



Illinois Library Association Annual Report 2023–2024

Dear Illinois Library Community,

As I reflect on my year as president, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible achievements and unwavering dedication of our library community. Our Annual Conference in Springfield was a resounding success, featuring inspiring speakers like Dr. Emily Knox and Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. Additionally, our Reaching Forward North and South events saw record turnouts, highlighting our collective commitment to professional development and community engagement.

One of our most significant accomplishments this year has been the rollout and implementation of Public Act 103-0100, a groundbreaking law designed to prevent book bans and promote education, literary justice, and equity. This legislation marks a pivotal moment for our schools and libraries, encouraging us to embrace a future where access to diverse literature is safeguarded for all.

We also celebrated the introduction of a new statewide database package through the State Library, which will collectively save our libraries millions of dollars every single year. This initiative underscores our commitment to resource sharing and financial stewardship, ensuring that our libraries can continue to offer invaluable services to their communities.

In response to the challenges posed by political polarization, censorship campaigns, viral disinformation, and threats to public servants, we launched the More Than a Building campaign. This initiative provides libraries with the tools and support they need to remain resilient and strong during difficult times. As this campaign continues to grow, it will become an essential resource for libraries navigating these complex issues.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the future of the Illinois Library Association. With the recent adoption of our new Strategic Plan and the forthcoming update to the *Serving Our Public: Standards for Public Libraries*, I am confident that our organization will continue to be a pillar of strength for the entire library community.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire ILA Board, the dedicated volunteers who serve on our committees and forums, and, of course, to Cyndi and her amazing staff. Your hard work and passion have been the driving force behind our successes.

As we move forward, let us carry this spirit of gratitude and optimism, knowing that together, we can overcome any challenge and continue to champion the vital role of libraries in our society.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" and last name "Johnson" clearly distinguishable.

Ryan Johnson, Director, O'Fallon Public Library
ILA President, 2023–2024

2019–2024 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.

Strategic Progress

2023-24 is the fifth and final governance year for ILA's strategic plan, which was developed in 2018-19 and approved in April 2019. Originally intended to be a three-year plan in effect from 2019-20 through 2021-22, it was extended for one year by Executive Board vote in September 2021, to run through 2022-23. The Executive Board voted in November 2022 that the plan be extended for an additional year with an updated plan in 2024. On May 16, 2024, the ILA Executive Board voted to approve the association's strategic plan for 2024-2029.

This assessment will be the final report on the progress toward the association's 2019-24 strategic priorities since the prior (2023) report:

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

- Continuing "Courageous Conversations" and "Otter Tech Code of Conduct Enforcement Workshops" training for Executive Board members and staff.
- Heath Umbreit presented "Trans Identities: Myths & Misinformation" to the Executive Board at the January 2024 meeting.
- The Diversity Committee Initiated a mentorship program to lay a solid professional foundation for the mentees to grow, learn, and thrive in the field of librarianship in Illinois.

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

- Awarded \$3,000 in travel stipends for two Illinois librarians from underrepresented populations to attend their first national conferences.
- Published article "Making Decisions Centered Around EDI" by Cindy Khatri & Van McGary, Downers Grove Public Library, in the December 2023 *ILA Reporter*.
- Published article "Stephen Jackson: A DiversiTEA Recap" by the ILA Diversity Committee in the March 2024 *ILA Reporter*.

Strategic Priority: Legislative Advocacy

- The first in-person Legislative Meetups since February 2020 were held in November and December, giving us the opportunity to get our legislation in front of legislators before the 2024 session began.

- HB 4224 was introduced to lower the treasurer bond percentage from 50% to 10–25% of total revenue collections from the previous fiscal year and signed into law by the Governor.

Strategic Priority: Community Advocacy

- The Advocacy Committee presented "Ready, Set, Advocate" programs at the ILA Annual Conference, AISLE Conference, and Reaching Forward North.
- When Illinois libraries faced a series of bomb threats in the autumn of 2023, ILA developed More Than a Building, a project to support library workers, trustees, and the community. More Than a Building was made possible by support from Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias and the Illinois State Library.

Strategic Priority: Leadership

- The 2023 Annual Conference was held in Springfield, with more than 91% of attendees saying they were happy or very happy with the conference overall.
- Illinois School Library Workers Symposium is a one-day online event designed for individuals who are working in school libraries with no formal library education, certified or not-certified, paraprofessionals, and those considering getting a school library endorsement. The event is a joint project of the Association of Illinois School Library Educators, Illinois Library Association, Illinois Heartland Library System, Illinois State Library, and Reaching Across Illinois Library System.

- The eighth Director's University (DU) was held in August 2023 and a third session of Directors University 2.0 (DU 2.0) was held in April 2024. DU is intended for first-time directors and directors new to Illinois from public libraries of all shapes and sizes. DU 2.0 dives deeper into topics that were touched on in the prior sessions.

Strategic Priority: Delivery of Member Value

- iREAD® 2024 "Read, Renew, Repeat" has wrapped up with great success, which has had more than 1,300 libraries in 41 states participate and also had purchases from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. In addition to Illinois, the 2024 iREAD campaign was adopted by ten states – Alaska, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington.
- The ILA Executive Board endorsed the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) statement on Appropriate Staffing for School Libraries. AASL states that in addition to qualified school library professionals, highly trained technical and clerical support staff are essential for all school libraries at every grade level.
- Reaching Forward South has been confirmed as an ILA committee. From now on, the Reaching Forward events will be known as Reaching Forward South and Reaching Forward North.
- The Human Resources and Administration Forum is the newest ILA Forum, representing the interests of those who are human resources professionals and/or administrative professionals in all types of libraries.

ILA'S Advocacy Efforts

In Illinois

The Illinois General Assembly passed and Governor Pritzker recently signed into law over \$75 million in Fiscal Year 2025 library funding. Library grants and other formulaic revenue streams upon which we rely are again contained within the state's spending package, which became effective on July 1. The Illinois Library Association thanks Illinois legislators for recognizing the importance of these dollars to our state's libraries.

Contained within one of the omnibus budget bills this session is ILA's House Bill 4224. The bill was introduced to lower the treasurer bond percentage from 50% to 10-25% of total revenue collections from the previous fiscal year and was signed into law by Governor Pritzker.

On the Federal Level

The American Library Association (ALA) submitted comments to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees calling for IMLS/LSTA funding of \$232 million and IAL funding of \$50 million. This followed on the heels of the "Dear Appropriator" letters and the work of library advocates during the in-person "Fly-In" events in March. Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth both signed the LSTA and IAL letters; eight Representatives signed the letter in favor of IMLS/LSTA and five signed the letter in favor of IAL.

Veronica De Fazio, Deputy Director of Peoria Public Library and Past ILA President, represented Illinois at ALA's "Fly-in Day." This is a day when librarians from across the country visit their legislators on Capitol Hill with the same goals in mind. Veronica was invited to attend as a constituent of Representative Darin LaHood's district.



Conferences and Events



ILA's Annual Conference returned to Springfield for the first time since 2014. Held at the BOS Center, the conference attracted 632 attendees and 158 exhibitor representatives. The theme – Connect, Cultivate, Collaborate – focused on finding our commonalities while working and growing together, and still acknowledging and respecting our differences. Conference Co-Chairs Amber Creger and Eric Edwards led a committee that built a strong array of speakers: Dr. Emily J.M. Knox, Keynote Speaker; Illustrator Jason Chin, Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast; Fobazi Ettarh, IACRL Luncheon; Stephen Jackson, DiversiTEA; and De'Amon Harges, President's Program.



The eighth Directors' University (DU) was held in August 2023. Due to demand, a third Directors' University 2.0 (DU 2.0) session was held in April 2024 at Starved Rock. The Directors' University events are collaborative projects of ILA, IHLS, RAILS, and the Illinois State Library and are intended to give new directors — and now, with DU 2.0, seasoned directors — the information and connections with colleagues they need to succeed.



The Reaching Forward South (RFS) Conference was held Friday, April 19, 2024 at the DoubleTree Collinsville. The conference was a success with 252 attendees – a record high attendance.



The Reaching Forward North (RFN) Conference held Friday, May 10, 2024 at the Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, was successful. The variety of exhibitors and program topics contributed to an attendance of 899!



Once again, the Library Trustee Forum has presented its series of spring workshops online, which has enabled greater attendance from trustees all over the states. Topics covered included "Inclusive Placemaking: Understanding the Power of an Accessible Library for All" by Zachary Benedict, MKM architecture + design; "Illinois Library Trustees: What's the Job and What I Wish I Had Known?" by Amanda Standerfer, Fast Forward Libraries; and "Director Searches & Evaluations: Tips & Tricks from Two Veterans" by Jim Deiters and Alex Todd, Deiters & Todd Library Consulting.



The "Noon Network," a series of midday micro-learning webinars on various topics designed to help achieve professional development goals, continued for its third year. Webinars are held at noon on Mondays and Wednesdays for 20 to 30 minutes followed by a question-and-answer session. Topics included "Making Decisions Centered Around EDI" and "The Great North American Solar Eclipse."

"ILA enjoys a diverse array of revenue sources, making the association unique among state chapters of ALA."

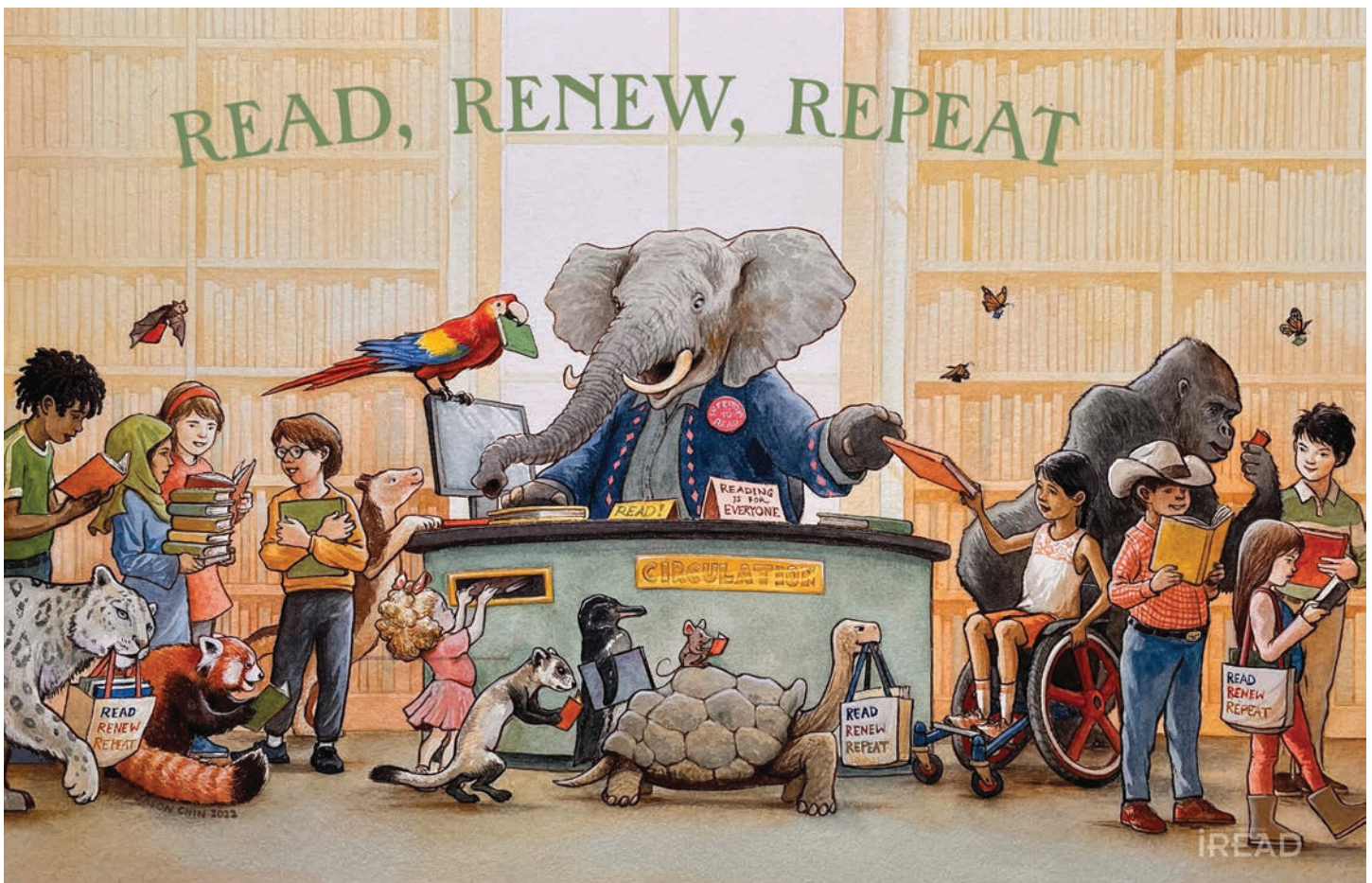
Realizing Revenue

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 monetary donations, primarily from corporations that require a 501(c)3 for their philanthropy. More than 40 libraries in Central and Southern Illinois received \$2,000 each from Ameren's Love Your Library program by utilizing the Fund for Illinois Libraries. Our long-term investments help ensure the Association's continuity; although the portfolio is managed conservatively, we do historically see investment growth over the long term.

More than 1,300 libraries in 41 states, plus all Department of Defense base libraries worldwide, and libraries in Australia and New Zealand participated in iREAD® in 2024, themed "Read, Renew, Repeat." Conservation as a movement focuses on protecting species from extinction, maintaining and restoring habitats, enhancing ecosystem services, and protecting biological diversity. iREAD® 2024: "Read, Renew, Repeat" made for a wonderfully diversified summer reading program that encouraged reading as a restorative method of self-improvement and self-preservation.

Begun in 1981 as an Illinois-only partnership among youth services librarians in the state, iREAD® has grown to include formal or partial statewide adoptions well beyond our borders, including Alaska, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington. This year we also welcomed a consortium from Alberta, Canada to our partnership family.

Contributions to the association also continue to increase, most notably through the Illinois Library Luminaries program, which supports the ILA Endowment and saw two new inductees in 2023-2024: Dr. Emily J.M. Knox and Ellen Popit. 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.



Fiscal Report (Year Ended June 30, 2024)

Revenue

General Operations	\$172,664
Membership	\$296,021
Conference	\$362,500
iREAD	\$2,422,529
Publications	\$44,615
Public Policy	\$2,000
Awards	\$12,100
Endowment Contributions	\$10,020
Workshops/Projects	\$133,335
Reaching Forward	\$162,679
Donor Restricted Funds Contributions	\$32,596
Total Revenue	\$3,651,059

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

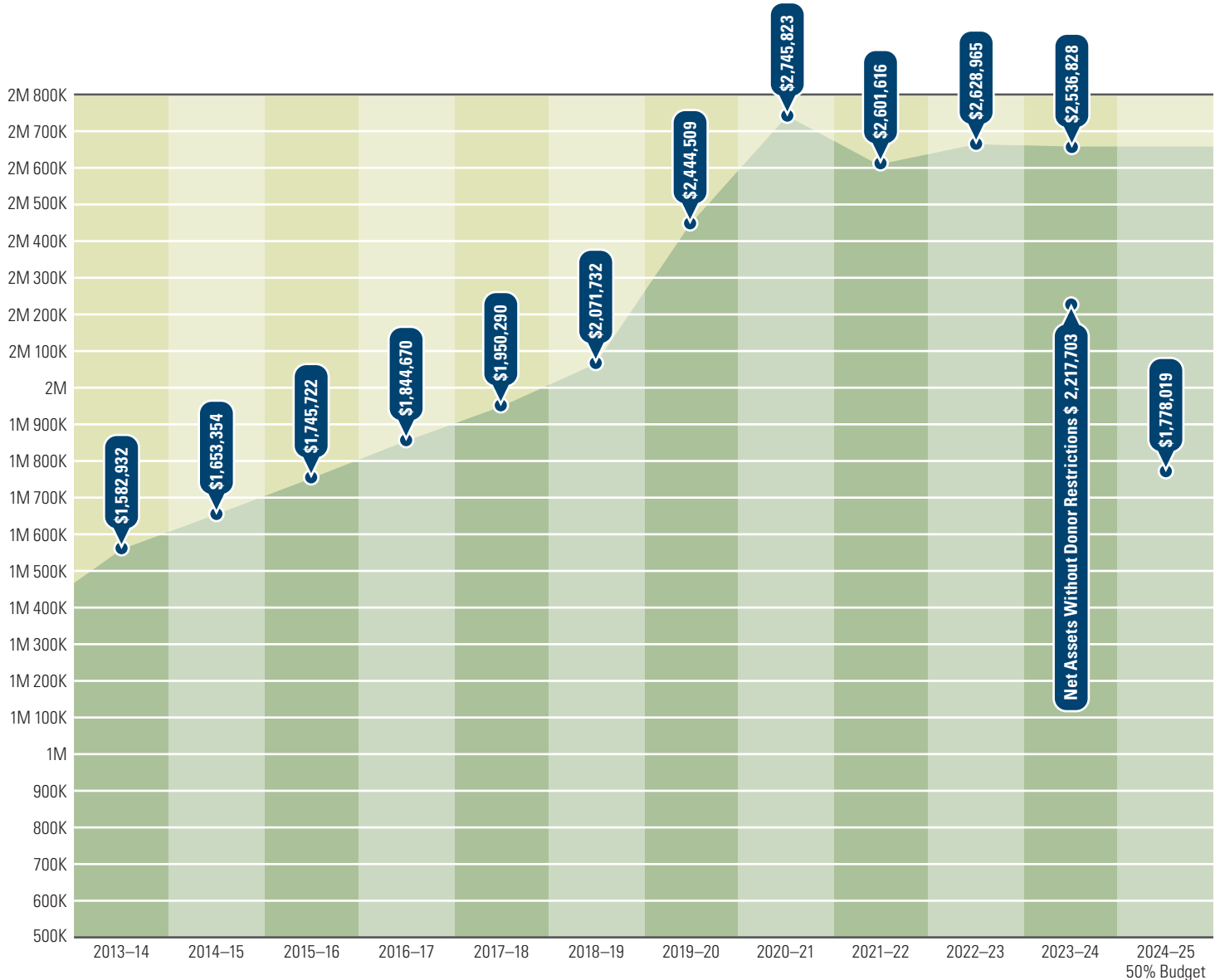
General Operations	\$319,218
Membership	\$206,345
Conference	\$320,741
iREAD	\$2,293,896
Publications	\$51,958
Public Policy	\$178,787
Awards	\$32,479
Workshops/Projects	\$178,778
Forums & Committees	\$9,441
Reaching Forward	\$141,533
Total Operating Expenses	\$3,733,176

Operating Net	-\$92,137
Other Revenue: Gain on Long-term Investments	\$156,815
Other Expenses: Amortization, Depreciation	-\$13,507
Increase in Net Assets	-\$92,137
Net Assets at end of FY 2023	\$2,628,965
Net Assets at end of FY 2024	\$2,536,828

Net Assets Comprise:

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$2,217,703
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$319,125
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atkinson Memorial Award: \$35 • Robert R. McClarren Award Fund for Legislative Development: \$8,548 • Legal Defense Fund: \$1,205 • OCLC Users Group: \$25,266 • Valerie Wilford Fund: \$14,070 • Diversity Scholarship: \$1,871 • Diversity Scholarship (Board Designated): \$0 • Intellectual Freedom Fund: \$1,118 • Endowment Fund: \$223,742 • Unappropriated Endowment Fund Earnings: \$38,270 	
Total Net Assets at End of FY 2023	\$2,536,828

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, \$2,536,828 are without donor restrictions. The expense budget for 2023-24 totals \$3,733,176; 50% is \$1,866,588.

2023-2024	-\$93,137
2022-2023	\$27,350
2021-2022	-\$144,209
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	\$2,535,827

Thank You to Our Donors



Help light the way forward for libraries in Illinois! The Illuminate initiative is designed to encourage individual giving with universal recognition of all gifts of \$5 or more, and additional honors for increasing levels of cumulative lifetime support. Contributions to ANY fund or purpose at ILA count toward Illuminate recognition.

SPARK

We thank all donors who sparked change with a gift during the 2023–2024 fiscal year (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024).

Jeanne Aken
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Susan E. Anderson
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Laura L. Barnes
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Nina M. Wunderlich

IGNITE

We thank donors who ignited possibilities with cumulative gifts of at least \$1,000 in their lifetime.

Bradley Baker
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James Jarog
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Megan Millen
Sharon Reese
Cynthia M. Robinson
Carol Steffensmeier

ENERGIZE

We thank donors who energized Illinois librarianship with cumulative gifts of at least \$1,500 in their lifetime.

Gail Bush
Margaret Cousin
Margaret Danhof
James Farrell
Kate Marek
Pattie Piotrowski



INSPIRE

We thank all donors who inspired the profession with cumulative gifts of at least \$2,500 during their lifetime or via estate plans.

Betsy Adamowski
Robert P. Doyle
Carol Johnston
John Shales
Amanda E. Standerfer
Peggy Sullivan
Myung Sung
Alex C. Todd
Sharon Wilford

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ILA/iREAD Operations Director

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Conference and Continuing Education Manager



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