



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Last weekend my office partnered with ShareFest Will County to host our annual food giveaway event in the County Office Building parking lot to support local families. In just three hours, our dedicated team of nearly 80 volunteers efficiently distributed over 51,000 pounds of food and household items at the drive-up event.

The event serves as more than a one-time food giveaway. It serves as an opportunity to connect Will County residents with information about how to access local food pantries, such as ShareFest Will County's storefront in New Lenox. Attendees also connected directly with other social service agencies to provide resources.

While this was a successful event, it demonstrates the increasing local need for food support. 819 families attended from throughout the county. With rising costs for everyday items and federal changes to food assistance programs, the need for support to fight hunger insecurity continues to grow. This is a top priority and one that I will be working with organizations throughout the county to address.

I want to express my gratitude for all the volunteers who came out on Saturday to support their community, along with the hundreds of volunteers who step up to serve at their local food pantries every day throughout Will County. If you are interested in volunteering or are in need of food assistance, consider connecting with your nearest food pantry. The

The Northern Illinois Food Bank maintains an active list at solvehungertoday.org

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



LOCAL FOOD ASSISTANCE



BOOK REUSE AND RECYCLING EVENT

MAY 29 - 31 | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.

BRING • RECYCLE • TAKE

Three-Day Book Event Returns This Weekend

Will County's popular Book Reuse and Recycling Event returns this weekend! Hosted by the Will County Resource Recovery and Energy Division, this event offers residents an opportunity to donate unwanted books or find free books to take home to their home libraries.

The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, May 29, and Saturday-Sunday, May 30-31, at Joliet Park District's Pilcher Park Nature Center, 2501 Highland Park Drive.

Donate Books | Schools, libraries, and individuals may bring unused and unwanted books for reuse and recycling. Hardcover and paperback books will be accepted and shared for free to attendees. Books that are not reused will either be distributed to literacy programs or responsibly recycled.

Take Free Books | The public is invited to review thousands of free books. Categories include fiction, non-fiction, children's, romance, hobby, travel, health & living, religion, textbooks, periodicals & cookbooks.

The annual event prevents thousands of books from going unused or dumped into landfills.

Learn More: willcountygovern.com/will_county_book_reuse_and_recycling_event_2026

CELEBRATING THE NEW HOME OF THE WORKFORCE CENTER OF WILL COUNTY



Workforce Center of Will County Celebrates New Location

The Workforce Center of Will County has celebrated the grand opening of their new location at 1300 Copperfield Avenue in Joliet, spotlighting an expanded space for services offered to job seekers and employers. Will County leadership cut the ribbon on the new center, which will serve as a modern, one-stop hub that offers career services, training, and workforce resources.

Operated by the Workforce Services Division of Will County, the multi-agency career center has moved into the renovated Will County-owned building in east Joliet, offering a four thousand square-foot increase in space from the previous facility. The new center location also offers a more centralized location for residents, which has already contributed to an uptick in users since the move was completed in February 2026.

The Workforce Center of Will County is the public-facing hub of several local, state, and federal partners who offer employer and job-seeker services under one roof, offering no-cost employment, education, and training services designed to empower individuals, strengthen businesses, and support long-term economic growth across the county.

The center serves between 600 and 1,000 residents every month, along with the additional outreach conducted through the county such as job fairs and kiosks. The center has also hosted their first job fair at the new space, connecting over 100 Will County residents with local career opportunities.

Learn More: willcounty.gov/News/workforce-center-of-will-county-celebrates-new-location

CONGRATULATIONS, COLIN!



MOBILITY MANAGER WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE



County Mobility Manager Receives Award for Expanding Transportation Access

Colin Phillips, Mobility Manager in the Will County Executive Office, has received the "Community Advocate" Award from Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202's Project SEARCH Program. The award recognizes his above-and-beyond efforts to connect their students with the Access Will County Dial-a-Ride service to achieve independence and connect with employment opportunities.

Project SEARCH is an international program that assists students with disabilities gain work experience that supports their long-term career success. In his role as the County's Mobility Manager, Colin was instrumental in familiarizing students engaged with the program locally with Access Will County to reach their primary internship location at UChicago Medicine Advent Health in Bolingbrook, as well as traveling to and from work in the Plainfield area. Students, parents, and teachers expressed gratitude that the Dial-a-Ride service provided empowerment and independence.

Access Will County provides curb-to-curb transportation to seniors and disabled residents in Will County. The program has expanded in recent years to offer transportation access to any Will County resident to any location within the county, one mile outside of the county, and parts of Southern Cook County. The program provided 15,000 rides in 2025 and has already provided 17,000 rides in 2026.

Congratulations to Colin and thank you for all that you do!

Get Access: willcounty.gov/County-Offices/Special-Services/Access-Will-County-Dial-a-Ride



WILL COUNTY COURTS HOST "LAW DAY"



"Law Day" Celebrated at Will County Courthouse with Student Visit

Earlier this month, 50 students from area high schools visited the Will County Courthouse to gain real-world perspective of the justice system as part of "Law Day." The educational event was a collaboration between the Twelfth Judicial Circuit and the Will County Bar Association under the theme "The Rule of Law and the American Dream". Participating high schools included Bolingbrook, Lincoln-Way Central, and Lockport.

Supreme Court Justice Mary Kay O'Brien and Chief Judge Daniel Kennedy welcomed students to the event, which featured presentations from local judges, private practice attorneys, state's attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, court security officers and court reporters. Students received a behind-the-scenes tour of the courthouse and witnessed a ceremony for attorneys and local elected officials to retake their oaths of office to demonstrate their continued commitment to the rule of law.

To reiterate the importance of the Rule of Law, an essay contest was also hosted for local high school students and an art competition for younger students. Essay contest winners include Levonique S. (1st Place) from Bolingbrook High School, Aiden P. (2nd Place) from Bolingbrook High School, and Kingston D. (3rd Place) from Joliet Catholic Academy. 8th Grader Alex K. won the inaugural art contest.

Congratulations to all participating students!



WILL COUNTY
ANIMAL PROTECTION SERVICES



WHISKERS — AT WORK —

"Whisker at Work" Program Helps Cats Find a Home

With warm weather in full swing, this is the perfect time to learn more about the Will County Animal Protection Services' (APS) "Whiskers at Work" program!

Launched in 2023, the Whiskers at Work program matches feral cats with residents and business owners in agricultural-zoned areas who are looking for natural rodent control for barns, outbuildings, and rural properties. The program provides an important alternative for cats that would not thrive as traditional indoor pets, providing them a safe home and opportunity to thrive. Will County APS staff works closely with adopters to ensure successful placements by counseling them on the proper acclimation process and ongoing care needs.

The "Whiskers at Work" program has experienced remarkable success since launching. The program's cat placements tripled last year, with 80 cats finding a home compared to 23 cats in 2024.

The continued success of the program highlights the community's willingness to embrace creative, compassionate solutions for animal welfare while also supporting local agricultural needs. For many of these cats, Whiskers at Work provides a second chance at life — one where they can remain independent, safe, and valued members of their new homes.

Get Access: willcounty.gov/County-Offices/Public-Health-and-Safety/Animal-Protection-Services/Barn-Cat-Adoption-Program

