

## Library Director Report

April 2025

Prepared by Tana Elias, April 29, 2025

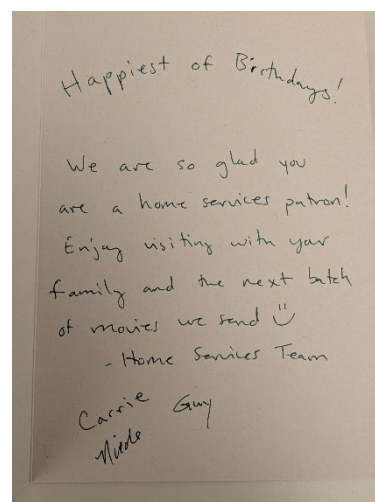


### IMLS Funding Update

A recent update on Wisconsin IMLS funding from Ben Miller, Director of Library Services for the Wisconsin Department of Library Services, indicates that Wisconsin has received a commitment of \$1.6 million in IMLS funding through the Grants for States program for 2025 (funding year July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026), or roughly half what it was expecting. Funding will prioritize statewide service, including BadgerLink, OLL support, and baseline professional development. Subawards to systems will not be available without additional IMLS support. Last year, for example, SCLS received 4% of its total budget from IMLS funds through DPI, while other systems in the state received up to 9%.

I believe this partial award also shows the power of speaking out and contacting elected officials at the federal level. By teaming up quickly with the Madison Children's Museum, we were able to get coverage in nearly every local news outlet in the last 6 weeks, and through our National Library Week postcard campaign we gathered almost 200 postcards in our libraries. I had the pleasure of giving copies of these postcards to Congressman Pocan last week when he visited the library and will be sharing them with Senators Johnson and Baldwin this week. While this initial award is encouraging, it's important to continue to highlight federal funding for libraries. We will continue to update our Advocacy page throughout the year, including the addition of this recent information.

### Programming & Service Highlights: Home Services



*Photo credits library staff. left: Home Services team Carrie, Guy and Nicole; right, birthday card*

A few weeks ago our Home Services team received a sweet call from a Home Service patron's daughter. She and other members of her family were in the city visiting her father for his 95th birthday. When they asked their Dad what he wanted for his birthday, he said that he wanted to meet the Home Services team who get him his bag of library materials every month! A time was set for the visit, which he was unfortunately unable to attend, but he received a birthday card signed by Carrie, Guy and Nicole, the staff who make this service possible.

Learn more about our Home Delivery program, where patrons get library materials like books, DVDs, magazines, and music delivered to their home, nursing home, or assisted living facility for free at <https://madpl.org/homeservice>

## **Community & Professional Engagement Highlights**

Spring has brought many events and opportunities to get out into the community or connect with librarians through professional development or informal learning.

Outreach and community events included a visit with Urban League of Dane County's President & CEO Dr. Ruben Anthony, League of Women Voters Lively Issues Luncheon, MPL Foundation's Donor Thank You and Lunch for Libraries events, Common Council New & Returning Alder Brunch, MMSD's Schools Make Madison Summit, Literacy Network's Reading Between the Wines event, and online outreach through our AMA (ask me anything) event on reddit.

Professional development opportunities included DPI's New Director Boot Camp, a visit with the Milwaukee Public Library's Outreach team coordinated by youth services manager Tammy Ocampo, a tour of the new Appleton Public Library, and the Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians spring conference (I was on the programming committee).

One additional highlight: I was selected as the recipient of the Outstanding Voter Service Award by the League of Women Voters of Dane County. While only one person accepts the award, it's possible thanks to our wonderful library staff, who've gone above and beyond in helping visitors register to vote, and who balance in-person absentee voting crowds and election day work with the regular work of a busy public library. In 2024, over 44,000 in-person absentee ballots were cast in or returned to Madison libraries, representing 64% of all in-person absentee votes cast. Our staff registered nearly 5,000 new voters, 7% of all voter registrations in the City for the year.

## **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

May 31, 2025 marks 150 years of public libraries in Madison! We're hosting three Saturdays of parties so that each library has its own celebration (and we'll have our own unique birthday celebrating the beginning of the Imagination Center, too!) Trivia, activities, cake & coffee,

programs, maybe even a marching band! – each library’s celebration will have its own unique local flavor, with formal remarks & recognition happening at the Central Library on May 17. A huge shoutout to our marketing team, especially marketing manager Liz Boyd, who was aided by Jacquie Kociubuk, a Humanities Fellow with the Madison Public Library Foundation who helped research the library’s history. Thanks too to the Foundation for underwriting these events. Please help us spread the word, and we hope to see you there! [150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary web site](#).

## **One Year Evaluation**

There’s a much smaller anniversary to celebrate in May as well – on May 12, I’ll have been the Director for one year! That means it’s evaluation time. I met with the Mayor in March for my annual executive check-in, I’m working with City of Madison HR to complete a 360 review, and I’m working with the Director Evaluation Subcommittee to help facilitate the annual review process. The committee will have access to all materials provided to the Mayor as well as results of the City’s 360 review when completed in late May.

## **Imagination Center at Reindahl Park Update**

We’re **so excited** to finally announce the groundbreaking for the Imagination Center on May 8. We’ll be joined by more than 70 folks at this invite-only event to help us celebrate this important milestone. On May 1, we’ll have our Pre-Construction meeting with the general contractor, Corporate Contractors, Inc. (CCI), then begin regular OAC (owner, architect, contractor) meetings as the project begins construction. We’re also beginning to schedule meetings for the logistics of operations, from furniture selection to fiber access to operational policies. Follow the project at [madpl.org/reindahl](http://madpl.org/reindahl).

## **Library Budget Update**

The operating budget kickoff is June 16, and our budget is due to City Finance on July 18; in between, the Library Board will have to approve our budget submission. You can see the entire budget timeline at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget>. For the next few months, we’ll be focused on the library’s 2026 operating budget, including adding the operations of the Imagination Center. While the City referendum passed and we hope that means this year’s operating budget remains relatively stable despite the instability of federal funds received by the city, we still need to identify operating funds for the new library. If we are given a budget target that is roughly the same as last year, that will mean we’ll have similar choices to make between reducing open hours, programming, or a mix of the two, to get to what we need to operate a tenth library. In May, I’ll be asking the Board for guidance on what you’d like us to prioritize and what data you’d like us to share. In June, we’ll provide preliminary scenarios, and

at our July meeting, we'll provide more detailed scenarios to meet our budget target. While Board members can advocate for additional funding between July-November, we will likely still need to turn in a budget that includes service reductions in other areas to bring the Imagination Center on board.

## **Library Metrics**

All monthly key metrics, by month and library, from 2015 to the previous month, are available on our interactive dashboard: [MPL Monthly Metrics | Tableau Public](#).

## **For your calendar**

Here are some dates you may want to save on your calendar:

- Staff Day (Board members welcome) – Thursday, May 15, 9am-3pm [please RSVP]
- Imagination Center groundbreaking – May 8, 12:30pm, Reindahl Park [please RSVP]
- 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary [celebrations](#) [no RSVP required]:

### **May 10**

Alicia Ashman Library [733 N High Point Rd], 9-11am

Meadowridge Library [5726 Raymond Rd], 11am - 1pm

Sequoia Library [4340 Tokay Blvd], 1-3pm

Goodman South Madison Library [2222 S Park St], 3-5pm

### **May 17**

Central Library [201 W Mifflin St], 10am - 2pm

### **May 31**

Monroe Street Library [1705 Monroe St], 9-11am

Pinney Library [516 Cottage Grove Rd], 11am -1pm

Lakeview Library [2845 N Sherman Ave], 1-3pm

Hawthorne Library [2707 E Washington Ave], 3-5pm