



Director’s Report

Date: April 9, 2026
To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees
From: Taliah Abdullah, Executive Director
Re: Director’s Report for Board Meeting of April 14, 2026

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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.

- Via email and on social media channels, information was shared and advocacy was encouraged for the Digital Library Protect Act, HB 5236. This bill, currently in the IL House, aims to prevent publishers from imposing unfair limits on how libraries license and use eBooks, digital audiobooks, and other electronic materials. The bill also stops publishers from restricting loan periods, charging libraries more than the public, and limiting access. [Current licensing practices](#) make it harder for our Library to provide equitable access to digital materials and meet growing demand. In 2025, eBooks and digital audiobooks accounted for roughly 20% of all circulation at The Urbana Free Library. House Bill 5236 helps address this by preventing publishers from charging unreasonable prices or imposing restrictive terms when licensing eBooks and audiobooks to libraries, ultimately supporting library services and saving tax dollars. Learn more about HB 5236 at ila.org/ebooks



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

- Angela Rivers, Barbara Suggs Mason, and Robert White from the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail led a tour of the traveling exhibit, Journey to Freedom: Illinois' Underground Railroad, on display at the Library. Then 21 patrons boarded a coach bus to visit

four stops on the Heritage Trail. During this city tour, attendees heard stories about freedom seekers, abolitionists, and the Underground Railroad in Champaign County. The tour included fascinating details about local residents and historical context about what was going on in the country at the time.



EMPOWER

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

- This year's annual Read Across America Community Celebration was the 26th instance held in Champaign-Urbana. Olivia Coleman represented the Library on the planning committee for a third year in a row, contributing by organizing a drawing contest for the design on the giveaway tote bags, coordinating volunteer readers for the world language area, sorting and organizing giveaway books, staffing the giveaway book table at the event, and preparing the activity for the Library's table. The theme for this year's celebration was "Champion Kindness." The chosen activity was creating "kindness cards". Children could write or draw a thank-you message for a kind act, pay someone a compliment, or think of another expression of kindness, and were provided with letter stamps, stickers, markers, and scrapbook paper to create with. Alice, a practicum student with the Library, and Library Assistant Brittini hosted the Library's table and had 220 people stop by.
- Kids and their caregivers saw the inner workings of technology at the Tech Take Apart program! Many of the nearly 50 participants visited the Library specifically for this program, sharing that they were delighted to see the insides of keyboards, sewing machines, and other items. Children showed off what they found, and one enterprising child took a keyboard apart and then put it back together. This event sparked excitement and curiosity about how things work.
- Student volunteers from the University's Department of Chemistry's REACT outreach program came to Jump into Science and thrilled 44 children and caregivers with experiments using liquids, oils, baking soda, and food coloring. They explored concepts such as diffusion and hydrophobic vs. hydrophilic. Children experienced whether hot or cold water made the colors run more on skittles, and used coffee filters and markers to see the colors spread. The colored filters transitioned into a flower craft.

Action Item Details & Additional Information

- The Archives partnered with Looking for Lincoln to support the cost of bringing guest speakers to talk about New Philadelphia this past February. Looking for Lincoln reimbursed the Library \$400 for the guest speaker costs. Staff request approval of the following budget changes:
 - \$400 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts (802 46300)
 - \$400 increase in expenses to Archives Programming (80280809 51812 80104)

- Funds available in the Library’s Special Reserve Fund were budgeted to help pay for Fall 2025 security cameras and access control projects. Staff request approval of the following budget changes to transfer the budgeted funds to replenish the Library’s operating fund:
 - \$64,243 increase in the expense line in the reserve fund for transfer to operating fund (80380860 59802)
 - \$64,243 increase the revenue line in the operating fund for transfer from reserve fund (802 49803)
- Staff request approval of the budget changes listed below to move funds from Patron Services Salary – Regular Employees to increase funding for legal services for rest of the fiscal year.
 - \$26,498.00 decrease to Patron Services Salary – Regular Employees 80280807 50110
 - \$26,498.00 increase to Legal Services 80280801 52101
- The Library presents its first Social Media Policy for approval by the Board. Adopting a Social Media Policy will fulfill Standard #7 of the Illinois Library Association’s [Illinois Public Library Standards for Marketing and Promotion](#). Staff recommend approval of this policy.

Communication

Library Newsletters

- **TUFL Times, April 2026:** https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/57554545-fe1d-4800-971a-e3f6dada8bd9
- **Archives Newsletter, April 2026:** https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/b86393a2-480e-4b1e-a7d7-f5f611f109a2

Library News

- **March 26, 2026** - *wcia.com* - Upcoming Art Labs with the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/upcoming-art-labs-with-the-carl-r-woese-institute-for-genomic-biology/>

Budget Information

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

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2025 - June 2026						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,476,560.39	\$ 3,188,594.97	\$ 4,675,169.94	\$ 4,116,589.59	\$ 3,568,902.80	\$ 3,371,285.16
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 152,102.48	\$ 155,474.35	\$ 160,216.59	\$ 163,753.82	\$ 168,142.05	\$ 170,486.63
Total	\$ 3,628,662.87	\$ 3,344,069.32	\$ 4,835,386.53	\$ 4,280,343.41	\$ 3,737,044.85	\$ 3,541,771.79
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 2,992,594.37	\$ 2,819,575.12				
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 173,685.86	\$ 176,444.52				
Total	\$ 3,166,280.23	\$ 2,996,019.64	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -