



Director’s Report

Date: May 7, 2026
To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees
From: Taliah Abdullah, Executive Director
Re: Director’s Report for Board Meeting of May 12, 2026

Table of Contents

Strategic Plan Progress 1

Action Item Details & Additional Information 3


Communication..... 4

 Library Newsletters..... 4

 Library News 4

Budget Information..... 4

Strategic Plan Progress

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

- Digital Download statistics:
 - Overdrive:
 - eBooks: 4,166 circs / 71,134 titles in collection
 - Audiobooks: 5,908 circs /39,583 titles in collection
 - Magazines: 2,613 circs / 6,643 titles in collection
 - Total: 12,717
 - Kanopy: 1,429 plays
 - Comics Plus: 139 checkouts; 200 users
- Thanks to the community partners that support the Library. These partnership opportunities allow for valuable experiences, varied offerings, fresh perspectives, shared workload, supplies, and equipment, and increased ability to extend our reach beyond existing audiences. We are grateful and look forward to building upon current partnerships and fostering new community relationships.

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

- Staff have been working to expand Older Adult and Senior programming. The goals for programming for this audience has been to offer events that build community and connect

attendees with activities and information, address the epidemic of loneliness and isolation, and to promote active living. In addition to the monthly movie and discussion events, Senior Happy Hour are scheduled as a time to gather, explore topics of interest, engage in activities, and to make new friends. An armchair tour of historic parts of Urbana led by staff working in the Archives was received with generous applause. Another program offered mocktails and games and puzzles while listening to a book. Staff are collaboratively working with the target population to plan future activities.

- Olivia and Joel led an art club at Urbana Middle School as part of their SPLASH after-school programming for the second school year in a row. It is always great to welcome returning youth as well as the new students who joined. Students are invited to suggest activities and projects that are of interest to them then these are implemented within the program. Activities included tote bag decorating, creating pins and magnets, collaging, sculpting with air-dry clay, painting, jewelry making, knitting and crocheting, hand-sewing, and more. Students were also encouraged to bring their own projects to work on. At the end of the year, a perennial favorite project of making slime was an enjoyable experience for students. Additionally, Olivia facilitated SPLASH sessions at Dr Williams Elementary School for the school year. Students engaged in art making based on the work of the artist Alma Thomas such as portrait drawing of classmates, self-portrait collage, and bookmark decorating. Students were also informed about and encouraged to participate in upcoming the Summer Reading Program that begins on May 15, 2026.



EMPOWER

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

- 2026 marked the 18th Annual Fairy Tale Ball! Thanks to community partners, we were able to offer new activities such as face painting and dragon academy led by students enrolled in a Recreation, Sport, and Tourism class, a performance by the Champaign Park District's Youth Theatre, a side quest featuring Urbana High School Theater students, and a craft created by the Idea Store alongside returning favorites like dancing and the maze. Library staff worked with the University Theatre Department BFA design students to create dynamic set pieces that transformed the look of library spaces for the ball. Nearly 1,100 people were welcomed to this fan favorite event.
- The Library enjoyed continued partnership with the Boneyard Arts Festival. This year's participation included two exhibits and three events. The Artist of the Corridor exhibit featuring photography by Mili Vishwakarma, who also gave a talk detailing her camera and layered photography editing techniques were featured. The other exhibit featured work by elementary students from throughout the Urbana School District, using artistic techniques from object collage to weaving. The students also had a fine arts showcase that included student musicians, to which families were invited to see the exhibit and celebrate the talent of young artists. The final event was a reading by the Red Herring Writers, Champaign-Urbana's longest-running writing workshop, where multiple members read excerpts from works ranging from historical fiction set in Persia to a children's picture book and speculative mystery. Also hosted in



April was PostMark Urbana, which coordinated activities to align with the festival. More than 300 people attended Boneyard events at the Library.

- The Library supported Battle of the Books programs at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Leal, Thomas Paine, and Yankee Ridge elementary schools. This grassroots program ran by librarians, teachers, and parent volunteers encourages students to team up to compete over trivia questions from a list of titles. With team names such as the "Book Rulers," "Pickles," and "Toilet Bowls," youth enjoyed teaming up with classmates. The Urbana Free Library supports the program by stocking physical and digital copies available for check-out, hosting the annual titles selection meeting, and serving as a Quiz Master for a school's final battler.

Action Item Details & Additional Information

- Thank you to the practicum students who chose The Urbana Free Library as a practicum site. Congratulations and best wishes to those who are graduating!
- The Board's Nominating Committee of Julia Pollack and Meena Malik will be meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 6:45pm meeting. If you would like to be considered for office of Secretary/Treasurer, please contact either Julia or Meena before or at the Nominating Committee meeting.
- A new policy for consideration by the Board: the Gift, Donation, & Sponsorship Policy is presented. This policy provides transparency on how donations are received and used. Also presented are the Meeting Room Policy and the Whistleblower Policy for review, as part of our regular policy update cycle. Staff recommend approval of these three policies.
- Staff request approval of the following budget changes.
 - Busey Bank generously donated funds to support this year's Summer Reading program.
 - \$1,500 increase in expense to Adult Programming (80280809 51812)
 - \$1,500 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts (802 46300)
 - To hire Building Operations floating staff.
 - \$4000 decrease to Building Repairs & Maintenance (80280805-52201)
 - \$4000 increase to Salary – Regular Employees (80280805-50110)
 - To pay 1st Quarter Illinois Unemployment Tax
 - \$2,500 decrease to Facilities Small Tools & Equipment (80280805 51410)
 - \$2,500 increase to Worker's Comp Claims (80280801 52721)

Communication

Library Newsletters

- TUFL Times, May 2026: https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/12801d98-9b5d-4894-97aa-3cea23bd5e9c
- Archives Newsletter, May 2026: https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/628dbe4e-762d-4461-8980-6a4803a40a4f

Library News

- April 9, 2026 - *chambanamoms.com* - Outdoor Concerts in Champaign-Urbana and Beyond <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2026/04/09/free-outdoor-concerts-champaign-urbana/>
- April 10, 2026 – *wcia.com* - Get ready for the Fairy Tale Ball, Urbana Free Library <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/get-ready-for-the-fairy-tale-ball-urbana-free-library/>
- April 10, 2026 – *wcia.com* - Magical reading recommendations with the Urbana Free Library <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/magical-reading-recommendations-with-the-urbana-free-library/>
- April 13, 2026 - *wcia.com* – Illinois bill aims to help libraries, restricts rising e-book costs <https://www.wcia.com/illinois-capitol-news/illinois-bill-aims-to-help-libraries-restricts-rising-e-book-costs/>
- April 16, 2026 - *smilepolitely.com* - Ride MTD to the library for free <https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/ride-mtd-to-the-library-for-free/>
- April 17, 2026 - *dailyillini.com* – Potential Illinois bill to support libraries, digital materials <https://dailyillini.com/news-stories/world-news/state-news/illinois-state-government/2026/04/17/illinois-bill-libraries-digital-materials/>
- April 21, 2026 - *wcia.com* - Celebrating National Library Week with the Champaign Public Library <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/celebrating-national-library-week-with-the-champaign-public-library/>
- April 22, 2026 - *chambanamoms.com* - Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – Goodbye, April <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2026/04/22/champaign-urbana-goodbye-april/>

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	\$ 2,403,558.89			
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 173,685.86	\$ 176,444.52	\$ 180,524.89			
Total	\$ 3,166,280.23	\$ 2,996,019.64	\$ 2,584,083.78	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -