

# YOU BELONG HERE

Illinois Library Association  
Annual Conference 2025 **Oct 14-16**

Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, Illinois

For full conference information and to register online: [ila.org/conference](https://ila.org/conference)  
#ILAAC25

On behalf of the Conference Program Committee and the ILA staff, we're pleased to welcome you to Rosemont in October for the 2025 ILA Annual Conference. From October 14–16, we'll be gathering at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center for three days of education, connection, and celebration of all the wonderful things Illinois libraries have to offer.

This year's theme, **You Belong Here**, celebrates libraries as a place of welcoming and acceptance for all. We're excited to explore how libraries foster belonging within their spaces; how they build strong relationships with diverse communities and address their unique needs; how library workers hold space for each other within the profession; and lastly, discuss just how important belonging is to the implementation of successful diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility efforts within libraries.

A key facet to belonging is creating and developing a feeling of connection, which is why we feel our annual conference is so important. In the face of so much uncertainty, now more than ever, we need to come together as a profession, as colleagues, and as friends to celebrate the work we do and the reasons we do it.

In addition to the programs and poster sessions, our speaker lineup is phenomenal, and continues to touch on the various themes of belonging. Our Opening General Session on October 14 will feature Terrell Strayhorn, Ph.D., whose research and work are directly tied into belonging.

The President's Program on October 15 will feature Sherman "Dilla" Thomas, Chicago historian. Winner of numerous accolades and awards, Dilla started by giving walking tours of Chicago's Black neighborhoods, and has now gained widespread recognition for his videos celebrating Chicago's unique history, and is considered one of the city's premiere historians.

On October 16, DiversiTEA will feature rapper, educator, author, and librarian Roy Kinsey, the founder of Rapbrary, a library dedicated to the preservation of rap and hip-hop as literary art forms.

Academic, school, and special librarians—we look forward to having a wealth of sessions for you, as well as a chance for you to connect with colleagues from across the state. And trustees, as always, you'll have a day dedicated to resources just for you, as thanks for all of the hard work you do for our libraries.

Your full conference registration includes access to the keynotes, all educational programming, and the two day exhibits featuring library vendors, poster sessions, and complimentary lunches and snacks. We also hope that you'll enjoy giving back as we support Anew: Building Beyond Violence and Abuse which offers services for victims of domestic abuse as our community projects recipients. We look forward to seeing you in Rosemont this fall!

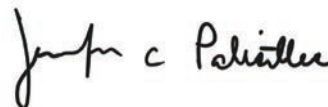
And be sure to mark your calendars for the 2026 ILA Annual Conference, October 6-8, 2026 in Peoria, IL.



Carolyn Ciesla



Nanette Donohue



Jennifer Paliatka

# Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors

## Leadership Partners



## Platinum Sponsors



## Gold Sponsors



## Silver Sponsors



# 2025 ILA Annual Conference Program Committee

**Carolyn Ciesla**, ILA President  
Elmhurst University

**Nanette Donohue**, Co-Chair  
Champaign Public Library

**Jen Paliatka**, Co-Chair  
Elmhurst University

**Grace Allbaugh**  
Illinois State University

**Darnetta Bolton**  
Orland Park Public Library

**Michelle Boule-Smith**  
North Central College

**Samantha Chiappone**  
Algonquin Area Public Library District

**Maria Fonseca-Gonzalez**  
NoveList

**Gwen Gregory**  
Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Joe Marcantonio**  
Winfield Public Library

**Georgia Pichinos-Anderson**  
Niles-Maine District Library

**Camille Rose**  
Kankakee Public Library

**Alanna Sablotny**  
Chatham Area Public Library District

**Devin Scott**  
Salem Township Public Library District

**Rhiannon Shoults**  
Normal Public Library

**Laura Van Cleve**  
Richton Park Public Library District

# Featured Speakers



## Dr. Terrell Strayhorn TBS Opening General Session Tuesday, October 14

During the Opening General Session on October 14, respected thought-leader Dr. Terrell Strayhorn will take the stage. He is one of the most prolific and influential scholars in the fields of education, psychology, and the academic study of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB).

He is President and CEO of Do Good Work Consulting Group, a minority-owned business that partners with hundreds of colleges, universities, corporations, and agencies each year to enhance culture, build inclusive environments, and boost belonging in ways that raise morale, increase retention, improve people's journey, and help organizations hit their bottom line. He's co-host of the podcast *Do Good Work* on Spotify and a contributing writer for *Entrepreneur*, *Thrive Global*, *AllBusiness*, and *Psychology Today*.

Strayhorn is Professor of Education and Psychology, Director of Research in the Center for the Study of HBCUs, and Principal Investigator of The Belonging Lab at Virginia Union University, where he also serves as Associate Provost for Faculty Development.

The Opening General Session is made possible by the generous support of Today's Business Solutions (TBS).



## Dilla President's Program Wednesday, October 15

ILA President, Carolyn Ciesla, is excited to welcome Chicago historian Sherman Thomas—affectionately known as Dilla—to be the President's Program speaker. A fascinating blend of modern historian, cultural worker, and content creator, Dilla is passionate about and well-versed in Chicago's history, architecture, and overall culture. He brings the city to life through captivating storytelling and insider knowledge. Featured in Chicago Emmy award-winning programming, this self-taught historian was awarded the City of Chicago's Tourism Ambassador of the Year by Choose Chicago. The Chicago Public Library has awarded Dilla the prestigious 21st Century Award for his recent achievements in promoting Chicago to the world.

Through his social media account, Dilla has made over 400 videos highlighting the stories of Chicago, with more than 20 million views. He has amassed a following of over 300,000 followers across all platforms and has been featured in all manner of Chicago media.

He has also appeared nationally on *The Today Show* and *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, and has been written about in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and several international publications. Dilla has presented Chicago history lessons and lectures to institutions such as the University of Chicago, LaSalle University (PA), Northwestern University, Roosevelt University, and several Chicago Community Colleges network partners. Dilla is a proud lifelong resident of Chicago's South Side. He lives by the saying that "everything dope about America comes from Chicago."

The President's Program is made possible by the generous support of Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS).





## Wendy Xu

**Youth Services Forum Breakfast  
Wednesday, October 15**

Wendy Xu is a bestselling, award-nominated Brooklyn-based illustrator and comics artist. She is the creator of *Infinity Particle*, *Tidesong*, and co-creator of *Mooncakes*, a young adult fantasy graphic novel. Her work has been featured in various places on the internet including Catapult, Barnes & Noble Sci-fi/Fantasy, and Tor.com. She loves obsessing over the perfect line, making matcha lattes, and art history.

Wendy Xu's appearance is presented by the Youth Services Forum and made possible by the generous support of iREAD.



## April Anderson-Zorn

**IACRL Luncheon  
Wednesday, October 15**

April K. Anderson-Zorn is an associate professor and University Archivist at Illinois State University. Anderson-Zorn holds an MA in History from the University of Central Florida, an MLIS from Florida State University, maintains a Digital Archives Specialist certificate through the Society of American Archivists, and is a certified archivist through the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Anderson-Zorn is active in SAA and the Midwest Archives Conference, advocating mental health awareness and representation for archives professionals. Additionally, her research focuses on women's history in the library and archives professions and explores unique outreach initiatives for hard-to-access repositories.

Hosted by the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL).



## Roy Kinsey

**DiversiTEA Closing Session  
Thursday, October 16**

Roy Kinsey is a Chicago-based rapper, librarian, and the founder of Rapbrary, an innovative platform dedicated to preserving hip-hop as a literary art form while advocating for literacy, banned books, and marginalized voices in literature. As both an artist and an educator, Roy seamlessly weaves storytelling, identity, and cultural preservation into his work, making him a powerful voice at the intersection of hip-hop and literature.

A 2025 recipient of the Arts & Public Life Residency at the University of Chicago, Roy has been featured in *Billboard*, *The New York Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, WBEZ, and NPR, among others. His album *Blackie: A Story by Roy Kinsey* was named one of the best albums of 2018 by the *Chicago Tribune* and continues to resonate as a defining piece of his catalog.

Hosted by the ILA Diversity Committee.

# Program Schedule at a Glance

## Monday, October 13

7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	RAILS Data Conference
-----------------------	-----------------------

## Tuesday, October 14

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Help Desk Open
9:00 – 10:30 A.M.	TBS Opening General Session featuring Dr. Terrell Strayhorn
10:45 – 11:45 A.M.	Program Session 1
NOON – 1:15 P.M.	Awards Luncheon
1:30 – 2:30 P.M.	Program Session 2
2:45 – 3:45 P.M.	Program Session 3
4:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Program Session 4

## Wednesday, October 15

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Help Desk Open
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Youth Services Forum Breakfast featuring Wendy Xu
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Unconferences
9:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Program Session 5
10:30 A.M. – NOON	ILA Membership Meeting & President's Program featuring Dilla
NOON – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
NOON – 1:30 P.M.	Exhibits Opening Lunch
12:15 – 1:30 P.M.	IACRL Luncheon featuring April Anderson-Zorn
1:45 – 2:45 P.M.	Program Session 6
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 7
4:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Snack Break

## Thursday, October 16

8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Help Desk Open
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Unconferences
8:30 – 9:00 A.M.	Trustee Breakfast
9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
9:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Program Session 8
10:00 – 11:00 A.M.	Exhibits Coffee Break
11:00 A.M. – NOON	Program Session 9
NOON – 1:30 P.M.	Exhibits Closing Lunch
12:15 – 1:30 P.M.	Trustee Luncheon
1:45 – 2:45 P.M.	DiversiTEA Closing Session featuring Roy Kinsey
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 10



# Conference Highlights

For a complete list and full descriptions of conference programs and events, visit [ila.org/conference](https://ila.org/conference).

## Awards Ceremony & Luncheon

Tuesday, October 14, Noon – 1:15 P.M.

Join us to celebrate our colleagues and friends within the Illinois library community. As we do each year, we will honor and recognize the best in libraries throughout the state. Tickets for the Awards Luncheon can be purchased when you register. **Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event. If you do not register for this event, you are responsible for your own lunch on Tuesday.**



The Awards Ceremony & Luncheon is made possible by the generous support of LIRA.



## DiversiTEA Closing Session

Thursday, October 16, 1:45 – 2:45 P.M.

The DiversiTEA Closing Session, hosted by the ILA Diversity Committee, will be on the big stage and open to all conference attendees. This Annual Conference event showcases experts within and outside the library sector who share their insights, expertise, and exemplary approaches to foster a more diverse and inclusive world.

This year ILA welcomes Roy Kinsey, a Chicago-based rapper, librarian, and the founder of Rapbrary and his keynote: “From Banned to Boundless: Literacy, Hip-Hop, and the Power of Knowing Thyself.”

## IACRL Luncheon

Wednesday, October 15, 12:15 – 1:30 P.M.

Join your academic library colleagues for a luncheon with April Anderson-Zorn. April K. Anderson-Zorn is an associate professor and University Archivist at Illinois State University. She holds advanced degrees in history and library science, along with certifications in digital and professional archiving. Active in professional organizations like SAA and MAC, her work advocates for mental health awareness in the field and focuses on women’s history and innovative outreach for hard-to-access archives. See “Featured Speakers” for more information about April.

**Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event.**

## ILA Membership Meeting & President’s Program

Wednesday, October 15, 10:30 A.M. – Noon

Learn more about what happened in your association in the past year and what we’re looking forward to in the coming year. Non-members are invited to attend the Membership Meeting.

Immediately following the ILA Membership Meeting, Carolyn Ciesla will welcome Dilla, Chicago’s historian as the 2025 President’s Program. Winner of numerous accolades and awards, Dilla started by giving walking tours of Chicago’s Black neighborhoods, and has now gained widespread recognition for his videos celebrating Chicago’s unique history, and is considered one of the city’s premiere historians. See “Featured Speakers” for more information about Dilla.

## Libraries Count: RAILS Data Conference

Monday, October 13, 7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Join us for the first ever Libraries Count: RAILS Data Conference. We’re planning a full day of hands-on data workshops that cover analysis, visualization, storytelling, and more—all tailored specifically for libraries. There will also be time to network and connect! Library workers of all positions, types, and levels are invited to register.

**Registration is required.**

## Trustee Day

Thursday, October 16, 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

A full day of conference programming is planned for Illinois library trustees. Enjoy breakfast and lunch with fellow trustees from around the state. Hosted by the ILA Library Trustees Forum. **Trustee Day registration is required in order to attend meal events.**

## Unconferences

In these participant-driven sessions, attendees will share ideas, network, and discuss relevant issues or topics they are confronting in their daily work with their peers. Facilitators will recommend topics but participants are encouraged to contribute suggestions. Unconferences are hosted by ILA forums.

## Youth Services Forum Breakfast

Wednesday, October 15, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Brooklyn-based illustrator and comics artist, Wendy Xu, will be the keynote speaker at the ILA Youth Services Forum Breakfast on October 15. She is the creator of *Infinity Particle*, *Tidesong*, and co-creator of *Mooncakes*, a young adult fantasy graphic novel. Her work has been featured on *The Today Show*, and Book Riot. Xu is a 2026 iREAD featured artist for the theme “Plant A Seed, Read.” See “Featured Speakers” for more information about Wendy. **Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event.**

# Conference Information

## Accessibility

ILA wants to make your conference experience pleasant and accessible.

- All conference hotels offer accessible sleeping rooms on request.
- ADA service animals are welcome throughout the conference.
- Complimentary ASL interpreters are available by request.\*
- Complimentary mobility scooters are available by request.\*
- A Mothers' Room will be available in the convention center.
- A quiet room will be available for attendees who need a break from conference activity.

\*Requests for scooters and ASL interpreters must be received by September 10. Contact Kristin Pekoll at [kpekoll@ila.org](mailto:kpekoll@ila.org) to submit your request.

## Dietary Accommodations

When registering for a meal event, you must indicate if you require dietary accommodations, e.g. gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, allergy. We cannot accommodate dietary restrictions given on-site. Please review the menu before registering. We do our best to choose a menu that provides options for attendees with common dietary restrictions but if you have specific dietary restrictions that cannot be accommodated by the menu, you're welcome to bring your own meal.

## Visit the Exhibit Hall

### Exhibits Hours:

Wednesday, October 15	NOON – 5:00 P.M.
Thursday, October 16	9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

The following free events will be held in the exhibit hall:

### Wednesday, October 15

Exhibits Opening Lunch	NOON – 1:30 P.M.
Exhibits Afternoon Snack Break	4:00 – 5:00 P.M.

### Thursday, October 16

Exhibits Morning Coffee Break	10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Exhibits Closing Buffet Lunch	NOON – 1:30 P.M.

Exhibits are not open on Tuesday, October 14.

## Exhibits-Only Pass

One-day, Exhibits-Only passes are available for \$100 Early Bird or \$125 Standard. Exhibits-Only passes do not include attendance to conference programming. **Passes must be purchased online in advance and will not be available for purchase on site.**

## Hotels

Visit [ila.org/conference](http://ila.org/conference) for reservation information on conference hotels.

Room blocks have been reserved for Monday, October 13 to Thursday, October 16, 2025. Reservations must be made by September 22, 2025. Once all rooms in the blocks have been reserved, ILA is not able to add more so we recommend you reserve your rooms as early as possible.

### Doubletree O'Hare - Rosemont

800-756-5505  
5460 North River Road  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
Parking: \$31 Daily with in/out privileges  
Rates: \$185–205

### Embassy Suites by Hilton O'Hare -Rosemont

800-315-1061  
5500 North River Road  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
Parking: \$36 Daily with in/out privileges  
Rates: \$195–215 (Breakfast is included in the rate, along with the evening reception: two free drinks and light snacks)

## Mobile App

Attendees are able to access full event schedules, rate sessions, view exhibitor profiles, customize their own agendas, and much more in the ILA conference mobile app. The PheedLoop mobile app is made possible by the generous support of Today's Business Solutions (TBS).



## Professional Headshot Studio

Complimentary head shots are available at the conference. An online signup will be available in late September and photos will be shared with attendees within two weeks of the conference.

## Statement of Appropriate Conduct

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) holds many events throughout the year to enable its members to receive continuing education, build professional networks, advocate for legislation, and discover new products and services for professional use. To provide all participants—members and other attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff, and volunteers—the opportunity to benefit from these events, ILA is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, religion, or other individual or group identity.

For more information and to review the Statement of Appropriate Conduct visit [ila.org/conference](http://ila.org/conference).

## WiFi Access

The Convention Center offers complimentary WiFi through their Boingo WiFi network. Attendees can sign in for free, 45-minute sessions throughout the day. We thank our generous sponsor, Outsource IT Solutions Group, for their support in keeping the conference connected!





# Get Involved

## Support ILA – Donate to our Silent Auction!

The ILA Fundraising Committee is gearing up for an upcoming Silent Auction Fundraiser at the ILA Annual Conference 2025 in Rosemont, IL, and we need your help to make it a success!

Do you create handmade crafts, jewelry, or art? Do you want to show off your local community, or have a unique item to share? We're seeking donated items, services, or gift cards to include in our silent auction with a special interest in items that align with the conference theme: **You Belong Here**, or are bookish, literary, or library-themed. All proceeds go to ILA continuing education, events, awards, and grants that benefit the Illinois library community.

### Some ideas for donation:

- Handmade art or crafts, jewelry, candles, bath works or skin care
- Gift baskets or themed bundles
- Local delicacies and beverages
- National gift cards
- Books, collectibles, or specialty items

To donate, visit: [www.ila.org/conference](http://www.ila.org/conference) — Support ILA at Annual Conference

## Submit a Poster Session

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) Conference Program Committee invites applications for poster sessions at the 2025 ILA Annual Conference at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois. Poster sessions will be held in the exhibit hall on Wednesday, October 15, and Thursday, October 16.

Submissions are solicited from all types of libraries and on any topic relevant to librarianship, and may include a description of an innovative library program, an analysis of a solution to a problem, a report of a research study, or any other presentation that would benefit the larger library community. Applications are due by Friday, July 25, 2025.

## Conference Committee 2026

Interested in being a part of the team that brings all the magic of the annual conference together? Submit an Interest Form for the ILA Conference Program Committee, 2026.

## Sponsor/Exhibitor

Becoming an Illinois Library Association Annual Conference sponsor or exhibitor represents an extraordinary opportunity to complement your marketing plan while supporting Illinois libraries. Sponsorship and exhibits enable ILA to deliver high-quality professional development and networking to Illinois library workers and trustees. Contact Kristin Pekoll, [kpekoll@ila.org](mailto:kpekoll@ila.org) with questions, or visit [ila.org/conference](http://ila.org/conference).

Sponsorship benefits will include two complimentary registrations at the Gold level and one complimentary registration at the Silver level. Leadership partners and Platinum sponsors that also exhibit will receive the six complimentary registrations included in the exhibits contract.



**Donate to the  
ILA Silent Auction**



## CRAFTERS & ARTISTS

**YOU BELONG  
HERE**

Illinois Library Association  
Annual Conference 2025 **Oct 14-16**

# Registration Rates & Deadlines

Your full conference registration includes access to all sessions, the exhibit hall, and networking. Register online at [www.ila.org/conference](http://www.ila.org/conference). Questions? Email [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org)

Full Conference	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
ILA Member*	\$350	\$400
Non-Member	\$450	\$500
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed ILA Member**	\$215	\$265
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed Non-Member**	\$290	\$340

SINGLE DAY	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
ILA Member*	\$275	\$325
Non-Member	\$350	\$400
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed ILA Member**	\$190	\$240
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed Non-Member**	\$240	\$290

TRUSTEE	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
Trustee Day ILA Member*	\$300	\$350
Trustee Day Non-Member	\$375	\$425
Trustee Day + Full Conference ILA Member*	\$375	\$425
Trustee Day + Full Conference Non-Member	\$475	\$525

OTHER	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
Single Day Exhibit Only (Exhibits Lunch is included. 1200–1:30 P.M.)	\$100	\$125
Award Luncheon	\$75	\$85
Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast	\$50	\$60
IACRL Luncheon	\$60	\$70
RAILS Data Conference	\$100	\$110

**July 1 – July 15:** Speaker registration  
(with 20% discount)

**July 21 – September 15:** Early Bird registration

**September 16 – October 1:** Standard registration

**All registrations close October 1, 2025.**

**No registrations will be available on-site.**

\* Attendees can register at the ILA Member rate if they have either a Personal Membership or work or serve as a Trustee at a library that has an Institutional Membership. If you are not sure of your membership or member status, please email [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org).

\*\* These registrant types apply to full-time students, retired librarians, or currently unemployed librarians. If you do not fall into these categories and you register at this rate, you will be billed for the appropriate level of registration and will not be allowed to fully register for the conference until the correct registration rate is paid in full.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** All cancellations/refund requests must be received in writing by October 1, 2025. This includes refunds for conference registration, meals, and special events. No telephone cancellations/refund requests can be accepted. No refunds after October 1, 2025. All cancellations are subject to a \$30 processing fee.



Illinois Library Association

560 W. Washington Blvd. Suite 330  
Chicago, IL 60661  
Phone: 312-644-1896  
Email: [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org)  
[www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)



@ILLibraryAssoc



@IllLibraryAssoc



illibraryassociation



@illibraryassoc.bsky.social