



LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES STAFF REPORT

ITEM NO. 4.2

DATE: September 25, 2025

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Library Board of Trustees

FROM: Anwan Baker, Library Director

SUBJECT: Review of "Five Ways Public Libraries Go Far Beyond Books" article by Abby Carlson, Research and Program Consultant, Urban Libraries Council

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the Library Board of Trustees review and discuss the article.

DECISION TYPE

Not Applicable

SUMMARY

On March 4, the Urban Libraries Council hosted a virtual town hall on the critical roles public libraries play in our communities. A big theme to come out of this discussion were the ways in which Libraries engage with their communities beyond books. The Urban Libraries Council invited leaders with experience engaging with local, state and federal government policymakers and discussed ways for libraries to stay connected with government officials, best practices for partnering with community organizations and how to tell the library's impact story. The article for discussion was derived from this town hall by Abby Carlson, Research and Program Consultant, Urban Libraries Council.

DISCUSSION

The five major themes that came out of this town hall were:

- The role of the public library spans far beyond books.
- Libraries should have a seat at the table for community policy- and decision-making.
- Partnerships between public libraries and local government are vital to the health of our communities.
- Libraries should tell the story of how they are serving the community beyond books.
- Libraries must reimagine their role in the future and transform themselves internally.

One way to approach the discussion of the article would be to walk through each of these in turn, and the

examples within. Staff would be interested in having Board Members share their thoughts on the examples provided, and/or offer any other input they have.

ATTACHMENTS

[1. Five Ways Public Libraries Go Far Beyond Books Article](#)

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