

ALA American Library Association

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American Library Association

Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation and ALA Open Applications for New Graphic Novel Grant

CHICAGO – The American Library Association (ALA) and the Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation opened applications today for the new Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants for Libraries, which recognize libraries for their role in the growth of graphic literature. The collaboration extends graphic novels into a new realm by encouraging public awareness about the rise and importance of graphic literature and honoring the creative excellence of Will Eisner. In a career that spanned nearly eight decades — from the dawn of the comic book to the advent of digital comics – Will Eisner is recognized as the “Father of the Graphic Novel.” In 2011, on the 94th anniversary of Eisner’s birth, Google used an image featuring Will Eisner’s *The Spirit* as its logo. Information about the grant and application can be found at <http://www.ala.org/gamert/will-eisner-graphic-novel-grants-libraries>. The application deadline is February 7, 2014.

The Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants for Libraries awards two grants – the **Will Eisner Graphic Novel Innovation Grant** will provide support to a library that would like to expand its existing graphic novel services and programs; the **Will Eisner Graphic Novel Growth Grant** will provide support to a library for the initiation of a graphic novel service or program. Each recipient will receive a \$4,000 program grant plus a collection of Will Eisner’s work and biographies as well as the graphic novels nominated for the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards at Comic-Con International. The grant award includes a travel stipend for a library representative to travel to the ALA Annual Conference to receive the grant from the Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation.

"The Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants for Libraries is a significant grant award that recognizes libraries for their contributions to the growth of graphic literature, sequential art, and comics as a literary medium. We are excited to give more opportunities to libraries to shape new ideas about graphic novels at their library," said Carl Gropper, the President of the Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation. "Will Eisner is recognized as one of America’s most influential comic artists. But this was not always the case. Will Eisner stayed true to his passion that sequential art served a wide range of needs. Today, graphic novels are one of the fastest growing categories in publishing and bookselling. These novels are more complex and varied in content than the comics that preceded them. They are subject to academic study, library and museum exhibits and prestigious literary awards."

"Graphic novels are a vital part of storytelling and libraries have become one of the main institutions which introduce readers to the format every day," Robin Brenner, Teen Librarian at Brookline Public Library and co-convener of ALA’s Graphic Novels & Comics in Libraries Member Initiative Group, "The Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants will help libraries across the country continue to highlight the medium, engage readers, and educate library users about the creative, inspiring Mr. Eisner and his lasting legacy."

The grant is administered by ALA's Gaming Round Table and the Graphic Novels & Comics Member Initiative Group.

The Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation fosters innovation and creativity in graphic literature, sequential art, and comics. It encourages others to continue and build upon the legacy of Will Eisner who broke new ground in the development of visual narrative and the language of comics and was the creator of *The Spirit*, *John Law*, *Lady Luck*, *Mr. Mystic*, *Uncle Sam*, *Blackhawk*, *Sheena* and countless others. For more information about Will Eisner visit www.willeisner.com.

The American Library Association (ALA), the oldest and largest library association in the world, provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

More information on the grant and the application process is available online at <http://www.ala.org/gamert/will-eisner-graphic-novel-grants-libraries> . For any inquiries, please contact ALA Graphic Novels & Comics in Libraries Member Initiative Group staff liaison Tina Coleman at ccoleman@ala.org.