

REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2021

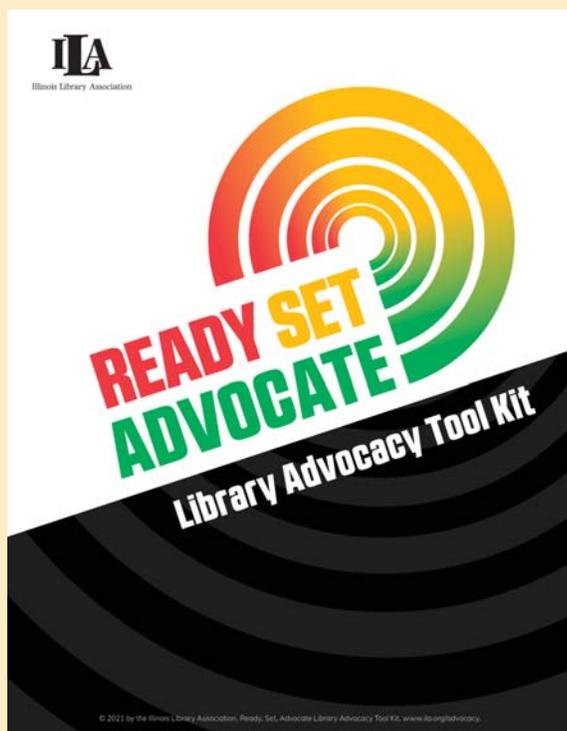
VOLUME XXXIX ISSUE 4



**READY SET
ADVOCATE**

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

Ready, Set, Advocate!

Ready, Set, Advocate is a comprehensive advocacy package that provides the skills librarians, library staff, library trustees, and library supporters need to become successful advocates for the library and to achieve local library advocacy goals. Developed by members of the ILA Advocacy Committee, Ready, Set, Advocate consists of an online toolkit and three recorded training modules, available on the ILA website at www.ila.org/advocacy/ready-set-advocate. See the article on p. 4 to learn more.

CORRECTION NOTICE

The September 2021 issue was printed with its volume year “LXI,” which is incorrect. That issue is number three in volume year XXXIX. The online version of the issue has been corrected.

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. 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: 224-698-1728 | fax: 312-644-1899
email: ila@ila.org | www.ila.org

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Presenting Ready, Set, Advocate! ILA's New Advocacy Training Package

Ready, Set, Advocate is a comprehensive advocacy package that provides the skills librarians, library staff, library trustees, and library supporters need to become successful advocates for the library and to achieve library advocacy goals.

Today, libraries are being challenged to do more with less money, staff, and time, and the recent pandemic has highlighted new threats and challenges to public support for libraries. Now more than ever, it is critical that library directors, frontline staff, trustees, friends' groups, faculty, parents, and others invested in their libraries, to make the case for libraries and their value. Most people recognize libraries are an important asset; but library supporters must constantly remind their neighbors, community leaders, school administrators, and elected officials of the fact that libraries provide essential learning opportunities, excellent public and student service, and invaluable contributions to their communities and patrons.

Ready, Set, Advocate! is an online toolkit and three training modules that each correspond to a section in the toolkit, which contains additional tip sheets and links for libraries of all types and all kinds of library supporters. The three online training modules are designed for in-person or remote presentations and are available in two formats: prerecorded sessions that can be broadcast online or shown in person or slides only for presenting live.

Ready, Set, Advocate! is part of the Illinois Library Association's sustained program of advocacy training for library staff, trustees, friends, and other supporters, and is based on the best practices of other successful training programs such as the ALA "Advocacy Boot Camp" and other state library associations. The package was developed by members of the ILA Advocacy Committee.



Ready, Set, Advocate Presentation Modules

Module One READY: Understand advocacy and the role it can play in your library. What is advocacy and how do the pieces work together? Why is advocacy more important now than ever and why are you an important advocate? Step one: know your library, your community, and how you are going to advocate.

Module Two SET: Build and tell your library story and message. Your library message: the big picture and your local library. Using data—and real stories—to show your library's impact. How to build and capture your library stories. Developing your library—and personal—advocacy plan.

Module Three ADVOCATE: Everyday advocacy and achieving your advocacy goals. Putting your advocacy plan into action. Library advocacy for all types of libraries and for everyone involved with the library. Building your advocacy network by involving staff, volunteers, community members, trustees, and friends. Engaging officials at the local, state, and national level. Resources for all types of libraries and potential library supporters.

The Ready, Set, Advocate Toolkit

The Ready, Set, Advocate toolkit includes sixteen pages of step-by-step advocacy guides:

- 1 The Importance & Purpose of Library Advocacy
- 2 What Is Advocacy?
- 3 Who Should Be a Library Advocate
- 4 Why Be a Library Advocate?
- 5 Getting Started: Know Your Library, Know Your Community
- 6 Your Library Message
- 7 Telling Your Library Stories
- 8 Using Data—and Stories—to Show Your Library's Impact & Value
- 9 Developing Your Advocacy Plan
- 10 Putting Your Advocacy Plan into Action!
- 11 Building Your Advocacy Network
- 12 The Public Library Trustee as an Advocate
- 13 Developing a Relationship with Local Officials
- 14 Developing a Relationship with State & Federal Legislators
- 15 Communicating Your Legislative Message
- 16 Online Advocacy Resources

Access the toolkit and modules at www.ila.org/advocacy/ready-set-advocate.



**READY SET
ADVOCATE**

Part of the Whole: Embedded Librarianship in Public Libraries

Libraries are always looking for ways to connect with their communities. The term “embedded librarianship” is widely used in professional and academic literature to mean librarians who provide services in the users’ environment. This often refers to academic librarians who work in a particular department on a college campus. Libraries are hubs of community activity, but the way that librarians provide information has changed, as has the way that users are seeking information and resources. To meet the users where they are, librarians need to understand what users are doing and what they need. Public libraries also have the difficult task of finding the non-users who need their help and finding ways to help them.

In a public library, librarians aim to embed themselves in areas where they can meet the needs of their community. This takes place through pop-up libraries, by attending or taking part in community events, by going into schools and other organizations, through partnerships with local businesses and organizations, and by joining community organizations. A main question that libraries need to consider is how librarians and library workers can embed themselves more deeply into the community, particularly in underserved areas. Librarians who are embedded in the community can build relationships, develop trust, and better understand the people, organizations, and businesses that they aim to help.

To learn more about public libraries and their embedded librarian engagement work in Illinois, I sent out a survey on IHLS and RAILS listservs. Happily, the results showed that many public librarians and library workers are involved in their communities as part of the work that they do within the library. The way that they are doing it varies and is particular to the communities in which they live and work. There is also a great deal of overlap in embedded librarianship with what is typically considered outreach. The main difference in embedded librarianship is the goal to become a part of the community that is being served instead of staying somewhat separate from it. This often looks the same as outreach and community engagement in practice.



“The term **EMBEDDED LIBRARIANSHIP** is widely used in professional and academic literature to mean librarians who provide services in the users’ environment.”



LIBRARIANS BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Joining community or civic organizations is a simple way to practice embedded public librarianship. This is a way to network and meet people in addition to finding ways to create community partnerships on a deeper level. Librarians and library workers who join organizations, become involved in them, and take on leadership roles can help further the goal of creating a community that is embedded with knowledge about resources and services offered by the library. The library essentially becomes a part of the organization through the representation of the staff member taking part. Examples of community organizations include Rotary International, Kiwanis, the Boys and Girls Club, and many other non-profit organizations. Civic organizations include the Chamber of Commerce, main street associations, city or town committees, and other groups organized primarily by municipalities. Library staff generally should not become embedded in political organizations as representatives of the library, though that can be done on personal time.

When librarians or library workers join community organizations, they are developing relationships within the community where they live and work. Even small rural towns generally have one or two organizations available to join. Many libraries provide support to local organizations, but when someone from within the library joins the organization, it adds a perspective that would not otherwise exist. They can even take on leadership roles to create partnerships that have both the organization and the library's interests at the center of their activities. At the Carbondale Public Library Teen and Youth Librarian Elizabeth Hartman is also a member of the local organization Carbondale United, who is working to fight violence in the community. "Carbondale United's vision of unifying area organizations to provide programs, resources, and education is a profound opportunity for our library to embed itself into the veins of our community. Working with community organizations like Carbondale United allows our library to reach new patrons, target efforts towards community needs, and avoid redundant programming or 'reinventing the wheel.' By collaborating with CU, we're able to create and distribute those educational resources and programs actually requested by our community," said Hartman.

Many libraries take a multi-pronged approach to embedding themselves in their communities. Chet Brandt from Tri-City Public Library said this about their work with organizations in their community, "We have few community organizations in the area. We work closely with the Parent Volunteer Group association with the Tri-City schools. We also host meetings of the Buffalo Women's Club, and they reciprocate by helping volunteer for library programs. We have worked with the local village and the police department in supporting and hosting annual Halloween and Christmas holiday events. We also provided assistance in putting on a library mystery play written and performed by the school drama department that ended up being a profitable event for the school. We also support food collection

for the Tri-City Food Pantry. We have had several elementary classes select us as their community support projects, raising some donations and donating children's books to the library," said Brandt. Since every community is different, embedded librarianship is unique to the community.

GET OUT THERE: COMMUNITY EVENTS AND POP-UPS

How can librarians show off their skills and resources while also helping build exposure and trust within their communities? Pop-up libraries take place when libraries take their resources out of the physical space of the library. This is most effective in locations where non-users or individuals who are underserved by the library are present and can change the way that the community views the library. Libraries including Indian Prairie Public Library provide programming at schools, businesses, and in parks. Some libraries are able to invest resources into pop-up libraries by purchasing bookmobiles or other vehicles, which has been discussed in previous ILA Reporter articles. Those with smaller budgets can provide a pop-up library experience by bringing a table, chair, and a librarian to a location outside the library including community events. Pop-up libraries create the effect of becoming embedded in a community, as the library staff builds relationships and are present to answer questions and provide resources.

Embedded librarianship is all about making connections in the community, so attending and taking part in community events as part of library work can be extremely beneficial. 85% of librarians and library workers surveyed attend community events as part of their work. In addition, volunteering to serve on a planning committee can further embed the library into the event taking place.

Since more than 85% of the libraries surveyed for this article attend community events, there are some great examples of work being done in this area. Rantoul Public Library attends community events to sign people up for library cards. "Story times at popular community locations, such as laundromats, would also be very beneficial in order to reach community members who aren't able to make it to the library," said Youth Services Librarian Joelle Travis. Alpha Park Public Library goes to community centers to provide programming. Taylorville Public Library is dedicated to community engagement, as their staff does talks at local schools, works with local non-profits with resource sharing, and offers book delivery throughout the town. The Lemont Public Library District has an environmentally friendly way of getting the word out about their library. "We have a book bike that goes out to the community, and we bring a hotspot with us so that we can register people for library cards," said Lisa Moe, Collection Development Librarian. Thinking of creative ways to bring library services to the public is at the heart of embedded librarianship. **ILA**

Embedded Librarianship in Academic Libraries

Q&A with Jennifer Horton, Science Librarian, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Q: What is your experience with the term embedded librarianship?

A: I think embedded librarianship has its roots in creating strong relationships with your community, whether it be in specific courses or with particular areas of campus. It entails working closely with members of your community, seeing what their particular needs are, and being available to assist them throughout a specific project or their time on campus.

Q: What are some ways that you (and other librarians) are embedded within the SIUC university system?

A: Most classes that we work with, we see for a typical one-shot session, but there are other courses that I would say that we are more embedded. There are degrees to how embedded we are depending on the needs of the students and what the faculty member desires. For example, I work with senior engineering students. These students are divided into teams working to complete their senior design projects. I go to their class and do an information literacy session, but my involvement doesn't stop there. I then meet with many of the teams, sometimes multiple times during the semester. They write literature reviews utilizing a broad range of resources. One thing that I work with them a lot on is finding engineering standards. I stay active throughout the semester with the teams and answer questions that arise, often meeting with individual team members or small groups. The professors ensure that students know who I am and what I can do to help. They put my information in the course's learning management system and upload documents I give them as well.

Another one of our librarians is very embedded in a specific course. She attends their class sessions, creates and grades assignments, regularly meets with students outside of class, and sits in on their final presentations. She is essentially a part of the course. Students get to know and trust her. A lot of work goes into this, but I think the students are very lucky to have her expertise and guidance throughout the semester. She becomes a mentor to them and another person they can seek help from that is not their professor.

Some librarians also work closely with some of our large-scale freshmen courses. They meet with the graduate students that teach the courses, develop curricula, and meet with the classes. We also have librarians that work with different areas on campus including SIU's First Saluki Center that serves first-generation students, the Student Multicultural Resource Center, the STEM Education Center, the McNair Scholars, and others.

Q: How do you think academic librarians could become further embedded in their schools and communities?

A: I think developing relationships with faculty and staff on campus can assist in further embedding librarians. When a program goes well, it usually leads to other opportunities because faculty and staff like to discuss success stories with others on campus. It also helps to just reach out. Let professors know what you are willing to do and how your presence can help not just their students, but for them as well. Embedding in a course offers students a unique perspective and a lot of assistance they might have been too scared to seek out or may not even know existed.

Tips for Getting Started

- Develop support within your library for this type of project amongst leadership and the team. Some benefits include a better image for the library, additional support within the community, and effective planning for services, programming, and resources.
- Look for leaders in the community, organizations doing positive work in your community, and issues that will be important in your community over the next few years.
- Look for areas in the community that need support. Who is underserved and could use extra support from the library? Which communities need more attention?
- Ask yourself these questions: Does the organization add value to the community? How can the library help them with what they need? Will this increase the public perception of the library in the community?
- Look at the skills and resources that you and your staff have to offer. Is anyone bilingual? Do you have adequate staffing for this type of project?
- Develop a plan. Begin by approaching organizations and offering your support. Start small and build relationships over time.

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2021 Sylvia Murphy Williams Scholars

Since 2003, ILA has honored former ILA President Sylvia Murphy Williams by awarding ILA Annual Conference scholarships and a one-year membership to the Association to ALA Spectrum Scholars who live in Illinois or who are attending graduate programs in library and information science in the state, thanks to support from a fund established in honor of the late Sylvia Murphy Williams, 2002 ILA President, now known as the Diversity Scholarship Fund. ILA Williams Scholars are also connected with mentors via ILA's Diversity Committee. This year, we are pleased to welcome ten Williams Scholars to Illinois librarianship! Several of them contributed these inspiring comments about what motivated them to become librarians, favorite courses in graduate school, professional goals, hopes for librarianship, and anything else they'd like to share. We welcome all of them as future members of the profession.



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SHERIDAN CAZAREZ

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

Librarianship as a possible career choice came to me at an early age. At eight years old I began a weekly Saturday ritual of walking to my nearest public library where I'd spend a few hours poring over books on ancient civilizations and pestering the library staff with questions that no one has the answer to. A few years later I became a teen volunteer, and then started working as a library page while in high school. Thirteen years later I'm still here, and with the encouragement and tutelage of some incredible role models, I'm finally beginning my MSLIS coursework at the University of Illinois to become a fully-fledged librarian.

Public librarianship has always been my area of interest; I relish the "daily grind" of public service: helping patrons on the computers, being mobbed by kindergarten classes, unjamming the copier, answering phones, leading story time, asking people to put their pants back on, community outreach, shooting the breeze with teens, I love it all. Now that I'm taking my first classes as an MSLIS student I'm finding that I also enjoy the more theoretical aspects of the information field and the principles that guide and underlie our work as well. I'm excited to gain an understanding of the systems that make libraries work, and of the systems that libraries work within, to begin doing my small part to make these systems work to advance liberation for oppressed and marginalized peoples.

I'm honored to join a community of library workers, Spectrum and ILA Williams Scholars, that are committed to making change in the information fields and our society. Although I haven't attended the ILA conference yet, I'm impressed at how proactive conference organizers and staff have been about reaching out to BIPOC students. They've been welcoming and professional so I'm looking forward to the conference and being a part of ILA to connect and collaborate with like-minded library workers.

It seems the field is slowly abandoning neutrality in favor of pursuing justice, and I think it's an exciting time to enter the profession. I hope to see many changes in the field in the years to come. Two of my biggest hopes are the formation of a national library workers' union, and that our state and national associations begin to advocate politically at municipal, state, and federal levels. This kind of shift would require courage, and a big part of that shift, in my opinion, is recruiting, retaining, and empowering librarians and library workers who have never had the privilege to be apolitical.

BRANDI HART

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

While growing up as a Korean adoptee, my public library was crucial in connecting me to my heritage through the books I found there about Korean culture, language, and history. As I learned more about my heritage, I became involved in my local Asian community and volunteered with an Asian youth group. By providing a diverse book collection, my library helped me meet a community of people I never would have otherwise, and this is what initially inspired me to become a librarian. In college, along with completing the coursework required for my two majors and a minor, I further immersed myself in learning by conducting two summer research projects and by completing a year-long senior research project. Doing independent research made me deeply appreciate the work that academic research librarians do. I also worked in college as a peer academic advisor for first-year students and as a tutor for philosophy students, primarily international students. As an AmeriCorps member after graduation, I was a college and career advisor serving in two Columbus City high schools assisting students with their college application and financial aid processes. I mostly worked with immigrant and refugee English Language Learner students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to help them write their college application and scholarship essays. This work taught me how to be creative with educational services and outreach methods, particularly when helping to transition the students from a brick-and-mortar education to virtual learning during the COVID-19 shutdown.

Once I earn my MS/LIS degree, I therefore hope to work either as a research librarian helping young adults in a college setting, or as a youth services librarian at a public library. In particular, I would love to specialize in assisting international students, English Language Learners, and immigrants and refugees, through developing outreach programming and providing creative services for them.

This is my first semester at the University of Illinois, and I am greatly enjoying all my current courses. I would be hard pressed to pick a favorite class—not only are they all very interesting, thought-provoking, and clearly helpful in my future career, but they also are taught by wonderful professors who have many years of real-world experience working in libraries. I really appreciate when the professors share with us their career experiences, helpful tips, and anecdotes.

I am thrilled to attend my first ILA conference this fall and plan to attend as many sessions on advocacy, equity, and inclusivity as I can in order to soak up as many insights and as much wisdom the sessions will offer me. As this year's ACRL Spectrum Scholar, I am especially excited about the track of programming for academic librarians that the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL) is sponsoring at the conference.

I hope that the library profession continues to become more diverse by focusing on accessibility. More accessibility will allow for further representation in our staff, which will in turn help libraries become more accessible to our patrons by identifying underserved populations in our communities, serving their needs, and making them feel welcome in our libraries.

Finally, I want to express my heart-felt gratitude to the ILA for giving me the great honor of being a Williams Scholar this year. It truly means the world to me! Thank you so much.

CORDIAH HAYES

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

I didn't choose to pursue a career in librarianship; it chose me and did so completely by chance. Immediately after earning my B.A., I found employment as a CyberNavigator, a computer tutor company that helps Chicago Public Library patrons with general online tasks such as job applications and resume creation. It was during this time I realized that I could help the community in a bigger way. When I became a teen library associate, I knew that I could be a change agent in more ways than one.

So far, my favorite class in library school is Youth Services Librarianship. This class delves into the ways in which librarians can serve youth and examines the social, economic, and emotional barriers young people face when visiting the library. I also enjoy the class because it allows for the cohort to draw real world experiences into the lectures, which in turn allows for interpersonal connections. My professional goal is to work in public libraries as a youth services librarian. Young people matter, and that the libraries they visit play an integral part in how they function in society as adults.

The hopes I have for my ILA membership are that I can share my creativity, organizational skills, and dedication to librarianship with fellow members. Building connections and potential friendships is important in such an autonomous and ever-changing field. My hopes for the library profession are that there is more attention paid to diversity. Representation matters. From the reading materials to staff, I strongly believe that there should be more persons of color celebrated in the field of librarianship.

Lastly, I would like to say that the Spectrum Scholarship has changed my life in various ways. Beyond the financial aspect, I have connected with potential partnerships and mentors even before I graduate from library school.

LESLIE LOPEZ HOLDER

Dominican University, School of Information Studies

My decision to become a librarian was far more than just a simple career choice. I searched for most of my life for my *ikigai* or "reason for being." In all aspects of life, I look for a connection to people; how to advise, mentor, and collaborate with others. And with librarianship, I found the nexus of my passion, my talents, and the public good.

While I had an idea about what type of librarian I wanted to be, it only took a few courses into my MLIS program to solidify my desire to become a public librarian. I was one of those kids who could only afford a bookmark at the Scholastic Book Fair, the eldest child of immigrants who had to navigate new terrain on my own most times. As I'm sure others will also relate, the public library then acted as a haven. I was able to take home any book I wanted, use a computer for the first time, and even bond more deeply with my mother (over the book *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, I must say!). And while I treasure these fond memories, I know they aren't attainable for everyone.

Information is the lifeblood of democracy, but unfortunately, this lifeblood often doesn't always circulate to communities that look like mine. A host of barriers exist that prevent certain communities from fully accessing the services provided at the library. As institutions that seek to provide equitable access to knowledge and encourage lifelong pursuits of learning, libraries must work from the inside out to dismantle these systems.

I intend on dedicating my career to providing this access and leveraging every ounce of passion and perspective I have, to ensure that libraries are not independent of the communities they purportedly serve, but rather, are the communities they serve. With the resources and network that ILA provides, I know I am unequivocally ready to contribute my voice to this mission.

KAILA RAIN THOMAS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

As a student of American history, anthropology, and African studies at the University of San Francisco, my goal was to one day be able to tell “the people’s history.” Early on in my college career, I knew I wanted to give voice back to the everyday people who’ve made history in their communities rather than retell an already prevalent historic tale with my own twist. I wanted to illuminate those forgotten and silenced narratives. I had high hopes but no idea how I’d make it.

I gracefully stumbled into LIS work when I started an internship at the Freedom Archives during my senior year of college. Early on in my internship, I discovered a piece of my own family’s history in a stack of unfiled documents and took this as a sign that I was exactly where I belonged. This was a defining moment for me. It was then that I knew that my goals as a historian were possible through archival work.

With the guidance of the director, Claude Marks, and archivist, Nathaniel Moore, as well as my advisors and mentors at USF, Kathryn Nasstrom and Candice Harrison, I was able to grow as an emerging public historian. I found my voice while preserving others’. I was a part of a larger community of people who inspired me with the work they were doing. They encouraged me to pursue a path that would allow me to continue doing this work that I fell in love with, so here I am today, working towards a graduate education in library and information science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

This year’s ILA conference will be my first conference as an emerging information professional, so I’m excited for the overall experience. Coming into this field has been both a professional and personal journey for me and I’m thrilled to be a part of this new community of fellow scholars whom I can connect with and learn from.

IDE AMARI THOMPSON

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

I first considered becoming a librarian when I discovered the glory of JSTOR. As a history major at the time, the close relationship I developed with all the library staff members, especially the reference and research librarians and the staff at the circulation desk at the college I attended allowed me to experience first-hand the power of accessible information and effective research techniques. These experiences made me see not only how interesting but also how vital the work of a college library could be.

In my first semester as an MSLIS student I am truly enjoying my cultural heritages class the most. The ways we engage with the mission but also the ideologies of different cultural institutions are vital for expanding my understanding and appreciation of how these spaces of cultural preservation and presentation influence wider cultural structures.

My goals for working in the library field are three-fold: to find new avenues of (re) presenting archival information and records in creative forms, to use writing and mixed media as tools of uncovering voices buried in archive, to developing creative, innovative ways to connect research institutions, patrons, and staff to the idea of the “living archive.” To me this is intrinsically a communal, and also a decolonizing project.

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CELINA TIRONA

Dominican University, School of Information Studies

I made the decision to become a librarian at the 2017 D23 Expo Disney fan convention! I went to a panel led by some of the Disney librarians showing some of the Disney parks maps they'd found for the book they'd been working on, and I was amazed to learn about some of the libraries and archives at Disney. I'd left a part-time position at my local library earlier that year and had just been offered my first full-time library position the week before and wasn't sure about how libraries fit into my future until that panel. Once I learned that I could combine my passion for libraries with my love of Disney, there was no turning back for me!

I'm really surprised to admit that my favorite course so far was my introduction to cataloging! I'd been initially intimidated by the course, but my professor picked really interesting articles for our weekly discussion posts and I found myself discussing metadata creation and classification methods with not only my library coworkers, but with my friends and family! I'd like to try working in a special library or archive, but I also love the work that I've gotten to do with my local public library and hope to build on that experience once I have my MLIS.

I look forward to being a part of ILA and participating remotely! I also believe that networking and gaining mentors will be necessary for my success, so I'm really excited about participating in the ILA Diversity Committee mentorship program. I'd really like to see how equity becomes embedded into the LIS profession. I've seen the work of BIPOC librarians in other spaces and am constantly striving to follow in their footsteps and trailblaze in my community. I'm lucky to have led a team for my library in the California State Library's Cultivating Racial Equity and Inclusion (CREI) Initiative, presented to my library board for my library to go fine free, and created a virtual bilingual storytime, but I want to see the profession change and progress so that my accomplishments are only a fraction of what's been done to make the library more equitable.

CYNTHIA MARIE WADE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Illinois Library Association, the Sylvia Murphy Williams Scholar program, and the ALA Spectrum Scholars program. I am honored to be a recipient and appreciate the many benefits, opportunities, and support. My academic journey to library and information sciences began seven years ago. The introduction occurred in my first semester at community college. The counselor suggested a one-unit course to complete my class schedule. This introduction to an information literacy class revealed the importance of competency in the subject. The question in my mind was, why are these courses not a prerequisite to attain your associate degree? In addition, these courses or something comparable should be taught in high school and required for high-school graduation. That one-unit class led to working in the campus library. I completed all three information literacy courses offered and landed a job as the student assistant to Dr. Jun Wang, professor of library and information studies and coordinator of bibliographic instruction and information literacy. Dr. Wang became my mentor. The rest is history, and here I am today!

The primary motivation for attaining my MSLIS degree is recruiting and retaining Black Americans into library and information sciences and community-focused information and cultural literacy initiatives. Also, I am drawn to scholarly research in international librarianship and global education, focusing on regional collaboration in East African countries and service to African immigrant patrons in United States libraries. My academic and professional goal is to earn a Ph.D. in LIS. Honestly, I am not sure if I will enter the private sector or public education. All the courses in graduate school so far have been a joy, and I do not have a favorite. The professors have been of the highest caliber. In the future of the library profession, I hope we can achieve true lasting diversity and equity in the field. I believe this is essential for the benefit of our patrons and the future of LIS relevancy in a democratic society dedicated to truth and justice.

I enjoy archery and listening to reggae music when I am relaxing and listening to jazz and classical music, especially the violin, when I am studying. I eagerly await the ILA conference and the outstanding line-up of speakers and presentations. I am honored and look forward to being a member of this library and information science practitioners' community. 

2021 ILA Awards Showcase



Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award
Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)



Crosman Memorial Award
Victoria Blackmer, Robert R. Jones Public Library District



Davis Cup Award
Heather Love Beverly, Cook Memorial Public Library District



Golden Ticket Award
Shelley Harris, Oak Park Public Library



Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award
Susan R. Franzen, Milner Library at Illinois State University



Intellectual Freedom Award
Deborah Caldwell-Stone, Director of the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom



Librarian of the Year Award
Kate Hall, Northbrook Public Library



Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award
Illinois State Senator Patrick McGuire



Deborah Dowley Preiser Marketing Award
Linda Vering, Northbrook Public Library



Readers' Advisory Service Award
Dylan Zavagno, Deerfield Public Library



Reference Services Award
Steven Giese, Des Plaines Public Library



Alexander J. Skrzypek Award
Lynda Spraner, St. Charles Public Library



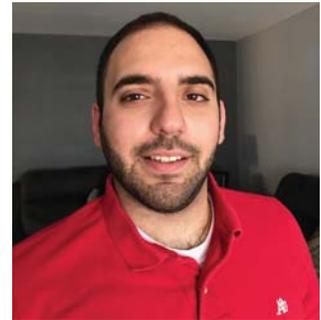
TBS, Inc. Technical Services Award
Rudolph Host III, System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)



Trustee of the Year Award
Christine Westerlund, Chatham Area Public Library District



Young Adult Librarian of the Year Award
Genevieve Stevens, Thomas Ford Memorial Library



Resources and Technical Services Forum Scholarship
Joseph Magnelli, Des Plaines Public Library



Valerie J. Wilford Scholarship Grant for Library Education
Karina Camarillo, Moline School District 40
Terra Jacobson, Moraine Valley Community College



Oberman and Rich Reaching Forward Conference Grant
Adrian Clark, Calumet City Public Library
Christine Steck, St. Charles Public Library



Robert P. Doyle ILA Conference Grant for Support Staff
Aaron Bryant, Chicago Public Library



Sylvia Murphy Williams Award
Ashley Bolger, University of Illinois
Sheridan Cazarez, University of Illinois
Bonita Dyess, University of Illinois
Brandi Hart, (ACRL Scholar), University of Illinois
Cordiah Hayes, (YALSA Scholar), University of Illinois
Leslie Lopez Holder, Dominican University
Kaila Thomas, University of Illinois
Ide Thompson, University of Illinois
Celina Tirona, Dominican University
Cynthia Wade, University of Illinois

2021 *Resources and Technical Services Forum Scholarship Winner*



Joe Magnelli, Des Plaines Public Library

I would like to begin by saying that I am grateful for having the opportunity to attend the ILA conference this year. I have been working in libraries and other similar environments for more than eight years now and every step of the way has taught me more about the importance of our work to our communities. It's vital that we constantly adapt and evolve with the current trends and new changes that affect our world; rapid advancements in technology have radically changed how we have engaged with information on a fundamental level. Not only that, we must also contend with trying to better appeal to our patrons, whether with more diversified catalogues, or by enhancing programming. This conference is one of several venues that allows for its users to synthesize these ideas and methodology so we can improve how we work. Every session I watched completely captured my attention, whether it was learning new techniques, how better to connect without patrons in these tumultuous times, or simply hearing anecdotes about our work and lives. In particular, the session with Catherine Wilkins on "How to Make History" was a standout favorite of mine because it demonstrated the importance of digitization to local culture for both preservation and ease of access. A large part of my current and past work deals with metadata and digital material which has become a greater part of everyone's lives and work. Understanding the need to increase digital collections to better appeal to patrons and as a way to help preserve local culture and history will be key going forward. This was one of the many sessions I found to be revolutionary in changing my perception of how we must operate in the future. All in all, I eagerly await next year's conference to see what new knowledge will be learned and taught.

The RTSF Scholarship terms and criteria state "The winner will write a brief post-conference essay to include what benefits they received from the conference. The winner agrees that this summary may be published in the ILA Reporter and may be used for future scholarship promotional materials." We are very pleased and proud to showcase the 2021 Scholarship winner here.

2021 Annual Conference Statistics



Conference Registration

	2021 Virtual	2020 Virtual	2019 Tinley Park	2018 Peoria	2017 Tinley Park	2016 Rosemont	2015* Peoria	2014 Springfield	2013 Chicago	2012 Peoria
Full	782	747	661	542	616	641	837	555	620	538
Single day	–	–	584	267	543	527	451	170	611	197
Preconference only	–	–	0	13	0	0	20	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL			1,245	822	1,159	1,168	1,308	670	1,231	735
Speakers	–	–	22	32	50	42	47	49	81	84
Exhibits only	–	–	98	44	46	61	89	101	131	102
Exhibitor representatives	100	164	300	220	290	270	250	267	378	203
TOTAL	882	911	1,665	1,118	1,545	1,541	1,694	1,087	1,821	1,124

* Joint conference with AISLE.

Hotel and Booth Statistics

Hotel Rooms Reserved by ILA	–	–	342	905	402	475	1,325	980	491	810
Hotel Rooms Used	–	–	263	865	398	354	1,190	921	352	729
Number of Companies	33	50	109	92	114	113	116	113	124	111
Number of Booths	33	50	121	102	126	128	138	131	141	124
Total Booth Square Feet	–	–	12,100	10,200	12,600	12,800	13,900	13,100	13,300	12,400

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

Leidos Inc., Peoria
Northland Securities, Inc., Minneapolis, MN

TRUSTEE MEMBERS

Takeisha Adams, Zion-Benton Public Library District
Robert Armstrong, Fountaindale Public Library District
Susie Baker, Mahomet Public Library
Arnettra Burnside-Barber, Maywood Public Library District
Madhurima Chakraborty, Oak Park Public Library
Jim Clinton, Lake Forest Library
Maryann Dellamaria, Fox River Valley Public Library District
Maureen DeRosa, Palatine Public Library District
Amy Ersland, Normal Public Library
Susanne Fairfax, Oak Park Public Library
Marianne Fasano, Batavia Public Library District
Tara Finn, Fox River Valley Public Library District
Christy Ford, Batavia Public Library District
Matt Goyke, Fox River Valley Public Library District
Kelley Hatlee, Gillespie Public Library
Akrom Hossain, Vernon Area Public Library District
Kathryn Hubbard, Batavia Public Library District
Jennifer Korb, Fountaindale Public Library District
Andrew Koroma, White Oak Library District
Matthew Mariani, Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library District
Cathie Neumiller, Peoria Public Library
Barbara Price, Zion-Benton Public Library District
Megan Rodriguez, Sandwich Public Library District
Kelly Schneider, White Oak Library District
Tracy Sharkey, Algonquin Area Public Library District
Sue Shattock, Lake Forest Library
Heather Strong, Lake Forest Library
Lindsay Taylor, Algonquin Area Public Library District
Lorna Turner, Lisle Library District
Karen Williams, Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library District
Shakeesta Williams, Maywood Public Library District
Monique Williams, Harvey Public Library District
Sara Wynn, Lisle Library District

STUDENT MEMBERS

Sarai Barrios, Norridge
Amy Bowen, Sandoval
Zoë Bowlus, Champaign
Stefanie Brown, Chicago
Sara Burchard, Sycamore
Jordan Calabrese, Westchester
Sheridan Cazarez, Long Beach, CA
Bonita Dyess, Oakland, CA
Brandi Hart, Fairlawn, OH
Cordiah Hayes, Chicago
Jill Lorenzen, Evanston
Katherine Majewski, Urbana
Kathryn Meyers, Crystal Lake
Tobias Paul, Wauconda
Eleanor Richardson, Chicago
Milagros Rios, Arecibo, PR
Emily Robinson, Champaign
Marisa Robinson, Elgin
Jazzmin Showalter, Naperville
Kristin Somers, Bloomington
Kaila Thomas, Chesapeake, VA
Ide Thompson, Northampton, MA
Celina Tirona, Daly City, CA
Leah Whitesel, Chicago
Devin Wood, Genoa City, WA

PERSONAL MEMBERS

Layne Arens, Chicago Public Library
Jennifer Bean, Oak Lawn Public Library
Tabitha Bilyeu, Decatur Public Library
Megan Cavitt, Aurora Public Library District
Stacy Craft, Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Dorothy Debosik, Oglesby
Maureen Fako, Geneva Public Library District
Susan Gordon, Bartlett Public Library District
Pamela Kulesza, Schaumburg Township District Library
Amanda Lopez, Calumet City
Meghan Maloney, Naperville
Sameer Notta, Lake Forest Library
Daniel Quinlan, Highland Park Public Library
Jeanie Resendiz, Indian Trails Public Library District
Robin Smith, Zion-Benton Public Library District
Kimberly Tuskey, Woodridge Public Library
Lexy Twidell, St. Charles Public Library
Steven Ward, Forsyth Public Library



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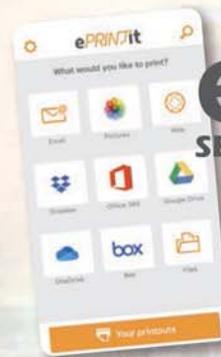


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RESTORING REOPENING RECONNECTING



Dear ILA Members and Friends,

When I ran for ILA Vice President/President-Elect in April 2019, I couldn't have imagined what was in store for libraries, or the world in which we now operate. As my term as ILA President began in July 2020, we were in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic. So much was still unknown and every day was filled with fear and uncertainty. Through it all, libraries and the Illinois Library Association worked hard to continue the services our patrons and stakeholders needed, in the safest way possible. Over the course of the year, we became optimistic about reopening our public spaces, then hesitant as the virus surged again, but we did not give up. Although each library needed to approach the pandemic based on the specific needs of those it served, the Illinois library community came together as a whole to support and guide one another. As the theme of the first-ever virtual annual conference reminded us, "Many Libraries, One State: We Are ILA."

Through the fall and a contentious presidential election, followed by violence at the nation's Capitol, the danger of disinformation became ever clearer. We issued a strong statement condemning the January 6 violence, rooting our stance in our strategic plan's listed core values of the library profession: information access, equity, intellectual freedom, and objective truth. In our annual series of Library Legislative Meet-ups, we kept on message, emphasizing libraries as vital to the reopening of the state.

As I write this, I currently serve as the association's Past President, whose primary responsibility is to chair the Nominating Committee, as well as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Executive Board. This subcommittee keeps ILA leadership accountable and led the process to create a foundational document to guide the association's DEI work. I look forward to helping our association recruit the next group of leaders to take ILA into the future; and stewarding the Executive Board in its efforts to continue the momentum re-energized last year toward our strategic goals of a culture of diversity and inclusion in the association, and the profession. I am so proud of, and appreciative of, everyone's participation in the association as we restore, reopen, and reconnect our libraries, our communities, and ourselves.

Here's to 2022 and beyond,



Veronica De Fazio, Plainfield Public Library
ILA President, 2020–21



2019–2023 ILA Strategic Plan

Vision

Collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois

Mission

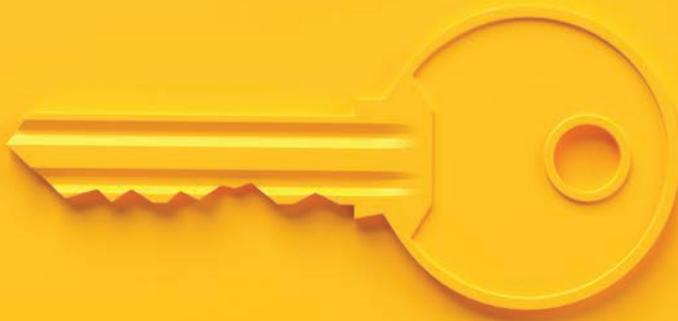
Leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries

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 Members 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.

REFOCUSING ON STRATEGY

2020–21 is the second full governance year with ILA's strategic plan (approved in April 2019). In 2020, it was difficult to focus on moving forward our strategic priorities as everyone was coping with the national crisis of the pandemic, although having a strong strategic plan in place helped the association continue to function and serve our members during that time. As the state began to re-open, we were able to refocus our attention back on our strategic goals. A July 2021 assessment included the following progress toward the association's strategic priorities since the prior (2020) report:

Strategic Priority: A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion in the Association

- Creation of DEI Subcommittee of the Executive Board
- Investment from ILA's net asset balance of \$10,000 in the Diversity Scholarship Fund in fiscal year 2020–21 and in the approved fiscal year 2021–22 budget
- Development of an association-wide "Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion"
- Instituted "Courageous Conversation" ongoing trainings for Executive Board and staff
- Best Practices Committee's work to develop a land acknowledgement statement
- The Diversity Committee's EDI educational needs survey and "ILA Voices" listening session at the 2020 ILA Annual Conference, and publication of the results in the *ILA Reporter*

Strategic Priority: A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion in the Profession

- Travel stipends for black, indigenous, and person of color librarians to attend national conferences included in approved fiscal year 2021–22 budget
- Funding for editorial work and permissions to adapt the Oregon Library Association's "EDI Toolkit" for an Illinois audience included in approved fiscal year 2021–22
- Planned outreach to PLA to sponsor Illinois interns for PLA's "Inclusive Internship" program and funding for this included in approved fiscal year 2021–22 budget

Strategic Priority: Legislative Advocacy

- Activism around the proposed "Diversity in Literature" bill; collaboration with internal and external groups (ILA Diversity Committee, ILA Intellectual Freedom Committee, ILA Public Policy Committee, ILA DEI Subcommittee; the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE); ALA; the Illinois Association of Teachers of English; and Illinois General Assembly members)
- Invest in Advocacy with funding in the approved fiscal year 2021–22 budget for an advocacy consultant to collect stories and produce content for the 2022 Library Legislative Meet-ups
- Successful advocacy for the inclusion of media literacy in Illinois high-school curricula, with AISLE
- Successful advocacy for the inclusion of a school librarian on the Inclusive American History Commission, with AISLE
- Successful advocacy for an increase in per capita grant rates for school and public libraries in the state budget for the past two years and as of this year, codified in state law, with the Illinois State Library

Strategic Priority: Community Advocacy

- Development of the "Bigger than a Building" campaign in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Outreach to IDPH and development of a template letter for libraries to use regarding vaccination for library staff members
- Inclusion of a mini "Advocacy Boot Camp" at ILA Annual Conference and Reaching Forward
- Initial development of "Ready, Set, Advocate" training initiative to launch in fall 2021
- Funding allocated to produce PSAs for school, public, and academic libraries in the fiscal year 2021–22 budget

Strategic Priority: Leadership

- Integrated Reaching Forward and Reaching Forward South into Reaching Forward Illinois in 2021, enabling attendance at both virtual one-day conferences for one registration price.
- Active participation in monthly calls with AISLE, IHLS, and RAILS leadership

Strategic Priority: Delivery of Member Value

- Planned revision of the ILA Connector blog to "ILA Voices," and integrate it in the ILA website
- Clarify committee appointment process via the "Overall Committee Composition Statement"
- New institutional member benefit: Free downloadable copy of the iREAD Resource Guide
- Creation of branded "Remote Learning" and enhanced "Noon Network" series during COVID
- Enhanced functionality for iREAD state partners regarding ability to purchase "credits" or downloadable Resource Guides for their in-state libraries

The complete report, including ongoing work toward advancing ILA's goals, is available on the ILA website at www.ila.org/about/strategic-plan.

ILA'S ADVOCACY EFFORTS

We began ILA's fiscal and governance year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as Illinois was preparing to move through the stages of Governor Pritzker's Restore Illinois plan to reopening. Alas, the pandemic continued to surge in fall 2020 and economic and legislative uncertainty persisted, with legislators' focus entirely on how the legislature itself could continue to function virtually, and on how best to serve the state in crisis. With an awareness that libraries across the state differ in approach, depending on the situation in different communities; and that the desire for state guidance on matters including materials quarantine, closure to in-person public services, and more is weighted differently in different communities against the importance placed on local control; ILA opted to shift our advocacy focus to a broader one instead of our traditional agenda focused on specific pieces of legislation. That said, we did secure a few legislative victories: First, working with AISLE, we secured a school librarian position on the newly created Inclusive American History Commission, part of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus's education platform; also with AISLE, advocated for the successful inclusion of media literacy in Illinois high school curricula. Last but not least, we secured recent budget increases in the per capita grant rates for school and public libraries into statute.

Beyond that, our "asks" for legislators were three-fold: first, to keep library funding "whole;" second, if edicts were to be issued about library activities during the pandemic, to please check with the library community first; and third, to ensure library eligibility for and inclusion in any COVID-19 relief funding initiatives. We framed these "asks" in context of remarkable work libraries did and are doing during the pandemic, which we showcased at the 2021 Library Legislative Meet-ups.

Like everything else in 2020–21, the series of Library Legislative Meet-ups looked a little different with all events taking place online, and without the opportunity for conversation that convening over a meal has allowed in the past. What didn't change was the enthusiasm and support for libraries expressed by the elected officials and their staff members in attendance and ILA's articulation of the library position. We did not know what to expect regarding legislator and library participation in a virtual format, but participation was strong across the board, including record-high attendance at two of the events anchored in Southern and Central Illinois. The primary focus of our presentations was showcasing Illinois libraries' vital work during the stay-at-home orders and beyond using the "Bigger than a Building" concept; and reporting on the productive use Illinois libraries made from CARES Act funding (see below).

Beyond advocacy with the Illinois General Assembly, ILA crafted a two-pronged approach to advocating for library workers' eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine, at a time of scarcity after its initial approval by the FDA. First, we reached out to the Illinois Department of Public Health for public librarians to be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1b or Phase 1c at the latest, noting that decisions about the extent to which libraries are open to in-person public services are being made on a local level, and the localities will need to know that decisions they make are in keeping with state guidance. Second, we created a template letter for library directors to use to follow up with their own county departments of public health, where most of these decisions were being made. By late February, 13 counties had included library staff as eligible in Phase 1b or 1c; by mid-April, vaccine availability and had eligibility opened up in all 102 counties.

On the Federal Level

Library funding, both for COVID-19 relief and for regular appropriations, continued as the top federal advocacy issue this year. Following four relief bills the prior year including the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which included \$50 million for libraries via IMLS and established the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law on March 10, 2021. ARPA included unprecedented levels of funding for numerous sectors, including libraries, through various channels. ALA and ILA worked hard to identify and clarify opportunities for libraries. In Illinois, these programs included \$4.7 million in IMLS funds made available via the Illinois State Library and \$15 million nationwide available by application directly to IMLS; \$1 million from the National Endowment for the Humanities made available via the Illinois Humanities Council; \$933,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts made available through the Illinois Arts Council Agency and \$80 million nationwide available by direct application to NEA; \$7.17 billion nationally from the FCC for the Emergency Connectivity Fund; and \$350 billion to state and local governments, for which libraries needed to work with their municipality to access.

Once again, ALA and its state chapters, including ILA, engaged in a campaign to secure "Dear Appropriator" letters in support of full funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Act (IAL) grant program in the Department of Education. For FY2022, we asked congressional appropriators to include funding of at least \$206 million for LSTA and \$50 million for IAL. President Biden's initial budget included \$265 million for IMLS, including \$197 million for LSTA; and \$28 million for IAL. Subsequently, the House Appropriations Committee approved an increase of \$9 million for LSTA and a \$3 million increase for IAL. In Illinois, both Senators signed both letters. Representatives Casten, Danny K. Davis, Schneider, Foster, and Bustos signed both letters; Rush, Kelly, Krishnamoorthi, Newman, and LaHood signed the IAL letter; and Schakowsky signed the LSTA letter. As of the writing of this report, a 2022 budget resolution has passed the House and the Senate, and negotiations over the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package are in progress.

In addition to COVID-19 relief funding and regular appropriations, ALA spearheaded a campaign for a proposed \$5 billion Build America's Libraries Act as part of the Biden administration's and 117th Congress's focus on infrastructure. Negotiations over the infrastructure package and the budget resolution continue. In Illinois, Senator Durbin and Representatives Kelly, Newman, Garcia, Casten, Danny K. Davis, Krishnamoorthi, Schakowsky, Schneider, Foster, and Bustos cosponsored BALA.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

ILA put on our first virtual Annual Conference on October 20-22, 2020. Nearly 1,000 people attended, including exhibitors. While the way we met changed, what didn't change was the array of high-quality topics and content typical of an ILA conference.

Over three afternoons, programs, exhibits, and online networking opportunities focused on the conference's theme: "Many Libraries, One State: We Are ILA." Conference Co-Chairs Darnetta Bolton and Sarah Sagmoen led a Conference Program Committee that not only was responsible for assembling a strong array of speakers, but also considering what the programming would look like in the virtual environment. Opening General Session speaker Eric Klinenberg, author of *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (Crown, 2018); President's Program speakers LaShawnda Crowe Storm, a community based artist and organizer and Phyllis Viola Boyd, an artist and urban strategist; set the tone. Rounding out programming, Jon E. Cawthorne, President of ACRL, spoke at the IACRL President's Program and James A. Bowey, a Chicago-based documentary artist, was the DiversiTEA featured speaker, along with more than 50 other sessions, all available to conference registrants via recording for one year following the conference.



ILA continuing education also continued virtually, including the second Director's University—a collaborative project of ILA, IHLS, RAILS, and the Illinois State Library. Conducted weekly online from June through September, this series featured its typical educational lineup of sessions covering public library budgeting and finance, human resources, policies, and records retention, and more.



ILA presented Reaching Forward South and Reaching Forward both online on April 16 and May 7, respectively, branded as "Reaching Forward Illinois." Both were accessible to registrants for one low, combined price of \$50; popular programs included "RA for All: Think Like a Reader," "Understanding Challenges to Library Materials and How to Respond," and "Weeding Without Tears."



The Library Trustee Forum converted its traditional in-person Springfield and Oak Brook workshops to a series of three online workshops in March, April, and May 2021: "One Year On: Where Is Your Library and How Can You Prepare for a Post-COVID World?," "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: What Library Trustees Need to Know," and "Boot Camp for Trustees."



Mark Puente, Associate Dean for Organizational Development, Diversity, and Inclusion at Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies presented the workshop "Conscious Actions for Inclusion" for the Elevate Library Leaders event. Elevate is a project of ILA, IHLS, RAILS, and the Illinois State Library designed for librarians at any level to develop their leadership skills.



The "Noon Network," a series of midday micro-learning webinars on various topics designed to help achieve professional development goals, launched in April 2020 and continued in 2020-21. Webinars are held at noon on Mondays and Wednesdays for 20 to 30 minutes followed by a question-and-answer session; topics included "Intellectual Freedom in an Age of Political Polarization: A Conversation with Emily Knox and Nadine Strossen," "Librarianship Specializations: Beyond 'Traditional' Library Careers," and "Sacred Ground: A Conversation with Timuel Black."



The Marketing Forum's annual Mini-Conference has become a highly popular and successful event. After postponement in 2020 it was held in April 2021 and was titled "Impact and Influence," and featured Adam Harris, head of communications and storytelling for the Arlington Heights School District 25; Anna Popp, consultant for the Massachusetts Library System; and Katharine Uhrich, social media manager for the Field Museum.



The Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL) Forum began a new series of online events known as "Spark: Connect and Get Fired Up," designed to foster sharing and connection among academic librarians. Three have been held to date, in addition to a series of online town halls. Recordings of all IACRL webinars are available on the Forum's page on the ILA website.

REALIZING 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; the iREAD® summer reading program enables 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, primarily from corporations that require a 501(c)3 for their philanthropy. Our long-term investments help ensure the Association's continuity; although the portfolio is managed conservatively, we do typically see investment returns, which were particularly strong in 2020–21.



iREAD marked its 40th year in 2021 with the theme, "Reading Colors Your World." Committee chair Alexandra Annen led an effort that included art by a fantastic array of illustrators including Yuyi Morales, Oliver Jeffers, Zach Lehner, and Hervé Tullet. The U.S. Department of Defense continues to purchase iREAD resources and incentives

for military libraries worldwide; and the 2021 program was implemented in states well beyond Illinois' borders, including statewide adoptions in Alaska, California, Iowa, Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington, and individual libraries in more than 25 states.

Contributions to the association also continue to increase, most notably through the Illinois Library Luminaries program, which supports the ILA Endowment and saw three new inductees in 2020–21, Janice M. Del Negro, James R. Johnston, and Patricia Jarog. Contributed income also helps build ILA's array of restricted funds, which primarily support awards and scholarships, including the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund, the Diversity Scholarship Fund, the Intellectual Freedom Fund, the Legal Defense Fund, the Valerie J. Wilford Memorial Fund, and the Robert R. McClarren Fund. For the second year, the ILA Executive Board itself voted to transfer \$10,000 from ILA's net asset balance into the Diversity Scholarship Fund, to enable it to support initiatives broader than its traditional role in the Sylvia Murphy Williams Scholar program.

There is no doubt that the Association's fiscal profile is different than before the pandemic necessitated changes, particularly to our business model for continuing education and events. We have striven to offer valuable programming for a reasonable cost; and have added a great deal at no cost. We can afford to do this, temporarily, thanks to the strong financial position that has been deliberately constructed over the years. One of the brightest spots among a difficult time is our membership, which has remained strong through the second year of the pandemic; ILA ended the fiscal year at 99% of our budget for dues. Our purpose for existing is our members, and we would not be here without you.

Fiscal Report (Year Ended June 30, 2021)

Revenue

General Operations	\$ 33,514
Membership	\$ 280,764
Conference	\$ 122,138
iRead	\$ 2,306,667
Publications	\$ 38,261
Public Policy	\$ 2,000
Awards	\$ 5,130
Endowment Contributions	\$ 8,852
Workshops	\$ 25,084
Reaching Forward	\$ 45,100
Donor Restricted Funds Contributions	\$ 3,140
Total Revenue	\$ 2,870,650

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

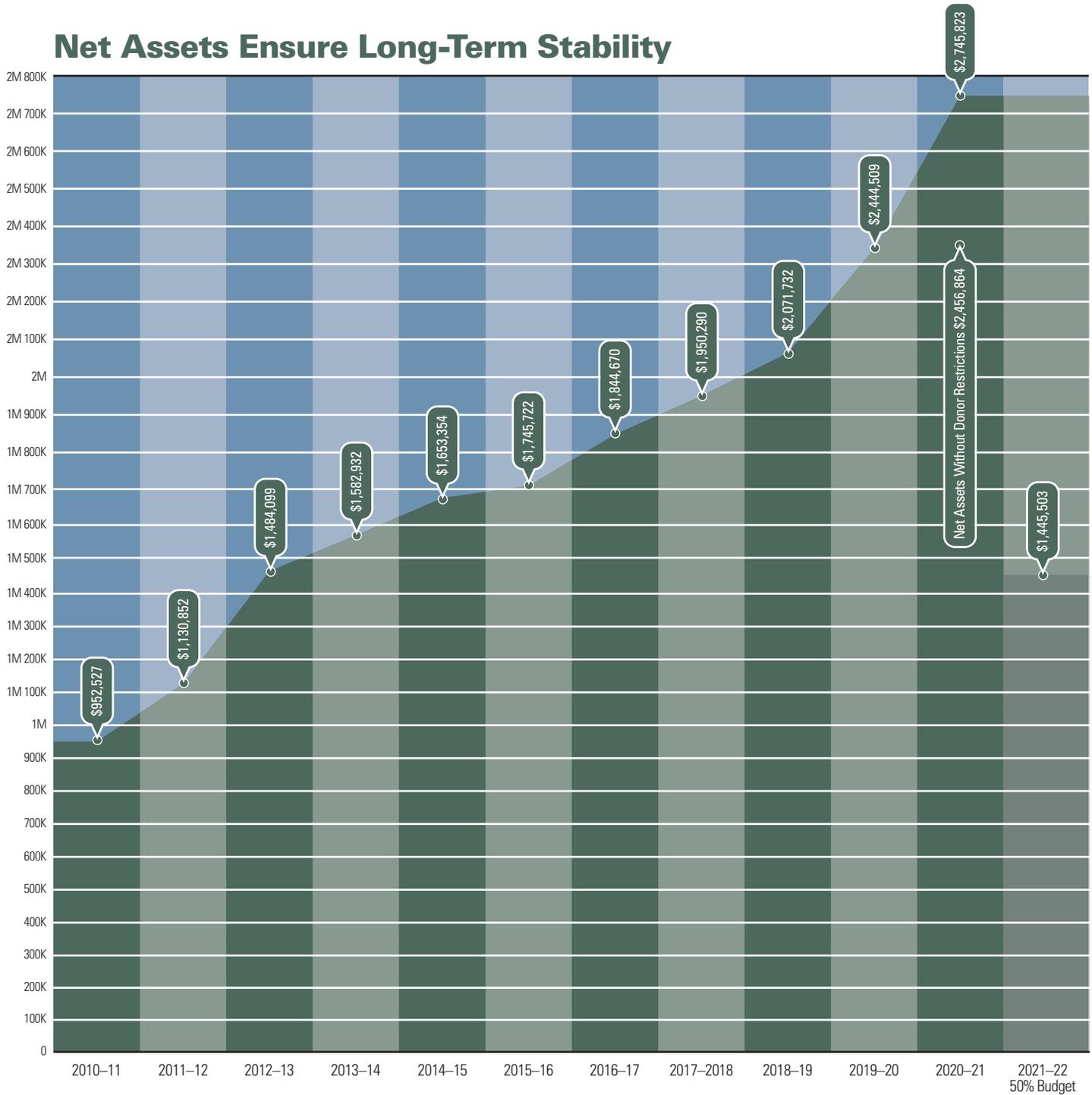
General Operations	\$ 302,778
Membership	\$ 149,971
Conference	\$ 160,965
iRead	\$ 1,979,206
Publications	\$ 30,611
Public Policy	\$ 157,720
Awards	\$ 23,710
Workshops/Projects	\$ 41,461
Forums & Committees	\$ 6,457
Reaching Forward	\$ 29,812
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,882,691

Operating Net	\$ -12,041
Other Revenue: Gain on Long-term Investments	\$ 319,494
Other Expenses: Amortization, Depreciation	\$ 6,139
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 301,314
Net Assets at end of FY 2020	\$ 2,444,509
Net Assets at end of FY 2021	\$ 2,745,823

Net Assets Comprise:

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 2,456,864
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$ 288,959
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atkinson Memorial Award: \$1,330 • Robert R. McClarren Award Fund for Legislative Development: \$8,911 • Legal Defense Fund: \$995 • OCLC Users Group: \$25,266 • Valerie Wilford Fund: \$16,632 • Diversity Scholarship: \$3,535 • Diversity Scholarship (Board Designated): \$10,000 • Intellectual Freedom Fund: \$1,480 • Endowment Fund: \$200,437 • Unappropriated Endowment Fund Earnings: \$30,373 	
Total Net Assets at End of FY 2021	\$ 2,745,823

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 20-plus years, with the goal of producing an annual budget surplus that will build up a reserve fund of net assets without donor restrictions 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, \$2,456,864 are without donor restrictions. The expense budget for 2021–22 totals \$2,891,006; 50% is \$1,445,503.

2020–2021	\$	301,314
2019–2020	\$	372,777
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
Grand Total	\$	2,745,823

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Tamara Jenkins, Communication and Engagement Manager

Tina Koleva, Membership and Product Services Manager

Cynthia M. Robinson, Deputy Director



Diane Foote

Diane Foote
Illinois Library Association
33 W. Grand Ave., Ste. 401
Chicago, IL 60654-6799
phone: 312-644-1896
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– Tina Hubert, Six Mile Public Library

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