

ILF Awards and Honors Criteria & Descriptions

(Updated: 5/20/26)

The Indiana Library Federation offers several awards, honors, and scholarships to recognize outstanding contributions from Indiana's libraries, librarians, library staff, supporters, volunteers, champions, and partners, and to encourage professional growth.

The nomination process opens each winter and closes June 30 for most awards and scholarships. The ILF Awards Committee reviews nominations and makes recommendations to the ILF Board of Directors. Most awards are announced at the ILF Annual Meeting, and winners are invited to an Awards Banquet at the ILF Annual Conference. For nomination information and deadlines, visit <https://www.ilfonline.org/ilf-awards>.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Librarians

- Federation Leadership Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Outstanding Librarian Award
- Outstanding New Librarian Award
- Outstanding School Librarian Award
- Outstanding New School Librarian Award
- Peggy L. Pfeiffer AISLE Service Award

Library staff without MLS/MLIS credential

- Outstanding Library Staff

Library Support

- Federation Volunteer Award
- Sena Kautz (Media Center Service) Merit Award

INSTITUTIONAL AWARDS

Libraries

- Esther V. Burrin School Media Project

Library Outreach

- Outstanding Library Award
- Programming Award
- Sara Laughlin Marketing Award

Special Situations

- Collaboration Scholarship Award
- Partnership Scholarship Award

INSTITUTIONAL & INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Library Support

- Everyone Counts Award
- Hoosier Intellectual Freedom Award
- Library Advocacy Award
- Outstanding Trustee/Supporter Award
- Library Champion Award
- Read Aloud Champion Award

Special Situations

- Tom Zupancic Literacy in Libraries Award

APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP (monetary award)

Scholarship for Professional Development

- David Dickey Continuing Education award for new academic librarians.

Scholarship for Higher Education

- The Esther Schlundt Memorial Scholarship for students in ALA-accredited degree programs.
- The Sue Marsh Weller Memorial Scholarship for students enrolled in ALA-accredited program with a specialty in children's librarianship.
- The William Gresh Memorial Scholarship for students at school librarianship/school media specialist.

Individual Awards

Librarians

Federation Leadership Award

Honors and recognizes any person in an ongoing Indiana Library Federation leadership role, or to a member who has achieved exceptional success or has performed far beyond the scope of normal expectations for a person in the member's position. This award focuses on persistent and ongoing work or service within or to the Indiana Library Federation.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation personnel or trustee member.
- Nominee has filled an ongoing role with the Federation for a minimum of five (5) years.
- The application should list specific examples of the nominee's service to the Federation.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from Federation members, leaders, the executive director, and/or members of the ILF Executive Board that offer concrete examples of these contributions.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award honors and recognizes a librarian who has rendered outstanding service to Indiana libraries or media centers in his or her local community, throughout his or her region, or the state. This award is intended for an individual who is or has been a member of ILF for 10 or more years and has served libraries for at least 20 years. This award is not only for retirees or soon-to-be retirees.

Nominee must have made substantial contributions in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Partnerships and/or networking with others for the benefit of libraries
- Voluntary service efforts
- Generation of new, expanded, and/or creative developments in library or media center services.
- Mentoring and outreach to other librarians
- Leadership and performance for several years
- Nomination must include submission of two (2) to four
- (4) letters of support from professional colleagues, the library community, and employing library (if applicable) that give concrete examples of these contributions

Outstanding Librarian Award

Honors and recognizes excellence and innovative leadership in the development of library service and for remarkable service to the profession. This award is given for both ongoing leadership to an individual library and for the development of the profession.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The Nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation personal member for the year nominated.
- Nominee must be an MLS/MLIS documented librarian.
- Nominees must exhibit sustained leadership and performance over a period of years.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from the local community, representatives of the local library or media center, and professional colleagues that concretely demonstrate these contributions.

Outstanding Librarian Award (cont.)

Nominee must have made a substantial contribution in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Resource development
- Expanded, new, and/or creative developments in library services.
- Responsiveness to community needs
- Financial management skills
- Mentoring and outreach to other librarians

Outstanding NEW Librarian Award

Honors and recognizes a recent graduate who is making important contributions to his or her employing libraries and librarianship at large.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The Nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation personal member for the year nominated.
- The nominee received his or her library degree no more than three (3) years ago.
- Nominees must be working in a professional capacity.
- The nominee demonstrates a commitment to the library in his or her community.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from colleagues, the local library community, and system administration that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Nominee made a substantial contribution in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Communication with library staff, administrators, and the public
- Initiation of special projects
- Contributions to his or her library's impact on its community
- Exceeding the expectations for his or her job description

Outstanding School Librarian Award

Honors and recognizes excellence and innovative leadership in the development of school library service and remarkable service to the profession. This award is given for both ongoing leadership to an individual school library and for the development of the profession.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominees must be an ILF/AISLE member for the year nominated.
- Nominees must hold an Indiana certification for School Library Services or Media Services.
- Nominees must exhibit sustained leadership and performance for five (5) or more years.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from the local community, representatives of the local public library or school library, and professional colleagues showing evidence of two (2) or more areas of accomplishments in the above domain. For more information on these domains, see the [AISLE School Librarian Evaluation Rubric](#) at ILFonline.org.

Nominee must have performed at a highly effective level in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Purposeful Planning
- Effective Instruction and Communication
- Teacher Leadership
- Collaboration and Innovation
- Mentoring and Outreach to other librarians or media specialists

Outstanding NEW School Librarian Award

Honors and recognizes a current school librarian who is making contributions to student

learning.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominees must be an ILF/AISLE member for the year nominated.
 - Nominees must hold an Indiana certification for School Library Services or Media Services.
 - Nominees must have worked as a school librarian for no more than five (5) years.
 - Nominee demonstrates a commitment to media services in his or her school(s).
 - Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from the local community, representatives of the local public library or school library, and professional colleagues showing evidence of two (2) or more areas of accomplishments in the above domains.
- For more information, see the AISLE School Librarian Evaluation Rubric at ILFonline.org.

Nominee made a substantial contribution in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Purposeful Planning
- Effective Instruction
- Teacher Leadership
- Collaboration and Innovation

Peggy L. Pfeiffer (AISLE) Service Award

Honors and recognizes outstanding service to the Indiana Library Federation Association for Indiana School Librarian Educators (AISLE) and to school library programs within Indiana. This award differs from other awards in that the award's focus is work or service within or for AISLE.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

Nominees must be an Indiana Library Federation/Association for Indiana School Librarian Educators (AISLE) personal member for the current year as well as for the previous four (4) years.

Nominees must have filled his or her role with AISLE for a minimum of three (3) years, served in multiple roles for a minimum of two (2) years, or both.

Award applications must list specific examples of the nominee's benefits to AISLE.

Application submission must include two (2) letters of support from AISLE leaders and board members that demonstrate the nominee's contributions to the group.

Librarian Staff

Outstanding Library Staff Award

Honors and recognizes a non-certified staff person who has contributed to his or her employing library or media center in Indiana.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominee exceeds the limits of his or her job description.
- Nominees make significant contributions to library or media center services and programs.
- Nominees understand and promote the goals of the library or media center.
- Nominees communicate well with library or media center staff, administrators, and the public.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from colleagues, administration, and the local library community that give concrete examples of these contributions.
- Nominee may be a full- or part-time employee of an Indiana library.

Library Support

Federation Volunteer Award

Honors and recognizes an individual who has rendered outstanding service to the Indiana Library

Federation and has made significant contributions toward furthering the goals of the Indiana Library Federation.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominee has made substantial contributions in areas such as (but not limited to):
- Creative thinking in problem-solving
- Communication with staff, other volunteers, and the public
- Submission of two (2) letters of support (one from the ILF office and one from an ILF member)

Sena Kautz (Media Center Service) Merit Award

Honors and recognizes a non-media professional in the education field (including school board members and administrators) for exceptional contributions or services which strengthen media center services in a school, community, or across the state. The nominee does not have to be an Indiana Library Federation member, however, a nominee who is an ILF personal or trustee would receive additional consideration.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominee's contributions must be of an extraordinary nature with unprecedented benefits to media center service.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Institutional Awards

Libraries

Esther V. Burrin (School Media Project) Award

Honors and recognizes an exemplary project in an Indiana school library program, or a project that impacts or supports school library programs throughout Indiana. Exemplary projects reflect the

involvement of students, parents, teachers, and administrators and other educational stakeholders and call attention to the indispensable role of professional staff in providing school library service.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The Nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation/AISLE (Association of Indiana School Library Educators) member for the year nominated.
- Award application must include a portfolio of at least six (6) items of documentation for the project. These should include program materials, letters of support, publicity, in-house publications, web-based products, and other pertinent items. (Ideally, the submission will be in electronic form.)

Documentation for the award application should:

- Describe the nominated program.
- Incorporate a statement of rationale for the program.
- Indicate the level of involvement of students, parents, teachers, and administrators or other educational stakeholders.
- Indicate how the program brings attention to the indispensable role of professional staff in providing school library services.
- Include statistical data, if appropriate.

Library Outreach

Outstanding Library Award

Honors and recognizes either outstanding library service that consistently exceeds the expectations of the users and serves as an exemplary model for other libraries, or notable expansion or improvement of service based on cooperation with other libraries or community organizations.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation institutional member, and if a public library, with its trustees listed for Indiana Library Trustees/Supporter Association.
- Submission of four (4) to six (6) letters of support from patrons, local community leaders, partnering libraries, and professional librarians that give concrete examples of these contributions and demonstrate that they are an essential service for their community.

Nominee must have made substantial contributions in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Cooperation/partnerships with other libraries and/or community organizations
- Notable service and programming
- Contributions to staff development
- Physical facilities
- Active involvement of Trustees with planning and library development
- Expansion of service

Programming Award

Honors and recognizes a library system or branch of a library system that has successfully provided ongoing, innovative, and diverse programming designed to meet its community's needs.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation institutional member, and if a public library, with its trustees listed for Indiana Library Trustees/Supporter Association.

Documentation and supporting information should:

- Incorporate a statement of need/rationale for type of programming.

- Indicate a broad range of programming.
- Represent all departments and areas of the library.
- Include statistical data.
- Provide a portfolio of five (5) to no more than twenty (20) items of documentation comprised of letters of support, publicity, and in-house publications that give concrete examples of these contributions.
- Awards to branch libraries must indicate that the programming is independent of the system.

Sara Laughlin Marketing Award

Honors and recognizes a library for its successful, creative, and contemporary marketing efforts. The award is presented to an institution or part of an institution, e.g., a department, program, or initiative that met the criteria for excellence in its marketing efforts during the year and may include a monetary award. Individuals may not apply.

The monetary award (\$1,000) may be given for an exemplary marketing program that:

- Makes creative use of current marketing approaches that focus on two-way communication with library customers and potential customers.
 - Calls attention to the indispensable role of the library in the community and demonstrates results
- Minimum Criteria for Consideration:
- The nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation institutional member for the year of presentation.
 - Submission of five (5) and ten (10) items of documentation comprised of planning and program materials, data, evaluation, letters of support, and in-house publications that give concrete examples of:
 - How ongoing communication with library customers helped determine needs and measure satisfaction with service.
 - How data about and from customers was used in making decisions about library services.
 - How creative use of resources helped carry out the marketing program and meet customer needs.
 - How the marketing effort resulted in positive outcomes, including creative use, users, or support. If a monetary award is provided, the receiving library must submit a report about how the funds were used. While there is no formal expectation for use of the award, the donor's intent is to incentivize continued innovation and success.

Special Situations

Collaboration Award

Honors and recognizes a corporation, organization, individual library, or a group of libraries, that has made significant contributions in a collaboration or collaborative efforts of promoting library services in a community, region, or at the statewide level. Indiana Library Federation membership is not required.

Nominee must have made substantial collaboration efforts in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Exhibition of collaboration not older than three years in areas such as programming, technical services, library collections, or other cooperative ventures
- Promotion of library services in a community, region, or statewide level

- Sound fiscal management (include relevant statistical data, if available)
- Creation or expansion of creative developments in library or school media services
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from the community that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Partnership Award

Honors and recognizes a corporation, organization, or group that has made significant contributions toward furthering the goals of the Indiana Library Federation and helping the Federation in meeting its mission to support Indiana libraries and media centers and their services. Indiana Library Federation membership is not required. Business contributors and vendors may be considered for this award.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Cooperative collaboration with the Indiana Library Federation to meet one or more goals of the Indiana Library Federation.
- Two (2) to four (4) letters of support from Federation leadership and the community served by the partnership that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Hoosier Intellectual Freedom Award

Honors and recognizes an individual, organization, or group for promoting, supporting, or encouraging intellectual freedom in Indiana. Any ILF member may forward a recommendation to the ILF Awards & Honors Committee, which may consult with other committees for review. (In 2017, the Danny Gunnells Intellectual Freedom and SIRS awards were combined with this award.)

Minimum Criteria for Consideration -Intellectual Freedom:

- Nominees must not be an Indiana Library Federation personal, institutional, or trustee member.
- Nominees must have made substantial contributions in areas such as (but not limited to):
 - active promotion of intellectual freedom in sphere of influence and beyond
 - exemplifying the spirit of intellectual freedom
 - producing a visible effect of their efforts to promote intellectual freedom and challenge censorship.

Individual & Institutional Awards

All awards in this category are given to both individuals and institutions unless noted.

Library Support

“Everyone Counts” Award

Honors and recognizes any personal or institutional member who has demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in policies, practices, programs, and/or initiatives. ILF encourages creativity in responses.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The nominee must be an Indiana Library Federation personal or institutional member.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support describing concrete examples of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Hoosier Intellectual Freedom Award

Honors and recognizes an individual, organization, or group for promoting, supporting, or encouraging intellectual freedom in Indiana. Any ILF member may forward a recommendation to the ILF Awards & Honors Committee, which may consult with other committees for review. (In 2017, the Danny Gunnells Intellectual Freedom and SIRS awards were combined with this award.) Minimum Criteria for Consideration -Intellectual Freedom:

- Nominees must not be an Indiana Library Federation personal, institutional, or trustee member.
- Nominees must have made substantial contributions in areas such as (but not limited to):
 - active promotion of intellectual freedom in sphere of influence and beyond
 - exemplifying the spirit of intellectual freedom
 - producing a visible effect of their efforts to promote intellectual freedom and challenge censorship.

Library Advocacy Award

Honors and recognizes a state or federal legislator or an individual who has promoted and supported legislative efforts which promote Indiana libraries, media centers, or librarianship. The ILF Legislative Committee forwards a recommendation to the ILF Awards & Honors Committee. The ILF Executive Board votes to ratify this recommendation. Indiana Library Federation membership is not required.

Outstanding Trustee/Supporter Award

Honors and recognizes a public library board member for constructive accomplishments toward developing sound library policies and effective service, serving as a liaison between the library and the community, and advancing library service on a community, regional, or statewide level.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominee must have performed beyond the scope of his or her duties.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from other board members, members of his or her community, and system administration that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Must have made substantial contribution in areas such as (but not limited to):

- Sound fiscal management
- Promotion and participation in local, regional and/or state trustee training sessions

- Development of cohesiveness (team leader) for his or her board
- Understanding and promoting the goals of the library
- Developing and maintaining good relationships with library staff members, library administration, and the community he or she serves

Library Champion Award

Honors and recognizes an individual, corporate entity, or group who has rendered outstanding service to Indiana libraries or media centers in their local community, throughout their region, or the state. This award is intended for someone other than a library employee, board member, or trustee who has provided support for Indiana libraries or media centers. Indiana Library Federation membership is not required.

- Nominees must have made substantial contributions such as (but not limited to):
 - physical buildings
 - library collections
 - endowment gifts
 - voluntary service efforts
 - other forms of fiscal support
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support from the community that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Read Aloud Champion Award

Honors and recognizes professionals or volunteers who demonstrate outstanding commitment to reading aloud in an Indiana program (school, library or community-based) to further a lifelong love of reading. The award is intended to recognize "Read Aloud" achievements of an individual or an organization during the prior year. The nominee does not have to be an Indiana Library Federation member.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominee who, at least in the prior year, sustained advocacy of the importance of reading aloud and/or who participated in reading aloud to children between birth to 18.
- Submission of two (2) letters of support from professional colleagues that include a description of the impact and contributions of the nominee (hours, activities, results).
- Submissions of audio/video recordings are encouraged, but not required.

Special Situations

Tom Zupancic Literacy in Libraries Award

Honors and recognizes community advocacy of literacy in libraries by an individual or organization in cooperation with a library. This award is created to acknowledge outstanding efforts by an individual or an organization in advocating the importance of libraries and literacy programs in a community. The nominee does not have to be an Indiana Library Federation member, however, a nominee who is an ILF personal, trustee, or institutional member would receive additional consideration.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominee's contributions must be of an extraordinary nature in advocating the importance of libraries and literacy programs in a community.
- Submission of two (2) to four (4) letters of support that give concrete examples of these contributions.

Continuing Education

The Indiana Library Federation maintains certain funds to support library education and training. Award amounts may vary from year to year, depending upon fund availability and the number of credits taken by the student. Monetary awards and scholarships are managed and awarded based on donor intent and include specific criteria and expectations for reporting outcomes to ILF. The scholarship deadline is June 30, with intent for awards for fall semester.

Scholarship for Professional Development

David Dickey Continuing Education Award

Awarded to individuals who are new to the academic library profession and seeking support for continuing his or her education. An award of up to \$250 may be provided each year to attend a professional conference, such as the ILF annual conference, or to obtain additional training. Indiana Library Federation membership is not required. Previous recipients of this award may reapply. Deadline: June 30.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- Nominees must have received his or her library degree no more than five (5) years ago.
- Nominees must be working in a professional capacity.
- Provide documentation and supporting information that describes the continuing education experience sought and its potential benefits to the recipient and institution.

Scholarships for Higher Education

The Esther Schlundt Memorial Scholarship Fund is named in honor of an outstanding reference librarian at Purdue University. This scholarship provides scholarship funding for one or more applicants entering or currently enrolled in an ALA-accredited graduate degree program in library and information science. This scholarship is typically awarded in the amount of \$1,000.

The Sue Marsh Weller Memorial Scholarship Fund provides funding for at least one scholarship for applicants entering or currently enrolled in an ALA-accredited program of graduate study specializing in children's librarianship. This scholarship is typically awarded in the amount of \$1,000.

The William Gresh Memorial Scholarship provides funding for at least one scholarship applicant entering or currently enrolled in a program to receive educational certification in the field of Library Media Services. A scholarship of up to \$1,000 is awarded to use toward an MLS or certification.

Minimum Criteria for Consideration:

- The applicant is currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate certification program for Library Media Services.
- Applicant's program of study must meet the current criteria as set by the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana Professional Standards Board (see [IN Teacher Licensing standards](https://www.doe.in.gov/licensing), with link to <https://www.doe.in.gov/licensing>).

Scholarships for Higher Education, continued

Guidelines for Scholarship Applicants

Minimum criteria for consideration:

- 1) Currently accepted to or enrolled in an ALA accredited library science program.
- 2) Applicant's program of study must meet the current criteria as required by the Indiana Professional Standards Board or, if for a school library, Indiana Department of Education licensing.
- 3) Required minimum grade point average of 3.0 for graduate work. Candidates with undergrad GPA less than 3.0 *may* qualify by demonstrating current and plans for future success.

All scholarship recipients are chosen based on:

- (1) Interest in librarianship as a profession
- (2) Individual's potential in the library field
- (3) Academic record
- (4) References
- (5) and/or a personal interview or video submission.

Applicants must be residents of Indiana. Each must accept employment in an Indiana library within one year after completing his or her library education and must continue to work in an Indiana library for at least one year after accepting employment. If a recipient does not comply with these conditions, the scholarship must be repaid as a loan.

Applicants are responsible for making sure that the materials requested in the scholarship application are received by the Indiana Library Federation office by the posted deadline of June 30.

The following items are necessary for an application to be considered:

- Two (2) letters of recommendation are required. At least one recommendation must be from a librarian. All letters of recommendation should be of a professional nature. References from current or previous employers, library trustees, current or previous teachers or professors, or others who comment on your potential as a library professional are acceptable. The letters should comment on one or more of the following:
 - potential in the library profession.
 - employment performance.
 - participation in volunteer and community activities.
 - academic performance.

For master's candidates:

- a transcript or copy of the official grade report for any library science courses already completed.
- minimum grade point average of 3.0 for graduate work.
- transcripts of all undergraduate education & transcripts from other graduate work may be included but are not required.

For [public library certification candidates](#):

- Documentation of enrollment in an approved public library certification program.
- transcripts from undergraduate education and/or high school, and if GPA is less than 3.0, plan for future success.
- transcript or copy of official grade report for any course already taken toward library certification with a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

For school library media candidates:

- a transcript for any education and/or library science courses already completed; including at least three (3) library credits toward certification).
- a transcript for all undergraduate or graduate work completed, with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for graduate work.
- transcripts from high school may be included by candidates who have not yet completed any graduate or undergraduate work.
- A short essay that describes the applicant's specific interests and goals in pursuing librarianship, including anticipated library type and area of specialization, if known. The essay should be no more than about one page, single-spaced, typed, and formatted professionally.