



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, LMSW, Assistant City Manager *SHH*

From: Hannah Terrell, Austin Public Library Director *HT*

Date: September 28, 2026

Subject: **Update on 2026 Centennial Activities of the Austin Public Library**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the 2026 centennial activities of the Austin Public Library and information regarding the major celebration planned for October.

Background

In 1926, the Austin Public Library (APL) became a reality, started by the efforts of Grace Delano Clark and a donated volume of 500 books in a rented space on Congress Avenue. A dedicated web page allows visitors to travel through time and see the evolution and growth of our public library system through the historic photos and extensive descriptions found in [The History of the Austin Public Library](#). Austin Public Library is celebrating its 100-year anniversary this year and has sponsored centennial-themed programs and activities to mark this major milestone throughout the year.

Centennial Library Cards

In June of 2026, APL launched a “Your art. In every pocket.” library card design contest to engage customers in creating the design for the new centennial-themed library cards. Austinites were invited to celebrate Austin Public Library’s 100th birthday by designing the Centennial library card. APL asked for original designs from artists of all ages, with a unique theme for each category:

- Child (ages 0–12) | The Library’s 100th Birthday Party
- Teen (ages 13–17) | Austin Public Library’s Next Century
- Adult (ages 18+) | Inspiring All to Discover, Learn, and Create

The contest was open to current APL cardholders who are residents of the APL service area and are *not* current City of Austin employees.

One winning design was selected in each age category. Finalist designs were shared for public voting from June 15 to July 31, 2026. Public voting helped determine the winning design in each category, with over 10,000 votes received. Winners will have their design printed on an official

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Austin Public Library card and be recognized by Austin Public Library as part of the Centennial Celebrations.

The winners of each category are:

- **Youth:** Ishana Jain
- **Teen:** Yaretzi Nicole Cruz Santiago
- **Adult:** Lyle Lewis

September is National Library Card Month, and we are excited to unveil these new cards designed by community members for current and future cardholders. APL cards provide full access to print, digital, databases, tool lending library, and more. For youth cardholders, a parent or guardian is fully responsible for the card's authorization and use. [Enhanced Library Cards](#) are available at select library locations.

Book Safe Harbor

On August 27, Austin City Council adopted a resolution declaring that the City of Austin is a Book Safe Harbor as a meaningful affirmation of the work that has been central to APL's mission for generations.

Upcoming Events

To celebrate Austin Public Library's Centennial, the Austin History Center is presenting [In Circulation: A Century of the Austin Public Library](#), an exhibit tracing APL's evolution from its early reading room to a citywide institution shaped by advocacy, public service, and community participation. Through archival photos, timelines, architectural history, and stories of access and civic change, the exhibit highlights how APL has influenced Austin's cultural and public life over the past century.

Finally, on Saturday, October 17, 2026, Austin Public Library will host the Centennial Party at Central, the culmination of APL's Centennial Campaign: a full day of activities, performances, exhibits, and more at the Central Library. Prior to opening the doors, a formal program of dedications, resolutions, and remarks at 9 a.m. will kick off the centennial celebration. The Mayor, all City Council members, and City offices are invited to attend and celebrate with us. For a full list of performers, please refer to the website page [Centennial Party at Central | Austin Public Library](#).

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Hannah Terrell, Director of Libraries, at (512) 974-7444 or Hannah.Terrell@austintexas.gov.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
Jason Hadavi, City Auditor
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court
CMO Executive Team
Department Directors