The Institute Library is a home for independent intellectual inquiry for writers, professionals, scholars, mentors, and students, housed in a 19th century building. At times we are a bustling center of lectures and debates, at others, a quiet refuge. The unique book collection holds more than 30,000 volumes.

Founded in 1826, the library’s mission has always been to provide “mutual assistance in the attainment of useful knowledge.” Over the past two centuries, the library has hosted eminent speakers, including Frederick Douglass, Anna E. Dickinson, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

“I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.”
—Jorge Luis Borges
Advocating for the Future

The library has a proud history of welcoming into our space youth advocacy and educational groups. Inspired by a nationwide call to action and with the guidance of community advisors, the Institute Library is home to the Social Justice Reader program. This paid fellowship for African American New Haven high school students offers the opportunity to partner with a mentor and explore topics such as race as a social construct, racial justice, and racism, from the disciplinary perspective of their choice. At the end of their fellowship, students make public presentations at the library of their research.

The Gallery Upstairs

Located on the third floor, the Gallery Upstairs is an exhibition space for visual art. Curators present group and solo shows of contemporary art, including photography and book art. We welcome submissions and proposals on an on-going basis. Send inquiries to gallery@institutelibrary.org.

Become a Member

Support New Haven’s best kept secret and join today. You can use the library’s quiet space and wifi for reading and study, and, with membership, you have borrowing privileges from our collection of over 30,000 volumes. Your membership dues keep the Institute Library open and operational, funding our general operations, overhead, new book acquisitions, and costs of events and programming.

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□ $90 - Family Level Membership ($7.50 Month)
□ $135 - Patron Membership ($11.25 Month)
□ Auto-renew annually. Your support of the Library is vital to our success. By automatically renewing your membership, you help us keep administrative costs low. You can cancel auto-renew anytime.

Go to our calendar!
InstituteLibrary.org/calendar/

Rent the Institute Library

The Institute Library is available as an event space. Film crews, social and professional organizations, couples celebrating their weddings, and families hosting baby showers have all rented the Institute Library for their own special events. Contact our office with inquiries, or email us at home@institutelibrary.org.

Join online!
InstituteLibrary.org/membership/