


# ROBBINS LIBRARY, ARLINGTON

## BACKGROUND

The city of Arlington is located in the eastern part of the state right outside of Cambridge and Somerville. The Robbins Library is a municipal library consisting of one main library located in downtown Arlington and one branch library (Fox Branch) serving the neighborhood of East Arlington with a total collection of 666,966 physical materials, 64,631 electronic resources. In FY17 they processed 143,729 interlibrary loans. The city of Arlington is a an urban community of almost 45,000 residents and it's median household income is $98,103.

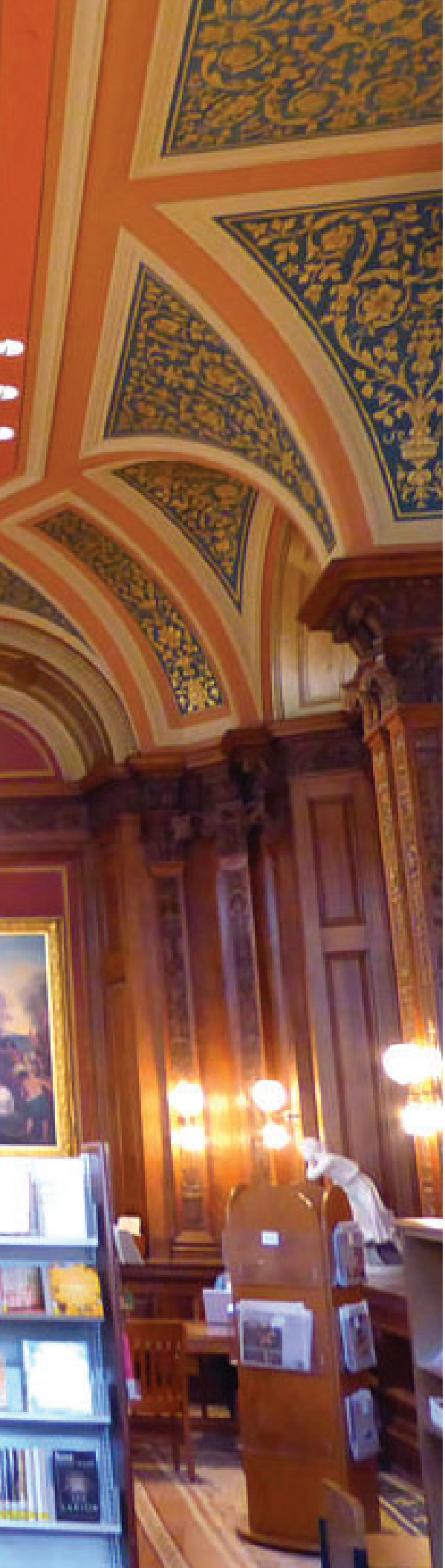
The Robbins Library offers a variety of programs of entertainment and educational value as well as interactive displays throughout the year. Their collection includes traditional materials like books, graphic novels, magazines, music, movies, and audio books. Robbins also circulates books in braille, books in Spanish, French, Russian, & Chinese, a Library of Things, and video games.

The Robbins video game collection boasts especially high circulation numbers and materials within the biography, politics, and arts collections are in high demand within the Arlington community. Programs held a Robbins are well attended, in particular their queer movie nights regularly draw a sizable crowd.

## ISSUES FACED

The Robbins Library saw an opportunity for their staff's participation in Project SET. One of the described goals of program was "to cultivate new talent among the library community of Massachusetts and provide the support and encouragement to build participants' confidence and strengthen their career paths." Robbins had a newly-minted librarian on staff named Rob Lorino. Rob was working at Robbins as an Adult Services Librarian and to the leadership at Robbins Rob seemed to be exactly the sort of person Project SET was geared towards/for.

2016 was a busy year for this Library they were just beginning to plan for a large building renovation and they had noticed the library was suffering from a greater amount of staff turnover than usual. A major need for the library was to ensure that their staff would be well prepared to initiate and lead library programs.





## ACTIONS

Finding the flexibility to accommodate a staff members participation in Project SET can be a challenge. The Robbins library was able ensure Robs participation by making some minor schedule adjustments.

During the program, Rob's supervisor received regular updates about the program assignments, activities, and final project.

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES

For Rob and the leadership at Robbins Library, the experience of participating in Project SET was a positive one. Rob benefited from the hands-on experience of putting together presentations and having opportunities to practice those presentations in front of others.

As a result of this experience Rob began presenting at other library conferences about some of the programs and services offered at the Robbins library. There have also been benefits to the library itself by presenting about some of Robbins less common initiatives such as their LGBT+ programming the library has been given more positive exposure, while inspiring other libraries to do the same.

## NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

The only downside that Rob and the library faced as a result of their participation in this program was the added responsibilities to their already-full workload.

## LESSONS LEARNED

One of the key things Robbins learned about itself and their staff is that being supportive of professional development opportunities does end up benefiting the library as a whole.

*The information from this case study was collected from several sources including interviews with staff members at the Robbins Library Rob Lorino and Linda Dyndiuk, the 2017 ARIS report, and the US Census.*