

# ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

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## Established February 22, 1839

The Illinois State Library in Springfield serves as the official information resource for Illinois government, and provides patrons electronic access to worldwide information systems and collections. The State Library coordinates Illinois' regional library systems and more than 5,000 public, school, academic and special libraries. The library is open to the public and promotes reading and literacy through a variety of programs and services. The Secretary of State serves as State Librarian.

The State Library is a regional depository of federal documents and coordinates the distribution of Illinois governmental publications to libraries throughout the state, as well as to the Library of Congress. The library also boasts the second-largest map collection in the country, including more than 189,000 maps, with special emphasis on Illinois maps.

Established on Feb. 22, 1839, the first State Library opened in the Old State Capitol the following December. As a state legislator, Abraham Lincoln was the first person to borrow a book from the State Library. The library later was housed in the State Capitol and the Howlett Building.

Dedicated on June 20, 1990, the current State Library building across from the State Capitol spans 164,000 square feet and has 15 miles of compact shelving. The atrium reaches 80 feet high and the floor is made of Italian Carrara marble.

On June 6, 2003, Secretary of State Jesse White hosted a ceremony renaming the building the Illinois State Library Gwendolyn Brooks Building in honor of the long-time Illinois Poet Laureate who died in 2000.

The names of 35 famous Illinois authors are etched on the building's outside fourth-floor frieze. Of those authors, Ray Bradbury is the only one still living. The first-floor Illinois Authors Room houses an extensive collection of first edition and signed copies of works by Illinois authors. In 1999, then-state Senator Barack Obama presented the library a copy of his memoir, *Dreams From My Father*. A photo and plaque marking the event are displayed in the Authors Room.

The Illinois State Library Gwendolyn Brooks Building at 300 S. Second St. is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except state holidays. For more information about the library, visit [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).

