

LIBRARIES

ROBBINS AND FOX LIBRARIES

The library's mission is to be a vital resource for Arlington, creating opportunities for lifelong learning, meaningful connection, and discovery for all. The Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library strive to offer outstanding collections and services to meet the evolving interests and needs of the community. To accomplish its mission, the library relies on a variety of resources including volunteer support, library trust funds, grants from the Arlington Libraries Foundation, the Friends of the Robbins Library, the Friends of Fox Library, the Fox and Robbin Shop, and an annual grant for state aid to libraries.

Library Board of Trustees

Under trustee bylaws, and consistent with Section 22 of the Arlington Town Manager Act, the seven-member Board of Trustees establishes general operating and administrative policies, advocates for excellent library services, plans and anticipates the future needs of the library, and administers all restricted and unrestricted contributions to the library and all restricted and unrestricted Library Trust Funds.

Department Overview

Under the administration of the director and assistant director, the library serves the community through two branches and online at robbinslibrary.org. The library's six service departments and the Fox Branch Library work together to meet the library's mission. The library aims to provide excellent and equitable service to all residents and visitors.

The Circulation Department is responsible for customer service and functions related to checking out and returning hundreds of thousands of items at the Robbins Library circulation desk and at the Fox Branch Library, issuing library cards, and maintaining order on the shelves with assistance from library pages and volunteers. The Department also processes the daily Massachusetts Library System delivery of outgoing and returned items and items on hold from other Minuteman Library Network libraries.

The Children's Services and Teen Services Departments support early childhood literacy skills and builds to support the needs of older youth. The departments are responsible for collection development and services for children, teens and families, and outreach

to schools. The Children's Services Department oversees the distinctive Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund, which sponsors a program coordinator and special programs and services for children and teens on an annual basis.

The Adult Services Department provides reference services and public technology support on site at the main reference desk and by phone, email, and chat. The Department includes the Local History librarian and the Local History Room collection and resources, plus oversees book clubs and programs for adults and the library's array of online databases.

The Technical Services Department receives and processes shipments of new library materials including books, audiovisual items, unusual collections like the Library of Things, and other library materials. In 2022 the Department processed over 19,000 new items, maintained catalog records, served as a key connection between the library and the Minuteman Library Network. The Department also manages invoices and accounts in coordination with the library Office Manager.

All of the library's public-facing and staff-facing technology equipment, systems, and peripherals are managed by the Information Technology (IT) Department. The Department ensures that Robbins and Fox equipment meet the Minuteman Library Network's management system requirements to support all library cataloging, purchasing, collection management and circulation functions. The Department manages important public facing technology including Internet connected desktop and laptop computers and printing and scanning solutions.

The Fox Branch Library manager plans collections and services at the branch and works with all departments to ensure smooth and consistent delivery of library services in East Arlington.

Communications

The library is committed to a communication plan that helps all residents find and access library materials, programs, and resources. The library's communication tools include; a robust website with dynamic content, an outreach procedure that includes communication with local news outlets, an active newsletter with over 6,000 subscribers, and social media channels.

Library Statistics	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual
Total Materials Circulated	749,636	669,692	707,033	939,396
Digital Materials	106,632	149,612	190,899	182,233
Program attendance	28,140	6,432	4,729	14,442

Major Accomplishments for 2022

- Achieved record breaking circulation at Robbins and Fox Branch Library in FY2022. With a total circulation of 939,396 physical and electronic items, Arlington is a circulation leader for the Minuteman Library Network and the Commonwealth, surpassing communities with much larger populations.
- Launched a new Robbins Library website on January 14, 2022. As the library's "third branch," the improved website, built on user feedback, connects library patrons to a wide array of library resources including the MLN catalog, databases, and additional information about library resources and collections. Library staff saw immediate increases in Grab Bag and homebound delivery requests, demonstrating that online visitors were more easily able to connect to library resources. The library contracted with an Arlington based web developer on this project.



Screenshot of Robbins Library home page.

- The annual community read program, "Arlington Reads Together" focused on indigenous experiences and environmentalism through the book, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. 308 patrons checked out a physical or e-book for the featured titles, making the Arlington Reads Together book pick the top circulating title in the January-March period. Over 100 people attended the keynote presentation, "Understanding our Past, Creating a Sustainable Future: An Indigenous Understanding of Climate Justice" with Dr. Kyle Whyte.
- Created new programs, services, and collections to support evolving community interests and needs. Highlights include: a Japanese language collection for adults, supporting a growing community of Japanese speakers in Arlington; book groups for kindergartners and first graders, bringing new opportunities

to engage for Arlington's youngest readers; English language learning opportunities for adults including a volunteer-led conversation circle and a class supporting students taking the Test for Essential Academic Skills.



English Now!

- Launched a new Library of Things collection at Fox Branch Library and added additional items and categories to the Library of Things collection at Robbins including outdoor items and sustainability items.
- Received funding from the Friends of the Robbins Library to continue to provide access to hotspots at Robbins and Fox after a Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grant ended. The libraries now offer thirty-three hotspots for checkout.
- Digitized aging microfilm to create the Historical Arlington Newspapers database. The digital collection provides easy access to newspapers from Arlington from 1871-2005. This project was supported by a targeted grant to the Arlington Libraries Foundation.
- Hosted the first in-person Pride Prom for teens since 2019. Over fifty Arlington teens attended the event at the newly renovated Arlington Community Center.
- A record breaking 1,584 children registered for the library's summer reading program for kids. 334 teens and adults also participated in summer reading programs.
- The library held an all-staff learning day, "Reframing Aging" to better understand support aging residents.
- Conducted a lighting assessment of Robbins Library with the Town's Sustainability Manager to reduce the library's carbon footprint. As a first step, the library added new auto-switching power strips.
- Library Trustees contracted with Museum & Collector Resources to start the Winfield Robbins Art Print Deaccession Project, in

accordance with 2019 Town Meeting Warrant Article 39, authorizing the Library Board of Trustees to deaccess and/or dispose of by sale, donation, or other means, the Robbins Art Print Collection.

Community Partnerships

The Library seeks out opportunities to partner with Town departments, boards, commissions, and other organizations to better serve Arlington.

- Stephen Quinlan served as Library Board of Trustee Designee to the Youth/Young Adult Study Committee. Amy Hampe served as the Library Board of Trustees Designee to the Poet Laureate Committee.
- The Department continued serving as an active partner in the Housing Corporation of Arlington's Human Services Network, a coalition of Town departments and non-profit social services organizations working to identify and stabilize vulnerable community members by connecting families and individuals to resources supporting housing, employment, and other key services.
- Served a community distribution site for COVID antigen tests provided to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Co-created the Social Justice Book Group with the Diversity Task Group of Envision Arlington.
- Created a new story time program hosted at Menotomy Manor
- Co-sponsored an Indigenous Peoples Day program with the Cyrus Dallin Museum and the Human Rights Commission and an Electrical Grid program with the Electrify Arlington Committee.
- Collaborated with the Disability Commission to make improvements to the library's revamped website.
- Co-sponsored new programs for English language learners with local volunteers, including Transformative grant awardees Lamplight Women's Literacy.
- Completed a long-term loan agreement with the Cyrus Dallin Museum, giving the Museum and researchers better access to Cyrus Dallin papers that had been stored in the library.

Future Goals

The library completed a new Strategic Plan in 2021 with extensive community feedback. The following goals and objectives for FY23 and beyond were defined by staff and library Trustees based on the Strategic Plan. The complete plan can be found on the library

website, robbinslibrary.org.

- Ensure programs and collections evolve to better meet residents' needs.
- Expand co-creation of program and events using community expertise and partner resources.
- Reevaluate and balance physical and digital/downloadable collections, in keeping with sustained and projected usage trends.
- Take a leadership role in the community to offer services and resources that spark conversation and critical thinking around issues facing Arlington.
- Increase library access for and use by all community members
- Develop and implement a marketing plan, with a focus on increasing use and awareness among underserved audiences and non-users.
- Direct additional staff time to targeting outreach efforts towards underserved populations.
- Further grow the resources and accessibility of the website as the library's third branch.
- Transform library spaces to improve services and better meet residents' needs.
- Develop an action plan for incremental and long-term physical upgrades at both branches to better serve and support people of all abilities and build towards the "Reimagining Our Libraries" vision.
- Promote all capital projects and work with library support groups and stakeholders to advance these initiatives through community connections and advocacy.

Acknowledgements

The Library Board of Trustees and library administration recognize that special grants, gifts, and bequests do not take the place of public support, but help to further enhance library facilities, services, and collections. These library support organizations and their volunteer boards, advisors and members are gratefully acknowledged:



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Arlington Libraries Foundation

The Arlington Libraries Foundation fulfilled the library's fiscal year 2022 grant request, funding materials and various initiatives including the Arlington Reads Together program. Established in 2013, the Arlington Libraries Foundation conducts fundraising appeals and campaigns, and secures and stewards the gifts, grants, and endowments that provide essential funds toward the library's current and long-term goals.



Friends of the Library

In 2021 the Friends of the Robbins Library granted funds for expanded Library of Things collections at Robbins and Fox, continued funding signature initiatives such as the library's 3rd floor balcony beehives, and the popular museum pass program. The Friends of the Robbins Library is a membership-driven non-profit that also runs ongoing book sales for the benefit of the library.



The Fox & Robbin Shop

The Fox & Robbin Shop is a children's resale shop within the Fox Branch Library. The shop is operated by a nonprofit with paid and volunteer staff whose primary mission is to support services at the Fox Library with proceeds from the shop.



Volunteers

Volunteers support the library's mission in many capacities. Trustees are grateful to the many volunteers who shelf materials, support the Homebound Delivery program by delivering library materials to some of our most vulnerable residents, and run library supported programs including books groups and English language learning groups.

Recognitions

In 2022 the library honored Library Director Andrea Nicolay for her nine years of service as she moved on to a new position. In 2022 the library also honored Mary Hearth for her service of 30 years. The Trustees are grateful to Ms. Nicolay and Ms. Hearth for their years of service and dedication.

In September, Anna Litten was appointed Arlington's new Library Director. Ms. Litten had served as the Assistant Library Director since 2018.

The Trustees would like to extend heartfelt thanks to library employees who make sure the library is a true destination for materials, programs, and community connections. Their efforts contribute to making Arlington an attractive and welcoming community for all.



View of Robbins Library Reading Room.