

# THE URBANA LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Supporting The Urbana Free Library since 1997.

## CASE FOR SUPPORT

### WHY NOW

The Urbana Free Library (TUFL) is one of the oldest libraries in Illinois. Over the last 150 years, it has become a vital community hub, enriching lives by providing access to diverse resources, programs, educational tools, and more. The American Library Association (ALA) states that “public libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies.” We believe there’s no better time than now to ensure that our Library remains a cornerstone of the Urbana community for generations to come.



### THE NEED

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that nearly 25% of Urbana’s population lives in poverty, more than double the state average of 11.6%. Further, the Illinois State Board of Education reported in 2025 that 95.8% of Urbana School District 116 students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Many residents face barriers to technology, reliable internet, learning opportunities, and safe, welcoming spaces for connection. TUFL serves as a critical “third place” in our community - a free, accessible, and inclusive space for everyone that fosters social interaction, reduces barriers to access, and promotes a sense of belonging. To ensure the Library continues to serve evolving community needs, it must be well-resourced. Public funding alone cannot meet these needs. The Urbana Free Library Foundation exists to strengthen and sustain TUFL through financial contributions.

### THE IMPACT

In 2024, TUFL welcomed over 231,000 visitors and circulated over 682,000 items. More than 19,000 people attended Library programs across all ages. Through Foundation support, the Library has expanded collections, enhanced programming, and increased community engagement. The Foundation raised over \$184,000 in 2024 to support these priorities.

### THE FUNDING GAP

Public funding covers Library operations, but not the full scope of 21st-century library services. Areas we support include:

- Facilities maintenance and capital upgrades
- Programming and outreach efforts to better reach underserved populations
- Technology access to bridge the digital divide
- Ensuring the Library can respond quickly to emerging community needs

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you love the Library as much as we do, we invite you to make a gift to the Foundation. Types of gifts accepted include cash, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, donor-advised fund distributions, IRA qualified charitable contributions, grants, and estate gifts. Our federal tax ID is 37-1347187.

Together, we can ensure that TUFL remains a welcoming space for learning, growth, and connection. To learn more, visit [urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/foundation](https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/foundation) or email [foundation@urbanafree.org](mailto:foundation@urbanafree.org).