



Director's Report

Date: July 3, 2025

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Rachel Fuller, Interim Director

Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of July 8, 2025

Strategic Plan Progress



ENHANCE

We steward our physical and financial resources to serve evolving community needs that support growth and sustainability.

- The Library celebrated its 150th Anniversary all year long with a reading challenge, monthly programs, and a library super user challenge. Over 1,500 community members registered for the reading challenge and read over 11,000 books. Over 1,200 people also signed up for the Library Super User Challenge. Anniversary program topics included a presentation about architect Joseph Royer, a community art piece about the meaning of the Library, a time travel-themed escape room, and a “Librarian for a Day” program for children. Overall, not counting the birthday party, which happened in the previous fiscal year, over 500 community members participated in the 150th Anniversary programs. Programs and challenges prizes for the anniversary celebrations were generously sponsored by The Urbana Free Library Foundation.
- The Urbana Free Library Foundation hosted its Giant Desk Concert: Donor Appreciation Event & Fundraiser on June 22, 2025. The Foundation helped the Library say goodbye to its current circulation area and celebrate the upgrades coming to the space this fall. The organization also honored long-time donor and Foundation partner Ann Harden for her [many contributions to the Library](#), including the highly anticipated new Welcome Desk in honor of Ann & Kermit Harden. This special donor appreciation event featured live music from [Crimson Calamity](#) and [Carl Johnson & the New Orleans Jazz Machine](#), a silent auction, a raffle, and light refreshments, as community members came together to make a difference. This event was the capstone to the Foundation's fundraising year, bringing the total funds raised in fiscal year 2025 to just over \$170,000 – their highest annual revenue in over a decade. The event was well attended and received positive feedback from guests and staff alike.





EMBRACE

We learn about and respond to our community in order to create a welcoming environment that cultivates equity, mutual respect, and belonging.

- The Library was a vibrant, joyful place when we hosted the Mariachi Tigres de Urbana (the joint Mariachi band of Urbana High School and Urbana Middle School) and the community performance group, Mariachi Libertad. Many families joined us to sing along, take photos, and celebrate this rich musical tradition. It was especially meaningful in this time of heightened fear for many in our immigrant communities. Bienvenidos - All are welcome here!
- There were two June pride programs hosted at the Library in collaboration with the local LGBTQ+ advocacy organization Uniting Pride: Uniting Pride Family Game Night on June 2 and Love Wins Crafting: DIY for Pride Month on June 14. Family Game Night, a new event created this year, welcomed LGBTQ+ families and allies of all ages to come together and enjoy board games, puzzles, and snacks in a relaxed setting. Games were provided from the Library's collection, staff members' personal collections, and from local game store Dr. G's Brainworks. Staff members helped explain the mechanics of the lesser-known games they offered. Love Wins Crafting: DIY for Pride Month has been offered consistently in June in recent years. Library staff members and local guest artists come together to offer various craft projects for participants to enjoy, including buttons, magnets, bracelets, collage journals, and zines. Attendees moved freely between stations and worked on whichever projects caught their attention, with support from the artists as needed. Both of these pride programs created a joyful and lively atmosphere and saw participation from attendees of all ages. Overall, more than 100 community members attended Library Pride events.
- Library staff attended this year's Jettie Rhodes Day. This year, the Library brought the button-maker and designed special buttons for the event. Between sharing information about Library services and creating buttons, staff spoke with over 100 community members.
- Archives staff recently took a field trip to the Museum of the Grand Prairie. During the trip, an out-of-scope artifact was rehomed, and staff toured collections, exhibits, and connected with the staff at this partner institution, which is also focused on local history.





EMPOWER

We connect people with tools and resources for learning, knowledge exchange, and personal growth that leads to greater fulfillment.

- The Archives organized a full-day cemetery restoration workshop in June. The morning session was held in the Archives, and the afternoon session was held at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Dawn Cobb, from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and John Heider, a professional gravestone conservator, gave presentations on the proper techniques, methods, and materials for cemetery restoration. They also discussed headstone styles and trends. In the afternoon, participants got hands-on practice. Workshop attendees gained experience resetting fallen headstones and repairing cracks.



Action Item Details & Additional Information

- The reimbursement for the 2025 Urbana Arts and Culture Grant will be received this fiscal year instead of last fiscal year. Due to this change, staff request approval for the budget amendment below.
 - \$1,775 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts (802 46300)
- The Library has received a donation to extend our SWANK movie license for another year. This will enable the Library to continue the Senior Movie program in partnership with Aging Services of Champaign County. Staff request approval for the following budget amendment:
 - \$546 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts (802 46300)
 - \$546 increase in expenses to Adult Programming (80280809 51812)
- Library staff recommend the Board approving paying the Cincinnati insurance bill. Though this bill has not yet arrived, it will arrive before the next Board meeting.
- We propose that the Library close to the public on July 31 and August 1 so we can prepare for renovations. Staff who are typically scheduled to work on Thursdays and Fridays would still be scheduled. Several items on our "To Do Before Renovations" list can't be done until right before construction because they will impact the way we provide services. We would also promote Curbside Pickup to patrons, so a few staff members would work on that service in addition to helping prep, completing training, etc.
- We also propose modifying service hours during the entire renovation, which would reduce the hours the Library is open to the public; however, hours worked by staff would not be impacted because we would increase coverage on our service desks. (For example, in some places where

we have “single coverage,” we would have “double coverage.”) Additionally, an hour of service would be added to Sundays. Archives’ hours will not change during renovations. While there would be some small adjustments to schedules for full-time and part-time staff, considerable effort has been made to keep changes as minimal as possible. At this time, the goal is to have the project complete by December 31, 2025. However, this timeline could change based on how smoothly (or not) construction goes. (See the tables that follows for proposed hours.)

	Current Hours	Current # of Hours per day	Proposed Reno Hours	Proposed# of Hours per day
Sunday	1-5p	4	12-5p	5
Monday	9a-9p	12	10a-8p	10
Tuesday	9a-9p	12	10a-8p	10
Wednesday	9a-9p	12	10a-8p	10
Thursday	9a-9p	12	10a-8p	10
Friday	9a-6p	9	10a-5p	7
Saturday	9a-6p	9	10a-5p	7
		70		59

Communication

Library News

- June 2, 2025, *smilepolitely.com* – The Week: June 2-5
<https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/the-week-june-2-5/>
- June 10, 2025, *smilepolitely.com* – The importance of third places
<https://www.smilepolitely.com/opinion/the-importance-of-third-places/>
- June 11, 2025, *smilepolitely.com* – Celebrate Juneteenth with events across C-U
<https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/celebrate-juneteenth-with-events-across-c-u/>
- June 18, 2025, *wcia.com* – Central Illinois cooling centers open this season
<https://www.wcia.com/news/illinois-news/central-illinois-cooling-centers-open-this-season/>
- June 19, 2025, *ipmnewsroom.org* – WILL Call: What’s Happening in Champaign – Urbana Jun. 19 – Jun. 22
<https://ipmnewsroom.org/will-call-whats-happening-in-champaign-urbana-jun-19-jun-22/>
- June 23, 2025, *wcia.com* – Children’s Book Recommendation + What’s Coming Up at Urbana Free Library
<https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/childrens-book-recommendation-whats-coming-up-at-urbana-free-library/>

Budget Information

- Budget and FY25 Financial Reports: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/your-right-to-know/financial-reports>

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2024 - June 2025						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
**Illinois Funds account	\$ 229,049.51	\$ 230,094.72	\$ 231,083.43	\$ 232,055.85	\$0.00	\$0.00
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,325,335.18	\$ 3,493,511.49	\$ 3,095,150.44	\$ 4,026,436.77	\$ 3,747,579.27	\$ 3,405,816.30
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 107,613.47	\$ 111,788.42	\$ 114,332.89	\$ 117,950.09	\$ 122,400.96	\$ 125,985.42
Total	\$ 3,661,998.16	\$ 3,835,394.63	\$ 3,440,566.76	\$ 4,376,442.71	\$ 3,869,980.23	\$ 3,531,801.72
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Illinois Funds account	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,597,677.03	\$ 3,254,518.21	\$ 2,892,504.01	\$ 2,559,693.26	\$ 2,068,226.81	
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 130,042.46	\$ 132,303.24	\$ 135,423.91	\$ 138,843.84	\$ 143,098.10	
Total	\$ 3,727,719.49	\$ 3,386,821.45	\$ 3,027,927.92	\$ 2,698,537.10	\$ 2,211,324.91	\$ -
**Illinois Funds account has been closed. Money was moved to Busey Cash account.						