

Secretary of State Jesse White hosts third national "Targeting Autism" forum

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SPRINGFIELD - Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White hosted the third national "Targeting Autism" forum on May 11-12, at the State Library in Springfield. Launched in 2015 by Secretary White and The Autism Program (TAP) of Illinois, the "Targeting Autism" forum is an innovative program designed to develop and implement creative ways to address the needs of Illinois residents impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

“The need for libraries and local providers to collaborate to better serve those with ASD is more important than ever in Illinois as the state’s budget impasse has negatively impacted many service providers,” said White. “Working with local families and ASD providers, libraries can provide resources and supportive environments that will help those with ASD achieve their full potential.”

This year’s forum focused on topics related to young adults with ASD seeking employment. A number of the speakers were professionals and/or authors, also on the autism spectrum, who shared their experience with autism.

More than 80 library professionals, autism providers and advocates from across Illinois along with professionals in other states came to the forum. Attendees gained a better understanding of the diverse needs of people with ASD and their families and ways libraries can support their patrons. Since then, forum participants have developed local collaborations and implemented a variety of programs and services.

“Targeting Autism” was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through a National Leadership Forum Grant.