

Commissioner Brian Bannon, Chicago Public Library  
2014 Budget Testimony to the City Council

Chairman Austin, members of the City Council, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about Chicago Public Library's proposed 2015 budget.

Chicago Public Library (CPL) serves all Chicagoans, providing rich collections of books, state-of-the-art technology and award-winning literary programs. Staff remains focused on providing the best library service to every neighborhood of Chicago. The Library is constantly evaluating the changing ways the public is looking for information, ideas and inspiration. While CPL's timeless mission will remain unchanged, 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 largest provider of free internet access in the city;
- Offers the largest, most comprehensive free homework help program in the country;
- Has a wide range of programs aimed at helping people prepare for the workforce and apply for jobs;
- Is the largest provider of preschool literacy programs anywhere in the city;
- Serves tens of thousands of adults who participate in One Book, One Chicago, financial literacy, and cultural programming annually.

Earlier this year, CPL launched a 3- year strategic plan to respond to the evolving needs of patrons who wish to learn, thrive and grow in the 21st century. The foundational strategies - access for all and serving patrons effectively - and the programmatic focus areas, which include nurture learning, supporting economic advancement and strengthening communities, will guide the Library's work for the next three years.

When I became Commissioner, Mayor Rahm Emanuel directed me to take the Chicago Public Library into the next century, to make it the library of the future. We've made much progress, and the great work we have done over the past months has paid off. Our work has received key recognition since we sat here together last year, confirming that CPL is very relevant and widely used.

**Below is a list of some of the key recognition:**

- CPL received a National Medal for Museum and Library Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services at a ceremony hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. This medal represents the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries, recognizing service to the community, and is displayed in the Grand Lobby of the Harold Washington Library Center.
- CPL was ranked the number one library in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany.

- The Library's Maker Lab received the Social Innovator Award from the Chicago Innovation Awards.
- A large-scale patron survey (30,000 people) noted that 90 percent of respondents would likely recommend CPL to a friend, and 72 percent said that the Library was "very important in their lives."
- CNN Money recently identified Chicago Public Library as a primary reason that Chicago ranks among the most innovative cities in the U.S.

**Much of this widespread recognition can be attributed to the following 2014 accomplishments:**

- Chicago kids read over 66 million minutes and extended their learning over the summer months by participating in Rahm's Readers, the Library's Summer Learning Challenge. This year, our partnership with Lincoln Park Zoo and Brookfield Zoo and Anti-Cruelty Society had kids engaging in the "Explore and Roar" theme in many different ways, such as exploring conservation, habitats and animal life. We witnessed a tremendous increase in participation this summer.
- CPL's Homework Help program saw a 38 percent increase in the number of sessions, following an expansion of the program to include in-person assistance at library locations throughout the city as well as an online homework help option, offering live tutors from 2-11 p.m. seven days a week and other assistance 24/7.
- As a recognized leader in the library industry, CPL, along with the Urban Library Council, co-hosted NEXT Library, an international professional conference in June. 366 industry professionals from 24 countries and 114 U.S. cities came to Chicago to work together to envision the future of libraries. It was the first time the conference was held in the United States.
- 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. The City's Department of Public Health and the State of Illinois have also partnered with the Library to provide the public the opportunity to learn about the Affordable Care Act and enroll in the program.
- Hundreds of thousands of adults participate in the city's largest book club through our season-long One Book, One Chicago program.
- None of this happens without world-class facilities, and we are building those too. The new Albany Park Branch opened last month. The state-of-the-art facility offers a unique blend of traditional library services and the cutting edge technology featured in 21st Century libraries. It features a dedicated digital media lab for teens, the first self-unit at a neighborhood branch and an expanded early learning area for children that will become the city-wide model. One of our main focuses over the next three years will be to help Chicago Strengthen its Communities.

- Critical infrastructure improvements at the Harold Washington Library Center are ongoing for fire alarm system, roof, emergency generator and HVAC cooling towers. All work at the Harold Washington Library Center, which is supported by TIF funding, will be completed by the end of 2014.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology**

- In early 2014, with support from the Chicago Public Library Foundation, the Library launched a new cutting edge, patron-focused website, allowing CPL to expand services beyond the walls of the library, into patrons' homes, schools and workplaces through its online presence. The new website, catalog and mobile apps are all "software as a service," providing the foundation for continuous innovation while reducing the need for costly in-house infrastructure and staff technical expertise. This site allows patrons to better explore our collections and 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 are able to manage their accounts via apps for iPhone/iPad and Android. Members of CPL staff routinely share blog posts about what's new at the library as well as recommend books, movies, music and events of interest to our communities.
- CPL also launched a tech lending program with small, programmable Finch Robots that facilitate computer science and programming education. Finch Robots were developed at the Carnegie Mellon University Create Lab and donated to CPL by Google. Since Finch Robots became available for circulation in May, robots have been checked out 1,174 times by patrons to explore computer programming languages individually and with groups of students.
- A grant to the Chicago Public Library Foundation from Motorola Mobility Foundation allowed the award winning Maker Lab at HWLC to extend for an additional year – through June, 2015 - after the expiration of the previous IMLS grant. The Lab continues to provide access to 21st century technology, such as 3D printers, as well as activities cultivating collaboration, creativity and digital skills. From January to September 2014, nearly 40,000 patrons have visited the Maker Lab; and since opening in July 2013, the Lab has served more than 100,000 patrons, and 976 classes have been offered with over 9,800 attendees. The Motorola Mobility grant has also allowed CPL to experiment with "traveling" maker labs visiting neighborhood branches. CPL's digital design and manufacturing space developed a role in Chicago's "maker" ecosystem, connecting people to opportunities for collaborative learning and Chicago City Colleges Advanced Manufacturing program.
- The YOUmedia digital learning program was expanded to 6 additional libraries throughout the city, thanks to a grant from the MacArthur Foundation and increased City investment, bringing the total to 11 libraries and allowing CPL to help more teens build their 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills needed for college and career success. Regular digital media workshops are offered at these additional branches, as well as traveling Pop-up YOUmedia sessions at various other branches. Programming recently kicked off at the

expansion sites - Sulzer and Woodson Regional Libraries and the Hall, Back of the Yards, Legler and Albany Park Branches.

- With our expanded digital offerings – like our new website with Zinio and Hoopla, and our Android and iPhone apps -- you can quite literally take the Library anywhere with you. We are a wonderful balance of both a community hub, and accessible for people on the go in a digital world.

### **Strategic Departmental Developments**

- Established CPL's first ever Teen Services Division to focus on the needs and interests of high school age teens. With library employees specializing in teen services and programming, this division will enable CPL to provide all Chicago teens with engaging learning opportunities and a supportive community to help foster their personal and academic growth.
- A new Division of Technology, Content and Innovation was created. This new division merged library technology, collections and acquisitions into one unit. The four areas of focus are technology, content, innovation and data management/analysis.
- New departmental realignment in order to better address our strategic priority of supporting economic advancement.

### **Below are some of the exciting new initiatives for 2015:**

- Starting in 2015, thanks to a multi-year grant from the Knight Foundation to the Chicago Public Library Foundation, CPL will pilot an "Internet to Go" tech lending program, allowing CPL patrons to check out Wi-Fi hotspot devices for up to three weeks at a time. This experiment, another tech lending initiative, will be implemented in pre-determined communities where internet use is extremely low. Digital skills coaching will also be available at these locations as well as laptops or similar mobile devices.
- Continue to improve operational efficiencies to expedite delivery of materials to patrons, including expansion of self-service check-out stations in more library locations and installation of an automated materials handling system at the Harold Washington Library Center. This centralized system will significantly cut the time that patrons are waiting for materials to arrive at their local branch.
- CPL will be a major partner in the Chicago Architecture Biennial, scheduled for late 2015. The Library will implement a variety of related programming as well as tie the theme into existing programs. Architecture-related tours will be offered of Library facilities.
- CPL continues to invest in resources and services to Chicagoans. In 2015 we will open the new two-story, 16,000 square foot Chinatown Branch at 2100 S. Wentworth, which was designed specifically for its location and cultural significance. It will include the 12th

YOUmedia location for teens, an expanded early learning area for children, a large community meeting room, study rooms, self-check units and additional PCs for public use.

- Open newly constructed digital media labs at Sulzer Regional, Woodson Regional and Legler Branch. These labs will give teens dedicated space for the as they build 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through the recently implemented YOUmedia programming.
- We will continue to update and expand early learning areas in library locations across the city to offer our youngest learners an inviting and engaging environment in which to begin their path to literacy with a focus on the 5 literacy skills: Read, Write, Talk, Sing, and Play.
- Major repairs are scheduled for the Sulzer and Woodson Regional Library with \$5 million from the Western Avenue North TIF. Construction of a new façade and building envelope at Woodson Regional Library as well as smaller mechanical and structural repairs to various other CPL locations are also scheduled, funded by a \$10 million Illinois Public Library Construction Act Grant.
- As a part of the Smart Chicago Challenge, CPL will collaborate with business, workforce development, and community technology providers to launch a robust curriculum and online learning tools for digital literacy that will serve as an access points for patrons to engage in jobs, education and civic life.

**The following is an overview of the Library's 2014 operations:**

Nearly 84,000 kids combined to read more than 66 minutes over the summer through Rahm's Readers, which translates into 2.7 million books. This represents an increase of almost 13,000 kids, more than a half million books and approximately 10 million minutes read.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, we delivered 82,318 homework help sessions -- representing a 38 percent increase over from the previous year.

By the end of 2014, more than 9.5 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 received over 45.2 million page views and over 3.7 million visitors through September 2014, 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 2014, CPL circulated more than 7.4 million items and is on track to see more than 11 million items checked out by the end of the year.

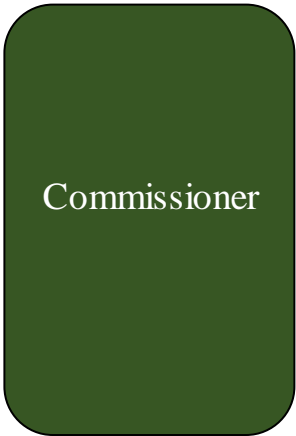
As is the case across the country, the public library is the only access to computers and online information for many of our residents. CPL, as the largest provider of free access to computers,

has provided over 2.1 million people got free access to the computers in library in just the first nine months of this year.

The Library provided over 2 million free WiFi sessions in the first 9 months in our locations in 2014 – this is more than the number of sessions provided in all of 2013.

Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.





Commissioner

