

Chilcoat Named Director of Arkansas State Library

Jennifer Chilcoat has been named the next director of the Arkansas State Library. Chilcoat, the current deputy director, replaces Carolyn Ashcraft, who is retiring July 1.

Chilcoat brings 30 years of library experience to the position, including 28 years at Arkansas public libraries. She has served as the deputy director of the Arkansas State Library since August 2018, where she oversees the Library Development Department, the Information Services Department, and the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled. Chilcoat also has served as the library's state data coordinator for Arkansas and has spearheaded statewide efforts to maximize the power of libraries in achieving a complete count for the 2020 Census.

"When I hired Jennifer as my deputy director in 2018, it was with the understanding that I was looking to retire in a couple of years," Ashcraft said. "She has been like a sponge, soaking up as much information as possible, learning about state government and our agency, and preparing for the opportunity to be the next state librarian. There will be a time of transition, but I know she has the skills necessary to lead our agency into this next decade."

Before joining the staff at the State Library, Chilcoat spent 28 years at the Central Arkansas Library System, where she served in various capacities, such as a reference librarian, branch manager, head of human resources, construction coordinator, and interim deputy director.

"The move from CALS to the Arkansas State Library was natural for me because I get energized by empowering other librarians to do their best work," Chilcoat said. "At ASL, I get to empower librarians around the entire state, not just those in my local community. Now, as director of the agency, I can ensure that the issues we face in our state are heard on the national stage."

Chilcoat earned bachelor's degrees in English and German, as well as a Master of Science in Library and Information Science, from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She currently coordinates a Parenting of Teens class at Second Presbyterian Church and serves as an assistant scoutmaster for Boy Scouts of America Troop 30, both in Little Rock.