Straka also encourages participants to keep any thoughts about people of a gender, culture, orientation, race, or ethnicity other than their own, to themselves. I aim to have refreshments and nametags prepared early to be available to greet attendees at the door and answer informal questions. Include announcements about other library programs of interest, logistics and how to register for the next discussion and obtain the book. Be aware of veteran participants who bring up past titles, facilitators, or participants. Seek to value their comments without making new participants feel out of the loop.

**Never underestimate the power of personal connection.** Follow up with participants when they visit the library after a discussion. Let them know how glad you are to have them in the group, comment further on the book, or solicit ideas. Hannon talks with attendees for a few minutes after the discussion to build personal connection. Send a reminder email separate from the automated version your registration system generates. Ask members for suggestions of future genres and titles. This all helps participants feel as if they are part of the group. Straka aims to write her own discussion questions to develop a stronger connection.

**Every group is different.** One monthly group uses a five-star rating scale while others use a four-star scale. Two groups bring treats; one does not. One group loves a particular title, while another group generally dislikes it. Discussions can take different angles as well, so I have learned to release the expectation that discussions of the same title will go similarly. I switched my regular seat recently, and one group embraced the change, while participants in the other group adjusted their seats accordingly. Frank chooses titles that group members might not pick up on their own for her mystery discussion from small presses, with characters of color and translated works. According to Talcott Free Library director Megan Gove, book discussions continued without a staff member following a retirement. Depending on your library's size and budget, patron-led could be an option.

My department was recently assigned facilitation duties of an off-site community book discussion. Compiling these lessons could not have been more relevant and timely. Your discussion will become "your own" as you engage in the consistent work of relationship building and maintaining a welcoming environment. **ILA**

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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.

## PERSONAL MEMBERS

**Amina Ali**, Fountaindale Public Library District, Bolingbrook  
**Camille Bowman**, Cicero Public Library  
**Anne Bultman**, Naperville Public Library  
**Jessica Cantarero**, Aurora Public Library  
**Stephanie DeYoung**, Batavia Public Library District  
**Carey Gibbons**, Washington District Library  
**Emily Grigoletti**, Mokena Community Public Library District  
**Meredith "Maisie" Iven**, White Oak Library District, Lockport  
**Allison Kampf**, Gail Borden Public Library District, Elgin  
**Patricia A. Leonard**, Batavia Public Library District  
**Mary Marshall**, Helen M. Plum Memorial Public Library District, Lombard  
**Alissa Medows**, Gail Borden Public Library District, Elgin  
**Isolda Page**, Lisle Library District  
**Beatriz A. Peralta**, Cicero Public Library  
**Jean Sanders**, Glenview Public Library  
**Katie Scheleski**, Addison  
**Sandra Tomschin**, Cicero Public Library  
**Sarah Udzielak**, Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling  
**Natasha Wands**, Geneva Public Library District

## STUDENT MEMBERS

**Ryan Cameron**, Joliet Public Library  
**Janette Derucki**, Oswego  
**Katie Eytchison**, Decatur Public Library  
**Mary Hester**, College of DuPage Library  
**Karen Tepps**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign SOIS  
**Jennie Tobler-Gaston**, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA

## TRUSTEE MEMBERS

**Jennifer Adams**, Eisenhower Public Library District, Harwood Heights  
**Marianne Bailey**, Poplar Creek Public Library District, Streamwood  
**Allison Demes-O'Brien**, La Grange Park Public Library  
**Adam Followell-Young**, Six Mile Regional Library District, Granite City  
**Taylor Frawley**, Indian Prairie Public Library District, Darien  
**LaShaunda Jordan**, Poplar Creek Public Library District, Streamwood  
**Sean Kelly**, Oak Lawn Public Library  
**Alvin Kempf, Jr.**, Mokena Community Public Library District  
**Elizabeth Larson**, Batavia Public Library District  
**Suriyya Latif**, Zion-Benton Public Library District  
**Bridget Lindbloom**, Orland Park Public Library  
**Charles Moore II**, Mahomet Public Library District  
**Patrick O'Donnell**, Oak Lawn Public Library  
**Peter Pelke II**, Algonquin Area Public Library District  
**Maria Perez**, Bellwood Public Library  
**Daniel Russo**, Batavia Public Library District  
**Erica Sanchez**, Maywood Public Library  
**Teresa Sigsworth**, Cary Area Public Library District  
**Jennifer Smith**, Zion-Benton Public Library District  
**Reginald Stewart**, Bellwood Public Library

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**JP Morgan Chase**, Chicago  
**OpenGov**, Redwood City, CA



# Strategy & Inclusivity

Dear ILA Members and Friends,

Thank you for an incredible year! It truly was a privilege and an honor to be the ILA President this past year. I am so proud of the work that has been done thanks to the amazing ILA staff and to you—the phenomenally talented volunteers. This is your association. You showed up to conference, maybe presented a program, served on a committee, attended a legislative meet-up, or perhaps gave feedback on the draft of our strategic plan. We are all in this together. Your involvement makes ILA a stronger, better, and a more inclusive organization.

One of the first tasks tackled by a newly elected Vice President/President-Elect each year is to convene a Conference Program Committee and to begin thinking about a conference theme. When I was first elected in 2017, I wanted my conference theme to reflect something that I am passionate about, and to set the tone for the year. The 2018 ILA Annual Conference, themed Libraries: All Inclusive featured an intentional focus. Programs such as “Creative Services for Patrons with Different-abilities,” “The Librarian’s Guide to Homelessness,” “Helping the Unseen: How Do We Recognize and Serve Members of Invisible and Marginalized Groups,” “Life Through a Transgender Lens,” and many more complemented the message from keynote speaker Gene Luen Yang, 2016-17 National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature: that reading can spread appreciation and understanding of others. Fostering true inclusivity is not a “one and done” concept; I know we are not done, but I hope we are further down the road than when we began.

Speaking of roads, ILA has a new road map to take us where we are going: Our newly revised strategic plan for 2019–22! This past year the ILA Executive Board truly did yeoman’s work, with additional meetings, a challenge to think creatively and strategically about what we wanted the Association to do and to be, and a mandate to do our very best to craft an inclusive, representative process. Our new mission statement refocuses the Association on our most important component, our membership: “Leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries.” Top strategic priorities include investing in advocacy, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion in the association as well as in the profession, and leading collaborative efforts with the myriad of other state organizations to make sure Illinois libraries receive the greatest possible benefit from our work.

Libraries truly are all inclusive, and we can’t take that for granted. I am so very proud of the ILA Executive Board, all of our members who serve the association in so many vital ways, and our small but mighty staff. I can’t wait to see where the road takes us together, toward advancing our new vision statement: “Collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois.”

Happy Reading,



Cynthia Fuerst  
Vernon Area Public Library District  
ILA President, 2018–2019



## Strategy and Inclusivity

On April 18, 2019, the ILA Executive Board voted to approve the association's strategic plan for 2019-2022. The plan development process had begun the prior year in spring 2018 with Executive Board working sessions followed by a broad survey of members and non-members, a strategic planning workshop with ILA committees and forum managers during ILA Orientation in July, a series of focus groups held online and in locations around the state in the fall, and additional Executive Board review and discussion, and eventual vote.

Highlights of the new plan include a continued focus on library advocacy both legislatively and in our communities; an increased focus on diversity and inclusion, both in the profession and in the association; a commitment to delivering member value; and a commitment to leading librarianship in the state of Illinois toward a new future. In fact, our new vision statement is "Collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois," with our mission to deliver "Leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries." Please visit [www.ila.org/about/strategic-plan](http://www.ila.org/about/strategic-plan) to view the full plan.

In addition to the strategic plan, the ILA Executive Board also began a process to comprehensively review the association's policies. First on the docket, the Finance Committee, with input from the Executive Director and the auditor, reviewed ILA's fiscal policies and made recommendations to the full Board, which were accepted. A Policy Review Task Force was formed to look at non-fiscal policies; this group's first project was to develop a code of conduct for ILA Annual Conference and other events, which is expected to be in place beginning with the 2019 Annual Conference in Tinley Park.

Operationally, the ILA office staff grew from three and a half to five full-time staff members! Communication and Engagement Manager Tamara Jenkins and Administrative Coordinator Kendall Harvey joined 33 W. Grand this year and quickly became indispensable; complementing the ongoing work of Membership and Product Services Manager Tina Koleva, Deputy Director Cynthia Robinson, and Executive Director Diane Foote.

## ILA's Advocacy Efforts

As noted above and in the strategic plan, advocacy continues to be a major focus for—and a major member benefit of—the association. We conduct advocacy efforts through the work of the Public Policy Committee and Advocacy Committee; through direct communication with legislators in Springfield via our legislative consultant, Derek Blaida; and in a series of events including ILA's Legislative Meet-ups, ALA's National Library Legislative Day and Fly-In Day and additional opportunities to meet with our elected officials on the state and federal level. Content of our advocacy efforts focuses narrowly on specific pieces of library legislation and library funding, and more broadly on issues of the value and worth of libraries of all types. Please visit [www.ila.org/advocacy/legislative-issues](http://www.ila.org/advocacy/legislative-issues) for a summary of ILA's legislative agenda.

### *In the State*

State budget news is always big news, and the fiscal year 2020 state budget contains appropriations and re-appropriations of \$66,141,234 for libraries, including \$875 from the Capital Development Fund and \$2,892,634 from the Build Illinois Bond Fund. In addition to the approved budget for 2020, during the final days of the session the Illinois General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed on July 5, a \$45 billion capital bill, which relies on new revenue sources to be funded, primarily an expansion of gaming, legalized recreational cannabis, and increased motor fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees. Some libraries and library districts are designated capital fund recipients. However, this is a six-year capital bill and there is not as of this writing an articulated timeline against which dollars must be awarded to intended recipients, nor a process in place for accessing such dollars, and ILA will continue to keep libraries informed as developments occur.

ILA's Legislative Meet-ups in 2019 saw an increase in both attendee and legislator participation, from 476 to 518 attendees, and from 65 to 72 legislators or legislative staff in 2018. For the second year, we hosted eight around the state, ensuring full state coverage. For the first time, an enhanced speaker lineup was piloted at the North Suburban event in Buffalo Grove, featuring library patrons with success stories and a series of poster displays rather than the traditional focus on the legislative agenda, although that was shared in print for legislators, librarians, and library supporters in attendance. Other locations, including Southern Illinois in Effingham, West Suburban in Oak Brook, and Chicago also highlighted success stories and initiatives, along with the legislative agenda presentation. The ILA Advocacy Committee continues to evaluate these events and work on designing them for the strongest possible impact.

The results of our legislative advocacy were mixed: Some bills passed that ILA supported, and some did not. Many bills that ILA opposed did not pass, although some did. ILA introduced legislation to make municipal library trustee qualifications consistent with the newly enhanced qualifications put into law last year for district library trustees, and that legislation is expected to pass this fall. ILA supported a law that passed that keeps the responsibility for federal immigration status enforcement under its appropriate jurisdiction and out of libraries, schools, and institutes of higher education. ILA also supported legislation that did not pass, that would have sought to protect net neutrality by requiring service providers doing business with the state of Illinois to disclose any throttling or other activity that abridges the principle of net neutrality.

ILA opposed a number of bills that did not advance that would have negatively affected libraries, including legislation that would have capped property taxes, prevented the use of public funds for attending continuing education opportunities, the ability to dissolve units of local government, set limits on how much in reserve funding a library may maintain, prohibit units of government from opposing unit consolidation and elimination bills, and impose ever-more onerous reporting requirements, among others.

ILA opposed legislation that would require a front-door referendum for annexing currently un-served areas into a library district, on the grounds that library service is a public good and the burden should be on those who seek to limit it, rather than on those who seek to expand it. It did pass; however, a provision to enable disconnecting annexed territory, which had appeared in previous versions of the bill, was eliminated by amendment.

ILA worked with our partner organization, the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) to support two pieces of legislation: one creating a Media Literacy Task Force; the other enabling schools to include media literacy in their curricula. The former is expected to be adopted and we will submit a nomination for a school librarian to serve; the latter did not advance.

The "Lifting Up Illinois Working Families Act" passed, raising the minimum wage from its current \$8.25 per hour to \$15 per hour by 2025. We know that a wage increase will benefit lower-paid library workers, and we also recognize that this will place a burden on already-stretched library budgets that could result in service cuts. Credits are available for businesses with fewer than 50 employees, and for all employers, including libraries, there is a phase-in period along with exemptions for part-time teen workers.

ILA took action on censorship in prison libraries following the spring 2019 removal of nearly 200 books from a library maintained in the Danville Correctional Center by an external group whose mission it is to educate incarcerated people, the Education Justice Project. Subsequently, the Freedom to Learn Campaign was created, and ILA joined the campaign and filed a written statement and a witness slip for a public hearing convened by three committees (Higher Education, Appropriations—Higher Education, and Appropriations—Public Safety) of the Illinois House of Representatives on July 8, which ILA staff, board members, and members at large attended. As of July 9, all of the books had been reinstated to the EJP library, a major victory; and Illinois Department of Corrections Acting Director Jeffreys acknowledged the need for updated policies and transparent procedures, as well as a viable, independent appeals process and body.

### On the Federal Level

ALA's traditional National Library Legislative Day was replaced this year by Fly-In Day, since the ALA Annual Conference was taking place in Washington, D.C. Fly-In Day took place earlier in the legislative session (February versus May) and focused strategically on federal library funding, in particular full appropriations for LSTA, administered by IMLS, and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program administered by the Department of Education. Librarians' collective advocacy about federal funding this year resulted in a resounding success, first with the passage of the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018; second with a \$25 million increase in the House appropriations budget for IMLS (including a \$17 million increase for LSTA) for a total of \$267 million, and a \$2 million increase for IAL for a total of \$29 million.

Unique among state chapters of ALA, ILA organized legislative visits for members attending the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. in June. Fifteen Illinois librarians met with nine Congressional offices to talk about library funding and the importance of the library to their communities and constituents. Advocacy efforts are a continuum, not "one and done," so every opportunity we have to forge relationships is valuable.



## Conferences and Events

Nearly 1,100 people attended the ILA Annual Conference in Peoria on October 9-11, 2018. Three full days of programs, exhibits, and awards provided an opportunity for attendees to focus on the conference's theme of Libraries: All Inclusive. Conference Co-Chairs Jeanne Hamilton and Lindsay Harmon led a Conference Program Committee that assembled a strong array of speakers on a wide variety of topics, including the Opening General Session featuring 2016-17 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Gene Luen Yang, the President's Program featuring Director of ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries Miguel Figueroa, a full day focused on trustee programs, and the ILA Advocacy Committee's popular program "Learn Effective Advocacy to Legislators from Legislators," among many others.

ILA partnered again with the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and the Reaching Across Illinois Library System to put on Directors University, a one-week intensive training course held in early June for new public library directors, and Elevate, a one-day leadership development conference in late April for library leaders at any level. The biennial (every two years) Illinois Youth Services Institute was held in March, with nearly 300 youth services librarians convening in Bloomington for sessions on the iREAD summer reading program, a luncheon keynote featuring Dr. Nicole Cooke, a plenary session featuring educator Michelle King, STEM programs for preschoolers, how to implement a teen job fair, and more. Each July, ILA committees, forums, staff, and Executive Board members convene for an orientation session; this year focused on the new strategic plan in East Peoria. ILA added a "Trustee Forum Workshop Springfield" to the annual Trustee Forum Workshop in Oak Brook; and hosted a second annual Marketing Forum Workshop.

Reaching Forward in Rosemont saw a record attendance of approximately 1,100, and ILA staff attended Reaching Forward South in Carbondale, both in May.

## Reading and Revenue

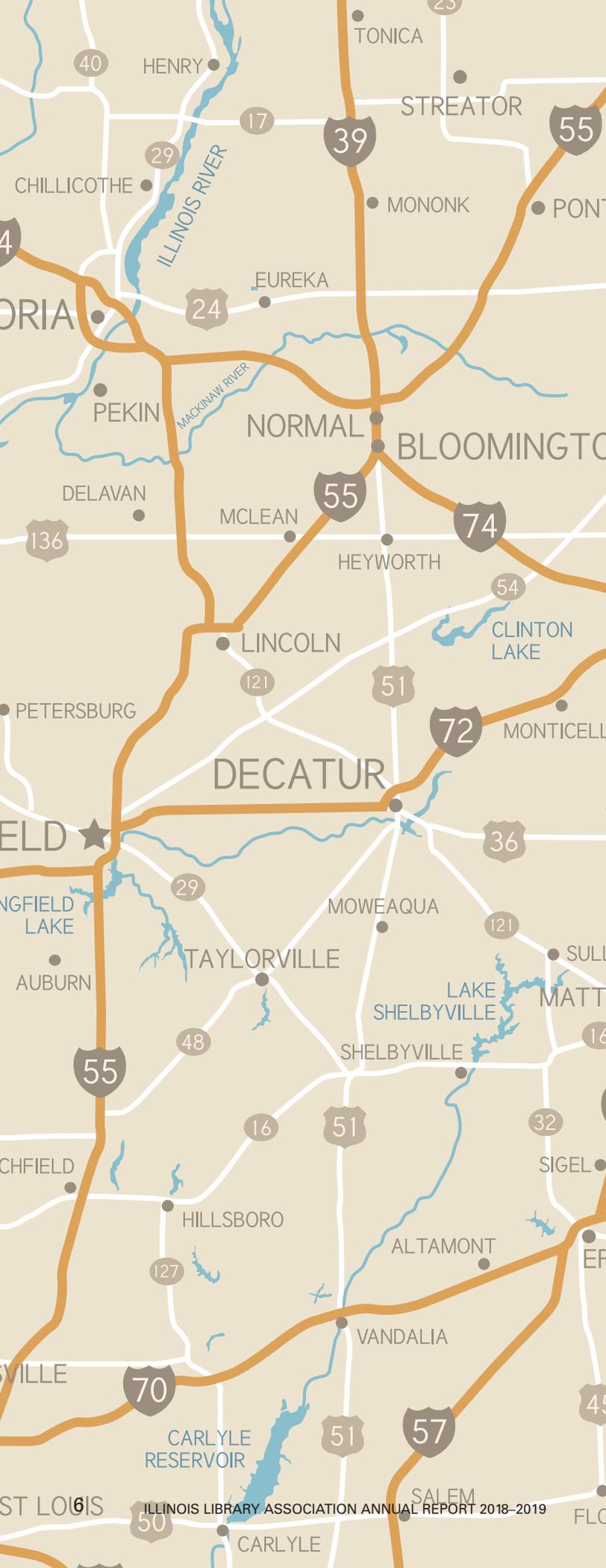
ILA enjoys a diverse array of revenue sources, making the association unique among state chapters of ALA. Membership, continuing education, and publications are all traditional sources of revenue; and the LIRA insurance pool, the CallOne affinity program, and especially the iREAD summer reading program enable ILA to survive and thrive as traditional revenue sources face pressure from tight budgets and changing environments. The Fund for Illinois Libraries continues to offer ILA institutional members who do not have their own associated foundations or friends groups a way to accept donations and apply for grants.

iREAD marked its 38th year in 2019 with the theme, It's Showtime at Your Library! Committee chair Brandi Smits led an effort that included art by a fantastic array of illustrators including Kevan Atteberry, Gregg Schigiel, Dennis Pryber, Janet K. Lee, and Alexander Hage. The U.S. Department of Defense continues to purchase iREAD resources and incentives for military libraries worldwide and states including California, Minnesota, and Virginia have adopted the program as well. This year we are delighted to welcome Alaska as our most recent statewide adoption, beginning with summer 2020!

Contributed income to the association also continues to increase, most notably through the Illinois Library Luminaries program, which supports the ILA Endowment and saw four new inductees in 2018-19:

- Kathleen "Kate" Boyle
- Lou Flavio
- G. Victor "Vic" Johnson
- Linda C. Smith

Such income also supports ILA's array of restricted funds, which primarily support awards and scholarships. This past year saw the first award of the Valerie Wilford Scholarship Grant for Library Education, presented by the ILA Awards Committee in honor of Valerie Wilford (1939-2016). As a teacher and mentor to hundreds of librarians, Wilford made enormous contributions to school librarianship, multi-type cooperation and resource sharing in Illinois. The Valerie J. Wilford Memorial Fund, created by donations from Wilford's friends, family, and colleagues, supports this award. Additional restricted funds include the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund, the Diversity Scholarship Fund, the Intellectual Freedom Fund, the Legal Defense Fund, and the Robert R. McClarren Fund.



## Fiscal Report (Year Ended June 30, 2019)

### Revenue

General Operations	\$ 32,572
Membership	\$ 263,106
Conference	\$ 353,751
iRead	\$ 2,156,001
Publications	\$ 14,882
Public Policy	\$ 2,000
Awards	\$ 5,130
Endowment Contributions	\$ 16,269
Workshops	\$ 142,053
Reaching Forward	\$ 132,345
Donor Restricted Funds Contributions	\$ 2,715
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,121,605</b>

### Expenses (reflecting allocation of staff salaries, taxes, and benefits to functional areas)

General Operations	\$ 310,831
Membership	\$ 160,487
Conference	\$ 288,743
iRead	\$ 1,825,470
Publications	\$ 116,895
Public Policy	\$ 100,661
Awards	\$ 17,128
Workshops/Projects	\$ 180,645
Forums & Committees	\$ 5,360
Reaching Forward	\$ 126,148
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,032,368</b>

Operating Net	\$ 89,237
Other Revenue: Gain on Long-term Investments	\$ 54,387
Other Expenses: Amortization, Depreciation	\$ 22,182
Net Income	\$ 121,442
Net Assets at end of FY 2018	\$ 1,950,290
Net Assets at end of FY 2019	<b>\$ 2,071,732</b>

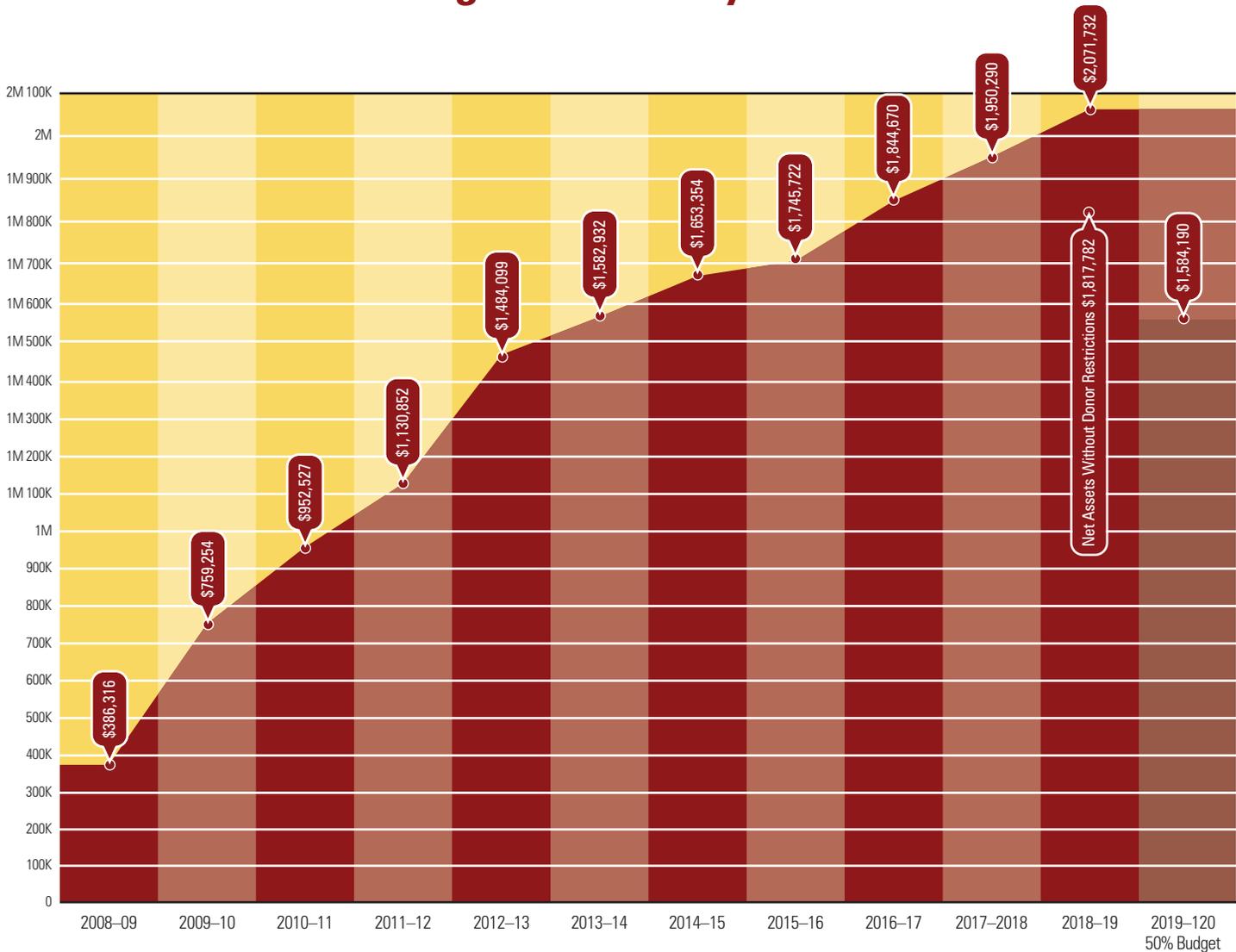
### Net Assets Comprise:

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 1,817,782
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$ 253,950

- Atkinson Memorial Award: \$2,783
- Robert R. McClarren Award Fund for Legislative Development: \$8,966
- Legal Defense Fund: \$875
- Preiser Award: \$116
- OCLC Users Group: \$25,741.9
- Valerie Wilford Fund: \$18,806
- Diversity Scholarship: \$4,595
- Intellectual Freedom Fund: \$2,530
- Endowment Fund: \$186,299
- Unappropriated Endowment Fund Earnings: \$3,239

<b>Total Net Assets at end of FY 2019</b>	<b>\$ 2,071,732</b>
---	---------------------

## Net Assets Ensure Long-Term Stability



## Cumulative Surplus

The growth in ILA’s net assets, particularly net assets without donor restrictions has been a conscious strategy over the past twenty-two years, with the goal of producing an annual budget surplus that will build up a reserve fund of unrestricted net assets equal to at least 50% of the subsequent year’s budgeted expenses, according to ILA fiscal policy.

This goal has been achieved since 2013; this year, of the net assets listed in the chart above, \$1,817,782 are without donor restrictions. The expense budget for 2019-20 totals \$3,176,039; 50% is \$1,588,020. As ILA makes investments in programs and services, increases its programmatic portfolio, and seeks to keep costs to members as low as possible, the size of the net asset balance we seek to maintain to be in compliance with policy—and association best practice—increases each year. We do that by keeping an eye on the revenue side of the budget, not just the expense side: The strategies that have contributed to realizing these goals include a focus on earned income projects, such as summer reading and our group insurance program.

During this same period, other professional associations have faced declines in their traditional sources of revenue—membership, conference, and publications. The need for innovation and entrepreneurial efforts, while maintaining our traditional areas of support within ILA is as strong as ever.

2018–2019	\$	121,442
2017–2018	\$	105,620
2016–2017	\$	98,948
2015–2016	\$	92,368
2014–2015	\$	70,422
2013–2014	\$	98,833
2012–2013	\$	353,247
2011–2012	\$	178,331
2010–2011	\$	193,267
2009–2010	\$	372,938
1896–2009	\$	386,316
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,071,732</b>

## 2019–2022 ILA Strategic Plan

### ***Vision***

Collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois

### ***Mission***

Leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries

### ***Core Strategic Values***

- Energizing, visionary leadership
- Adaptation to change
- Long term strategic perspective/direction
- Member service focus
- Partnerships and alliances
- Diversity and equity of opportunity

### ***Core Values of the Profession***

Information access, equity, intellectual freedom, and objective truth

## Strategies, Goals, and Desired Outcomes

### ***Strategy: Advocacy***

#### **Goal: Legislative Advocacy**

- Invest in advocacy. Educate and mobilize activist groups and other professional associations to understand and support the cause and critical nature of libraries.
- *Desired outcomes:* Activated strategic alliances and informed advocacy at all levels achieve adequate funding for libraries. Governmental decision-makers increase support for libraries.

#### **Goal: Community Advocacy**

- Develop education and tools for library leaders and staff to establish clear understanding of libraries' worth among the people served, resulting in community and stakeholder ambassadorship and engagement.
- *Desired outcomes:* The communities and people served value the presence and vitality of libraries. The communities and people served are vocal advocates for libraries.

## Strategy: A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

### ***Goal: In the Profession***

- Develop education for library leaders and staff about increasing diversity in collections and programs and creating an inclusive environment in libraries and librarianship.
- *Desired outcome:* Library leadership and staff are cultivated and engaged in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the communities they serve.

### ***Goal: In the Association***

- Review and revamp the committee and volunteer system for functionality, diversity, inclusivity, and recognition. Increase awareness, understanding, and commitment to creating an inclusive environment in ILA.
- *Desired outcomes:* Members recognize their ownership in and have equitable access to participate and be heard in ILA's volunteer structure. Members connect collaboratively for sharing and creation of knowledge.

### ***Strategy: Delivery of Member Value***

- *Goal:* Assess and refresh programs and services, integrating new approaches and technologies to deliver member value in programming, communication, and involvement.
- *Desired outcome:* Members in every segment find relevant value from ILA programs and services.

### ***Strategy: Leadership***

- *Goal:* Convene critical conversations with partners in the library ecosystem including the Illinois State Library, the three systems, AISLE, and other related consortia and organizations.
- *Desired outcomes:* Access to library service continually expands to increasing numbers of Illinois residents. Librarians, library staff, and trustees are supported effectively and efficiently by the library ecosystem in the state.

## 2018–2019 Executive Board

### President

Cynthia Fuerst, Vernon Area Public Library District

### Vice President/President-Elect

Molly Beestrum, Northwestern University Galter Health Sciences Library

### Immediate Past President

Melissa Gardner, Palatine Public Library District

### Treasurer

Brian Shepard, Indian Trails Public Library District

### Directors

Sarah Keister Armstrong, Sarah Keister Armstrong & Associates, Libertyville

Janine Asmus, Leyden High Schools District #212

Nanette Donohue, Champaign Public Library

Jennifer Jackson, University of Illinois Chicago

Tim Jarzemsky, Bloomington Public Library

Kate Kite, Six Mile Regional Library District, Granite City

Megan Millen, Joliet Public Library

Anne Slaughter, Reaching Across Illinois Library System

Leander Spearman, Belleville Public Library

Diana Brawley Sussman, Carbondale Public Library

Reina Williams, Rush University, Chicago

### ALA Councilor

Jeannie Dilger, Palatine Public Library District

### Ex Officio

Diane Foote, Illinois Library Association, Chicago

Greg McCormick, Illinois State Library, Springfield

### 2017–2018 ILA Staff

Diane Foote, Executive Director

Kendall Harvey, Administrative Coordinator

Tamara Jenkins, Communication and Engagement Manager

Tina Koleva, Membership and Product Services Manager

Cynthia M. Robinson, Deputy Director





Illinois Library Association

*Diane Foote*

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[www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)



# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Want to see your name in print? Earn a publication credit?  
Explore current issues in librarianship? Consider writing for the *ILA Reporter*!

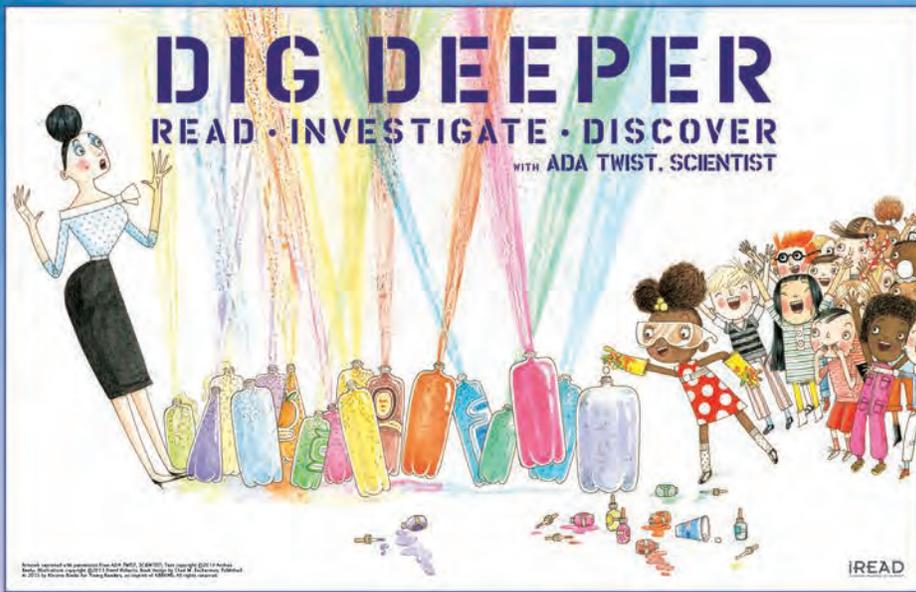
## Here's what we're looking for:

- Articles that explore an issue, rather than promoting a particular initiative or program, with examples from more than one library or type of library
- Writing that considers a "how to think about..." approach rather than "how to do..."
- Submissions from all geographic areas of the state
- Submissions that relate to ILA's strategic goal area of a culture of diversity and inclusion, both in the profession and the association



Illinois Library Association

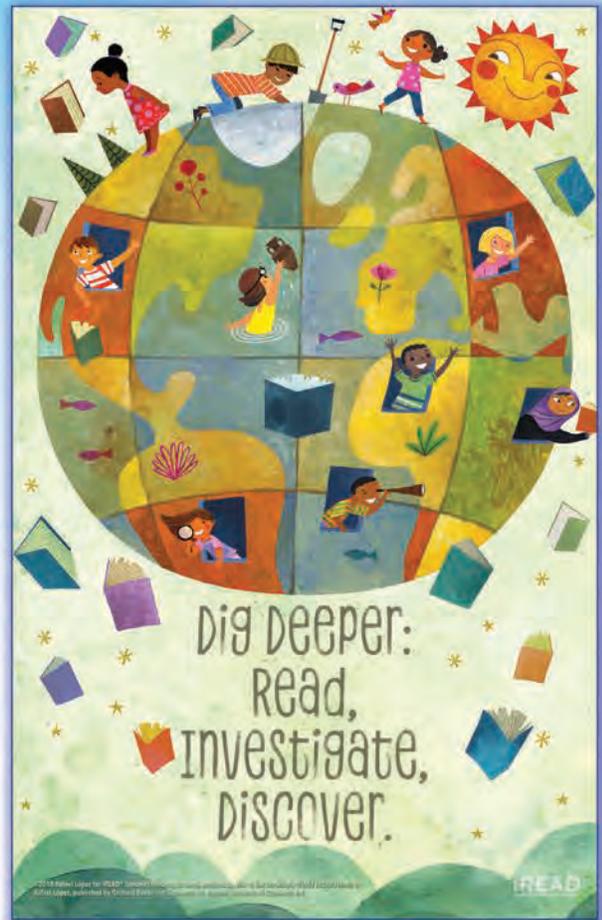
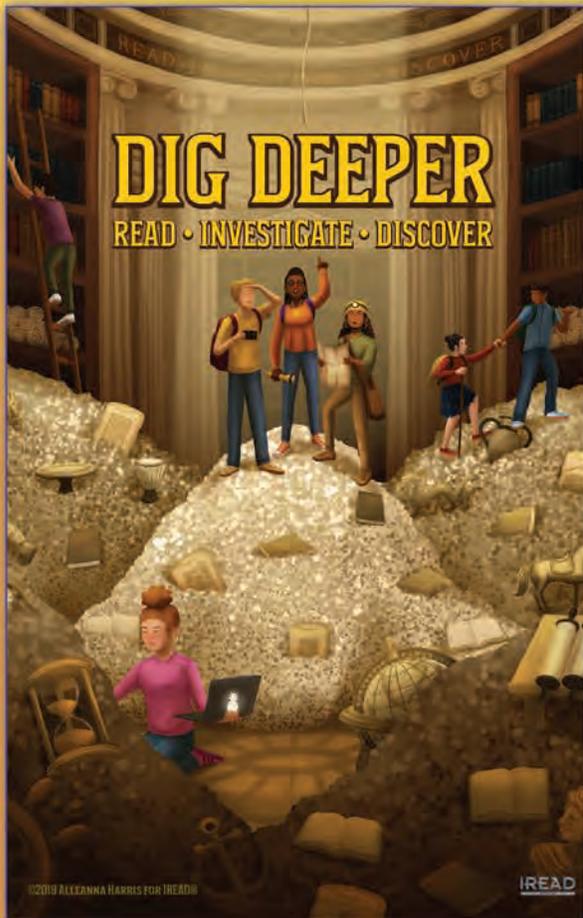
View submission guidelines at [www.ila.org/publications/ila-reporter](http://www.ila.org/publications/ila-reporter)  
and consider sharing your ideas! Send submissions to [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org).



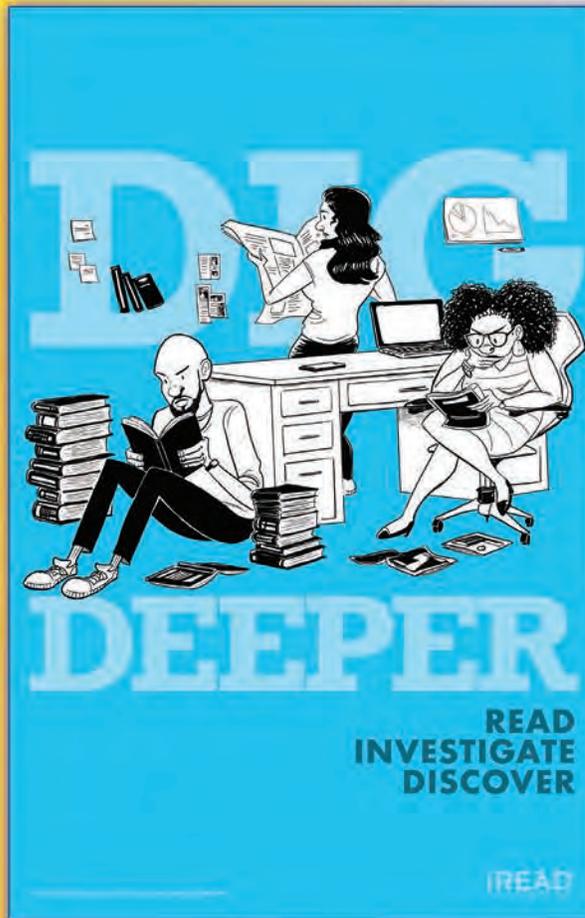
**Above**  
**Preschool:** David Roberts, illustrator of the picture books in Andrea Beaty's popular and acclaimed *The Questioners* series; iREAD will feature art from the title *Ada Twist: Scientist* (Abrams, 2016). Here, the interpretation of the theme focuses on scientific curiosity.

# iREAD Summer 2020

**Below**  
**Young Adult:** Aleanna Harris is an up-and-coming illustrator whose clients include Comcast, *Highlights Magazine*, and Teach for America and whose first picture book, *The Journey of York: The Unsung Hero of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* by Hasan Davis (Capstone, 2019) received praise from *Kirkus Reviews* and *Booklist*. Her art focuses the iREAD theme on archaeology, geography, and museums.



**Above**  
**School-Age:** Rafael López, Pura Belpré Award-winning illustrator; iREAD will feature art adapted from his picture book *We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands* (Scholastic/Orchard, 2018) based on the popular traditional American spiritual. López's art encourages the exploration, discovery, and appreciation of everything the world has to offer.



**Left**  
**Adult:** Jingo de la Rosa is commercial artist and community art educator whose clients include the NBA, the Houston Symphony, the St. Paul Public Library, and Butler University. De la Rosa's graphic, active, whimsical style interprets the journalistic investigative angle and the research process aspect of the 2020 theme.





# Summer Reading Programs BY LIBRARIANS FOR LIBRARIANS

## WHY Should I Use iREAD?

iREAD is run by the Illinois Library Association, a nonprofit entity; revenues are used to support libraries. There are NO membership fees, contracts, or commitments necessary. iREAD is flexible; you can use the art in perpetuity after purchase. We provide themed templates for any commonly used registration software package such as Beanstack, Evanced, and others. We have a proven track record of success since 1981!

## WHO is iREAD?

Librarians are the creators *and* users of the program; readers of all ages infant through adult participate each year; and renowned illustrators create artwork for our materials.

## WHAT is iREAD? A

flexible, nonprofit reading program designed by librarians featuring appealing incentives, compelling and adaptable themes, and a comprehensive resource guide chock full of ideas and reproducibles.

## WHEN is iREAD?

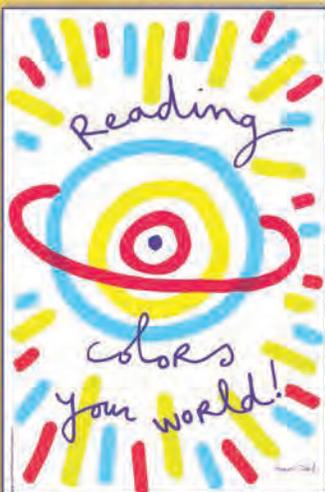
The 2020 program, with the theme *Dig Deeper: Read, Investigate, Discover* will be available in October 2019. Advanced orders of the 2020 Resource Guide will start shipping as early as November. Although originally designed as a summer reading program, iREAD can be used any time to develop excitement about books, reading, and libraries.

## WHERE is iREAD?

Developed by the Illinois Library Association, the program is adopted in other states including Minnesota, California, and Virginia and worldwide by the Department of Defense for libraries on military bases. iREAD is implemented in thousands of individual libraries across the country. Bring iREAD to YOUR library!

## HOW Can I Participate

**in iREAD?** Visit [www.ireadprogram.org](http://www.ireadprogram.org) to view our themed materials, browse or search for incentives, access the online store, connect with us on social media, and learn more about this program. Or, contact us at [iread@ila.org](mailto:iread@ila.org) or (877) 565-1896.



**Sneak Preview! The 2021 theme is "Reading Colors Your World,"** which lends itself to a wide range of interpretations and vibrant graphic presentation. The broad motif of "colors" 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!"

Left, 2021 Poster by Hervé Tullet



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Logo art by Terri Murphy [[terrimurphyart.com](http://terrimurphyart.com)]  
Margin art by Rafael López [[rafaellopez.com](http://rafaellopez.com)]

Illinois Library Association  
33 W. Grand Ave., Ste. 401  
Chicago, IL 60654-6799



**SHIFT**

Where Will You Grow?

**2019 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference**  
**October 22–24, 2019** \* Tinley Park Convention Center  
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