

2025



ROCK ISLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

CONNECTING
OUR
COMMUNITY

OUTCOMES & HIGHLIGHTS

MISSION

The Rock Island Public Library makes our community stronger by freely connecting people to resources and each other. Begin Here.



2 *From the Director's Desk*

Your Rock Island Public Library Rocks!

What a banner year for Rock Island Public Library! Library materials, both print and electronic, have been flying off the physical and virtual shelves. Library services used topped 1.35 million - yes, million! Our program attendance saw a near 40% increase. I point out these statistics not only because they are impressive, but more importantly, they are because of the great staff we employ at the library. We always call ourselves "small, but mighty," and proudly state that our "scrappiness" allows us to think outside the box with limited funding.



For example, our libraries are open to the public 144 hours per week, plus mobile library hours. Just 35 staff people support the critical services that make the library work for you. Their tasks include ordering items and collection development, cataloging and maintaining our physical and digital collections, circulating materials and issuing library cards, offering reference and information services, developing and offering public programming, communicating library services, maintaining and improving our facilities, managing partnerships, overseeing business operations, and all the other tasks involved with serving nearly 50,000 residents of Rock Island and the Milan-Blackhawk library service area.

There are no words to say how proud I am of our staff, and their continued commitment to the library and our public. A huge "thank you" to them for keeping up the momentum and achieving our strategic plan goals. You all rock!

Angela Campbell, Library Director

Five-Year Strategic Plan Launched in 2025



Library staff have made great progress toward several goals in the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. Plan tasks are centered around themes of Transformation, Relevance, Equity, Engagement, and Sustainability, or "TREES." See the photos throughout this report for more details!

TOTAL SERVICES USED

1,353,985!

all sources combined

Notary & Watts-Midtown Faxing posted large gains



Transformative * Relevant * Equitable * Engaged * Sustainable

LIBRARY LONGEVITY

The City of Rock Island recognized 20 of our library workers during three longevity award presentations at Hauberg Carriage House in December. Several years are represented due to the awards being on hiatus since 2021.

From left:
Karrah,
Monica, Fred,
James, Ranell,
Kathy, & Emily



From left:
Sue Y, Rachel,
Patti, Lisa,
and Sue F.

Longevity awards and years attained are as follows:

40 Years:

Alma Womack (2021)
**far right column*

30 Years:

Richard Moritz
(2021)* *at right*



25 Years:

Ranesha Vallejo
(2021) **at right*
Susan Foster
(2024)



20 Years:

James Shearouse (2023)
Susan Young (2024)
Lisa Lockheart (2025)

15 Years:

Fred Heffernan (2023)
Ranell Dennis (2023)
Kathy Jones (2023)
Patti Thomas (2025)

10 Years:

Vicky Binger (2022)
**far right, 3rd from top*
Emily Tobin (2022)
Monica Bacon (2022)
Angela Campbell
(2023) **at right*



5 Years:

Christina Nobiling (2021)
Susan Wahlman (2021)
**at right*
Karrah Kuykendall
(2023)
Rachel Ippolito (2024)



Kim Brozovich was also recognized for her years of work in our Tech Services Department.



STAFF UPDATES

In 2025, we said goodbye to retiring staff members Alma Womack (44 years,) Susan Young (21 years,) and Vicky Binger (13 years.) That's 74 combined years of Circulation Department experience! We wish them all well in their new chapters in life.



Sue's retirement created an opening for a new Southwest Branch Manager/ Library2Go coordinator. Former Circulation director Christina Nobiling jumped at the chance to return to her beloved bookmobile. She helped launch our Library2Go service in 2020.



Janna Brackey is our new Circulation Director. Though new to RIPL, Janna has spent many years in libraries, most recently at Musser Public Library in Muscatine.



Pictured in order of mention

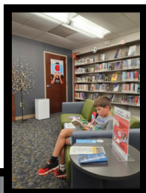
"I LOVE My Library because of the huge smiles that welcome me each time I enter - They Rock!"

TRANSFORMING FACILITIES

for the better

Work continues on maintaining and improving our three buildings. Projects included repainting the Southwest Branch interior, resurfacing the main parking lot Downtown, and completing an ADA-compliant restroom remodel on the first floor of our Downtown Library. For the longer term, the library has created a multi-year plan to preserve the historic character of our primary Downtown Library, while also planning for interior upgrades to better meet community needs.

**LIBRARY
PROJECTS
IN 2025**



Left, middle, right: Paint and a new Teen reading area added a fresh new look to our Southwest Branch. Right: One of the new Downtown restrooms partially funded by CDBG monies.



Right: Library patrons participate in a space planning exercise conducted by architects Cordogan Clark & Associates. The master plan study was made possible by a grant from The Day Foundation.



Microfilm resources moved to a more accessible location across from the Downtown Reference Desk.

**TOTAL PATRON
CONTACTS
INCREASED 16%**

EXTRA:
**WATTS-MIDTOWN
BRANCH**

DEBT 
PAID IN 2025!

Thanks to the Rock Island Public Library Foundation for years of fundraising and the Bobby E. Davis Trust, the renovation debt for the Watts-Midtown Branch project was paid off in February 2025. Special thanks to Library Foundation executive director Kathy Lelonek and all donors for making this vision a reality!

RELEVANT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

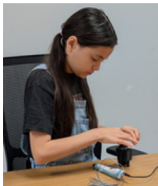
adding value to your library experience

Starting in May 2025, an agreement with Bucktown Music Review (right) brought six live-music shows to the Watts-Midtown Branch auditorium. The effort attracted new visitors, provided the library with extra rental income, and helped us pilot monthly after-hours events for teens and more.

Music enrichment is also filling the air at our Watts-Midtown Branch Mayeski Reading Garden, thanks to the June installation of musical instrument flowers (below.)



"It's the heart of the town and the family events."



Flowers dedicated to late Rotarian Mary Fiskar. Rotary funded the project with a special fundraiser. From left: Rotary president Sue Rector, Mary's twin, Marcy Bell, and Mary's husband Dick Fiskar at the June dedication.

Teen activities included hands-on STEAM experiences (above) offered through a Project Next Generation grant from the Illinois State Library, as well as summer mini-golf at the library (top right.) Best-selling writer Tiffany D. Jackson (center) visited Rock Island High School in April. Young Adult Librarians from Rock Island and Davenport Public Libraries worked with school librarians to arrange the visit. (Photo RIMSD#41.)

In Fall 2025, RIPL purchased new sewing machines for programming (right) after receiving a surprise \$1,000 donation from the MidAmerican Energy Foundation CARES daily drawing. Arts & crafts for adults were hot commodities in 2025!



Tuesday and Thursday drop-in after-school programs at Watts-Midtown and Southwest Branches significantly increased school-age programming in 2025. Activities include crafts, science fun, games, and reading. Trading card events were also added!

Youth Services Librarian James Stratton with after-school kids. Photo: Cora Deemer, Augustana College.

EQUITABLE FOR ALL

welcoming our community

Our continuing focus on enhancing awareness and support for community mental health continued in 2025. More than 70 free programs helped participants connect with others to reduce loneliness, navigate and talk about grief, manage anxiety, learn healthy parenting skills, develop healthy coping and self-care habits, and build mental resilience.

Mental Health programs and Community Comfort Carts (at right) are supported by American Rescue Plan Act funds designated by the City of Rock Island.

"Tough times and reading keeps me sane."

17,914 COMMUNITY COMFORT CART ITEMS DISTRIBUTED



Patrons helped support our community, too. The 7th annual personal care and hygiene products drive collected nearly 1,500 items for Heart of Hope Outreach Center and the Rocky Resource Room. RIPL staffer Karrah Kuykendall (in red) is shown dropping off donations to Heart of Hope.

Rock Island Public Library has certified as a dementia-friendly organization.

Library staff serve on the local committee, and staff were trained on dementia-friendly service skills.

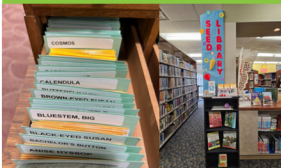


Supportive community options that foster quality of life for people & families living with dementia.



Multiple health & wellness items added to the Library of Things collection in 2025. Checkouts almost doubled!

Gardening for All: RIPL Seed Library!



3,758 PACKETS: distributed at Downtown, Watts-Midtown & Southwest Branch Libraries.

"I like the support and how I can find everything I need from the RI Library!"

ENGAGING PROGRAMS

connecting our community

2025 library programs that connected and enriched our community included free art shows, a popular craft and art supplies swap, multiple crafts, free family fun, and Hug-A-Book early learning.



Three art shows at the Watts-Midtown Branch featured nine regional artists. The shows were funded by Quad City Arts through their Arts Dollars regranting program. Artist Lisa Mahar speaks to guests at the August show.



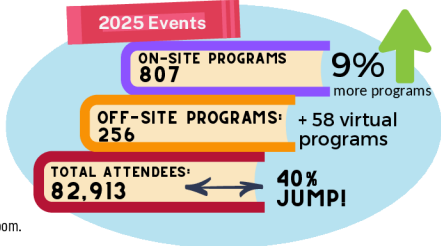
"Family passes to local venues help our family visit and make memories together."



Top: Family fun at the Southwest Paint and Sip. From left: December card class, Craft Exchange Swap, Hug-A-Book dance balloon chaos.



Dino-November Day activities at the Downtown Children's Room.



SUSTAINABILITY

for viable operations

Partnering with others and pursuing sponsorships are helping the library do more and increase long-term sustainability. Rock Island Township support enabled RIPL and Rock Island Parks and Recreation to host a highly successful Petting Zoo and book giveaway at Longview Park. (Shown at right.) The experience delighted 1,800 guests and distributed 1,000 books.



Volunteers from Jordan Catholic and Rock Island Rotary planted flowers at our Downtown Library. The native plants were grown by the Hauberg Estate greenhouse for a true community project!



Since 2017, the Tuneful Tuesday music series, sponsored by Carol and the late James Horstman, has brought free noon-time music concerts to all ages. This family enjoyed the 2025 Ukulele Club concert!



260 guests attended the "BBQ & Book Sale" fundraiser from the Library & Rock Island Library Foundation. The Arts Alley event joined the Downtown Rock Island "Back From the Dead" Halloween festival. Eudell Watts III & family served the delicious BBQ.

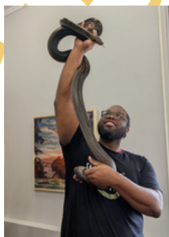
"I like that I can find current books that I don't have to buy."



Library PALS (People Advocating for Library Services) volunteers helped raise \$4,000 through four library book sales. Volunteer time increased by 25%! PALS support fine-free lending.

SUMMER EVENTS

bring in the crowds



**684,452
MINUTES READ
SUMMER 2025!**

Winter: 188,788!

**873,240
MINUTES!
TOTAL!**

Top left, center: Shadowland Serpentry presented to capacity crowds at Downtown & Southwest. Left: Young dragon tamers at Dragon Training Academy. Bottom: Non-fiction book club at Longview Park.

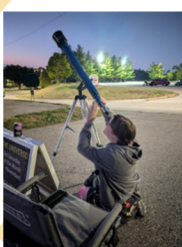
Center down: Book lover at Summer Reading Kickoff. Adventure Camp kids at a Library & Police Read-Along event at Longview Park. Bubble fun at summer kickoff. Succulent string art craft. Right: Tie-dyeing at the Watts-Midtown patio space.

Above: Summer Reading prize bag seen in use at the July Book Sale!

REACHING OUT

into our community

Library staff brought the word about library cards, services, and reading by visiting schools, daycares, and community events. Outreach included Library2Go stops at elementary schools, Maple Ridge apartments, Milan parks, Douglas Park, the Big Fat Greek Fest, Rotary Pumpkin Palooza for Earl Hanson Elementary, and even the Wake Brewing Boozy Book Fair. Youth services visited multiple daycares and schools, including Skip-A-Long Milan and Longfellow Elementary.



Above: Library2Go visitors at the Petting Zoo. Top Right: Night sky viewing at Longview Park. Below right: A young patron visits the bookmobile at Hodge Park for Library Outreach Day. Left: A patron at the Boozy Book Fair with the book she checked out from Library2Go.



Above: Youth Librarian reading at Longfellow School.



So many library "fans" at the Ready to Rock Back to School Event. It was HOT that day!

GROWING USE OF LIBRARY COLLECTIONS OVERALL

Print: 5% ↑

Digital: 23% ↑

Non-print: 21% ↑

Library of Things: 48% ↑

1,046

Library of Things

122,635

Print

184,545

All Non-Print

155,492

Digital materials



Above, top: Library2Go at Rotary Pumpkin Palooza. Bottom: Spring Forward Learning Center kids board the bookmobile. Left: Augustana College PARTICIPATE volunteers at the September Party in the Park/Walking Lantern Parade.

Careful Stewardship

The library carefully manages its tax-supported budget. Operational costs and capital projects are affected by inflation, requiring additional funds to preserve our resources, staff, and facilities. Our Watts-Midtown Branch partnership continues to offer substantial cost-savings. On average, the library returns \$4 or more of value to the community for every \$1 invested in funding.

LIBRARY FINANCES IN 2025

Operations

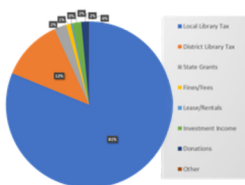
\$3,116,632

Capital

\$103,055

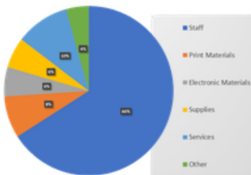
As of February 1, 2026

Revenues



Total collected: \$3,136,406.23

Expenditures



Total Spending: \$3,116,632

A BANNER YEAR for library cards

Circulation processed 376 new cards during National Library Card Month, the highest September since 2016. RIPL card ownership is at its highest in recent years!

TOTAL CARDS: 17,914

NEW CARDS: 3,490



IN PERSON PATRON VISITS: 142,812
7% increase

"I love the Library of Things we are able to check out."



Our Circulation Department processed 300+ cards per month for 6 months straight!

Patron-supplied photo.

"[I brought] my daughter to check out books as early as 3 years old. As she learned from Arthur, 'Having fun isn't hard if you have a library card.' (She is 28 now!)"

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Leveraging resources for greater service!

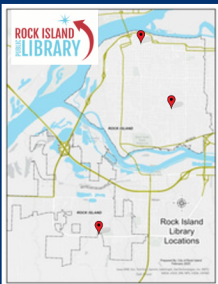
AOK (All Our Kids) Early Childhood Network
 April Greetings
 ARC of the Quad Cities
 Army Sustainment Command
 Augustana College & Archives
 Black Hawk College Adult Learning Center
 Black Hawk State Historic Site
 Broadway Historic District Clock, Inc.
 Community Caring Conference
 Dementia Friendly IL QC
 Davenport Public Library
 EveryChild
 Family Resources
 Family Solutions
 Figge Art Museum
 Fort Armstrong
 Friendship Manor
 Gas & Electric Credit Union
 Genesis Guild
 Goodwill of the Heartland
 Her Voice Media
 Heart of Hope Ministries

Hauberg Estate
 Huiskamp Collins Insurance Solutions
 Illinois Department on Aging
 Illinois Public Libraries Present
 Illinois State Treasurer's Office
 Independent Lens
 Jewish Federation of the Quad Cities
 Jordan Catholic School
 Lion's Club
 Midwest Writing Center
 MLK Community Center
 NAMI
 Narratives QC
 Planting Books - Seeds 4 a Better Future
 PrairieCat Online Consortium
 Progressive Action for the Common Good
 ProjectNow
 Quad Cities Open Network
 Quad City Arts
 Quad City Botanical Center
 Quad City Wild Ones
 Quad City Audubon Society
 Reaching Across Illinois Library System
 Robert Young Center
 Rock Island HeadStart & Preschool
 Rock Island Horticulture Club
 Rock Island Kiwanis Club
 Rock Island Parks and Recreation

Rock Valley Physical Therapy
 Rock Island Police Department
 Rocky Resource Room
 Rock Island-Milan School District
 Rock Island Township
 Rotary Club of Rock Island
 Rx Integrative Solutions
 Sacred Mornings
 SB Quilling
 Seton Catholic School
 Skip-a-Long Childcare Centers (new in 2025: Skip-A-Long Milani!)
 Small Business Development Ctr (SBDC)
 Society for Financial Awareness
 South Rock Island Township
 Spring Forward Learning Center
 St. Anthony Nursing & Rehab Center
 St. George Greek Orthodox Church
 Sunlight Apothecary
 The Third Place
 Transitions Mental Health
 Two Rivers YMCA
 University of Illinois Extension Office
 US Army Corps of Engineers
 Vera French Mental Health Center
 WIU - QC Campus
 World Relief Quad Cities After School



WQPT Quad Cities
 YWCA Quad Cities
 April 30 Eudell Watts III Day proclamation; Citizen of the Year (volunteer) Kathy Lalonek; Library & Parks/Recreation Petting Zoo workers.



ROCK ISLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY:

- Rock Island Downtown Library, 401 19th Street
- Rock Island Southwest Branch, 9010 Ridgewood Road
- Rock Island Watts-Midtown Branch, 2715 30th Street
- Library2Go bookmobile, moving around town
- 24/7 website, our online "branch"

www.rockislandlibrary.org | 309-732-READ

Serving Rock Island and the Milan-Blackhawk Area Public Library District