

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



[June 1, 2026]

### **Rural Library Grant Powered by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation**

#### ***Nine rural Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations to receive funding for projects***

The Rural Library Grant Program, powered by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (RCWJRF), will provide support for rural public libraries and library systems, recognizing them as key community hubs. The Foundation is providing \$1.5 million in support for a three-year period (2026-2028) in Western New York. The grant is being co-administered by Western New York Library Resources Council and the Rochester Regional Library Council.

Projects funded through the grants will directly benefit residents throughout rural communities in: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming counties. Funded projects are designed to strengthen community engagement, expand educational opportunities, and improve access to vital services for residents in underserved areas.

For 2026, the grants awarded to WNY libraries range from approximately \$1,500 to \$80,000. The funded projects conform to the following interests of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation: Youth Sports and Recreation, After School Youth Programming, Parks and Trails, Non-Profit Innovation, Caregivers, Young Adults and Working Families, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development and Early Childhood.

Awarded Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations include:

- **Angola Public Library** (34 N. Main St., Angola, Manager Jennifer Page) – awarded \$10,200 for *Study Seating for Success @ the Angola Public Library*
- **Aurora Town Public Library** (550 Main St., East Aurora, Director Paula Ausberger) – awarded \$20,000 for *Aurora Town Public Library: Preparing Tweens, Teens, and Young Adults for Success*
- **Boston Free Library** (9475 Boston State Rd., Boston, Director Lydia Herren) – awarded \$20,000 for *Connecting the Community to Nature: A Native Plant Garden and Outdoor Educational Space at the Boston Free Library*
- **City of Tonawanda Public Library** (333 Main St., Tonawanda, Director John Gaff) – awarded \$4,000 for *Covered Bicycle Shelter and Community Resources @ the City of Tonawanda Public Library*
- **Town of Collins Public Library** (2341 Main St., Collins, Director Abigail Barten-McGowan) – awarded \$39,061 for *Work Pod in Town of Collins Public Library*

- **Elma Public Library** (1860 Bowen Rd., Elma, Director Stephanie Molnar) – awarded \$3,400 for *Roots of Elma: Rural Homesteading Through Libraries*
- **Grand Island Memorial Library** (1715 Bedell Rd., Grand Island, Director Bridgette Heintz) – awarded \$33,188 for *Grand Island Memorial Library Study Room Project*
- **Hulbert Library of the Town of Concord** (18 Chapel St., Springville, Director Jennifer Morris) – awarded \$20,139 for *One Booth, Many Opportunities: Access for All*
- **North Collins Public Library** (2095 School St., North Collins, Manager Alice Yoder) – awarded \$13,140 for *Enjoy the Warm Weather: Library Kayak Lending Program*

Rural libraries serve as essential community hubs in underserved areas, providing education, internet access, workforce support, and lifelong learning opportunities. This investment from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation will help ensure communities across Western New York continue to have access to innovative programs and welcoming public spaces.

For more information about the funded projects or participating libraries, contact:  
**Joy Testa Cinquino** Assistant Deputy Director, Development & Communications  
 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
 716-858-7182, [testaj@buffalolib.org](mailto:testaj@buffalolib.org)

#### **About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation**

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two areas reflect the devotion of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his beloved Buffalo Bills NFL team. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson provided that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. Based in Detroit, the Foundation began with a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable, and overseen by those who knew him best.

