The Illinois Center for the Book is a programming arm of the Illinois State Library that promotes reading, writing and author programs with the mission: “Nurturing and connecting readers and writers, and honoring our rich literary heritage.”

The Illinois Center for the Book was incorporated in 1985, making it the third affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Today, all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands have a center affiliated with the Library of Congress. Each state center provides programs that highlight their own literary heritage, books, reading, literacy and libraries.

Illinois authors’ names on the frieze of the Illinois State Library, Gwendolyn Brooks Building

The state of Illinois has a long and proud literary heritage. Some of the greatest written works were produced by Illinoisans such as Ernest Hemingway, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ray Bradbury and Studs Terkel. Reading inspires and entertains us and is the pathway to lifelong learning.

Programs such as the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition spotlight talented new poets, while the Illinois Authors Wiki recognizes published writers. The highly acclaimed Read for a Lifetime program was the first statewide reading initiative developed exclusively for teenagers. The Letters About Literature competition has inspired thousands of students to read books and reflect on how those works have changed their lives. Family Reading Night brings families together to celebrate the magic of reading.

As State Librarian I am proud to support the outstanding work of the Illinois Center for the Book, and I look forward to our continued efforts to encourage reading and writing and celebrate our rich literary heritage.

Jesse White
Secretary of State & State Librarian

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**Family Reading Night**
An annual statewide event held the third Thursday in November to encourage families to spend quality time to “Read Together, Grow Together.”

**Illinois Emerging Writers Competition**
A creative writing competition providing a unique opportunity and outlet for recognizing new literary talent in the state. Winners receive cash prizes and have their works submitted for possible publication in Illinois literary magazines.

**Letters About Literature**
A national reading and writing contest that encourages students to read a book and write a letter to the author reflecting on how the book changed their life or view of the world.

**Read for a Lifetime**
A statewide reading program for high school students that highlights contemporary and classic literature and promotes reading for pleasure.

**Illinois Authors Wiki**
A means to celebrate and share information about Illinois authors, illustrators and photographers.

**National Book Festival**
The Illinois Center for the Book participates with other state centers at the annual Library of Congress National Book Festival in the Pavilion of the States in Washington, D.C.

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