

Commissioner Brian Bannon, Chicago Public Library
2017 Budget Testimony to the City Council

Chicago Public Library is recognized as a leader in designing and delivering innovative, responsive library services. The Library provides free access to rich resources, engaging cultural and educational programs, and technology for all Chicagoans through its 80 neighborhood locations. Throughout its 140-year history, CPL has demonstrated a remarkable ability to evolve with the changing times and the needs of Chicagoans, and CPL has always done so while maintaining a commitment to providing free access to all and excellent service to patrons.

CPL makes information and knowledge available to all Chicagoans, from young children to older adults – inspiring continuous learning, exploration and growth. The Library’s programs and services are aligned with the goals of our City – to equip Chicagoans with lifelong learning opportunities and resources to build healthy, successful communities.

The Library has demonstrable impact throughout Chicago communities – increasing literacy, bridging the digital divide, delivering a sense of excitement and wonder to each generation. With the goodwill and support from patrons across the city, the City of Chicago and private support through the Chicago Public Library Foundation – and growing national and international recognition, CPL is well-positioned to expand its offerings to support Chicagoans to excel in the knowledge economy.

While CPL’s timeless mission will remain unchanged, the Library will continue to respond to its patrons’ current and evolving needs by nurturing learning, supporting economic advancement and strengthening communities. Staff remains focused on providing the best library service throughout Chicago.

We circulate over 9 million items per year and provide state of the art digital content for download and streaming. Chicago Public Library also:

- Is the biggest provider of free digital access in the city;
- Provides 24/7 access to library services through the CPL website and apps for Android and Apple devices where patrons can stream movies, TV and music, learn new languages, get homework assistance, read eBooks and magazines and listen to audiobooks;
- Offers the largest, most comprehensive free after-school homework help program in the country, with both in-person and online options;
- Provides one-on-one support and digital tools aimed at helping people improve computer skills, as well as prepare for the workforce and apply for jobs;
- Is the largest provider of preschool literacy programs throughout the city.

Below are just some of the exciting initiatives and accomplishments from this year:

- Participation in the award-winning Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge exceeded 100,000 participants for the first time, which represents an approximately 72% increase since the traditional summer reading program was revamped in 2013 to include all learning activities. This year the partnership with Museum of Science & Industry had children, families and caregivers exploring transportation through Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) activities. In partnership with Bernie's Book Bank and KPMG, we distributed over one million books to Summer Learning Challenge participants. Every child who participated received 12 books to build their home library. This program has become a national model for summer learning. CPL remains the only public library system in the nation to receive an award from the National Summer Learning Association for excellence in summer learning, and this year received the honor of the John Cotton Dana Award from the American Library Association (ALA) for strategic marketing.
- In April, CPL publicly launched a partnership with Connect Chicago to bridge the digital skills divide in Chicago. The CyberNavigator program expanded citywide, offering all Chicagoans one-on-one support for computer skills and digital job resources.
- In order to further support digital skills, CPL developed an online tool called Chicago Digital Learn. Patrons can complete online tutorials about how to use a computer, find information, and use online job resources. Each tutorial is only 15-20 minutes in length.
- The Library continues to invest in Chicago neighborhoods. CPL announced a new branch library in Altgeld Gardens and a renovation and addition at our Whitney Young branch. In addition, Woodson Regional Library is undergoing a complete façade replacement and Sulzer Regional Library is getting a new roof and facility upgrades.
- Chicago Public Library organized and co-hosted the city's first ever Teen Lit Fest. Over 350 teens from across the city attended panels and workshops focused on poetry, fiction, zines, memoirs, blogs and spoken word performance at Columbia College and the Harold Washington Library Center.
- The Library hosted the first Harold Washington Commemorative Lecture and Summit, honoring the late Mayor Harold Washington. The summit offered a full day of panels and discussions around the life and legacy of Mayor Washington. This event was hosted in partnership with Chicago Urban League, the Mayor

Harold Washington Legacy Committee, and HistoryMakers and saw approximately 500 attendees.

- *Above and Beyond*, a memorial art installation consisting of over 58,000 dog tags, each representing a soldier who lost their life in the Vietnam War, was installed at the Harold Washington Library Center. The exhibit is a signature piece from the National Veteran's Art Museum and is on display for the next four years.
- CPL was the largest convener of "On The Table" discussions hosted in partnership with Chicago Community Trust. Conversations with the community were held at all 80 CPL locations on May 10, 2016.
- The Library also partnered with Chicago Community Trust to expand *One Book, One Chicago* in the 2015-2016 season. For the first time, all 80 locations hosted at least one program, and CCT renewed their support for the 2016-17 season.
- Thanks to a \$2.5 million grant from Exelon, one of the largest individual gifts in the history of the Chicago Public Library Foundation, CPL has begun to build out Early Learning Spaces that incorporate interactive play and discovery in neighborhood branches across the city. The branch spaces offer the youngest learners an inviting and engaging environment in which to begin their path to literacy. CPL combined innovative library design with evidence-based early childhood education insights to design the flagship STEM-focused learning space in Thomas Hughes Children's Library at HWLC. CPL will begin construction on this space in fall 2016.
- The Library selected a new Library Management System, which is a hosted solution that will streamline and support core functions such as circulation, cataloging, purchasing, and collections processing. It seamlessly integrates with patron facing services, such as the library website and digital content like Over Drive, Zinnia and Hoopla. This new system will go live in 2017.
- CPL developed a three year strategy for digitizing, preserving, processing and facilitating engagement with CPL special collections. The library has many unique and high-interest archival collections, and this process will make them accessible for patrons both in the library and online.
- World Business Chicago and Gensler worked with the Library on creating a Strategic Vision for the Harold Washington Library Center that provides a long-term vision for use of space throughout the building.

CPL will continue to offer the following initiatives and programs in 2017:

- CPL continues to offer the largest, most comprehensive free homework help program in the country. In-person Teacher in the Library assistance is available at CPL branches throughout the city, as well as online homework help seven days

per week. Homework help sessions increased by 10% to nearly 105,000 sessions during the 2015-16 school year.

- CPL continues its dedication to early literacy. The Library has piloted “Words to Grow On” in Pilsen/Little Village and the Englewood communities served by Lozano, Little Village and Toman and West Englewood, Sherman Park and Kelly branches respectively. 1,729 children and parents along with teachers from El Valor and Metropolitan Family Services have participated in highly intense literacy initiatives in communities. In 2017, we will be providing more services to families, professional development for teachers and librarians, and trainings for parents.
- The Library’s STEAM team continues to conduct STEAM-based story times to pre-school aged children throughout Chicago. Introducing these skills at a young age will make children more successful and school-ready. The STEAM team has conducted 430 classroom visits and workshops since their start in October 2015.
- The 2016-2017 *One Book, One Chicago* selection is *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver. The Library will offer a OBOC program in every CPL branch from now through May 2017. Programs are based around the theme “Eat Think Grow” inspiring Chicagoans through discussion, walking tours, author visits, music, and workshops.
- The National Endowment for the Humanities recently awarded one of 18 Digital Humanities Start Up Grants to DePaul University scholars who, in collaboration with Chicago Public Library, are studying the *One Book, One Chicago* program. The study has used data from the *One Book, One Chicago* program to analyze reading patterns from past OBOC selections and programs.
- Through the “On the Right Path” Financial Education Project, CPL is collaborating with the Office of the City Treasurer to deliver enhanced financial education to supplement existing financial literacy programs citywide. The program is currently underway and scheduled to run through spring 2017. Upon completion, over 50 programs will be offered at locations throughout the city and financial literacy resources will be available in all CPL locations and online.
- Library branches continue to serve as community centers, offering free meeting spaces to neighborhood groups, serving as early voting locations and providing workshops on topics like financial management, legal issues, energy efficiency and computer literacy.
- CPL’s Maker Lab, the award-winning advanced manufacturing lab, will continue to bring together people of all ages to explore their creative interests and strengthen Chicago’s economic competitiveness.

- CyberNavigators will continue to guide Chicagoans through the digital world and assist with online job search, communication and workforce readiness.
- The Library will continue to develop new library services and programs responsive to community needs using human centered design. Library teams continue to examine challenges and opportunities to improve services in partnership with Aarhus Public Libraries in Denmark and other leading global libraries.

Below are some of the exciting new projects and initiatives for 2017:

- In 2017, we will open the new flagship early learning space at Harold Washington Library Center. This space will utilize evidence-based based early childhood education practices to serve as a model for children’s libraries.
- The 17 new early learning spaces will be opened in neighborhood branches throughout Chicago, to offer the youngest learners an inviting and engaging environment in which to begin their path to literacy and learning.
- The Library’s new Library Management System (LMS) will be implemented in the second quarter of 2017.
- The 10 GB Connection to Libraries, a project scheduled for completion in early 2017, will increase bandwidth, capacity and speed at all 80 CPL locations.
- CPL will work in partnership with World Business Chicago to better leverage libraries for economic development in neighborhoods. The key deliverables for the project, over a one to three year time period, will include a needs assessment tool for branch libraries, an inventory of resources that can be deployed as a kit, demonstration projects, and a plan for system wide scaling.

The following is an overview of the Library’s 2016 operations:

- More than 102,000 kids combined to read more than 71 million minutes over the summer through Rahm’s Readers.
- During the 2015-2016 academic year, CPL delivered nearly 104,000 homework help sessions -- representing a 10% increase over the previous year.
- Over 7,300 teens participated in YOUmedia workshops through August 2016, representing a 23% increase over the same period the previous year. General attendance at YOUmedia during the same period increased by 21% to almost 30,300 teens.
- By the end of 2016, nearly 10 million patrons will have visited a CPL branch 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 38 million page views and over 3.4 million visitors through September 2016, offering patrons 24/7 access not only to the catalog and rich online account services, but also to extensive sources of online information through subscription databases and resource and reading recommendations for all ages prepared by CPL librarians.
- During the first two thirds of 2015, CPL circulated more than 6.8 million items, up two % from the previous year.
- As is the case across the country, the public library is the only access to computers and online information for many residents. Chicago Public Library has provided over 1.6 million people free access to the computers in library in just the first eight months of this year.
- The Library provided over 2.6 million free Wi-Fi sessions in the first 8 months through all locations in 2016.
- There are approximately one million active library card holders in the city. That's one-third of all Chicago households.

Looking Ahead

Chicago Public Library continues to provide world class services to the citizens of Chicago. We help Chicagoans bridge the digital divide, guiding them with tools and support to learn basic skills, apply for jobs, and compete in our workforce. We create collaborative spaces in which community members come together to share, to make and to create. Our library spaces and the skilled librarians on staff help children build literacy, discover the world around them, and reach their full potential. Teens tap into their strengths and talents through mentor-led 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, the Chicago Public Library Foundation and the members of the Chicago City Council, Chicago Public Library is a national and international leader in libraries and learning, bringing innovative ideas and creative solutions to meet the rapidly changing demands and needs of the citizens of this great city.