

# REACHING FORWARD / NORTH

**ILA** Illinois Library Association

**Thursday, May 1, 2025**

Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont

REACHING FORWARD NORTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF:

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**Esther Curry**  
 ILA Board Liaison  
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## Badges

Conference badges must be worn at all times to gain admission to programs and exhibits.

## Lanyards

Before you leave, be sure to stop by the Help Desk to recycle your lanyard. We'll reuse them for future conferences and prevent them from ending up in a landfill.

## Coffee

Morning Coffee, sponsored by RAILS, will be available from 8:00 to 9:30 A.M.



## Exhibit Hours

8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

## Handouts

Handouts are available on the PheedLoop conference website if speakers have made them available. You can browse through the sessions or search for specific sessions in the search field. If handouts are available, they will be linked underneath the session's description.

## Hashtag

#ILARF2025

## Lost and Found

Articles may be turned in and reclaimed at the Help Desk.

## Lunch

A plated lunch, sponsored by Today's Business Solutions (TBS) and the Illinois State Treasurer's Office, will be served in the ballroom. The luncheon menu is available at [www.ila.org/RF](http://www.ila.org/RF).



## Mothers' Room

A Mothers' Room is located between the North Ballroom restrooms, near the exhibit hall.

## Quiet Room

Need to take a break? Room 55 will give you a place to relax and refresh. Materials generously supplied by the Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District.



## WiFi

The Convention Center offers complimentary WiFi through their Boingo WiFi network, and you sign in for free, 45-minute sessions. You can sign in for repeating free sessions throughout the day.

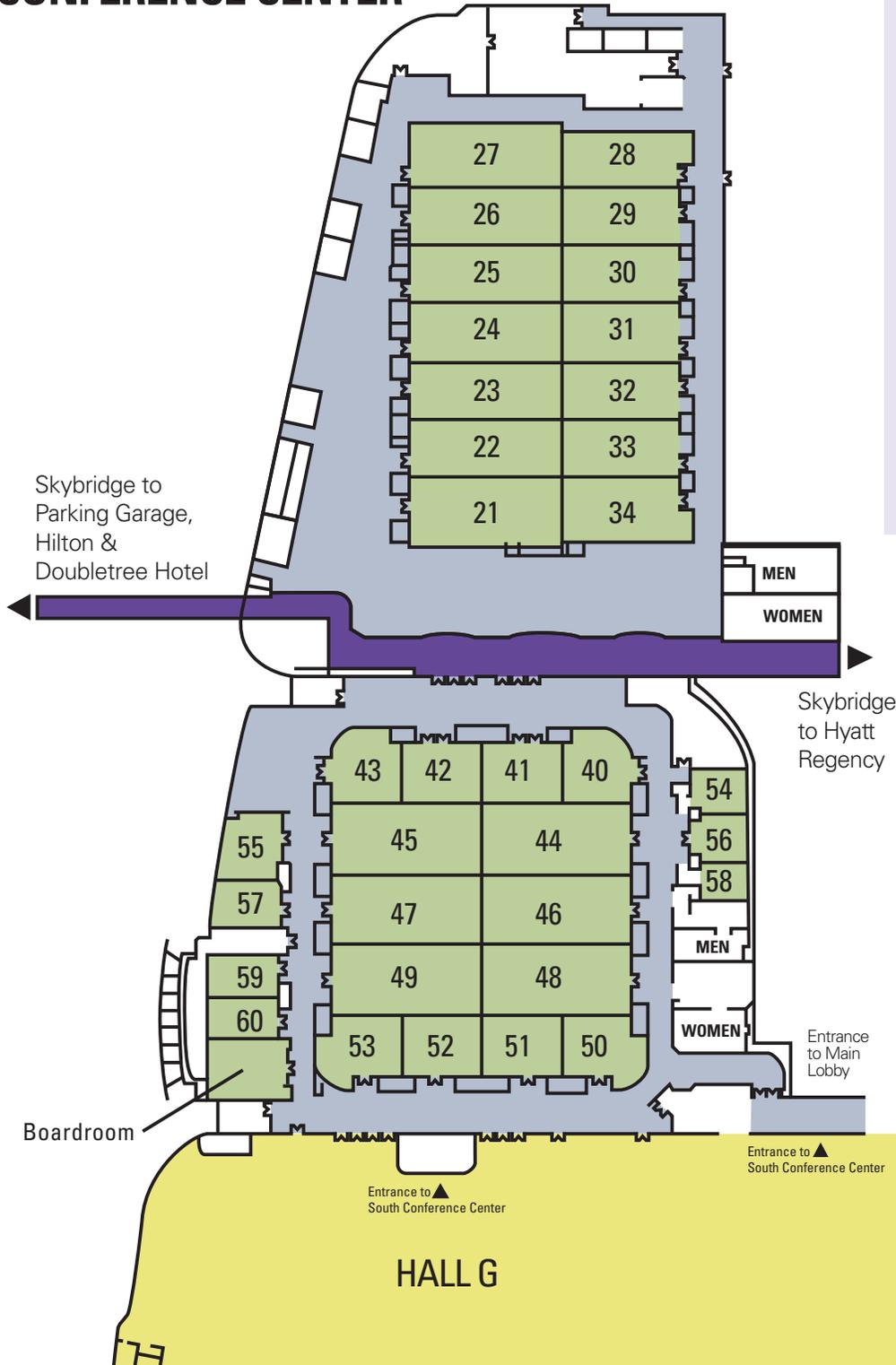
# Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 A.M.	Morning Coffee, Exhibits, and Networking
9:15 – 10:15 A.M.	Breakout Session 1
10:30 – 11:30 A.M.	Breakout Session 2
11:45 A.M. – 12:45 P.M.	Luncheon and Awards Presentation
12:45 – 1:15 P.M.	Exhibits Break
1:15 – 2:15 P.M.	Breakout Session 3
2:30 – 3:30 P.M.	Breakout Session 4

# Floorplan

**LEVEL 2**

## CONFERENCE CENTER



## Congratulations to Our 2025 Award Winners

*Oberman and Rich  
Reaching Forward  
Conference Grant*

**Kate Kresek**  
Indian Prairie Public Library

*Robert P. Doyle  
ILA Conference Grant  
for Support Staff*

**Annamarie Magnelli**  
Eisenhower Public Library District

# Program Schedule

9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

## ***Library Explorers: Field Trips as Adult Programming***

Field trips were a blast when we were kids, right? Well, guess what? They can be just as thrilling for grown-ups! Discover how the Wood Dale Public Library put together some awesome field trips, like visits to Downtown Chicago and nearby museums. You'll get the scoop on how to plan, fund, and promote library field trips to boost your adult programming while staying within your budget.

**Speakers:** Najera Miljevic, Wood Dale Public Library; Christopher Renkosiak, Wood Dale Public Library; Sandy Sanchez, Wood Dale Public Library

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Graphic Novels for Kids/Teens (but Were Afraid to Ask)***

How do you respond when you overhear a parent tell their child graphic novels aren't real books? Can you tell the difference between a graphic novel, a comic, and a manga? What do you do when the only NovelList+ suggestions for a child's favorite graphic novel are for non-illustrated books? Are your graphic novel RA skills up to par? If you've ever struggled with any of these issues then this session is for you!

**Speaker:** Rachel Stine, Antioch Public Library District

**Location:** Room 22

## ***Dynamic Displays: Making Your Space Fun and Informative***

Do you ever find yourself looking at your library displays, yearning for something more? Something better? They can be! This session will teach you how to use your library's resources to create interesting, dynamic displays that engage your patrons' minds as much as they visually improve your space. Learn how to source ideas and craft engaging imagery; curate and display diverse, inclusive, modern collections lists; work with staff throughout the library using clear and inclusive language and documentation; evaluate the efficacy of your displays using quantitative analysis and hard data; and use your display space as a way to get patrons into your programs and materials into their hands.

**Speakers:** Mallory Caise, Lisle Library District; Karalyn Collazo, Lisle Library District; Joann Sheahan, Lisle Library District

**Location:** Room 24

## ***Creating a Making Place: Pathways to a Makerspace***

Curious about launching a makerspace but aren't sure where to start? Join us for an inspiring session where three innovative librarians share their different paths of using maker programs and tools to create makerspaces for their communities.

**Speakers:** Angelica Bibbs, Geneva Public Library District; Christine Edison, Sugar Grove Public Library; Donna MacCartney, Vernon Area Public Library District

**Location:** Room 25

## ***Unusual Storytimes: Beyond the Basics***

Have you ever felt bored or even constrained by your storytime programming? Storytimes are a staple and tradition for any Youth Services Department, but that doesn't mean there's only one way to do them. Join us as we discuss some of our thoughts on storytimes and adjacent programming. We'll share some of our unique ideas, successes we've had, challenges we've faced, and future plans. Our hope is to broaden your minds on what constitutes a storytime and what storytime elements can be part of other types of programming.

**Speakers:** Cristina Bueno, Skokie Public Library; Tom Malinowski, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District

**Location:** Room 28

## ***4-Day Work Week: Attainable or Inconceivable***

As organizations worldwide explore innovative work structures, the 4-day work week has emerged as a compelling alternative to traditional models. This session will showcase the multifaceted experiences of our library and how we have adopted this model, highlighting both successes and challenges. By examining research, talking through perspectives, and making a game plan, we aim to provide valuable insights for leaders considering this transition.

**Speakers:** Sue Eckhardt, Midlothian Public Library; Sarah Marshall, Midlothian Public Library; Vanessa Parrilla, Midlothian Public Library

**Location:** Room 29

## ***Crafting for All: Inclusive Creative Experiences in Libraries***

This workshop aims to equip library professionals with tools and strategies to create inclusive crafting programs that cater to individuals of all ages and abilities. As libraries evolve into community hubs, fostering creativity and collaboration through crafting can enhance patron engagement and inclusivity.

**Speakers:** Jez Layman, Elmhurst Public Library; Elizabeth Lugo, South Holland Public Library; Daniela Martinez, Maywood Public Library District; Nancy McKay, Byron Public Library District; Hayley Rightnowar, Elmhurst Public Library; Wendy Roe-Chapman, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library; Marissa Theilgaard, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 31

## ***Discovering Engaging Training Opportunities for Library Staff***

Finding the best training for library staff involves a mix of research, creativity, and understanding the specific needs of your team. Start by identifying the core skills and areas for improvement within your library—whether it's customer service, technology integration, cataloging, or leadership development. Then, explore a variety of resources: Professional Organizations: Many library associations offer specialized training programs, webinars, and workshops designed for library staff at all levels. Online Courses: Platforms like Niche Academy, LinkedIn Learning, and edX provide flexible, self-paced courses on a wide range of library-related topics. Peer Networks: Connecting with other libraries and professionals through conferences, online forums, or local meetups can yield valuable recommendations for effective training. In-house Workshops: Tailor training to your library's specific needs by hosting workshops led by experienced trainers or internal staff with expertise in certain areas. Vendor Training: If your library uses specialized software or systems, check with vendors for official training sessions or resources to ensure optimal use of those tools. Lastly, consider blending different formats—such as in-person workshops, virtual learning, and hands-on practice—to keep the training dynamic, engaging, and applicable to real-world library challenges.

**Speakers:** Diana Rusch, Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS); Margae Schmidt, Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

**Location:** Room 33

## ***Performers' Showcase***

The Reaching Forward North Performers' Showcase is designed to introduce the work of performers to library staff who book outside performers for library events throughout the year.

**Location:** Room 26

9:15 – 10:15 A.M. Youth Showcase

- The Art of Hula
- GlamBat Make-up Masterclass
- Little Miss Ann
- TAP: The Art Project

# Program Schedule

10:30 – 11:30 A.M.

## ***The Stacks Social Club: Expanding Social Opportunities for Young Adults with Disabilities at Your Library***

More public libraries need to create programs dedicated to young adults with autism and other disabilities, and all they need is a willingness to open the library doors wider! The Stacks Social Club offers autism- and disability-friendly events for teens and young adults. The session will: 1. Describe the Stacks Social Club mission and vision and share the Evergreen Park Public Library's origin story 2. Explain how to identify Stacks Social Club community stakeholders 3. Discuss educating staff on how to serve patrons with autism and other disabilities 4. Describe how to recruit Stacks Social Club volunteers 5. Share marketing and promotion used to inform the community 6. Share Stacks Social Club programming on a budget 7. Share outcomes: describe how the Evergreen Park Public Library Stacks Social Club improves the quality of life for patrons with disabilities by creating social opportunities.

**Speaker:** Mary Black, Evergreen Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Same, Same, Different: Infuse Anti-Bias Work into Storytimes and Youth Programs***

We all want our library storytime and program participants to feel seen, safe, and included. You probably already select picture books and music with diverse representation. But did you know there are many additional easy, evidence-based ways to structure your programs to champion belonging/inclusion, all while supporting positive social, racial, and cultural identity development, and reducing bias and stereotype formation? In this interactive, hands-on session, presenters will model strategies they use to meet these goals. Based on the work of early childhood experts Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards, presenters will share how the anti-bias framework can be applied to programs through play, active representation, highlighting self-other overlap, individuating multiple people of various races, and narrating the idea that diversity is a strength.

**Speakers:** Sally Battle, Mount Prospect Public Library; Sydney Stensland, Mount Prospect Public Library

**Location:** Room 22

## ***Dive In! Discover the Pool of Print, Website, and Mobile App Resources for Literacy/English Language Development (ELD) Assistance***

This session will provide insight into dealing with limited English-speaking adults and their families who struggle with learning the language and understanding the nuances of American culture. Materials will be showcased in areas including citizenship, visual dictionaries, families, grammar, jobs, language, life skills, reading, and stories.

**Speaker:** Jean Demas, Lisle Library District

**Location:** Room 24

## ***Changing Roles Within the Public Library***

Many people work in public libraries with the intention of getting their foot in the door or working their way up to different roles within the library. Cultural expectations are shifting to allow more movement than decades ago, and HR managers now also rethink perceptions of job hopping. Transitioning to a different role in the library is inevitable for many of us. Whether you are thinking about transitioning to a different role in your current company or to a different library, explore how to make yourself a strong candidate by hearing from a diverse panel with varied educational and work backgrounds. Our panelists collectively bring an array of experience spanning technical services, youth services, teen services, adult readers' services, adult reference services, circulation, management, digital design, and makerspace. See what strategies you can apply to find your niche.

**Speakers:** Guadalupe Colin, Palatine Library District; Amy Dittmeier, Des Plaines Public Library; Ariana Haze, Des Plaines Public Library; Annie Li, Des Plaines Public Library; Parish Turner, Bensenville Community Public Library

**Location:** Room 25

## ***Becoming a Library Advocate for Frontline Staff***

Do you work in a library? Do you live in a community that has a library? Do you go to a school that has a library? Then you are a library advocate! Learn what that means and how you can build your advocacy platform using the ILA Ready, Set, Advocate Toolkit.

**Speaker:** Tim Prendergast, Hodgkins Public Library District

**Location:** Room 28

## ***Level Up Your Career: Pro-Tips on Cover Letters, Resumes, and References***

Take advantage of this opportunity to rethink your approach to the next application package. Facilitators will share best practices from experience on both sides of the recruiting table. Improve your skills when communicating your narrative, crafting a focused resume, and selecting ideal references. Through presentation and audience participation, these seasoned speakers will provide guidance on how best to showcase your talents when seeking the next step in your career. This session will include a hands-on review of sample documents, perhaps a few laughs, and plenty of time for questions.

**Speakers:** Anthony Andros, Orland Park Public Library; Jim Deiters, Joliet Public Library

**Location:** Room 29

## ***Unique Programs and Services for Your Makerspace***

The staff of the Launch Pad makerspace at Indian Trails Library share some of their unique makerspace programs and services such as Maker@Home craft subscription boxes, Maker-in-Residence program, Maker Challenge program, social maker programs, and cultural maker programs. Learn how to create these or other unique programs and services for your library's makerspace.

**Speakers:** Heidi Estrada, Indian Trails Public Library District; Michelle Flitman, Indian Trails Public Library District; Liz Poppenhouse, Indian Trails Public Library District; Morgan Sedano, Indian Trails Public Library District

**Location:** Room 31

## ***A Seed Library for Every Library***

Have you wanted a seed library at your library but don't know how to start? This session will offer guidance on different ways to offer seeds to your patrons including seed packaging, display options, seed sources, circulation guidelines, and educational resources. You can also catalog your seed library so that your seeds are searchable, holdable, and able to be checked out like books.

**Speaker:** Stephanie Girardi, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District

**Location:** Room 33

## ***Performers' Showcase***

The Reaching Forward North Performers' Showcase is designed to introduce the work of performers to library staff who book outside performers for library events throughout the year.

**Location:** Room 26

10:30 – 11:30 A.M. Adult Showcase

- Todd Hunt Nostalgia Programs
- Saddle Shoe Sisters
- Strictly Self Defense
- Laughs at the Library

# Program Schedule

1:15 – 2:15 P.M.

## ***Maximizing Makerspaces: Empowering Makers and Upcycling Materials***

Makerspaces often juggle identifying community interest, demystifying equipment, and empowering users to take on new skills. This session outlines how we upcycled our unpopular materials, incentivized our community to dive into new equipment, and created instructional binders for everyday use with the start of our passport activity program.

**Speaker:** Selicia Applegate, Palatine Public Library

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Flipping the Script on Summer Reading Logbooks: Creating an Inclusive Experience for All Readers***

Are you struggling to reach young readers who complete your Summer Reading Program? Are you tired of the tried-and-true method? Come learn about a new way to have readers complete your Summer Reading Program! In 2022, Genoa Public Library made the switch from using logbooks that required kids to read 12 hours before getting turned in for a prize, to a 30-day logbook that encouraged reading every day, with the parent/guardian determining for their own children what an appropriate amount of reading is. Switching logbooks has allowed for more participants to complete the summer reading program, proven to be more inclusive of children and adults struggling with reading, and helped parents keep track of their child's reading more easily. Our session will go over library data and patron accounts and show how you too can make the flip to a more inclusive Summer Reading Program.

**Speakers:** Jennifer Barton, Genoa Public Library District; Alyssa Hanchar, Franklin Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 22

## ***Tween & Teen Engagement: Passive and Active Programs***

Let's talk tween and teen engagement! Explore a wide range of ways to engage them from book displays and designated spaces to maker carts and structured programs. Whether it's a passive DIY project or a Robot Olympics program, what and how you set up programs can be scaled for interest levels and form connections with your target audience. We will present our approach to tween and teen programming engagement and facilitate group discussions.

**Speakers:** Kerry Bailey, Arlington Heights Memorial Library; Nicole Brennan, Arlington Heights Memorial Library

**Location:** Room 24

## ***Using NovelList in Your Everyday Work with Readers***

You work with readers in a variety of ways every day, and NovelList is here to help. In this session, new and veteran users of NovelList will learn about beyond-the-homepage features and resources to easily match readers with their next favorite book, save time creating reading lists and book displays, quickly provide in-the-moment read-alikes, and more.

**Speaker:** Maria Fonseca-Gonzalez, NovelList

**Location:** Room 25

## ***Beyond the Book: Creative Ways to Transform Your Book Club Discussions***

Are your book club discussions lacking energy and feeling repetitive? Try these fun ideas to mix things up! 1. Theme Nights 2. Author Q&A Sessions 3. Character Dress-Up 4. Creative Food Pairings 5. Book-Related Activities 6. Genre Jumps 7. DIY Book Swaps 8. Guest Experts 9. Creative Meeting Locations 10. DIY Book Soundtracks

**Speaker:** Karrie Stewart, Algonquin Area Public Library District

**Location:** Room 28



### ***Community Impact: Identify, Adapt, Engage!***

This workshop will explore the importance of understanding community needs and how to adapt library outreach services to meet them effectively. We'll showcase three adult outreach programs at Geneva Public Library—Mobile Library, Story Share, and Volunteering—as case studies to illustrate effective service adaptation strategies. Participants will also receive practical guidance on implementing similar changes in their own outreach efforts to make a meaningful impact in their communities.

**Speakers:** Jordan McNamee, Geneva Public Library District; Lexy Rodriguez, Geneva Public Library District

**Location:** Room 29

### ***Managing the Library of Things: Effective Processing, Planning, and Circulation***

Rokus, guitars, and sleds, Oh My! Sandra and her team delve into the mysteries of circulating an extensive Library of Things. From choosing cases, totes, and designing labeling, to determining best practices for checking in returned items. They'll also discuss replacement costs, budgets for replenishables, and turnaround time from receiving new items to making them circulation ready.

**Speakers:** Kathleen Alberts, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District; Sandra Leyva, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District; Ariel Schultz, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District

**Location:** Room 31

### ***IMRF: Your Glass is Half Full***

The Glass Half Full presentation is for active IMRF members to help them better understand their benefits, including retirement, disability benefits, death benefits, and the Voluntary Additional Contribution plan. This presentation also explains how to qualify for a Tier 1 and Tier 2 pension, how the pension is calculated, and how enrollment is determined.

**Speaker:** Rebecca Alanis, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)

**Location:** Room 33

### ***Performers' Showcase***

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1:15 – 2:15 P.M. Youth Showcase

- Let's Celebrate Holi, India's Festival of Colors!
- Justin Roberts
- Red — A Crayon's ASL Story
- David Casas Magic

# Program Schedule

2:30 – 3:30 P.M.

## ***Take Care: A Practical Perspective on Workplace Resilience***

Ever since COVID, library staff have done an amazing job adapting to frequently-changing work environments while continuing to pour their heart and soul into their community. As a result, the terms “overwhelm” and “burnout” are being heard more often, which is why resilience is more important than ever! In this session, we will have an honest conversation about resilience, discuss ways to act on and think about self-care, dive into the importance of shifting your mindset, and, most importantly, provide tangible solutions that you can use right away! Your presenters have a combined 34 years in libraries with 14 of those being spent in Administration, so we have years of firsthand experience to prove the importance of resilience. Life is a marathon, not a sprint, so let’s go!

**Speakers:** Michelle Krooswyk, New Lenox Public Library District; Shalyn Rodriguez, New Lenox Public Library District

**Location:** Room 21

## ***In Pursuit of Professional Education***

Have you considered pursuing your MSLIS? If so, you are welcome to join this session to learn more about program expectations and admissions requirements. Discussion will include insights from currently-enrolled students.

**Speakers:** Rae-Anne Montague, Chicago State University; Emma Schmidt-Swartz, Dominican University

**Location:** Room 22

## ***The Benefits of Passport Services in Libraries***

Learn how the Glen Ellyn Public Library has expanded service to their community by offering Passport Acceptance services. Library employees and Passport Acceptance Agents from the Glen Ellyn Public Library will explain how offering Passport Services benefits not only the community, but the library itself. Sara, the library’s passport program facility manager, and Rosalind, a library passport acceptance agent, will detail what is required to be certified as a passport acceptance facility and agent, the services the Glen Ellyn Public Library provides related to passport services (such as application acceptance and photo services), and how we have expanded access and information with online booking options and programming related to our service.

**Speakers:** Rosalind Watkins, Glen Ellyn Public Library; Sara Youngs, Glen Ellyn Public Library

**Location:** Room 24

## ***Saying “Yes, And!” to Literacy and Inclusion: The Role of Improv Programming at the Library***

Improv is proven to help kids develop literacy skills, build communication strategies, and bolster confidence within a supportive environment. Improv programs are a natural fit for the library. In this session, we will explore how improv can increase literacy and language skills for kids of different ability levels, as well as discuss practical strategies for implementing youth improv programs at the library.

**Speaker:** Elizabeth Sanderson, Lincolnwood Public Library

**Location:** Room 25

## ***Networking for Career Success***

This session will cover the importance of networking groups, how to start a networking group, the benefits of participating, and best practices for running and participating in networking groups. Hear from several networking group conveners about how they run and plan meetings and conduct professional networking. Our panel will share how networking has benefitted them and their career. This will be a great opportunity for support staff to have leadership opportunities.

**Speakers:** Laura Brettholle, Old Town School of Folk Music; Colby Maddox, Old Town School of Folk Music; Todd Miller, Niles-Maine District Library; Stacy Palmisano, Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS); Jessica Silva, Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

**Location:** Room 28

## ***Adaptive Arcade at the Library: Video Games Are for Everyone***

Are you enthusiastic about video games and excited to share that passion with others? Do you feel committed to ensuring your patrons with disabilities can also experience the joy of connecting through video games? Learn how the Deerfield Public Library partnered with AbleGamers, a prominent gaming accessibility organization, to put on an Adaptive Arcade at the Library event. Gain an understanding of why gaming accessibility is so important and how organizations like this can work with public libraries to help bridge the divide. Discover some of the latest advancements in assistive technology, including adaptive video game controllers and 3D-printables you can use for library programming and even circulation. Leave with programming tips and tricks for seamlessly highlighting your library's collection, services, and resources, all while providing a safe and welcoming space for everyone to game.

**Speaker:** Vicki Karlovsky, Deerfield Public Library

**Location:** Room 29

## ***Ensuring Accessibility: An Introduction to ADA Title II Mandates for Public Libraries***

This session will provide a general overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II and its mandates for public libraries. Public libraries play a critical role in serving all members of the community and ensuring accessibility is a key component of equitable service. Specific content will address physical and web/digital accessibility, communications, and programs and services. The learning outcomes will include: understanding the basics of ADA Title II and how it applies to public libraries; learning about the specific requirements for physical and web accessibility, effective communication, and programs and services; identifying common barriers libraries face in meeting Title II standards and strategies and ideas for overcoming them; and discovering tools, guidelines, and resources available to libraries seeking to comply with ADA standards and regulations.

**Speaker:** Jen Ryjewski, Downers Grove Public Library

**Location:** Room 31

## ***Performers' Showcase***

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**Location:** Room 26

2:30 – 3:30 P.M. Adult Showcase

- Vintage Jazz Ensemble
- Michael Herzovi
- The Cosmic Romantics
- Folk Songs of Bengal

# Reaching Forward North 2025 Exhibitors

## Library Products, Services, and Professional Development

### American Library Association (ALA)

[www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)  
[mdowling@ala.org](mailto:mdowling@ala.org)

The ALA is the national association providing professional development opportunities for library staff to increase their knowledge and advance their careers. ALA's Library Support Staff Round Table (LSSRT) focuses on developing skills, networking opportunities, and supporting programming for staff on the front lines, in the back rooms, and everywhere in between.

### Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC)

[www.illinoisheartland.org/services/cmc](http://www.illinoisheartland.org/services/cmc)  
[emckinney@illinoisheartland.org](mailto:emckinney@illinoisheartland.org)

The Cataloging Maintenance Center provides statewide cataloging support for Illinois system-member libraries and consortia. Since 2001, the Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC) has made cataloging easier for Illinois libraries and consortia like yours through original and copy cataloging services, database cleanup, metadata and general consultation, and cataloging training. Ultimately, we improve the quality of public access catalogs and make library materials more discoverable and accessible to patrons—for free.

### College of DuPage

[www.cod.edu/lta](http://www.cod.edu/lta)  
[musacchioa@cod.edu](mailto:musacchioa@cod.edu)

The Library and Information Technology program at the College of DuPage provides fundamental and advanced education and practice that will enable you to enter the workforce as a library technical assistant. Students will learn about various library and information technology topics, including acquisition of materials, cataloging and classification, librarianship, library technology, public service, and reference and information. The program combines classroom lectures, hands-on exercises, and field trips. An active advisory committee of local librarians ensures that coursework reflects the needs of library employers in the area.

### Dominican University SOIS (Sponsor)

<https://sois.dom.edu>  
[sois@dom.edu](mailto:sois@dom.edu)

As one of the two American Library Association (ALA)-accredited Master of Library and Information Science programs in the Chicago area, we offer a distinct degree experience. Here, you'll earn an MLIS degree that upholds the core values of librarianship while giving you the skills you need to succeed in an ever-changing field.

### iLEAD Trustee Learning Portal (Sponsor)

[www.ileadtrustee.org](http://www.ileadtrustee.org)  
[ilead@illinoisheartland.org](mailto:ilead@illinoisheartland.org)

You're a public library trustee! Now what? The iLEAD Trustee Learning Portal is an interactive guide for the Illinois public library board member, covering legal and fiscal responsibility, strategic planning, policy building, trustee role and duties, and more. Choose your pace. Start and stop modules as you wish. Free for Illinois libraries.

### Illinois State Library

[info@ilsos.gov](mailto:info@ilsos.gov)  
[www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/home.html](http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/home.html)

Your knowledge Resource: Online, In-Person, Here for You! The Illinois State Library provides leadership in information access and supports essential and collaborative library and literacy services.

### Illinois State Treasurer's Office (Sponsor)

[www.illinoistreasurer.gov](http://www.illinoistreasurer.gov)  
[info@epay.com](mailto:info@epay.com)

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office provides treasury management services for local governments and agencies, like libraries, looking to conduct business safely and efficiently. The Illinois Funds is a \$20 billion local government investment pool servicing 1,500 local and state participants, ePAY offers competitively priced payment processing options. The office also offers free cybersecurity training and encryption technologies to our participants.

### iREAD (Sponsor)

[www.iREADprogram.org](http://www.iREADprogram.org)  
[iREAD@ila.org](mailto:iREAD@ila.org)

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



### **Joliet Junior College**

[www.jjc.edu/lta](http://www.jjc.edu/lta)  
[mroubal@jjc.edu](mailto:mroubal@jjc.edu)

The Library Technical Assistant Certificate Program at Joliet Junior College equips students with the skills needed for a career as an information paraprofessional in a library or related organization. Using cutting-edge technologies, along with tried-and-true techniques, as an LTA you will help unite people, data, books, and materials in this current exciting and constantly-changing information environment.

### **LACONI**

[www.laconi.net](http://www.laconi.net)  
[pturner@benlib.org](mailto:pturner@benlib.org)

The Library Administrators Council of Northern Illinois (LACONI) is an organization focused on providing continuing education and networking opportunities for library professionals at all levels. Through its programs, LACONI helps introduce new technologies, ideas, best practices, and trending topics relevant to both adult and children's library services.

### **Los Amigos Books**

<https://losamigosbooks.com>  
[lr.losamigosbooks@gmail.com](mailto:lr.losamigosbooks@gmail.com)

Los Amigos Books is a specialty bookstore that focuses on high quality Spanish-language books and bilingual books for readers of all ages, with a special focus on books for children and young adults. Laura Rodríguez-Romaní, the owner and curator of the collection, sources books from domestic and international publishers in Latin America and Spain. Los Amigos Books also places an emphasis on carrying books written by Latine and Hispanic authors that are linguistically and culturally relevant. Los Amigos Books aims to be a safe space for the community where bilingualism and multiculturalism are valued and celebrated through author visits, Spanish storytimes, and other cultural celebrations. The mission is to provide families, schools, libraries, and other institutions with these high-quality texts to support their linguistic and cultural program goals.

### **RAILS Reaching Across Illinois Library System**

[www.railslibraries.org](http://www.railslibraries.org)  
[communications@railslibraries.org](mailto:communications@railslibraries.org)

RAILS offers a wide variety of programs/services for all levels of library staff, including continuing education, networking opportunities, e-resources, discounts, and much more for more than 1,200 academic, public, school, and specialized library agencies in northern and west-central Illinois.

### **RMC Imaging/ST Imaging**

[www.stimaging.com](http://www.stimaging.com)  
[stviewscan57@gmail.com](mailto:stviewscan57@gmail.com)

Sales and service of the ST Viewscan 4 Digital Library Reader Printer.

### **TBS Today's Business Solutions**

[www.tbsit360.com](http://www.tbsit360.com)  
[jfarrell@tbsit360.com](mailto:jfarrell@tbsit360.com)

TBS—Today's Business Solutions—was established in 1991 as a software and hardware solutions provider specializing in the Public Library and Higher Education markets. TBS provides BookScan Stations, Print Management, MyPC Computer booking, and Web-Based Printing Portals as well as a full line of payment devices. Payment devices range from low-cost coin towers to combination systems of coin, bill, and debit cards to "networked" terminals connected to a centralized server. Payment devices control access and charge for such things as copies, printing, scanning, fax, laundry, vending, Point of Sale, PC time access, and door access. Our solutions can also integrate a Web-Base credit card gateway which will allow users to use their credit cards or debit cards (Master Card, Visa, American Express, etc.) for such purchases. Our solutions decrease your cost of operating your business while increasing your patron's overall satisfaction. In addition to being an equipment provider, TBS provides Sales Support, Technical Support, and can custom design support and implementation programs to meet any customer's requirements.

### **Wintrust Government Funds**

[www.wintrust.com/govfunds](http://www.wintrust.com/govfunds)  
[jboland@wintrust.com](mailto:jboland@wintrust.com)

You're an expert at managing the libraries that improve our quality of life and are a trusted source of information for people of all ages in our communities. Wintrust Government Funds is an expert in providing the financial services libraries and other local government entities require. We offer flexible financing structures, customizable treasury management solutions, investment options, and public sector specific accounts, including our MaxSafe™ Public Fund accounts which provide up to 16 times the typical FDIC insurance coverage of municipal deposits. Best of all, as a community bank, taxpayer funds are kept local and reinvested back into our communities.

# Reaching Forward North 2025 Exhibitors

## Library Programs and Performers

### 312 Magic, LLC

<https://312magic.com>  
[aaron@312magic.com](mailto:aaron@312magic.com)

Aaron Fasel, founder of 312 Magic, is a full-time magician and former elementary school teacher. With hundreds of kids' shows under his belt, including countless library shows, Aaron's ability to engage and entertain AND educate is notably impressive. In 2025, 312 Magic is offering several distinct products/services that can be mixed and matched to create the perfect fit for your program suitable for all ages.

### Bollywood & Culture Groove

[www.bollygroove.com](http://www.bollygroove.com)  
[info@bollygroove.com](mailto:info@bollygroove.com)

Chicago-based Publishing, Dance, and Indian Cultural Education company. Bestselling author of Maya/Neel books, 85K sold worldwide. Keynote speaker on multicultural education.

The company has worked for the past 15 years towards raising awareness about ethnic dances, helping parents and educators raise multicultural kids, and helping corporations provide exciting cultural experiences to their employees. Featured on NBC, ABC, FOX, *Elle Magazine*, Nielsen Media, *Sun-Times*, Univision, *Al Jazira*, and more. Winner of International Purple Dragonfly Book Award, Corporate Woman of Achievement award by NAWBO, YouTube Silver Creator Award, Best Dance/Music Company CEO from WE Awards, and more.

### Cheryl Brown

[www.KiddielandRemembered.com](http://www.KiddielandRemembered.com)  
[KiddielandRemembered@gmail.com](mailto:KiddielandRemembered@gmail.com)

Kiddieland Remembered was my first program in 2019 and I have since given over 200 programs on my 7 topics. My passion shows through for each program. As a historian, a retired professor at Oakton College, and a member of the National Amusement Park Historical Association, I was recently a consultant for the WTTW TV *Chicago Stories* episode on Chicago Amusement Parks. To watch, go to [wttw.com/chicago-stories](http://wttw.com/chicago-stories). My new program for the fall is called "Amusement Parks of Chicagoland Remembered," with over 12 parks discussed (Adventureland, Dispensa's, Old Chicago, and more). Many of my programs draw large audiences and some reach full capacity. Once there were 485 people watching on Zoom. For each of my programs, I display 2 tables of vintage memorabilia. Special discount if you book 2 programs in 2025. Zoom is also discounted. Programs: Kiddieland, Riverview, Lego (very popular), Fisher-Price Toys, Chicago Bakeries, Toys of the '80s and '90s, and Amusement Parks of Chicagoland Remembered (new).

### Culture Shock Chicago

[www.cultureshockchicago.org](http://www.cultureshockchicago.org)  
[chicago@cultureshockdance.org](mailto:chicago@cultureshockdance.org)

Culture Shock Chicago brings a high energy, entertaining and interactive performance to any event or special occasion. We work with your staff to create a stress-free and successful program. Through the power of music and dance, Culture Shock uses the principles of hip hop—Peace, Love, Unity and Respect—to apply to a wide variety of themes and topics. Performances can be tailored to fit a variety of events and budgets and our show appeals to audiences of all ages. We bring the party with us, including a full sound system, turntables, DJ, Emcee and highly skilled dancers. We'll take care of everything and have your audiences on their feet!

### DuPage County Health Department - Protect Swimmers 10 Million (PS10M)



[www.dupagehealth.org/231/Pool-Safely](http://www.dupagehealth.org/231/Pool-Safely)  
[Laura.Cochran@dupagehealth.org](mailto:Laura.Cochran@dupagehealth.org)

DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) is located in Wheaton, Illinois and serves a population of just under one million residents. DCHD's Protect Swimmers 10 Million (PS10M) initiative aims to reach at least 10 million Illinois residents to prevent child drowning. PS10M is funded through a competitive two-year federal Consumer Product Safety Commission Pool Safely Grant to reach children and their caregivers in key areas including DuPage County, Metro Chicago, Metro Rockford, and Metro East (St. Louis).

### **Flying Fox Conservation Fund**

[www.flyingfoxconservationfund.com](http://www.flyingfoxconservationfund.com)  
[acerodon@yahoo.com](mailto:acerodon@yahoo.com)

Flying Fox Conservation Fund is an organization dedicated primarily towards protecting old world fruit bats and their habitats. We also fund projects that help little known and misunderstood animals mainly in SE Asia. FFCF programs are hands-on educational experiences that are fun and safe. Our objective is to educate people about conservation and the diverse and unique world of animals. We bring the zoo to you.

### **Historic Voices**

[www.LauraFKeyes.com](http://www.LauraFKeyes.com)  
[LFKeyes@gmail.com](mailto:LFKeyes@gmail.com)

Since 2008, Historic Voices has offered lectures and living history performances about little-known topics from history. Programs are offered in-person and virtually, and for all ages. Illustrated lecture topics include Hershey Chocolate Company, Lighthouses, and History of Color. Portrayals include Mary Lincoln, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other little-known women from history.

### **Jim Gibbons Historical Presentations**

[www.jimgibbonshistorian.com](http://www.jimgibbonshistorian.com)  
[jimgibbons1048@gmail.com](mailto:jimgibbons1048@gmail.com)

Jim Gibbons, historical presenter and business owner of Jim Gibbons Historical Presentations, has made a name for himself teaching the importance of history. Using his passion for and strong knowledge of history, Jim offers over 220 riveting presentations on topics such as: the Life of President Harry S. Truman, the 1963 Kennedy Assassination, the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic, the Life of Frank Capra, the Lincoln Assassination, Pearl Harbor, Alexander Hamilton, Anne Frank, Princess Diana, and many, many more. Jim's presentations have brought in audiences of over 600 both in-person and virtually. Many audience members repeatedly attend his programs through libraries, park districts, retirement communities, private venues, schools, and colleges in Illinois and nationwide.

### **Laser Comedy Show**

[www.lasercomedyshow.com](http://www.lasercomedyshow.com)  
[Lasercomedyshow@gmail.com](mailto:Lasercomedyshow@gmail.com)

You've never seen anything like it. The Laser Comedy show is a live, illustrated puppet show drawn on a glow-in-the-dark screen with black light lasers. Influenced by audience suggestions, 20-year veteran comedian Chris Fair creates worlds that he draws and voice-acts before your very eyes. Audiences of all ages have been enjoying the Laser Comedy Show for over a decade at theaters, libraries, and schools throughout the United States.

### **Mobile Adventure Company**

[www.mobileadventurecompany.com](http://www.mobileadventurecompany.com)  
[jason.garvett@gmail.com](mailto:jason.garvett@gmail.com)

Mobile Adventure Company is the leader in interactive and immersive entertainment that comes to your library. Our Mobile Escape Rooms, Game Show, Remote Control Car Experience, and Axe Throwing will have you and your patrons laughing, working together, and building lasting relationships.

### **The Natural Naturalist**

[www.thenaturalnaturalist.com](http://www.thenaturalnaturalist.com)  
[kiwhite1@gmail.com](mailto:kiwhite1@gmail.com)

Nature Education Programs for pre-K to adults.

### **Pocket Circus**

<https://pocketcircusweb.com>  
[pocketcircus@hotmail.com](mailto:pocketcircus@hotmail.com)

Family Entertainment company providing Circus Shows and Magic Shows and also seasonal Magic Shows for: Halloween or Christmas. All programs we offer are family-oriented and also we believe in active audience participation so, for sure, someone in the audience is going to be part of the Pocket Circus Show. The show can be bilingual, English and Spanish.

# Reaching Forward North 2025 Exhibitors

## Reel Stories Productions LLC

[www.dickbiondifilm.com](http://www.dickbiondifilm.com)  
[pamelajpulice@gmail.com](mailto:pamelajpulice@gmail.com)

Discover the history of Chicago rock-and-roll radio through the extraordinary career of Dick Biondi, one of the 20th century's most influential broadcasters. In the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, Hall of Fame DJ Dick Biondi introduced rock and roll to teens in Chicago and nationwide, from debuting the Beatles in the U.S. to promoting icons like Elvis, the Rolling Stones, and Chicago's own legendary bands. Filmmaker Pamela Enzweiler-Pulice is the perfect person to tell Biondi's story—she grew up listening to him on a transistor radio under her pillow, started a fan club in his honor, and remained his close friend through the years. With exclusive rights from Biondi himself, she brings to life *The Voice That Rocked America*, a heartfelt documentary exploring his life and his pivotal role in pop radio history. Join Pamela for exclusive interviews with radio legends and music icons, offering a behind-the-scenes look and insider stories that define Dick Biondi's legacy as a true rock 'n' roll pioneer.

## ScribbleMonster

<https://scribblemonster.com>  
[mail@scribblebooks.com](mailto:mail@scribblebooks.com)

Jim from ScribbleMonster is always thinking of ways to engage kids in play. He created the ScribbleMonster book and music series, *The ScribbleShow* and *Field Trip Radio* for SiriusXM, and interactive television shows *Wimee's Words LIVE!* and *Our Show Today*—both airing on PBS. Jim loves nothing more than hosting musical playdates for kids and families. His live performance encourages audience participation and creates opportunities for creative expression. Themed programs available for summer reading and other special occasions.

## Smarty Pants

[www.smartypantsworld.com](http://www.smartypantsworld.com)  
[smarty@smartypantsworld.com](mailto:smarty@smartypantsworld.com)

Smarty Pants presents the Big Balloon Show! Called "simply amazing" by WGN-TV, the Big Balloon Show is a theatrical style balloon stage show featuring magic, all-ages comedy, and Smarty's award-winning, world's biggest balloon props. Each performance of the Big Balloon Show is geared towards getting kids excited to come to the library and become avid readers, with tons of audience participation! The Big Balloon Show is much more than just "kids" entertainment—Smarty Pants' eye-popping, larger-than-life balloon creations will have the entire family exclaiming, "I never believed it was possible to do such things with balloons!" Smarty Pants has been presenting the Big Balloon Show in area libraries since 2006!

## Strictly Self Defense

[www.strictlyselfdefense.org](http://www.strictlyselfdefense.org)  
[lindsey@strictlyselfdefense.org](mailto:lindsey@strictlyselfdefense.org)

Strictly Self Defense partners with libraries to offer accessible and age-appropriate self defense training that educates and empowers attendees. We offer a holistic training approach that educates attendees on personal safety and empowers them with the life skill of self defense. Our trauma-informed instructor provides a safe space for everyone to learn and participate at their individual comfort level. Programs are available for families, youth, teens, adults, and seniors. Programming can also focus on messaging that creates awareness or ties to a specific topic such as Sexual Assault Awareness, Domestic Violence Awareness, Mental Health Awareness, and more.

## Gift Products for Work/Life Balance

### A Taste of Michigan Cherries

<https://store.atasteofmichigancherries.com>  
[june@atasteofmichigancherries.com](mailto:june@atasteofmichigancherries.com)

Cherries are one of today's hottest "Super Fruits," a versatile fruit that are homegrown in the U.S. It's easy to enjoy cherries in a wide range of sweet and savory dishes. We offer a large variety of delicious cherry products made from America's "Super Fruit," the Michigan Montmorency Tart Cherry. A Taste of Michigan Cherries is focused on providing high-quality cherry products and we will do everything we can to meet your expectations. With a wide variety of offerings to choose from, we're sure you'll be happy with the quality, freshness, and unique tastes of our products.

### Fable-ous Finds

<https://fableousfinds.etsy.com>  
[fable.ous.finds@gmail.com](mailto:fable.ous.finds@gmail.com)

Fable-ous Finds is a small business that sells handmade accessories and printed apparel with a presence online and at local craft fairs and markets. Our mission is to preserve stories and traditions through the power of imagination and life-long play. Our creations are inspired by classic tales, another place and time, and artisanal techniques.

### Fine Jewelry by Karen

Retail jewelry featuring sterling silver.

### Hardback Yoyo

[www.hardbackyoyo.com](http://www.hardbackyoyo.com)  
[hardbackyoyo@gmail.com](mailto:hardbackyoyo@gmail.com)

HardbackYoYo is a micro-enterprise that repurposes and upcycles discarded media into art decor and writing journals, keeping great books in circulation, with a touch of whimsy and a green attitude.

### Ink Forest Eco-Screen Printing

<https://inkforest.net>  
[myinkforest@gmail.com](mailto:myinkforest@gmail.com)

Ink Forest is the only Women-Owned and Green Certified screen printing company in the Country. We print exclusively with water-based inks. These inks do not contain harmful chemicals or plastics. They are safer for the wearer and the environment. We print on all types of garments and for all sizes.

### Ivy Nicole Natural Remedies

[www.ivynicolenaturalremedies.com](http://www.ivynicolenaturalremedies.com)  
[nicole.cavalea@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.cavalea@gmail.com)

Herbal remedies for skin and overall health. Natural body products, hair products, face products, healing products, kid/baby products, household products, and more!

### The Librarian's Candle Co

[Info@thelibrarianscandleco.com](mailto:Info@thelibrarianscandleco.com)  
<https://thelibrarianscandleco.com>

We have book-themed gifts including candles, room sprays, enamel pins, bookmarks, and wrapping paper.

### Sheets by Karen

[Karencarlene@aol.com](mailto:Karencarlene@aol.com)  
[www.sheetsbykaren.com](http://www.sheetsbykaren.com)

Sheet sets.

### Storybooks & Gardens LLC

[www.etsy.com/shop/storybooksandgardens](http://www.etsy.com/shop/storybooksandgardens)  
[storybooksandgardens@gmail.com](mailto:storybooksandgardens@gmail.com)

Storybooks & Gardens uses retired library books, vintage magazines, old maps, sheet music, and other ephemera to create magnets, pins, bookmarks, blank journals, and more! We are committed to upcycling materials that would otherwise be thrown away, and we reinvent them as new, usable items.

# Notes





## UNLOCK THE BENEFITS OF ILA INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP!

Join the Illinois Library Association (ILA) as an Institutional Member and take advantage of exclusive benefits designed to support your library's growth, advocacy, and access to essential resources.

### WHY JOIN?

#### Legislative Advocacy

- Representation in Springfield and Washington, D.C.
- Updates on critical library issues
- Participation in legislative meetups

#### Affinity Programs & Discounts

- Savings on insurance through LIRA
- Access to the Fund for Illinois Libraries for tax-exempt contributions
- Free Amazon Business Prime Membership for public libraries

#### Exclusive Resources & Publications

- Discounts for conferences and events
- Complimentary iREAD Resource Guide and iREAD grant opportunities
- ILA awards, grants, and scholarships

TO LEARN MORE: SCAN CODE OR EMAIL ILA AT [ILA@ILA.ORG](mailto:ILA@ILA.ORG)

Bluesky: [@illlibraryassoc.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/illlibraryassoc.bsky.social)

Facebook: [@ILLibraryAssoc](https://www.facebook.com/ILLibraryAssoc)



Instagram: [@illlibraryassociation](https://www.instagram.com/illlibraryassociation)

Linkedin: [illinois library association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/illinois-library-association)



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