



# Director's Report

**Date:** August 7, 2025

**To:** The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

**From:** Taliah Abdullah, Executive Director

**Re:** Director's Report for Board Meeting of August 12, 2025

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## Strategic Plan Progress



### ENHANCE

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

- 32 new board games have been added to the library's board game collection and are available in the Children's area for check out. These games are designed with children in mind, are available for all who are interested, and are meant to teach and develop skills for social-emotional learning, teamwork, and strategy. These games are in addition to the main Board Game collection and are helping to meet the demand for family board games. Patrons are already checking out and we are excited that this collection will continue to grow.
- Library staff met with Champaign County staff for the annual meeting regarding the Archives' budget request for the County's FY26 (calendar year). The Archives annually receives general financial support from Champaign County for direct service to the public. In addition to a general appropriation received from the County each year, the Archives also receives direct support from the Champaign County Circuit Clerk for storing, cataloging, and preserving County Court records. Combined, Library staff requested roughly a 5% increase in funding from the County and Circuit Clerk. The increase is consistent with increases received last fiscal year and also reflects an increase in the cost of providing services to the public. The County Board will vote to approve funding in the coming months.
  - \$26,460,440 – FY25 request to Champaign County
  - \$15,520 – FY25 request to the Champaign County Circuit Clerk.



## 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 has been a field trip destination throughout the summer for preschools such as the Early Learning Center and Next Generation. Library staff gave tours around the Children's area showing students what the Library has to offer, teaching them how to look for items, etc. Then they enjoyed a fun story time and craft to end the visit. This summer, kids made a flower craft where they glued pieces together to make flowers that stand up on a paper plate. Between the start of June and the end of July, twelve tours have been given to classrooms for a total of 260 students.
- Safety Library Assistant Craig Williams and Executive Director Taliah Abdullah attended a community engagement event hosted by the Urbana Police Department and Urbana Neighborhood Connections Center.



## EMPOWER

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

- Librarian Rachel Vellenga shared fun and practical information about backyard chickens. The all-ages audience of nearly 30 people heard interesting facts about chickens including the varieties, what chickens eat, where they sleep, and what are predators to chickens. Attendees were able to hold Maddie, the guest chicken. These types of programs help all ages understand more about the natural world and are meant to encourage less fear and more curiosity.
- The program LGBTQ+ Rights in Champaign County - Exploring a Landmark Local Civil Rights Case featured an enlightening discussion about local gay rights documented in the events of the book, *The S and S Bar and Grill*, by community members who were involved at the time. Audience members were engaged during the Q&A portion. This conversation was recorded as an oral history and will be added to the catalog.
- Despite rain, 150 community members enjoyed July's PostMark Urbana. The theme was Theatre Arts, and included a multitude of activities such as performances by four local theater groups and face painting. The Urbana Park District's Youth Summer Theater Program led a themed craft, and Urbana Park District staff continued the fun with UrVANA, the mobile recreation unit. A highlight of the event was the costume and prop walk, in collaboration with Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. This walk doubled as a downtown scavenger hunt and took participants to view costumes and props at many local businesses including the Library. The day was a success!
- Makers of all ages enjoyed creating slime using everyday ingredients of glue, baking soda, and contact solution. A total of 130 children and adults attended the program.



- The Library hosted two all-ages international music programs in July. One program was in conjunction with CU Tango Week, and patrons heard from world-class musicians along with our own local talent including students from Urbana schools. The second program brought interested attendees to an Afro Brazilian Drum and Dance workshop, where they interacted with drums, shakers, and other Brazilian instruments. Both music programs provided opportunities for over 150 people to drum, dance, laugh, and connect with one another and diverse cultures.



## Action Item Details & Additional Information

- The City granted a \$100,000 “above baseline” request \$100,000 for the Library to continue carpeting and repainting various areas that have become worn. Staff recommends approving the budget amendments below to accept and use these funds for remodel efforts.
  - \$100,000 increase in revenue to City Other Contribution (802 41700)
  - \$100,000 increase in expense to TFR to Building Fund (80280801 59820)
  - \$100,000 increase in revenue to TFR from Library General Fund (820 49802)
  - \$100,00 increase in expense to Building Repair & Maintenance (82080852 52201)
- Due to the recategorizing of some of our staff, the Workers’ Comp insurance premium was increased. Staff recommend the following budget amendment to cover the increase.
  - \$8,000 decrease in Other Supplies (80280801 51900)
  - \$8,000 increase in Workers’ Comp Claims (80280801 52721)

## Communication

### Library Newsletters

- August 2025 TUFL Times: [https://tufl.moosend.com/show\\_campaign/338d53fb-2473-453c-9cb3-9d42ae1cb5d7](https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/338d53fb-2473-453c-9cb3-9d42ae1cb5d7)
- August 2025 Archives Newsletter: [https://tufl.moosend.com/show\\_campaign/9b07f657-5710-4491-8be0-1f7f5542106a](https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/9b07f657-5710-4491-8be0-1f7f5542106a)

### Library News

- July 14, 2025 - *Chambanamoms.com* – Urbana Free Library Renovations Require Brief Closure, New Operating Hours <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2025/07/14/urbana-free-library-renovations/>
- July 15, 2025 – *ipmnewsroom.org* - Urbana Free Library hours change during welcome desk, play area renovation <https://ipmnewsroom.org/urbana-free-library-hours-change-during-welcome-desk-play-area-renovation/>
- July 15, 2025 – *smilepolitely.com* - Urbana Tango Week brings Buenos Aires to C-U <https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/urbana-tango-week-brings-buenos-aires-to-c-u/>
- July 18, 2025 – *dailyillini.com* - The Urbana Free Library prepares for renovations [https://dailyillini.com/life\\_and\\_culture-stories/around-town/2025/07/18/urbana-free-library-prepares-renovations/](https://dailyillini.com/life_and_culture-stories/around-town/2025/07/18/urbana-free-library-prepares-renovations/)

- July 29, 2025 – [wcia.com](https://www.wcia.com/news/champaign-county/urbana-free-library-to-close-preparing-for-construction/) - Urbana Free Library to close, preparing for construction
- July 29, 2025 – [wcia.com](https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/urbana-free-library-renovations-book-recommendations/) - Urbana Free Library Renovations & Book Recommendations
- July 29, 2025 – [wcia.com](https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/how-to-make-fabric-collages-with-slow-stitching/) - How to Make Fabric Collages with Slow Stitching

## Budget Information

- Budget and FY26 Financial Reports: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/your-right-to-know/financial-reports>

1	Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2024 - June 2025						
2							
3		July	August	September	October	November	December
4	**Illinois Funds account	\$ 229,049.51	\$ 230,094.72	\$ 231,083.43	\$ 232,055.85	\$0.00	\$0.00
5	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
5	Busey Bank Web account	\$ 107,613.47	\$ 111,788.42	\$ 114,332.89	\$ 117,950.09	\$ 122,400.96	\$ 125,985.42
7	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
3							
9		January	February	March	April	May	June
0	Illinois Funds account	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
1	Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,597,677.03	\$ 3,254,518.21	\$ 2,892,504.01	\$ 2,559,693.26	\$ 2,068,226.81	\$ 3,920,064.23
2	Busey Bank Web account	\$ 130,042.46	\$ 132,303.24	\$ 135,423.91	\$ 138,843.84	\$ 143,098.10	\$ 147,498.29
3	Total	\$ 3,727,719.49	\$ 3,386,821.45	\$ 3,027,927.92	\$ 2,698,537.10	\$ 2,211,324.91	\$ 4,067,562.52
4							
5	**Illinois Funds account has been closed. Money was moved to Busey Cash account.						
6							