

**Commissioner Brian Bannon, Chicago Public Library
2014 Budget Testimony to the City Council
November 5, 2013**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the Chicago Public Library's proposed 2014 budget. The Library is constantly evaluating the changing ways the public is looking for information, ideas and inspiration. We continue to work to redefine and transform what a library system can do for a diverse and growing city.

While known for lending books, ebooks, audio books and other materials, CPL also:

- Is the biggest provider of free digital internet access in the city;
- Offers the largest free after school homework help program in the country;
- Has a wide range of programs aimed at helping people prepare for the workforce and apply for jobs; and
- Is the largest provider of preschool literacy programs anywhere in the city.

Below are just some of the exciting new initiatives launched this year:

In January, we received a first of its kind grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to partner with Danish public library to use human centered design in exploring ways to make libraries more functional, more relevant and more ready for the challenges of the future. The results of this exploration will be discussed in Chicago at the Next Library conference in 2014 – the first time the conference is being held outside of Denmark.

CPL launched its first Innovation Lab in the Harold Washington Library as a space in which to experiment with new ideas and approaches in library services in order to be more customer-focused and able to adapt to the community's changing needs. With the Chicago Public Library Foundation and a \$250,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, we created our first experiment: the CPL Maker Lab. This is a place where the public can get free hands-on experience with 3D software, 3D printers and other 21st century equipment to learn the production skills of tomorrow's job market. This space served 15,000 residents in its first three months and is a finalist for a Chicago Innovation Award.

The Library created a unique "Geeks in Residence" program at the Harold Washington Library Center, providing incubation space for a small start-up company in exchange for sharing their firsthand experience and "know-how" to other budding entrepreneurs through public talks and one-on-one sessions. The first "Geeks" in the space have vast experience in the tech industry and are starting a software company designed to help others use technology to help create public good. This pilot is a perfect complement to the business resources already available at the library, allowing us to connect small business people with experts working in the field in order to support Chicago's growing technology sector.

In 2013 we expanded our YOUmedia digital skills mentorship program for teens to four neighborhood sites. With the increased support of the City, we will continue that expansion to more sites in 2014. A 2013 University of Chicago study of YOUmedia found that 40 percent of the students visiting the program are African American males and 57 percent of the attendees reported improving one or more digital skills as a result of taking part. Most importantly, 89 percent believe it's cool to be excited about interests at YOUmedia and more than half say it has helped to improve school work, writing and relationships with adults. (Source: *Teens, Digital Media and the Chicago Public Library. May 2013. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.*)

With the support of Mayor Emanuel, we expanded our Teacher in the Library homework help program to offer in-person support at all our branches. We also added online live one-on-one tutoring as well as self-paced tutorials in subjects from K-12, so that anyone with a library card and an Internet connection can get help understanding homework. As a result, Chicago Public Library now offers the largest free homework help program in the country.

Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge was revamped this year to offer kids more ways to participate and incorporated Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math in all the activities this summer. As a result, a record-breaking 71,000 kids participated in the program, reading 2.1 million books during the eight week program (equaling 56 million minutes of reading). Because of this success, we've added a Winter Learning Challenge starting December 16 to keep kids learning over the winter break with a focus on Backyard Nature and Ecology.

With the financial support of the Chicago Public Library Foundation, we are completely revamping the website. This site will allow patrons to better explore our collections and have an interactive experience in which they can read and write reviews of items, keep lists of what they've read or want to read and follow other readers' suggestions. Patrons will also be able to manage their accounts via apps for smartphones and tablets. Our staff will be able to share blog posts about what's new at the library and can also recommend books, movies, music and events of interest.

The Library continues to be a community anchor, offering programs that help residents access the information they need in their lives – whether it is a path to citizenship or learning about the Affordable Care Act. Working with the Mayor's Office for New Americans, we created Citizenship Hubs in many of our branch libraries, offering enhanced resources to assist in becoming U.S. citizens. As part of this partnership we proudly hosted a citizenship swearing in ceremony at the Harold Washington Library in April. The City's Department of Public Health and the State of Illinois have partnered with the Library to provide the public assistance in enrolling in the new Affordable Care Act.

Our Board of Directors recently approved several changes to CPL policies, all of which should make our patrons happy as we make our services even more customer-focused. We increased the number of times a checked out item can be renewed from three to 15. This will allow a patron to keep an item for 45 weeks if no one else is waiting for it, providing them with more time to read or view it reducing the amount of time our staff spends returning and checking out

the same materials to a resident. Patrons now receive email reminders of checked out items two days prior to the due date so they have time to renew or return the items before incurring a late fine. The Board unanimously approved allowing patrons to make appointments for Computer Sessions even if they had outstanding fines. This removes barriers for those patrons (many of whom are children) often most in need of free access to computers and the Internet. We are continually looking for ways to ensure our services are patron-focused and user friendly.

None of this happens without world-class facilities, and we are building those too. We opened new Edgewater and Back of the Yards branches, as well as an expanded Humboldt Park branch with a YOUmedia center. We broke ground on the new Albany Park branch to open in 2014 and unveiled the plans for the new Chinatown branch which will open in 2015. Chicago Public Library now has 80 locations across the city, providing every neighborhood with free access to the information and ideas of the day.

As a recognized leader in the library industry, Chicago Public Library hosted a number of professional conferences this year, including the annual American Library Association conference in June, which showcased CPL and Chicago to 24,000 library industry professionals who brought an economic impact of \$56.8 million to the city. In a few weeks, CPL will host the Library Journal Directors' Summit, bringing together library directors from across the country to discuss the latest trends in library services, many of which are being piloted at Chicago Public Library. In June of 2014, CPL will host the NEXT Library conference with the Public Libraries of Aarhus, Denmark.

The following is an overview of the Library's 2013 operations and programs:

LIBRARY USAGE

By the end of 2013, more than 10 million patrons will visit a Chicago Public Library location to use computers, seek reference assistance, check out materials, attend an author program, take part in a children's program, attend a workshop, view an exhibit, or simply find a quiet place to read or study.

The Library's website averaged more than 1.1 million visits per month in 2013, offering patrons 24/7 access not only to our catalog, but also to a rich source of online information through subscription databases and popular topic pages prepared by our librarians.

During the first two thirds of 2013, CPL circulated more than 7 million items and is on track to see more than 9 million items checked out by the end of the year. Our downloadable circulation increased by 72 percent this year as patrons increasingly checked out eBooks, audiobooks, video or music from our website.

The public library is the only access to computers and online information for many of our residents. Chicago Public Library, as the largest provider of free access to computers, has

provided 2,084,127 million free internet sessions to the public in just the first nine months of this year.

The Library conducted a large scale public technology upgrade this year. We added 100 public computers across the system, including laptops available for use inside the library and ADA compliant computer stations in all CPL branches. We've also doubled the memory on all public computers to enable faster response time. We upgraded the software on all public computers to include Windows 7, Internet Explorer 10 and the Microsoft Office 2013 suite. Not only will the move to Windows 7 increase the functionality, accessibility and security of the public computers, it will also improve the usability of many popular websites. Access to PowerPoint, Excel, Publisher and Word makes it possible for patrons to create presentations, spreadsheets and other documents needed for work or school. This expansion is in a large part due to a partnership with DoIT and support from the Federal BTOP grant and the Chicago Public Library Foundation.

The Library provided more than 500,000 free WiFi sessions in the first 7 months in our locations in 2013 – this is equal to the number of sessions provided in all of 2012.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Programs and Services for Children

Chicago Public Library starts its relationship with Chicago's children at birth. Through early literacy programs like lapsits and story times, the youngest child is introduced to language and reading and their caregivers are given the tools to support this learning at home.

In 2013, the Library added programs to provide parents and caregivers more involvement and direction in promoting early literacy skills in their children. Through the revamped Summer Learning Challenge and the upcoming Bookamania, parents are being taught easy ways to keep their child learning through everyday activities.

The Library provides students with access to the skills they need to succeed in school. The Chicago Public Library serves more than 500,000 school children across the city with after school programs, homework help, summer learning programs, family story times and special programs to assist with history fair, science fair and other school projects.

Programs and Services for Teens

The Library continued its partnership in Now Is The Time, an initiative with Steppenwolf Theatre and Facing History & Ourselves to address ways to inspire Chicago's youth to make positive changes in their communities and stop violence and intolerance. Steppenwolf's performance of "How Long Will I Cry," a play created from stories of Chicagoans affected by violence, toured CPL branches this year to full houses, with talkback sessions at which community members came together to share ideas of how to work together to find solutions

for their neighborhoods. The stories included in the play have now been compiled into a book by the same name, and the author Miles Harvey is currently visiting CPL locations with Steppenwolf actors to continue this conversation.

The Library's YOUmedia program has been replicated across the country and expanded in Chicago to four neighborhood branches in 2013 and six more in 2014, along with monthly "pop up" locations across the city.

Programs and Services for Adults

The award-winning One Book, One Chicago program expanded from two one-month programs to one yearlong program – we now spend 12 months discussing a book and the themes involved in it. This year, we have been exploring how migration has shaped Chicago as we read Isabel Wilkerson's "The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration." We've already hosted hundreds of events and welcomed thousands of Chicagoans to take part in this discovery of all who've helped to make Chicago the most American of American cities. These wonderfully diverse programs are made possible by the support of our Chicago Public Library Foundation and corporate sponsors BMO Harris and Allstate.

Thousands of Chicagoans visited the Library this year to listen to nationally renowned authors such as Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor, Isabel Wilkerson, Walter Mosley, Gillian Flynn, William Friedkin, Anthea Min and Isabel Allende.

Thanks to the Chicago Public Library Foundation, the Library continued to offer technology assistance to patrons in 45 libraries through the CyberNavigator program. This important initiative provides the public with help learning how to safely and effectively find essential online information.

Our library branches continue to serve as community centers, offering free meeting spaces to neighborhood groups, serving as early voting locations as well as providing workshops and classes on topics like financial advice, legal assistance, energy efficiency and computer literacy.

Looking Ahead

As the world around us changes at an amazing pace, libraries are changing too. Public libraries continue to bridge the digital divide while also creating collaborative spaces in which community members come together to share, make and create. Children explore and discover the world around them through the guided tour provided by librarians and teens tap into their talents and inspirations through mentor-led digital skills programs. Adults keep their love of learning, doing and reading alive through the diverse programs offered by the library.

Thanks to the support of Mayor Emanuel, the Chicago Public Library Board and Foundation and the members of the Chicago City Council, the Chicago Public Library is leading the way in public

libraries with innovative ideas and creative solutions to the meet the rapidly changing demands and needs of the citizens of this great city.

