

# FORWARD

## WI ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES CONFERENCE '25



### CONFERENCE CHAIR

*Heather Thompson*  
*Kenosha Public Library*

### WAPL 2025 Features:

Sessions organized by  
**areas of interest**

Reception and social at the  
**beautiful Oshkosh Public Library**

**Networking opportunities**  
with library colleagues

**Breakout sessions** with  
library professionals sharing  
best practices and new  
innovations

**Keynote sessions** focused  
on a diverse array of  
contemporary topics  
important to the public  
library community



We hope you are excited to move your public library's services forward at the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Annual Conference! This year's theme is—you guessed it—*Forward*. This is not just the Wisconsin State Motto, but a call to action. When we come together to learn from the creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness of our peers, we leave inspired to make the changes we want to see in our own communities.

And I promise you: there is no shortage of inspiring programs at this year's conference! In addition to a well-rounded slate of engaging breakout sessions that run the gamut from creating AI usage policies to providing top-notch reading recommendations for Horror fanatics, we are welcoming several phenomenal keynote speakers. Past ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo will kick off the conference by giving us tools for navigating uncertain times in our libraries. Author and Geology Professor Marcia Bjornerud will talk about reading the world around us (followed by a book signing!). Jeanne Wolfe, Director of the Ben Guthrie - Lac Du Flambeau Public Library, alongside a panel of tribal library representatives, will raise our cultural awareness and understanding of Wisconsin's tribal communities. On Friday afternoon, the conference will close with a legal information and Q&A session with Professor, Lawyer, and Librarian, Tomas Lipinski—so, be sure to come prepared with any burning legal questions you might have regarding public libraries!

Perhaps best of all, though, is that the WAPL Annual Conference is punctuated by plentiful break times, mealtimes, and activities that allow you to connect, learn from, and socialize with public library peers from across the state. We will kick off the conference Wednesday evening in a relaxed setting with an opening celebration buffet. On Thursday evening, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in an exclusive tour and networking reception at the historic Oshkosh Public Library. Pre-registrations are required to attend both evening functions.

I look forward to welcoming you to the conference.

Heather Thompson  
WAPL Conference Chair

# FORWARD

WI ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES CONFERENCE '25

April 30 - May 2, 2025

Oshkosh Marriott Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center

## FEATURED SPEAKERS

OPENING KEYNOTE

**Loida Garcia-Febo**

2018-2019 ALA President &  
International Library Consultant



THURSDAY LUNCHEON KEYNOTE

**Marcia Bjornerud**, author of *Turning to Stone: A Geologist's Love Letter to the Wisdom of Rocks*

FRIDAY BREAKFAST KEYNOTE

Panel discussion: Native American Cultural Awareness of Wisconsin Tribal Communities with Jeanne Wolfe, Director, Ben Guthrie - Lac Du Flambeau Public Library

CLOSING KEYNOTE

Legal Information Q&A with Librarian Lawyer, Professor Tomas Lipinski

*Plus 36 breakout sessions on a variety of topics led by your peers.*

[View the Complete Program Schedule](#)



## CONFERENCE APP

We have chosen the Results @ Hand app for our conference technology needs. Registered attendees will be able to download the Results @ Hand app or access the app from their smartphone, tablet, or PC web browser. The app will feature our entire conference agenda, speaker handouts, venue maps, community message boards, sponsor information, and tools to interact with other attendees.



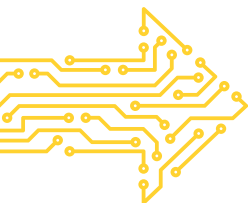
## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Chair Heather Thompson, Kenosha Public Library  
Joe Bongers, Oskosh Public Library  
Tana Elias, Madison Public Library  
Nicole Mszal, Hustisford Community Library  
Roxanne Staveness, Rio Community Library

*Special thanks to Amy Mitchell, Beloit Public Library, for designing the conference logo.*

[wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-2025-conference](https://wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-2025-conference)

# Special Events



## Opening Celebration Buffet

Wednesday, April 30 | 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Attendees registered for the opening reception can catch up with colleagues, make new friends, and create new connections in a relaxed setting while enjoying a buffet and a cash bar. Required pre-registration is closed.

## WLA Foundation Button-Making Station

Thursday, May 1 – Friday, May 2 |

The station will be available in Leander Choate room following keynote sessions and during the afternoon break

Add some flair to your conference experience! Stop by the WLA Foundation-sponsored Button-Making Station and unleash your creativity. Decorate a custom button that celebrates this year's conference theme, "Forward", and proudly wear it on your name badge lanyard. It's the perfect way to add a bit of flair while showing how you're moving libraries forward. Don't miss out—come make a button and learn how the WLA Foundation helps take your member experience to the next level!



## At The Movies with Librarians: Foreward vs. Forward

Thursday, May 1 | 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Leander Choate Room

A conference tradition! Our panel will discuss books being made into movies slated for release in 2025. After enjoying exciting trailers, panelists will analyze how well (or poorly) these books may translate to the screen. Panelists will also rate films previewed at previous conferences. *Join us for this popular event!*

## Networking Reception at the Oshkosh Public Library

Thursday, May 1 | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

106 Washington Avenue, Oshkosh, WI

Required pre-registration is closed.



Registered attendees will join us at the beautiful, historic Oshkosh Public Library in the famous Dome enjoying delicious food offerings while socializing with colleagues.

Located in the heart of downtown Oshkosh, the library was built in 1900 and designed by famed architect William Waters. It is one of the most iconic and photogenic buildings in Oshkosh. Don't forget to say hello to the bronze lions Sawyer and Harris, the beloved Guardians of the Library!

The library is about a 7-minute walk from the conference center. Attendees are encouraged to carpool; transportation will not be provided. Free parking is available.

## Tour of the Appleton Public Library

Friday, May 2 | 2:30 p.m.

Appleton Public Library, 200 N. Appleton Street, Appleton, WI

Free: Pre-registration required

Wrap up the conference with a special tour of the newly transformed Appleton Public Library!



## WAPL CONFERENCE 2025 – SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE



Schedule is subject to change. Complete session descriptions and speaker information can be found on the WAPL conference app or at <https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-2025-conference>.

<b>Wednesday, April 30</b>		
1:00 – 3:00 PM		
	BF Carter/Anna M	WPLC Board/Membership Meeting
3:30 – 5:30 PM		
	BF Carter/Anna M	SRLAAW Meeting
4:00 – 6:00 PM		
	South Concourse	Registration Open
5:00 – 7:00 PM		
	South Breakouts	Opening Celebration Buffet
<b>Thursday, May 1</b>		
7:00 AM – 4:00 PM		
	South Concourse	Registration Open
8:00 – 9:00 AM		
	Leander Choate Room	Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00 AM		
	Leander Choate Room	Conference Welcome and Opening Keynote: Loida Garcia-Febo
10:30 – 11:30 AM		
	KM Hutchinson	Book Talk 101: Engage, Excite, and Empower Readers
	Anna M/Evelyn	Forward Together: Building Bridges to Serve Hispanic/Latine Communities Through Creative Partnerships
	Thistle	New Trustees: You Don't Know What You Don't Know
	Lynch/Lefevre	Search to Shelf: Optimizing Your Library on Google
	Henrietta	Why is the Librarian Paid Less Than Everyone Else?
	BF Carter	You've Gotta Break a Few Eggs: The Case for Making a Mess
12:00 – 1:00 PM		
	Leander Choate Room	Luncheon Keynote: Reading the World Around Us: Rocks as Libraries with Dr. Marcia Bjornerud
1:15 – 2:15 PM		
	Henrietta	A Readers' Advisory Guide to the Horror Genre
	KM Hutchinson	Advocacy 101 for Trustees and Friends
	Anna M/Evelyn	Community Engagement: Taking YOUR Library Beyond Its Walls
	BF Carter	Equipping Families to Support Learning
	Lynch/Lefevre	Hosting a Library Renaissance Faire
	Thistle	Reaching More Readers with Libby
2:30 – 3:30 PM		
	Thistle	Growing a Successful Seed Library
	KM Hutchinson	Inclusive Programming for Adults with IDD
	Lynch/Lefevre	Libraries Flexing for the Future: Examining the Growing Need for Spaces and Technology
	Henrietta	Policy Power: Engaging Board Members and Directors in Shaping Library Futures
	Anna M/Evelyn	Public Libraries, Big Data, and AI: Oh My!
	BF Carter	Screen Smarts: Leveraging PBS KIDS Digital Media to Enrich Library Programs for Families and Youth

# WAPL CONFERENCE 2025 – SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE



3:30 – 4:00 PM		
	OCC Concourse (Riverside Atrium, Concourse & Patio)	Refreshment Break
4:00 – 5:00 PM		
	Leander Choate Room	At the Movies with Librarians: Foreward vs. Forward
6:00-8:00 PM		
	Oshkosh Public Library	Networking Reception at the Oshkosh Public Library
<b>Friday, May 2</b>		
7:00 AM – 12:00 PM		
	South Concourse	Registration
7:30 – 8:30 AM		
	Leander Choate Room	Breakfast
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM		
	Leander Choate Room	Native American Cultural Awareness of Wisconsin Tribal Communities
8:45 – 9:45 AM		
	Thistle	Creating Engaging Library Environments: A Case Study of Brown County East Branch Library
	Lynch/Lefevre	Creating Interactive Audio Experiences for Young Library Patrons
	Anna M/Evelyn	Cybersecurity for Public Libraries
	KM Hutchinson	Improving Accessibility @ Community Events
	Henrietta	Reflecting on Wisconsin's Public Library Standards: Reimagining a Stronger Future Together
	BF Carter	Sustainably Grow Your Summer Library Program
10:00 – 11:00 AM		
	Henrietta	Forward Together: Leveraging LGBTQ+ History Exhibits to Build Inclusive, Resilient Communities
	BF Carter	Global Tales & Local Hearts: How Libraries Can Help Raise Multicultural Kids
	Anna M/Evelyn	Hiring for Diversity: An Interactive Plan
	Lynch/Lefevre	Libraries Forward for Access to Justice
	KM Hutchinson	The Library as Time Machine: Using Historical Fiction to Build Community, Inspire Readers, and Make History Come Alive
	Thistle	Title II Website Accessibility: What All Public Libraries Should Know
11:15 AM – 12:15 PM		
	BF Carter	BadgerLink Resources for Youth Services
	Thistle	Data-Driven Strategic Planning
	Lynch/Lefevre	From Frenemies to BFFs: How to work with Friends and Foundations
	KM Hutchinson	Potosi Branch: A Successful Community Partnership
	Henrietta	Top 5 Energy-Efficient Solutions to Optimize Library Facilities
12:30 – 1:30 PM		
	Leander Choate Room	Luncheon Keynote/Closing Session: Legal Information Q&A with Librarian Lawyer, Professor Tomas A. Lipinski
2:30 – 3:30 PM		
	Appleton Public Library	Tour the Transformed Appleton Public Library!



# YOU ARE THE WLA FOUNDATION

*Every member of the Wisconsin Library Association is a member of WLAF, supporting Wisconsin libraries as essential institutions.*

## YOUR CONTRIBUTION SUPPORTS:



**Scholarships**  
for professional development  
and continuing education



**Awards**  
for excellence in our  
profession and literature



**Special Projects**  
moving our  
libraries forward



**Our Legacy**  
promoting the history of  
Wisconsin libraries and librarianship



**MAKE YOUR MARK!  
DONATE TODAY.**

[wisconsinlibraries.org/ways-to-give](https://wisconsinlibraries.org/ways-to-give)



## The UW–Madison Information School

***We educate future library and information leaders.***

- Nationally renowned MA Library & Information Studies program
- Lifelong learning opportunities from conferences to online courses

Visit us online:





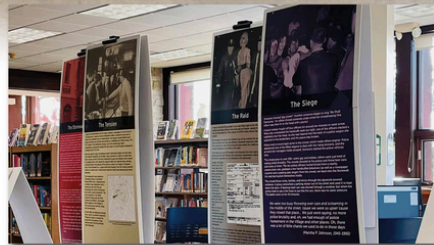
# UNCOVER UNTOLD STORIES



Scan to browse  
our catalog, now  
available to rent  
throughout Wisconsin



*foster respect, understanding,  
and lifelong learning*



*celebrate heroes, milestones,  
and the pursuit of equality*



*illuminate LGBTQ+ history  
with compelling exhibits*

Expanding Horizons offers informative and engaging traveling exhibits that bring the history of the LGBTQ+ community to life.

Connect to new and classic books, films, digital programs, and community speakers that inspire minds of every age with the hidden heroes who shaped our world, milestones in the fight for equality, and hope for the future.



## Expanding Horizons

Global LGBTQ Journeys through Time and Identity

ExpandingHorizons.lgbt ♦ vince@ExpandingHorizons.lgbt ♦ (414) 212-5410

# Session Descriptions

**Thursday 05/01/2025**

**9:00 am to 10:00 am**

**Conference Welcome and Opening**

**Keynote: Loida Garcia-Febo**

**"Navigating Change with Strength: Tools for Managing Anxiety and Uncertainty in Libraries" with Loida Garcia-Febo, International Library Consultant**

The past few years have been marked by rapid, unpredictable shifts, putting librarians in high-stress environments where balancing personal well-being with professional demands has never been more challenging. In the face of uncertainty, the pressure to serve communities effectively while managing personal anxiety can lead to burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Garcia-Febo will bring information to equip librarians with a set of actionable, time-tested strategies for navigating periods of high anxiety and maintaining mental wellness in the workplace. Participants will learn how to foster emotional resilience, maintain a sense of control, and develop a mindset of adaptability. Through exploring simple yet powerful tools, attendees will discover ways to manage their emotions, build strong support systems, and stay focused on their purpose, even in the midst of uncertainty.

Drawing from global practices and wellness principles, the session will empower librarians to embrace change with confidence and resilience. Each participant will leave with a personalized "Wellness Empowerment Toolkit" that includes resources for emotional management, cultivating hope, and leveraging technology to support mental wellness.

This session, led by Loida Garcia-Febo, offers practical takeaways for anyone looking to stay grounded and thrive in an ever-changing landscape.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Techniques for managing emotions in high-stress environments
- Strategies for maintaining a sense of purpose and focus
- Tools for strengthening support networks
- Approaches to fostering a positive, adaptable mindset
- Methods for creating hope and long-term vision
- A personalized Wellness Empowerment Toolkit, including AI-driven resources for self-care

**Thursday 05/01/2025**

**10:30 am to 11:30 am**

**Book Talk 101: Engage, Excite, and Empower Readers**

*Terry Ehle, Lester Public Library*

As a librarian, you already understand stories—now it's time to share that magic! Learn to create quick, compelling, and irresistible book talks that captivate your audience in under a minute. Whether or not you've read the book, you'll learn the skills to confidently present a title and make it come alive. Then, explore how to turn book talking into a powerful tool for building strong, lifelong readers within your community, with a focus on outreach to schools. Walk away with practical tips, strategies, and a new enthusiasm for connecting readers with the stories they'll love!



### **Forward Together: Building Bridges to Serve Hispanic/Latine Communities Through Creative Partnerships**

*Rebecca Barry, Chilton Public Library;  
Maria Mason, Multicultural Coalition Inc.*

Discover how the Chilton Public Library partnered with a local non-profit and church to create innovative programs and services for the Hispanic/Latine community. This session will explore the collaborative process, including overcoming challenges, aligning goals, and securing grant funding. Learn about bilingual programming, cultural celebrations, and family literacy initiatives that enhanced community engagement and equity. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and inspiration to build impactful partnerships in their own communities, regardless of library size. This session demonstrates how creativity, persistence, and collaboration can help libraries move Forward! to better serve diverse populations and overcome outreach challenges.

### **New Trustees: You Don't Know What You Don't Know**

*Kristin Laufenberg, Outagamie Waupaca Library System*

Local citizens from all backgrounds are appointed to provide oversight of Wisconsin libraries' budgets, directors, buildings, and operations while operating within local, state, and federal laws, and are often just expected to hit the ground running. What do you need to know to make your first few months less overwhelming and confusing? How can you contribute to meetings and be a good steward of community resources, all while learning the ropes yourself? Why are Wisconsin libraries like this in the first place?

The presenter will provide context, share resources and checklists to fill in the gaps,

and set the stage for a successful first year of trusteeship.

### **Search to Shelf: Optimizing Your Library on Google**

*Emily Heller, Bridges Library System; Vince Sabatino, Midwest Pano; Emma Plitzner, Mukwonago Community Library*

The presenters will share strategies for all experience levels to enhance your library's online visibility through Google Business Profiles. This session covers setting up and optimizing your profile, creating impactful updates, and showcasing library spaces. Learn practical ways to connect with your community, boost discoverability, and turn Google searches into library visits. Plus, discover how photos and 360° images can make your library even more engaging and accessible.

### **Why is the Librarian Paid Less Than Everyone Else?**

*Kari Preuss, Elroy Public Library*

Asking for a raise is not easy. Listen to the harrowing journey of a plucky small-town Library Director who asked, was approved, was denied, was devastated, and then was determined to prove her worth so that she would not get denied again. Hopefully you get inspired to stand up for more than just your patrons and begin to stand up for yourself.

### **You've Gotta Break a Few Eggs: The Case for Making a Mess**

*Heather Thompson, Kenosha Public Library; Shawn Wolf, Kenosha Public Library*

Toys left out all the time, an unstaffed art room, splatter painting indoors, a sand table out on the floor for an entire month...and much more. These things really happen in the Youth & Family Services department at the Kenosha Public Library! Join the presenters to learn how making a mess can benefit patrons, why they embrace it, and how they manage it.

You'll also get a ton of fun programming ideas that range from slightly untidy to totally catastrophic!

**Thursday 05/01/2025**

**12:00 pm to 1:00 pm**

**Luncheon Keynote: Reading the World Around Us: Rocks as Libraries with Dr. Marcia Bjornerud**

Rocks don't have a good reputation for being communicative, but to geologists they are richly illustrated texts – Earth's own account of its long history. Like libraries, rocks provide access to otherwise inaccessible worlds. Both allow us to travel through time, expanding our imaginations, deepening our empathy for other ways of living, and helping us see ourselves in proper perspective.

**Thursday 05/01/2025**

**1:15 pm to 2:15 pm**

**A Readers' Advisory Guide to the Horror Genre**

*Sarah Read, Oshkosh Public Library*

Not sure what to recommend when patron requests skew spooky? Is your horror collection looking a little stale? RA Librarian and award-winning Horror author/genre aficionado Sarah Read will walk you through this popular genre so you can make those recommendations with confidence and stock your shelves with the most popular titles. We'll explore the labyrinth of subgenres, highlight popular tropes, and discuss the latest hot trends. Horror is booming in popularity and diversity. This talk will help equip you for success (without giving you nightmares).

**Advocacy 101 for Trustees and Friends**

*Bradley Shipps, Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS)*

A library advocate is someone who understands the value and importance of

library service and communicates that importance to the community, governmental leaders and other decision-makers. Advocacy is a core responsibility of library trustees and friends. Build your confidence to speak up for your library, secure funding and community support, and become a library champion.

**Community Engagement: Taking YOUR Library Beyond Its Walls**

*Alex Coggeshell, Ripon Public Library; Susie Menk, Ripon Public Library*

Libraries play a vital role in every community, but waiting for people to discover us isn't enough—we need to meet them where they are. Community engagement is about fostering connections, building trust, and becoming a visible presence in the lives of those we serve.

This session highlights the significance of community engagement in a library's success, offering actionable ideas for connecting with your community, real-world examples of triumphs and challenges, and practical tips to enhance your library's impact and involvement. Attendees are encouraged to share experiences, ask questions, and engage in collaborative discussion.

**Equipping Families to Support Learning**

*Bev Schumacher, Consultant*

Parents are children's first educator! Libraries are ideal partners to equip families in guiding early learning. Parents will benefit when they are provided with encouragement, knowledge, skills, awareness, and resources that empower their engagement. Library programming that embraces young learners also needs to empower those that are the dominant influencers in the lives of children--be that family members, babysitters/caregivers, or educators. It takes community

collaboration for all youngsters to be school ready!

### **Hosting a Library Renaissance Faire**

*Amanda Bosky, Stoughton Public Library; Liz Zimdars, Middleton Public Library; Jenn Senn, Middleton Public Library; Cynthia Schlegel, Stoughton Public Library*

Bring history to life with costumes, performances, and hands-on activities! Renaissance Faires are a great way to engage attendees of all ages in an interactive setting. Libraries can utilize this event to expand programming, attract diverse audiences, and foster community involvement. Learn strategies for success from a smaller library (Stoughton) and a larger library (Middleton) as they share what they learned from their own experiences hosting community Renaissance Faires. Topics will include volunteer recruitment and training, collaboration with other municipal departments, and resources for booking Ren Faire performers and presenters.

### **Reaching More Readers with Libby**

*Kristin Laufenberg, Outagamie Waupaca Library System*

With over 9 million checkouts in Wisconsin in 2024, OverDrive's popularity shows no signs of slowing down. Are your patrons taking full advantage of it?

This session will share the tips and behind-the-scenes context you need to teach and promote Libby and OverDrive to both your coworkers and patrons. The presenter does genre selecting for WPLC, digital selection and purchasing for two library systems, and is an avid Libby user. If you're wondering what any of that means, where all those titles come from, or you're just insecure in your Libby skills, make this session part of your WAPL schedule!

**Thursday 05/01/2025**

**2:30 pm to 3:30 pm**

### **Growing a Successful Seed Library**

*Stephanie Schulz, L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library*

Gardening programs support several values common to public libraries by providing equitable access to resources that enhance community wellness, promoting hands-on learning, and encouraging sustainable practices. Seed libraries not only reduce the cost of gardening by providing free seeds, they reduce waste, encourage creative education, and foster community connections.

Learn how to set up a seed library, from choosing seeds and navigating state seed labeling laws, to promotional strategies and methods of evaluating success. Gain tools to adapt the program to your community through community partnerships, data analysis, and cost-saving options, and take home templates for labels, handouts, and more.

### **Inclusive Programming for Adults with IDD**

*Kit Killian, Portage County Library*

Come hear about programs tailored for adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities implemented at the presenter's library and community. This session will empower attendees to engage with this often overlooked population of learners through inclusive and captivating story times.

Attendees will leave with a list of learning resources, best practices for planning accessible programs, tips for partnering with community organizations, and a story time lesson plan ready to be put into action at their libraries.



**Libraries Flexing for the Future:  
Examining the Growing Need for  
Spaces and Technology**

*Teresa Schmidt, Wisconsin Department  
of Public Instruction; Ben Miller,  
Wisconsin Department of Public  
Instruction; John Thompson, IFLS Library  
System*

Within two months of opening the Flexible Facilities Program (FFP), the state of Wisconsin received applications for over \$297M for projects addressing inequities in access to infrastructure for work, education, and health monitoring in Wisconsin's communities. Of the 100 applicants, eighty of them were for public library spaces.

What do these applications say about the space needs and increasing demand for meeting rooms, modernized equipment and infrastructure in Wisconsin's libraries? What were the commonalities in successful FFP applications, and how can libraries be prepared for future funding opportunities? Let's talk about the lessons learned from FFP and what they mean for the future.

**Policy Power: Engaging Board  
Members and Directors in Shaping  
Library Futures**

*Kristie Hauer, Nicolet Federated Library  
System; Hannah Good Zima, Nicolet  
Federated Library System*

Dive into this informative session on drafting and maintaining library board policies. This is your go-to guide for crafting robust, legally compliant policies. Ready to demystify the difference between policy and procedure? Kristie Hauer and Hannah Good Zima from Nicolet Federated Library System have you covered! We will also reveal the top 10 essential policies every public library should have. This session is perfect for library directors

and board members who are eager to collaborate and develop an effective policy framework. Equip yourself with actionable tips and strategies to lead your library with confidence. Attend today and become a policy-making master!

**Public Libraries, Big Data, and AI: Oh  
My!**

*Zander Miller, Kenosha Public Library;  
Rob Nunez, Kenosha Public Library*

AI in libraries, like Thanos, is inevitable. This presentation explores how libraries can create AI usage policies and leverage AI in various operations. We'll discuss the Kenosha Public Library's journey in policy development, its creation of a privacy focused data warehouse, and the various tools used for accomplishing these tasks.

**Screen Smarts: Leveraging PBS KIDS  
Digital Media to Enrich Library  
Programs for Families and Youth**

*Mouna Algahaithi, PBS Wisconsin  
Education; Kirsten Smith, Manitowoc  
Public Library*

This session explores effective ways to integrate PBS KIDS digital media into library programming to engage families and young learners. Participants will learn practical strategies for incorporating culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate media into storytimes, STEM activities, and family engagement events. The session also provides tools for navigating conversations about screen time, empowering caregivers to balance digital and real-world experiences with confidence and compassion. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas to enrich their programs and foster meaningful, screen-smart learning experiences for all.

**Thursday 05/01/2025**  
**4:00 pm to 5:00 pm**

**At the Movies with Librarians:**  
**Foreward vs. Forward**

*Rachel Arndt, Rachel Arndt Consulting;*  
*Kim Dearth, Wonewoc Public Library;*  
*Erin Foley, Adams County Library*

A conference tradition! The panel will discuss books being made into movies slated for release in 2025. After enjoying exciting trailers, panelists will analyze how well (or poorly) these books may translate to the screen. Panelists will also rate films previewed at previous conferences.

**Friday 05/02/2025**  
**7:30 am to 8:30 am**

**Native American Cultural Awareness**  
**of Wisconsin Tribal Communities**

*Jeanne Wolfe, Lac Du Flambeau Band Of Lake Superior Indians*

Jeanne Wolfe, director of the Ben Guthrie - Lac du Flambeau Public Library, along with others will do a presentation on their tribal communities. They will educate others on their treaties, employment, library services, technology status, and future goals of their Tribes. They will share dates of the annual Pow-Wows to attend to appreciate the culture. Some display boards will be available to view.

**Friday 05/02/2025**  
**8:45 am to 9:45 am**

**Creating Engaging Library**  
**Environments: A Case Study of Brown**  
**County East Branch Library**

*Heather Nohr-Valley, Somerville Architects and Engineers; Dan Wiitanen, Somerville Architects And Engineers; Halle Laverdure, Somerville Architects And Engineers*

How can innovative design transform your library into a vibrant community hub? Join Dan Wiitanen, Senior Project Architect, and Halle Laverdure, Interior Designer, as they take you through the process of creating engaging and functional library spaces. Using the award-winning Brown County East Branch Library as a case study, we'll explore the architectural, engineering, and interior design process, share best practices, and highlight the importance of community engagement throughout the process. Learn how thoughtful design can boost library usage, programming, and community involvement, all while staying on budget and schedule. Don't miss this opportunity to reimagine your library's potential!

**Creating Interactive Audio Experiences**  
**for Young Library Patrons**

*Teresa Douglas, Pauline Haass Public Library; Anna Dinkel, Carter Memorial Library; Rebecca Feirer, L.D. Fargo Public Library; Emily Vincent, Hales Corners Library*

Engage young patrons with interactive audio devices like Tonieboxes, Yoto Players, and Wonderbooks. This workshop provides practical strategies for selecting, cataloging, and promoting these tools to enhance accessibility and engagement. Learn how to set up devices for library use, package them for circulation, and create effective displays. Gain insights on managing replacement fees and tips to streamline set up process. Walk away with actionable ideas to make these devices a hit in your library.

**Cybersecurity for Public Libraries**

*Rob Nunez, Kenosha Public Library; Zander Miller, Kenosha Public Library*

Libraries are not immune to cyber attacks. A new variation--Ransomware--

provides a new set of challenges for library IT staff to keep the library technology systems safe. Public library IT staff will provide a practical overview of how library staff can help prevent cybersecurity attacks from occurring in their libraries.

### **Improving Accessibility @ Community Events**

*Chelsey Myhre Foster, Knutson Memorial Library*

Libraries play a vital role in community engagement- ensuring community events are accessible to people with disabilities is critical. In this session, you'll learn best practices for planning inclusive events that meet the needs of all participants, how to advocate for accessibility, and what to do when a new need arises. Attendees will explore strategies to find community partners to aid in your inclusive efforts and discuss common challenges in creating truly welcoming spaces.

The presenter will share accessible event planning guides will be shared to help you apply these strategies effectively. Join us to ensure your library's community events are both welcoming and accessible to everyone.

### **Reflecting on Wisconsin's Public Library Standards: Reimagining a Stronger Future Together**

*Jeni Schomber, Department of Public Instruction; Teresa Schmidt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*

How do you assess library services in your community? Last revised in 2018, the Wisconsin Public Library Standards remain a useful tool for library planning and reflection. Yet we know that dramatic changes to how libraries serve their communities are driving a need for new conversations about how we

demonstrate the value of our work and plan for the future.

Join Wisconsin Library Services Team staff in an interactive discussion about the current standards, what's missing from them, and how they should address youth and inclusive services. Let's talk about how future revisions can help move our libraries forward!

### **Sustainably Grow Your Summer Library Program**

*Dawn Tevis, La Crosse County Library*

Looking for ways to keep your Summer Library Program (SLP) energized and transformative? This session will inspire you with tips and strategies to align your programming with ALA's sustainability values. Bring environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable practice to your library through hands on program and policy fun! Through the exploration of arts and science activities, community collaborations, summer self care, and more, learn how a sustainability mindset and your community's unique characteristics can transform your SLP and nurture community resilience. You'll leave with creative ideas of ways to strengthen summer engagement and lead your library to a more just and sustainable future.

**Friday 05/02/2025**  
**10:00 am to 11:00 am**

### **Forward Together: Leveraging LGBTQ+ History Exhibits to Build Inclusive, Resilient Communities**

*Vince Tripi, Expanding Horizons Traveling LGBT History Exhibits*

Libraries are vital hubs for fostering inclusion and education, especially in challenging times. This session explores how traveling LGBTQ+ history exhibits



from Expanding Horizons can help libraries fill gaps in community education, celebrate diversity, and foster belonging. Participants will gain practical strategies for implementing exhibits, collaborating with local organizations, and creating engaging programming, even in small spaces or politically charged environments. Through interactive components, attendees will leave inspired and equipped to position their libraries as inclusive community anchors while advancing equitable access to LGBTQ+ history and resources.

### **Global Tales & Local Hearts: How Libraries Can Help Raise Multicultural Kids**

*Ajanta Chakraborty , Bollywood & Culture Groove*

Join bestselling author Ajanta for a dynamic workshop empowering children's librarians to create inclusive library spaces. Explore strategies for selecting diverse stories, and integrating multicultural books, activities, and digital resources. Engage in interactive discussions and hands-on activities to make diversity a joyful part of learning. Discover practical ways to transform your library into a vibrant hub where every child feels seen and valued. Walk away with tools to create welcoming, culturally rich environments that inspire young readers. Come ready to transform your library where every child can see themselves reflected in the stories they hear and the faces they meet.

### **Hiring for Diversity: An Interactive Plan**

*Tracy Herold, Dane County Library Service*

The Presenter will give an overview of the Ripple Intern Program, its origination, execution and outcomes. The Presenter will discuss Dane County's Alternative Selection Process and how Dane County Library Service has used this process to

help diversify DCLS staff. In addition, the Presenter will conduct an interactive discussion that will provide participants with 3-5 concrete next steps for pursuing diversity hiring within their libraries.

### **Libraries Forward for Access to Justice**

*Jaime Healy-Plotkin, LIFT Wisconsin;*  
*Megan Lee, Judicare/WI Law Help; Erica Nelson, LIFT Wisconsin*

As a local nonprofit LIFT Wisconsin offers the online Legal Tune Up tool to allow access to justice to citizens of Wisconsin. Public libraries in Wisconsin are perfect institutions to partner up and bring the tool to its patrons. This program will discuss access to justice issues in civil actions, teach the basics of the tool, and seek partnerships with libraries and staff to guide users to greater access to information.

### **Wisconsin Law Help**

at <https://www.wislawhelp.org/> offers online assistance in three areas of civil actions statewide, Housing Law, Consumer Law, and Family Law. Judicare offers assistance in civil actions for the Northern half of Wisconsin.

This session aims to share information about improving access to justice for all members of the community, using the existing institutions of libraries to facilitate this message. Legal Tune Up is designed to help Wisconsinites identify and clear civil legal problems on their own or with help from trusted professionals. As a mobile first web-based application, it uses publicly available data (driver's license, criminal, eviction, court, and child support records) to help people identify and address legal needs. Low income individuals face the greatest challenges when it comes to accessing justice for civil legal barriers to their economic success which the Legal Tune Up tool seeks to address. In addition, the tool

and the LIFT website are all available in Spanish.

This session will inform the audience about the Library Program and training available to Wisconsin libraries at no cost. In order to maximize the training capabilities of the small LIFT Wisconsin staff and the experience and knowledge of public library staff, the Library Program offers five options of trainings of the Legal Tune Up tool to help access to justice in your community:

L: Library staff training

Group training by LIFT Wisconsin trainer in one program event

E: Expert training

One on one training to teach the expert in your library by LIFT Wisconsin trainer

G: Group training

Group training for staff of multiple libraries at a library system or conference by LIFT Wisconsin trainer in one program event

A: All in training

Public training to members of your community by a trained library staff member in one program event

L: Library programming

Regularly scheduled library program with a trained library staff

### **The Library as Time Machine: Using Historical Fiction to Build Community, Inspire Readers, and Make History Come Alive**

*Eileen Schnabel, author of the Kep Westguard historical fiction series*

The presenter will explore how libraries can use historical fiction to engage communities, foster intergenerational learning, and build partnerships. Attendees will gain practical strategies for implementing history-themed programs, hosting immersive events, and using storytelling to inspire lifelong learning. This session will provide actionable tools to help libraries connect readers with history in creative ways

while strengthening their role as community hubs.

### **Title II Website Accessibility: What All Public Libraries Should Know**

*Brendan Tuckey, LEANWI Technology Services; Erica Brewster, Wisconsin Valley Library Service*

In 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice announced new ADA rules requiring public websites, including libraries, to achieve full accessibility compliance by 2026 or 2027 based on service population. This session offers a comprehensive overview of website accessibility standards and practical tools to help libraries meet these requirements. Presenters will explain what “accessible” means, its impact on library users, and delve into WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines, the POUR principles, and strategies for accessible design. Attendees will gain hands-on knowledge about evaluation tools, compliance resources, and best practices for creating inclusive library websites.

**Friday 05/02/2025**

**11:15 am to 12:15 pm**

### **BadgerLink Resources for Youth Services**

*Jen Champoux, Department of Public Instruction*

BadgerLink is Wisconsin's Online Library, providing a foundational collection serving all Wisconsin residents, including Wisconsin's librarians and staff that work with youth. Join this discussion highlighting the resources available in the BadgerLink collection that apply specifically to development of youth programming and collections for young readers, as well as professional learning content to keep you up to date with the latest research in the field of youth services.

### **Data-Driven Strategic Planning**

*David Foster, Bâton Global; Darryl Eschete, Oshkosh Public Library*

Strategic plans serve as roadmaps, guiding a library's activities over the next two to five years to achieve meaningful impact. However, as circumstances evolve, traditional plans often fall short, delivering only a fraction of their intended results. To navigate this challenge, more libraries are adopting data-driven strategic planning—an approach that enables leadership to adapt tactics in real time while staying aligned with the library's mission. This session will introduce data-driven strategic planning and compare it to traditional methods, using real-world examples.

### **From Frenemies to BFFs: How to work with Friends and Foundations**

*Teresa Schmidt, Wisconsin Department Of Public Instruction; Brandi Cummings, Kenosha Public Library And Kenosha Public Library System; Amanda Wakeman, Columbus Public Library; Clairellyn Sommersmith, Winnefox Library System*

Friends and library foundations can elevate your public library, provide financial support, and build a strong network of advocates. But there can be pitfalls, too. What happens when your Friends feel like frenemies, or your Foundation tries to direct your library instead of supporting it? This panel discussion will share the joys and trials of working with library support organizations. We'll discuss the differences between Friends and foundations; how they're legally formed; how to establish roles and responsibilities; tips for getting your Friends and library board to play nicely; and how to sustain your Friends or foundation into the future.

### **Potosi Branch: A Successful Community Partnership**

*Jen Bernetzke, Southwest WI Library System (SWLS); Martha Bauer, Schreiner Memorial Library*

The Potosi Branch of Schreiner Memorial Library is an example of the positive impact that community partnership can have on a region. The branch opened in 2007 in a community that was lacking local library services, fulfilling a gap that was created after bookmobile service ended several years before. The presenters will discuss the creation and sustainability of a branch library in a rural community, the agreement that allows the branch to function, and the cooperation between communities that has been mutually beneficial. The presenters will cover advocacy, finances, staffing and administration, collections, programming, and outreach opportunities.

### **Top 5 Energy-Efficient Solutions to Optimize Library Facilities**

*David Voss, Focus On Energy*

Investing in energy efficiency upgrades offers libraries significant financial and operational benefits. By implementing cost-effective strategies such as upgrading to LED lighting, installing advanced HVAC systems, and integrating renewable energy, libraries can lower energy costs, reduce maintenance expenses, and enhance facility value. In this presentation, FOCUS ON ENERGY® will guide libraries through five impactful solutions to optimize energy use and access financial incentives. Attendees will learn how to identify energy-saving opportunities, leverage available funding, and collaborate with Energy Advisors to implement sustainable practices that strengthen their role as a community resource.



**Friday 05/02/2025**  
**12:30 pm to 1:30 pm**

**Luncheon Keynote/Closing Session:**  
**Legal Information Q&A with Librarian**  
**Lawyer, Professor Tomas A. Lipinski**

Long established public institutions such as public libraries are facing unprecedented queries into everyday practices such as collection development, program offerings, access issues, patron privacy and information liability from making so-called dangerous content available to its patrons, both online and on the physical shelf. This lunch session will offer the opportunity for a lively give and take, question and answer format.

Professor Lipinski is the former Dean of the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. After Leave in the 2020/2021 AY he returned to faculty status as Full Professor. He completed his Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Marquette University Law School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, received the Master of Laws (LL.M.) from The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois, and the Ph.D. from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Lipinski has worked in a variety of legal settings including the private, public and non-profit sectors.

# Volunteers needed.

Interested in getting more involved with WLA? Volunteering for a role on one of the Association's committees is a great way to build connections, learn new skills, and help strengthen the organization. Below are some volunteer opportunities with committees available for 2025. Committee terms are for two years and can be renewed once. You must be a WLA member in good standing in order to participate on committees.

If you have questions, please contact the WLA Office at [wla@wisconsinlibraries.org](mailto:wla@wisconsinlibraries.org) or the committee chairs listed below.

## Awards & Honors Committee

Be a part of the committee that reviews nominations and selects our annual award winners, such as the Library of Year.

- All meetings are online.
- Committee starts meeting in late spring and finishes early fall.
- Total time commitment is around ten hours.
- Seeking two new members with preference for one new member representing the WLA Support Staff & Circulation Services (SSCS) section.

Contact:  
Mindy King ([mking@uwsp.edu](mailto:mking@uwsp.edu)) &  
Nicole Mszal  
([nmszal@monarchlibraries.org](mailto:nmszal@monarchlibraries.org))

## Leadership Committee

Assist with the popular WLA Mentorship Program!

- Seeking one new member. Someone from an academic or special library is preferred but not required.
- All meetings are online.
- Committee meets throughout the year.

Contact:  
Clairellyn Sommersmith at  
[sommersmith@winnefox.org](mailto:sommersmith@winnefox.org)

## Nominating Committee

Help identify and recruit leaders for various elected and non-elected leadership positions across the Association and create our monthly Member of the Month communications.

- Seeking two new members -- we'd especially love to see a representative from WLA's AWSL, WISL, SSCS, or TSS units!
- All meetings are online.
- Committee meets throughout the year.

Contact:  
Rachel Arndt at  
[rachel.arndt27@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.arndt27@gmail.com)



WISCONSIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



WISCONSIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

# WLA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

## CONNECT

Find people and information.  
Connect to your profession  
because it's more than a  
job Become immersed in learning  
best practices from a diverse  
group at a nexus where issues,  
actions and ideas are shared



## BELONG

Become part of a bigger  
community representing libraries of  
all types and sizes and library staff  
and supporters at all levels Join a  
strong network of people who are  
passionate about libraries Share  
your contributors through  
volunteering and leadership

## LEAD

Pay it forward by becoming a  
change agent on behalf of libraries  
in Wisconsin Hone your leadership  
skills on committees, boards, as  
unit leaders and on state-wide  
library projects Immerse yourself in  
formal leadership training at the  
annual Leadership Development  
Institute



## LEARN

Commit to lifelong learning  
through annual spring and fall  
conferences, webinars and WLA  
member-led learning opportunities  
mentorship opportunities,  
information exchange and alerts  
through newsletters, blogs, social  
media opportunities to hone  
presentation skills and share  
expertise



## ADVOCATE

Become a knowledgeable  
advocate in your community  
Maintain strong advocacy within  
your institution Join other  
passionate political advocates to  
develop your skills while  
advancing support for libraries  
with elected officials