

URBAN LIBRARIES COUNCIL

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2025 IMPACT REPORT

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From the CEO



Over the past year, libraries across North America faced unprecedented challenges, many of which captured national headlines. Yet rather than allowing these headwinds to divide us, libraries of all sizes and in all communities came together. From ULC's largest urban systems to our small and rural peers, library leaders banded together to advocate not only for their own institutions, but for one another and for the communities they serve.

2025 was a year we can all be proud of. Among the many highlights, we gathered hundreds of library leaders and staff in Cincinnati for an energizing Annual Leadership Forum focused on the power of advocacy and storytelling. We launched ULC Academy, our new online learning platform designed to help library professionals gain the skills they need to thrive. We produced impactful research that positions libraries as economic engines for cities, while also supporting libraries as they look to the future—embracing emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and helping their communities learn how to use them responsibly.

We also worked to secure better pricing on essential library software and partnered with forward-thinking funders, including the Walmart Foundation, to spotlight libraries that are leading the way in constructively engaging opportunity youth. 2025 marked a strong growth year for ULC membership, with nearly 200 member systems representing hundreds of millions of people across the United States and Canada. Our members power everything we do. As we move into 2026, ULC remains deeply committed to supporting urban library leaders and helping libraries be fierce, effective advocates for their value and impact.

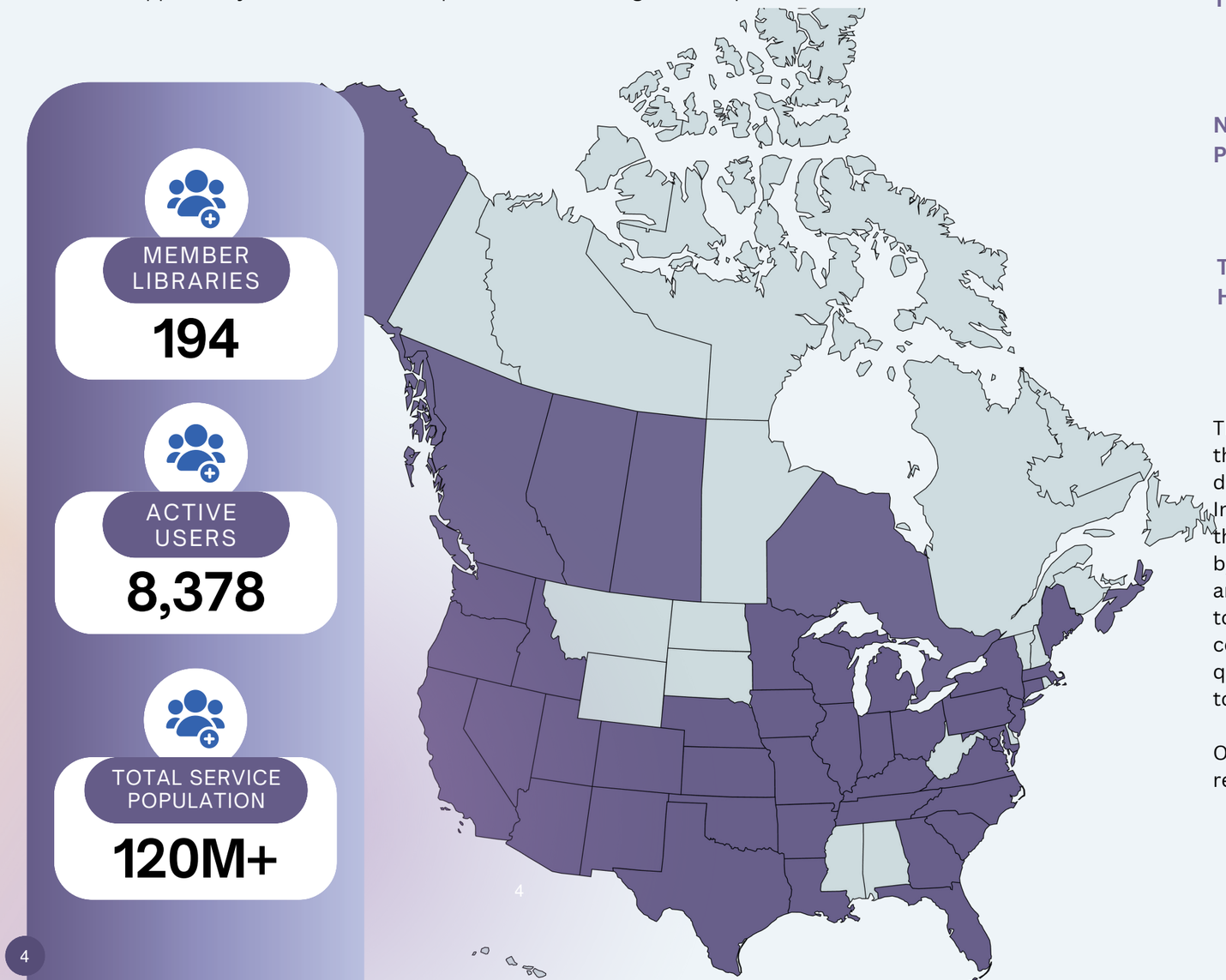
Thank you for the work you do every day to keep libraries vibrant and essential pillars of your communities. I am also deeply grateful to ULC's Board of Directors, our corporate sponsors, and our funders, whose support makes this work possible. It is an honor to serve this extraordinary network of library leaders. I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

With gratitude,
Brooks Rainwater
President & CEO
Urban Libraries Council

MEMBERSHIP IN REVIEW ↘

For over 50 years, the Urban Libraries Council has served as an outcomes-driven research and innovations network of nearly 200 leading North American public libraries.

ULC members represent a total service population of over 120 million, ranging from libraries with just a few branches to those with over 100. The diversity of membership ensures that everyone has the opportunity to learn from a comprehensive knowledge base of peers.



MEMBER LIBRARIES

194

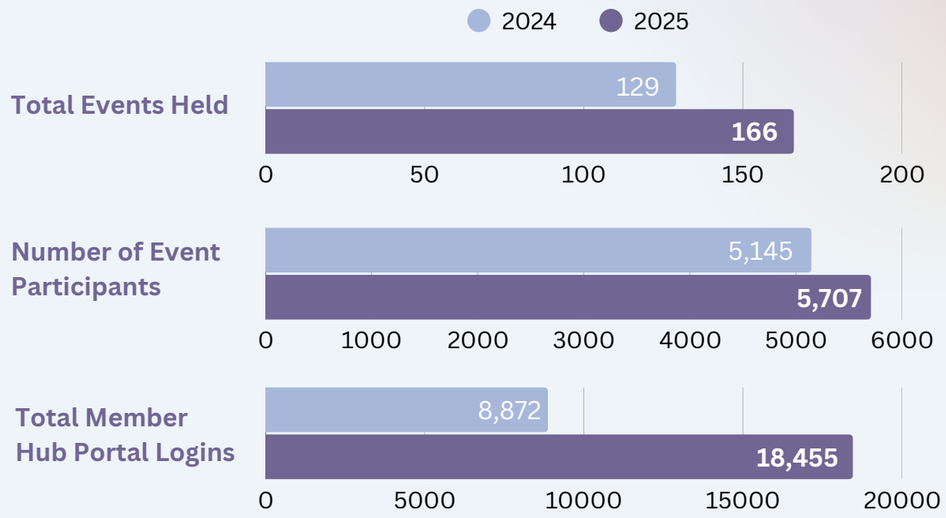
ACTIVE USERS

8,378

TOTAL SERVICE POPULATION

120M+

YEAR-OVER-YEAR GROWTH



The majority of ULC's network is rooted in the **Member Hub**, an online portal designed specifically for ULC's members. In the Member Hub, users can join any of the **15 Member Communities**, organized by staff role and focused on specific areas of work. The communities are peer-to-peer networks that allow members to connect, share announcements, pose questions for feedback and discuss topics relevant to their everyday work.

Over the course of 2025, ULC members reached out to their peers in a total of:

2,572

MEMBER HUB DISCUSSIONS

Member Communities
(and number of participants)

- Analytics & Tech Leaders - 837
- Branch Managers - 275
- CEOs/Directors - 194
- Collections Leaders - 686
- Communications & Marketing Leaders - 427
- Customer Experience Leaders - 860
- Deputy Directors - 352
- Development Professionals - 241
- Education Leaders - 483
- Foundation CEOs - 84
- Human Resources - 239
- Public Safety & Operations - 427
- Public Services - 415
- Social Workers - 227
- Transformative Leadership - 415

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Urban Libraries Council is dedicated to strengthening the essential role of public libraries as **dynamic, accessible places for opportunity, learning and innovation**. We connect public library leaders and drive transformative change to enrich the lives of individuals and communities across North America.

As part of ULC's current strategic plan, we have outlined **three main priorities** designed to guide this mission. These priorities align with all of ULC's ongoing work and initiatives, which you can see throughout this report.

1. **Support the Urban Library Leader**
2. **Center the Transformative Role of Libraries**
3. **Drive Advocacy for Urban Libraries**



Supporting the Urban Library Leader↘



Through in-person events, online discussions, webinars, Member Community calls, and professional development tools like ULC Academy, the Urban Libraries Council provides various pathways for library members to have access to invaluable tools and feel fully supported. ULC continuously provides programming to advance library leaders' leadership skills and strengthen the continued value of the library professional.

- **2025 CEO Roundtable**
- **2025 ULC Annual Leadership Forum**
- **Launch of the new Library Learning Platform, ULC Academy**

Bringing Leaders Together

2025 CEO Roundtable

Every year, the Urban Libraries Council hosts two flagship events: the Annual Leadership Forum and the CEO Roundtable. These opportunities allow ULC's members to convene in person to discuss the latest trends, challenges, and innovations of the field.

In June 2025, ULC hosted the third-annual **CEO Roundtable**, a yearly event exclusively for library Directors and CEOs. This year, we met in Toronto, Ontario, to explore how libraries can understand, measure, and amplify social impact.

This year's Roundtable explored **how libraries can understand, measure and amplify their social impact.** Distinguished library leaders shared how their organizations are positively impacting social cohesion and combating the negative effects of social isolation and polarization.

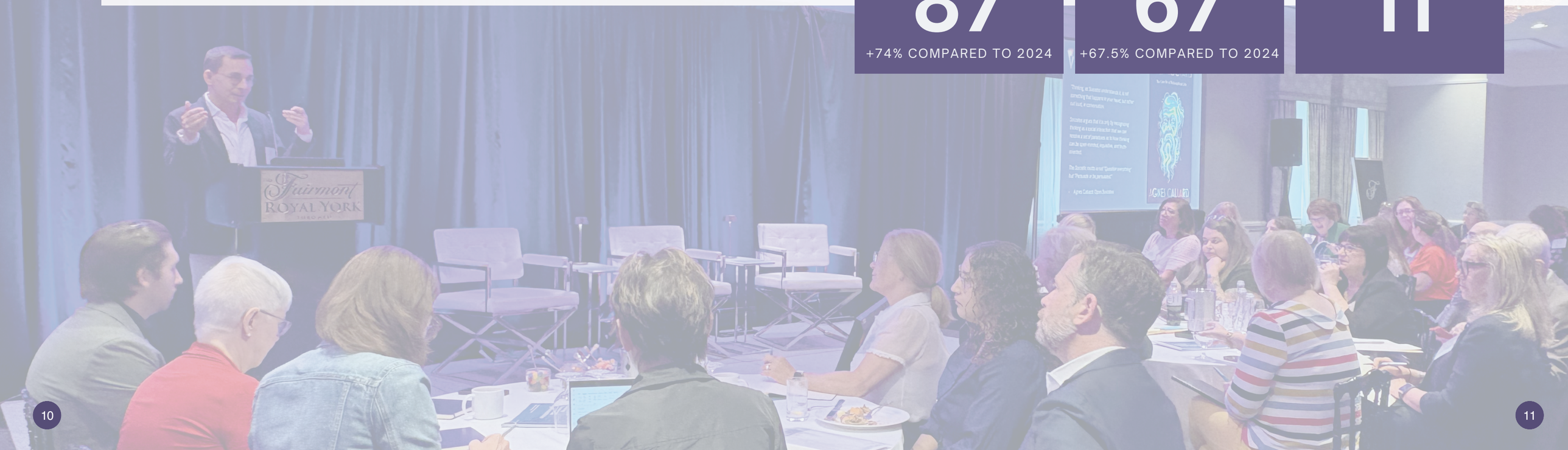
Toronto, ON

This culminated with a spotlight on the groundbreaking social impact study from Toronto Public Library (TPL): **Enabling Torontonians to Grow and Thrive**—a North American first. This pioneering study went beyond traditional statistics to reveal how libraries profoundly enrich lives, foster resilience, and build social cohesion.

Thank you to all who attended! From the warm welcome and behind-the-scenes tour at Toronto Public Library to thought-provoking sessions on mental health, intergenerational programming, and civil discourse, your energy and insights made this gathering a true success.

We are especially grateful to our speakers, the **Toronto Public Library** and then-director Vickery Bowles for their incredible hospitality, and OCLC for their generous support of this event.

TOTAL ATTENDEES	LIBRARIES REPRESENTED	FEATURED PRESENTERS
87	67	11
+74% COMPARED TO 2024	+67.5% COMPARED TO 2024	



Convening on Advocacy

2025 ULC Annual Leadership Forum

ULC was proud to convene library leaders from across the U.S. and Canada for the **2025 ULC Annual Leadership Forum**, held October 22-24, 2025, in Cincinnati, Ohio. This Forum's theme was "**Leading with Advocacy: Championing Urban Libraries**." Throughout the three days of programming, we focused on ways staff and leaders can advocate for their libraries, themselves, and their teams.

The event offered a range of dynamic sessions exploring high-level advocacy, narrative change, coalition building, the future of librarianship, and the broader social impact of libraries. Each panel featured a group of expert library leaders and partners who shared invaluable insights.

Cincinnati, OH

TOTAL ATTENDEES	LIBRARIES REPRESENTED	FEATURED PRESENTERS
238	101	34
+6.3% COMPARED TO 2024	+5.2% COMPARED TO 2024	

A major highlight was the inspiring keynote conversation between the **Honorable Mitch Landrieu,** former Mayor of New Orleans, and ULC President & CEO Brooks Rainwater. Mayor Landrieu shared a compelling vision of how libraries can strengthen democracy and civic connection during times of division, reminding attendees that libraries serve as powerful catalysts for community, trust, and hope.

The 2025 Annual Leadership Forum was a dynamic and energizing gathering, made possible by the engagement of our members. This event wouldn't have been nearly as successful as it was without the steadfast partnership of the **Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library**, its director Paula Brehm-Heeger, and the many staff members who helped plan and organize it.

ULC is also grateful for the generous support of Forum sponsors EBSCO, Bibliotheca, Group 4, Ingram Content Group, OCLC, and ThriftBooks.







ULC Academy

Launched in May 2025

In May, we unveiled **ULC Academy**, the Urban Libraries Council's new learning management system, born from member feedback for more formal professional development. The goal of ULC Academy was to offer **accessible, practical training** that equips library leaders to excel in today's evolving landscape.

On kickoff, ULC offered two live courses for immediate signup: "Managing from the Middle: Branch Managers" and the Urban Libraries Fellows program. Later, ULC also offered Data Analytics for Library Professionals. These live courses were the first of our new fee-for-service model, with plans to expand in 2026.

ULC Academy also offered hours of self-paced, asynchronous learning available to members at no extra cost. Upon launch, members could immediately access self-paced courses and an **exclusive catalog of members-only webinars** on topics like data fluency, entrepreneurship, summer programming, STEM, and more.

27
COURSE/WEBINAR OFFERINGS

188
CERTIFICATES ISSUED

539
TOTAL LEARNERS

701
TOTAL ULC ACADEMY COURSE ENROLLMENTS IN 2025

76
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS OFFERED

Managing from the Middle: Branch Managers

During ULC's first round of the "Managing from the Middle: Branch Managers" course, **26 new or aspiring branch managers** from across the U.S. and Canada met biweekly to explore leadership, management, and professional development. Participants learned from expert speakers from member libraries (including branch managers, HR leaders, and executives), covering topics such as managing in all directions, data-driven decision-making, and emotional intelligence in leadership. Alongside these sessions, cohort members have engaged in self-paced work and interactive discussions, creating personal leadership development plans they can continue to build on beyond the course.

The Branch Managers course was in such high demand that a **second session of this course will be offered in 2026.**

26
PARTICIPANTS

20
CREDIT HOURS OFFERED



Urban Libraries Fellows Program

Library leaders across North America are calling for advanced, cross-sector leadership development that goes beyond traditional library paradigms. In response, ULC developed the Fellows Program: a **premier, year-long leadership accelerator** designed to empower library teams to drive transformative change.



Since launching in June, the Fellows Program has focused on redefining libraries as dynamic public spaces that promote belonging, bridge divides, and support community resilience. Through **monthly virtual meetings**, participants have heard directly from urban designers, placemakers, social entrepreneurs, and public policy leaders whose innovative approaches offer **real-world strategies for reimagining library spaces**.

30	15
PARTICIPANTS	LIBRARIES REPRESENTED

The Fellows Program is unique in that it also included an **in-person convening** at the ULC Annual Leadership Forum in Cincinnati! Participants were able to meet—many for the first time — and present their progress so far in addressing a specific library challenge.



Learning Pathway: Data Analysis

ULC staff noticed a particular interest among members in learning more about data analysis. **In the modern library, data drives the work**, from everyday decisions to larger strategic priorities. Often, library staff are asked to use and even lead data analysis work without ever receiving a solid foundation of learning how to effectively find, interpret, and share data within the library system.

In response, ULC created “Data Analytics 101 for Library Professionals,” a **4-part workshop series** that members could take as a bundle or sign up for individual sessions. The enthusiasm for this Learning Pathway was so great that ULC plans to offer the course again in 2026.



37	23
PARTICIPANTS	LIBRARIES REPRESENTED

Self-Paced Offerings on ULC Academy

In addition to live offerings, ULC Academy offered 21 self-paced learning courses in 2025 at no additional cost to ULC members. These learning opportunities range from previously-recorded webinars, bootcamps, and professional development sessions adapted for the ULCA platform.

Most Popular Self-Paced Courses Over 2025

1. Data Fluency
2. Self Awareness and Reflective Leadership First
3. Libraries, Artificial Intelligence, and Civic Engagement
4. The Public Library Was Not Always for Everyone
5. Unlocking Literacy: Five Action Steps for Implementing the Science of Reading

Center the Transformative Role of Libraries



Each year, ULC aims to reinforce the importance of public libraries by supporting key strategic initiatives, empowering project-based cohorts, creating useful models and resources, and cultivating robust research and data. This work is only as successful as it is because of the dedication and partnership of ULC library members.

- **Creating Youth Opportunities Initiative**
- **ULC's Business Value Calculator**
- **Creating a Culture of Belonging Webinar Series**
- **Civic Engagement and Democracy Partnerships**
- **2025 Innovations Initiative**
- **Research & Data**



Photos from library programs offered through ULC's Creating Youth Opportunities Initiative

Creating Youth Opportunities

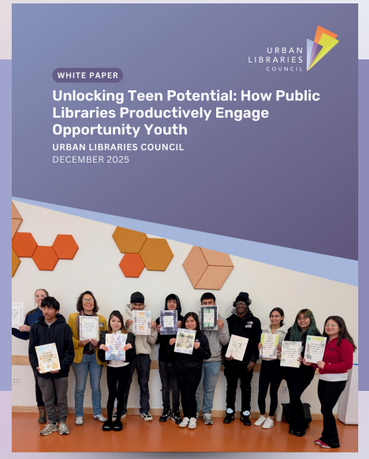
Walmart org

With the support of the Walmart Foundation, ULC has worked since 2022 with a cohort of 11 public library systems that have deployed **opportunity youth-focused programming**. From 2022 to 2023, the cohort learned best practices, researched their communities, and designed tailored program plans for their libraries. From 2023 to 2025, the cohort implemented a wide range of programs for opportunity youth and captured impact data through a multi-faceted evaluation process.

"Opportunity youth" is a term that describes young people between the ages of 16 to 24 who are disconnected from both school and work. Disconnection can happen for a number of reasons, and common risk factors include trauma, engagement with the child welfare or justice systems, and having unemployed or drug-addicted parents.

The goal of the Creating Youth Opportunities initiative was to support opportunity youth through targeted, locally designed programs centered in public libraries to deflect them from involvement with the criminal justice system.





ULC developed a white paper to summarize the work of the Creating Youth Opportunities grant. This publication highlights the 11 ULC member libraries that participated in the 3-year grant, and includes individual case studies, impact and evaluation data, and recommendations for the library field.

Participating Libraries:

- Cedar Rapids Public Library
- Chicago Public Library
- Columbus Metropolitan Library
- DC Public Library
- Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Greensboro Public Library
- Memphis Public Libraries
- Oak Park Public Library
- Pioneer Library System
- Prince George's County Memorial Library System
- Richmond Public Library

4,891 TOTAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENTS

77% OF PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS NON-WHITE

18 STAFF MEMBERS LEADING PROGRAMS EVERY MONTH

49 NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED

33 PARTNER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS HOSTED

The CYO program concluded with a pre-conference event at the ULC Annual Forum, where cohort members from the 11 participating library systems **shared lessons from their local programs** with the broader library field. Through a mix of presentations and roundtable discussions, cohort leaders educated their library peers on the best ways to engage opportunity youth.

"In Their Own Words..."

This video showcases the individual impact of the CYO program through the words of the very young adults who participated. Special thanks to Cedar Rapids Public Library, Oak Park Public Library, and Pioneer Library System for gathering these youth testimonies.



Sharing Value

2025 Business Value Calculator Relaunch

Developed in 2022 by ULC's Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses action team and inspired by St. Louis County Library's Small Business Value Calculator, ***ULC's Business Value Calculator (BVC)*** helps libraries concretely estimate the value they provide to their local business community. With its use, a wealth of feedback on ways to enhance the tool has come in.

Therefore, in February 2025, **ULC released an updated version of the tool** to include additional suggestions to calculate various metrics, the ability to calculate the impact of a library makerspace, adjustments for inflation, and the option to receive an AI-generated summary of key themes.

In 2025, ULC Member Libraries calculated a total of

$245,539,635.77

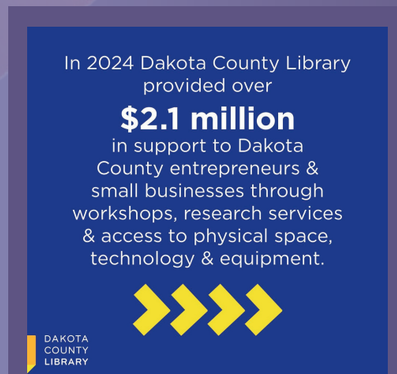
in business value to their communities.

Throughout 2025, ULC members shared the various ways that they have used their BVC results to communicate the value of their libraries. View a few examples below!

ULC's entrepreneurship work in 2025 was generously supported by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.







Centering Culture

Creating a Culture of Belonging Series





In direct response to member feedback and sentiment on library issues in 2024, ULC launched in 2025 the **Creating a Culture of Belonging webinar series**. This 8-part webinar series had some of the highest registration numbers of the whole year, reiterating the need for reactive, holistic professional development.

These sessions were led by a **diverse group of experts in the library field** who shared their insights and progress on the journey to creating a culture of belonging. Participants explored topics such as understanding library history, building diverse teams, and fostering an environment where all employees feel valued and respected.

The Creating a Culture of Belonging webinar series covered the following topics and themes:

- The Public Library Was Not Always for Everyone
- Self-Awareness and Reflective Leadership First
- Auditing for Change: Understanding Systemic Inequities
- Building Inclusive Organizations
- Developing Diverse Teams
- Leading Belonging Initiatives
- Commitment and Accountability
- Welcoming the Community, Inside and Out

294
UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

13
EXPERT PRESENTERS

Civic Engagement Partnerships

Building Community Trust Through Libraries

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

IREX WebJunction® Walmart org

In a time of increasing division, libraries play a crucial role in fostering social trust and civic engagement. To support this vital work, in 2025, IREX, ULC, and OCLC's WebJunction **launched a national coalition of urban, rural, and tribal public libraries**, or a "Community of Practice."

Based on the existing **Bridgebuilding Resource Hub**, this initiative equips library professionals with the tools, strategies, and support they need to bridge divides and strengthen trust in their communities.

Libraries in the Community of Practice have the opportunity to **connect with peers, access new resources, and receive funding opportunities** to enhance their work in building social trust.

301
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

237
LIBRARIES REPRESENTED

7
TOTAL MEETINGS IN 2025

Promoting Civic Discourse in Libraries

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Everyday Democracy

In 2025, ULC launched a new initiative: **Promoting Civic Discourse in North American Library Systems**, in partnership with **Everyday Democracy**. This work is made possible through a multi-year $182,000 grant from the American Arbitration Association–International Centre for Dispute Resolution (AAA-ICDR) Foundation.

Together, ULC and Everyday Democracy are **training over 50 library leaders in multi-partial facilitation,** a dialogue approach that **promotes balance, equity, and inclusion by encouraging multiple viewpoints**, addressing power imbalances, and challenging dominant narratives.

The goal is to strengthen community bonds and create more inclusive, participatory public spaces. In 2026, the trained librarians will host community conversations in their cities, aiming to engage more than 300 participants in thoughtful dialogue on pressing local issues.

52
PARTICIPANTS

13
LIBRARIES REPRESENTED



2025 URBAN LIBRARIES COUNCIL INNOVATIONS

SPONSORED BY EBSCO

For over 15 years, ULC's Innovations Initiative has recognized cutting-edge programs, strategies, and ideas from among ULC's nearly 200 members.

In 2025, **ULC member libraries submitted over 180 projects**. This year's submissions showcased the remarkable breadth of library innovation—from engagement campaigns spanning generations and programs designed quickly yet thoughtfully in the wake of natural disasters, to creative policy updates that promote safer, healthier libraries.

2025 Top Innovators



ADVOCACY & AWARENESS

PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES

PWPL aimed to connect with Gen Z and spark their interest in library resources, services, and programs through a unique reel featuring Gen Z slang and humor. PWPL invited its Teen Advisory Group to write the script. PWPL's branch manager, Gregg, a man from another generation, had just the right amount of rizz to pull off this trend. The video went viral, with more than 3.2 million views.



EDUCATION - CHILDREN & ADULTS

DAYTON METRO LIBRARY

In 2024, the Dayton Metro Library (DML) launched Reading Railroad (RR), a transformative literacy initiative designed to reshape the relationship between Black boys and their local library. This multifaceted effort fosters a lifelong love of reading among Black boys and young men, while providing holistic resources for the adults and community members within their support systems.



EQUITY & INCLUSION

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

On June 16, 2025, Gwinnett County Public Library opened a unique building to the public. Built on the site of Gwinnett County's only school for Black children during segregation, the Hooper-Renwick Branch incorporates a portion of the original building into the new space. A shared library and museum space, this new branch is both a historical marker and a celebration of community resilience and determination.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY

When the Eaton Fire disrupted the Pasadena community in January 2025, the Pasadena Public Library transformed the Jefferson Branch Library into a hub for learning, healing, and connection. Library staff stepped beyond their usual duties, fulfilling a variety of disaster response roles, addressing trauma and offering structured, safe educational experiences during the crisis.



LIBRARY OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

DC PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 2025, DC Public Library updated its long-standing Rules of Behavior, transforming them into a new Code of Conduct. At the project's center was a comprehensive staff engagement strategy, with a cross-departmental staff working group, focus groups, workshops, a survey, and broad public engagement. 300 staff, 2,500 customers, and stakeholders provided feedback.



WORFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PIONEER LIBRARY SYSTEM

Pioneer Library System's Spark a Change transforms the traditional author visit into a three-county cultural movement that bridges libraries, schools, and community organizations. In 2025, the series featured astronaut and former NFL player Leland Melvin, strategically selected to showcase a diverse career path to inspire youth and see reading as a gateway to unexpected possibilities.



The 2025 ULC Innovations Initiative was proudly supported by: EBSCO

Visit urbanlibraries.org/innovations to see Honorable Mentions,

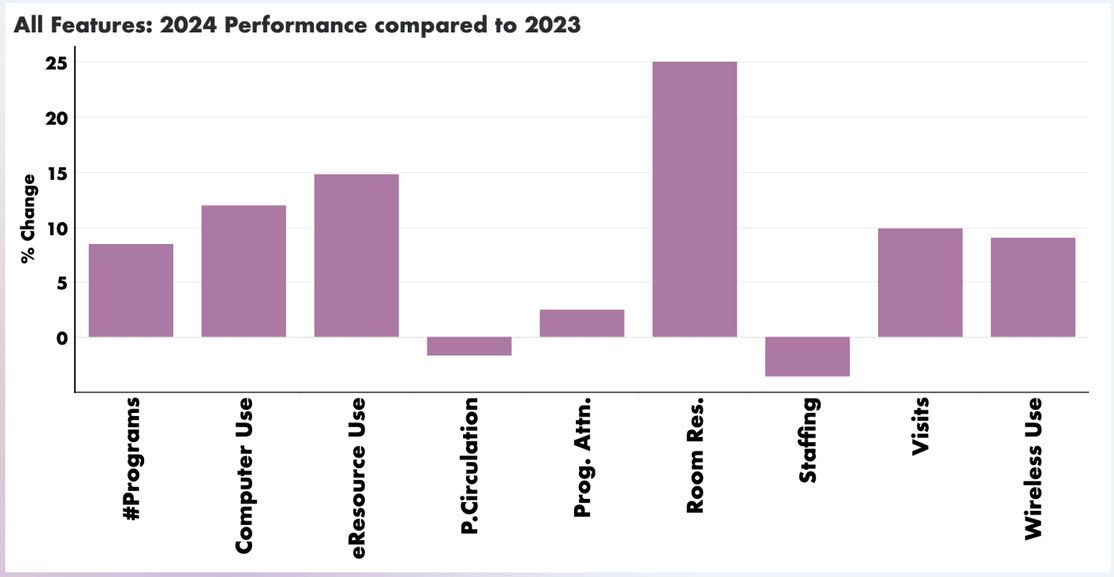
Research & Data

Annual Library Insights Survey & Report

The annual **Library Insights Survey (LIS)** collects information from member libraries on their budgets, staffing, operations, visitors and programs to help strengthen and advance the essential role of public libraries in our cities. These data snapshots and more are analyzed in the annual Library Insights Reports. **The 2025 analysis reports on libraries' activities from the 2024 calendar year**.

Now in its third year, the Library Insights Survey **draws on four years of member data** to illuminate trends in library programs, staffing, budgets, and operations—offering a clear picture of where libraries are today and how they're shaping the future.

LIBRARIES PARTICIPATED	BRANCHES REPRESENTED	TOTAL SERVICE POPULATION
122	2,307	91M
+6.1% COMPARED TO 2024	+2.1% COMPARED TO 2024	+4.0% COMPARED TO 2024



KEY FINDINGS

Visits to libraries increased nearly 10% from 2023 to 2024, with meeting space use up 25% and digital resource demand up 15%.

Compared to 2019, **digital use has surged 58%**, underscoring how libraries continue to adapt and innovate as essential community hubs for learning and connection.

Early literacy and school-age programs remain core priorities, with **69% of libraries** ranking them as the **most frequently offered** and highest attended.

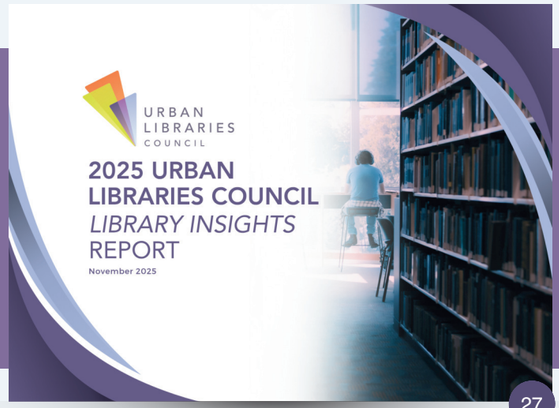
Libraries have seen an **8% increase** in the **number of programs** offered in 2024.

Computer usage recorded a 12% increase, breaking a trend that saw a 64% decline in usage in 2022 (compared to 2019) and a 70.6% decline in 2023 (compared to 2022).

Budgets increased 5% in 2024, but an additional 5.4% would have been necessary to keep pace with inflation.

The full 2025 Library Insights Report is available on the ULC website.

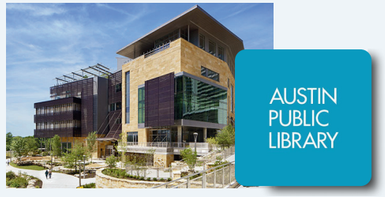
ULC Members also have exclusive access to the **ULC Data Hive**, which offers interactive dashboards, year-over-year trend analysis and data visualization of key LIS metrics.



Data Analysis: Downtown Libraries Are the Anchors Cities Need

To highlight how central libraries contribute to economic and social activity in different urban contexts, ULC analyzed five flagship branches in major cities across the country: Austin (TX), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Jacksonville (FL), and San Francisco (CA). While these libraries vary by size, population, and geography, they all show the same trend: **downtown libraries are helping to draw people to city centers and are major contributors to neighborhood vitality.**

HIGHLIGHTS:



AUSTIN CENTRAL LIBRARY

Before or after a library visit, patrons visited:

- **Dining Establishments:** over 50,000 times
- **Leisure Attractions:** nearly 48,000 times
- **Shopping Centers:** over 35,000 times



BOSTON CENTRAL LIBRARY

- The Central Library welcomed **1.2 million visitors** in 2024
- Nearly **130,000** central library visitors **visited shopping centers** before or after a visit
- Patrons spent an avg. of **104 minutes per visit**



HAROLD WASHINGTON LIBRARY CENTER

- In 2024, more than **721,000 patrons visited** the Harold Washington Library Center
- Visitors averaged a stay of **150 minutes**
- **189,000+** library patrons visited **attractions and businesses** after visiting the library



JACKSONVILLE MAIN LIBRARY

- The average visitor spent **164 minutes at the library** in 2024
- 24,000 patrons visited the library on Saturdays alone
- **55,500 visitors went to another business establishment** after a visit to the Main Library



SAN FRANCISCO MAIN LIBRARY

- The average visitor spent **165 minutes per stay**—the longest average dwell time among the peer libraries reviewed
- Welcomed **836,000 visitors** during 2024
- **206,000 visits to nearby businesses and attractions** after a Main Library visit

3

Driving Advocacy for Urban Libraries



ULC's advocacy strategy seeks to garner more support and funding for policies that strengthen and advance the essential role of public libraries. Through engagement with lawmakers in Congress, U.S. federal agencies, and key stakeholders, we advocate for several key policy positions that center the critical role that public libraries play in urban communities.

- **Advancing the Case for the Institute of Museum and Library Services**
- **Ongoing Education on the Hill**
- **E-Content Advocacy**

Federal Advocacy for Libraries

Advancing the Case for IMLS

In March of 2025, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order calling for the gutting of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), resulting in the cancellation of all existing discretionary grants, some state block grants, and a reduction-in-force for IMLS staff.

ULC immediately partnered with the **Association for Rural and Small Libraries** (ARSL) and the **Public Library Association** (PLA) to speak and call for Congress to oppose the gutting of IMLS and rescind grant cancellations. ULC also joined with ARSL to bring our respective memberships to Capitol Hill, engaging in 33 meetings in both chambers of Congress, largely focused on Republicans on key committees overseeing IMLS funding.

In meeting after meeting, we saw stories from ULC and ARSL members break through to get to the heart of what IMLS funding meant for our nation's public libraries. And, more recently, we saw extremely promising signals from Congress itself: draft appropriations bills have maintained funding for IMLS programs and grants, with only minor reductions to operations budgets – an outcome that was nearly inconceivable before this work began. Alongside these and other key efforts, 21 states brought a lawsuit that ultimately resulted in a U.S. District Court issuing a permanent ruling reversing efforts to dismantle IMLS, with all federal grants being reinstated.

This decision is the direct result of tireless advocacy from libraries all around the country.

While there may be further legal challenges ahead, ULC will continue to work to educate members of Congress and the public on the essential role IMLS plays in day-to-day library functioning to ensure it is able to fulfill its mission now and in the years to come.



Ongoing Education on Capitol Hill

Throughout this battle for IMLS, ULC's advocacy efforts continued to include recognition and funding for libraries as essential public infrastructure, literacy leaders, and workforce centers.

A few highlights from this work:

- ULC was proud to be cited as a supporter of the newly reintroduced Adult Education WORKS Act, a bipartisan bill led by Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Jack Reed (D-RI) aimed at strengthening and expanding adult education programs nationwide.
- In March, ULC worked with COSLA and ARSL leaders on the Voices for Libraries Hill Day event, reinforcing our unified federal advocacy efforts on behalf of the entire field.
- In December, the U.S. Government Accountability Office published a report highlighting the urgent needs of library facilities across the country. The report found that an estimated 38% of the nation's public library buildings—about 6,000—have at least one major building system in poor condition. ULC President & CEO Brooks Rainwater was interviewed at length for this report, and ULC members participated in the nationally representative survey that informed it.

22
SENATE MEETINGS

11
HOUSE MEETINGS

26
REPUBLICAN MEETINGS

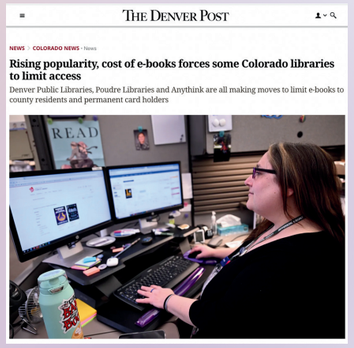
7
DEMOCRAT MEETINGS

E-Content Advocacy

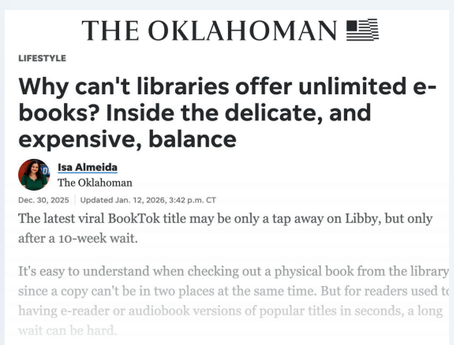
The Outsized Cost of E-Books for Libraries

In general, most library patrons—and many stakeholders, such as local government leaders and library trustees—don't understand that purchasing e-books and e-audiobooks are vastly more expensive for libraries than for consumers. A lack of sustainable models for libraries to buy these materials has led to increased costs for libraries, and long wait times and arduous lending restrictions for patrons: **A typical digital book license costs libraries $55 for 2 years, with checkout limited to a single user.**

In order to prepare for a concentrated push for dialogue with publishers and platform providers, ULC's **E-Content Action Team,** a coalition of leaders from 36 libraries, met regularly in 2025 to develop a solutions-based approach to critical e-content issues, advance sustainable library access to digital content, and educate the public on this seldom-understood topic. Here are just a few examples of where ULC leaders and Action Team members have advocated for this in the media.







Free Microsoft Licensing for Library Computers

Sustained advocacy by ULC, the Public Library Association, and major urban systems in 2025 led **Microsoft to create a new program offering free Office Standard 2024 and Windows licenses for all public-access computers in public libraries.** This represents a substantial cost savings for library systems and responds directly to sector-wide concerns following Microsoft's transition of libraries from EDU to nonprofit pricing. **LEARN MORE.**



ULC Statement on Equitable Access to E-Books

"As digital technologies become increasingly inseparable from the ways that people learn, work and interact, public libraries' abilities to afford access to e-books, e-audiobooks and other e-content like streaming movies are more important than ever.

Publishers need to provide libraries with stable lending models and fair pricing for e-content, like those in place for print books.

Thank You...

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Thank You, Members

** = New/Returning Member in 2025*

ALASKA
Anchorage Public Library

ALBERTA
Calgary Public Library
Edmonton Public Library

ARIZONA
Mesa Public Library*
Phoenix Public Library
Pima County Public Library

ARKANSAS
Central Arkansas Library System

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Vancouver Public Library

CALIFORNIA
Alameda County Library
Berkeley Public Library
Carlsbad City Library
Contra Costa County Library
Glendale Library, Arts & Culture
LA County Library
Los Angeles Public Library
Marin County Free Library
Oakland Public Library
Palm Desert Library
Palo Alto City Library
Pasadena Public Library
Sacramento Public Library
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Santa Clara City Library
Santa Clara County Library District
Santa Clarita Public Library
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Anythink
Arapahoe Library District*
Denver Public Library
Douglas County Libraries
Jefferson County Public Library
Pikes Peak Library District
Poudre River Public Library District

CONNECTICUT
Ferguson Library
Hartford Public Library
New Haven Free Public Library

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC Public Library

FLORIDA
Broward County Library
Jacksonville Public Library
Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach
Miami-Dade Public Library System
Orange County Library System
Palm Beach County Library System
Sarasota County Public Libraries
Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library

GEORGIA
Athens Regional Library System
Chattahoochee Valley Libraries
Clayton County Library System
Cobb County Public Library*
DeKalb County Public Library
Fulton County Library System
Gwinnett County Public Library
Live Oak Public Libraries

IDAHO
Boise Public Library

ILLINOIS
Chicago Public Library
Oak Park Public Library
Schaumburg Township District Library
Skokie Public Library

INDIANA
Allen County Public Library
Anderson Public Library
Carmel Clay Public Library
Elkhart Public Library
Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library
Johnson County Public Library System
La Porte County Public Library
Lake County Public Library
St. Joseph County Public Library
The Indianapolis Public Library

IOWA
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Iowa City Public Library

KANSAS
Johnson County Library
Kansas City, Kansas Public Library*
Lawrence Public Library
Olathe Public Library
Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library
Wichita Public Library

KENTUCKY
Kenton County Public Library*
Lexington Public Library
Louisville Free Public Library

LOUISIANA
East Baton Rouge Parish Library
New Orleans Public Library
Shreve Memorial Library

MAINE
Portland Public Library

MARYLAND
Anne Arundel County Public Library
Baltimore County Public Library
Calvert Library*
Charles County Public Library*
Enoch Pratt Free Library
Howard County Library System
Montgomery County Public Libraries
Prince George's County Memorial Library System
St. Mary's County Library*

MASSACHUSETTS
Boston Public Library
Cambridge Public Library
Springfield City Library
Worcester Public Library

MICHIGAN
Detroit Public Library
Gloria Coles Flint Public Library
Grand Rapids Public Library
Kalamazoo Public Library
Kent District Library
Public Libraries of Saginaw*

MINNESOTA
Dakota County Library
Hennepin County Library
Saint Paul Public Library

MISSOURI
Kansas City Public Library
Mid-Continent Public Library
St. Charles City-County Library
St. Louis County Library
St. Louis Public Library

NEBRASKA
Do Space
Lincoln City Libraries
Omaha Public Library

NEVADA
Henderson Libraries*
Las Vegas-Clark County Library District

NEW JERSEY
Edison Public Library*
Hoboken Public Library
Jersey City Free Public Library
Newark Public Library
Paterson Free Public Library

NEW MEXICO
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System

NEW YORK
Brooklyn Public Library
New York Public Library
Queens Public Library
Suffolk Cooperative Library System

NORTH CAROLINA
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
Durham County Library
Forsyth County Public Library
Greensboro Public Library
Wake County Public Libraries*

NOVA SCOTIA
Halifax Public Libraries

OHIO
Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library
Cleveland Public Library
Columbus Metropolitan Library
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Dayton Metro Library
Delaware County District Library*
Stark Library
The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County
Toledo Lucas County Public Library

OKLAHOMA
Metropolitan Library System
Pioneer Library System
Tulsa City-County Library

ONTARIO
Barrie Public Library
Cambridge Public Library*
Hamilton Public Library
Kitchener Public Library
Markham Public Library
Milton Public Library
Mississauga Library
Oakville Public Library
Ottawa Public Library
Pickering Public Library
Richmond Hill Public Library
Toronto Public Library
Vaughan Public Libraries

OREGON
Jackson County Library Services
Multnomah County Library

PENNSYLVANIA
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Free Library of Philadelphia

SASKATCHEWAN

Regina Public Library
Saskatoon Public Library*

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