

Carthage Public Library District Report
for Compliance with the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act

I. Unit of Government submitting this report:

Carthage Public Library District
500 Wabash Avenue
Carthage, IL 62321
Hancock County, Illinois
217-357-3232
cartlib@mtcnw.net

II. Information about our Library:

The Library District's boundaries are the same as those of the Carthage Elementary School District. Based on the 2020 census, the population of our service area is 4,106.

Public libraries in Hancock County include three city libraries (Hamilton, Nauvoo, Warsaw) and three district libraries (Carthage, LaHarpe, and Greater West Central which serves the Southeastern School District and has branches in Augusta, Bowen, Golden, & Plymouth). There are many unserved areas in Hancock County.

Currently, Carthage Public Library District has one full-time employee and six part-time employees. The library is generally open 49 hours a week from Labor Day through Memorial Day. During the summer, the library is open 45 hours per week.

Our annual working budget for FY 2023-2024 is \$292,871.35.

Our District's total equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for tax year 2021 was \$97,202,724 with a rate setting EAV of \$92,575,779 after TIF. For tax year 2022, the total EAV is \$105,563,659 with a rate setting EAV of \$100,215,444 after TIF.

III. Information about our Committee

A. Committee Members

Library Director	Amy Gee
Library Trustee	John Dittmer
Library Trustee	Sarah Talley
Library Trustee	Andy Bastert
Library Trustee	Rebecca Eagan
Library Trustee	Victoria Livingston
Library Trustee	Rose Fisher
Library Trustee	Ann Thompson
District resident	Angie Perry
District resident	Cheryl Underwood
District resident	Melita Finney

B. Dates that our committee met -- Meeting agendas and minutes are attached.

First (organizational) meeting: April 10, 2023
Second meeting: June 12, 2023
Third meeting: October 9, 2023

IV. Core Programs and Services currently offered by the Library

A. Materials for checkout or in-library use

Fiction and non-fiction books for all ages, large print books
Books in Spanish or Spanish/English bilingual books
Magazines & newspapers
Audio books on CD, Playaway, and Wonderbooks
DVDs
Early Learning Kits
Local history & genealogy references, local newspaper on microfilm
Kindle e-readers
Laptop computers
Fishing Poles
Tax forms
Interlibrary Loan Service allows us to provide access to many more materials.

We offer curbside pickup of library materials, have a rotating collection of materials at the Marion Corner apartments, and offer delivery service to patrons who are homebound or residents of Hancock Village.

B. On-line resources

On-line card catalog – search our collection, place holds, renew items
Downloadable audiobooks & ebooks through Alliance Digital Media Library using the Libby app and through eReadIllinois using the Boundless app.
Library edition of Ancestry.com database (in library use only)
Gale Entrepreneurship database
Peterson's Test and Career Prep database
4 AtoZ databases from World Trade Press – Food America, Maps Online, World Culture, and World Travel
Explore More Illinois – free or reduced fees for museums and cultural venues.
Illinois Legal Aid
The reference page of our website provides links to many credible on-line sources on a variety of topics.

C. Technology & Services – a small fee is charged for some of these services to recover our costs.

Computers with Internet access & basic productivity software for public use
Free Wi-fi access
I-pads with games for young children
Copying & printing services in black & white and color, including printing from a phone
Fax service
Laminating
Disc Cleaning

D. Programs – although the exact programs offered each year vary, we consistently offer programs in these areas:

Early Literacy (children 0-5 years & their families)– currently Rhythm & Movement
Story Time, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten
Story time in day care homes
Elementary literacy & enrichment – story and craft times, STEAM programs
Programs for teens & tweens

Movie Days (often on no school or early out days)
English Language Learners Group
Adult Programs – Book club, crochet group, informational programs
Family Programs – game nights, Family Reading Night
Summer Reading Program for all ages – events and activities plus incentives for children, teens, and adults to read during the summer.
Promoting the state-wide reading programs for all grade levels, in conjunction with the teachers. Support book clubs held at the schools.
Read to Kindergarten and First Grade classes at the elementary school

Other Core Services or Programs we could possibly provide:

- *License plate sticker renewals
- *Passports
- *Notary
- Tutoring
- Computer workshops
- Loaning wireless hotspots, Chromebooks, and other devices
- Larger collection of Spanish and bilingual books
- Additional databases
- Additional options for downloadable audios, e-books, & movies (Hoopla)
- Additional programs and events
- Meeting room and study rooms (in our new building)

* Many other (larger) libraries offer these services. However, to be efficient, we try not to duplicate programs and services already available through another agency or business in Carthage.

V. Awards and Recognitions – Our Library has received the following awards, distinctions and recognitions:

- 125th Anniversary in 2018.
- Public Library Construction Act Grant 2021
- Video Storytelling Grant & Fundraising for Nonprofits grants from the Tracy Family Foundation 2023
- Three Early Literacy Grants from the Tracy Family Foundation

VI. Intergovernmental Agreements and Memberships and how they increase our efficiency

Intergovernmental Agreement with Illinois Libraries Present to provide our patrons with access to quality virtual programs, primarily presentations by well-known authors. None of the libraries could afford to offer this on their own.

Agreement with ROE #26 to be a participant in the IRIS referral network, which provides information about health and social services available in our area, and allows agencies to refer clients more efficiently.

The library is a member of the American Library Association, the Association of Rural and Small Libraries, the Illinois Library Association, and the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS). These associations advocate for libraries and provide continuing education workshops and other resources for the library. The email discussion lists they host facilitate discussion of various topics of concern among libraries, so we can share ideas and expertise with one another. In addition, as members of RAILS we have access to a FOIA/OMA hotline and we are eligible for group discounts from some vendors.

The library is a member of the Resource Sharing Alliance, NFP, and automation consortia which negotiates the contract for our circulation system and on-line card catalog and provides service and support. This system facilitates the sharing of materials among the over 190 libraries who are members of RSA. Through Interlibrary Loan, we are able to provide requested materials to our patrons and multiple copies of titles for book clubs, without needing to purchase them. Our library system (RAILS), with support from the State Library, provides a delivery service for InterLibrary Loan materials, saving our library thousands of dollars in postage each year. We are also members of OCLC, which allows us to borrow materials from libraries outside of our area in Illinois and from other states.

Carthage Public Library belongs to two consortia to offer e-books and downloadable audiobooks to our patrons: eReadIllinois and Alliance Digital Media Library. Through these databases our patrons have access to over 25,000 downloadable audiobooks and almost 67,000 e-books, which we would not be able to provide on our own.

The library director participates in the Rural Directors networking group and the Long Distance Libraries (LDL) group that meet regularly to share ideas and information and to support one another. The LDL group also collaborates on an early childhood literacy initiative funded by grants from the Tracy Family Foundation. The grant has provided early learning kits for the libraries to circulate to our patrons, storybook walks to display in our communities, and funding for librarians to attend state and national conferences. Each library in the group also has the opportunity to apply for grants from the Tracy Family Foundation to meet their library's specific needs in the area of early literacy.

VII. Community Partnerships

The library director attends meetings of the Carthage Area Illinois Chamber of Commerce, the Carthage Area Round Table, and the Agency Collaboration Team to keep informed of community events and to inform other agencies of the library's activities. The director serves on the committee that holds the Family Fair and Safety School.

Carthage Elementary School District – We partner with the teachers to support literacy. For example, we read to classes, promote the state-wide reading programs, and obtain books for teachers and for book clubs. We offer “teacher cards” to enable teachers who live outside our district to check out books for their classroom. In turn, the school helps us promote our programs and activities.

Illini West School District - IWHS does not have a school library, so we encourage students to use the public library. We obtain books for the HS book club, and offer teacher cards. Students can access to the Peterson's Test Prep database through the library.

WCCC & WIC – We partner with West Central Child Care Connection to supply bags containing child development and early literacy information and a free book to the Women Infant and Children program of the Hancock County Health Department, which they distribute to their families. The books we provide were purchased with a grant from the Tracy Family Foundation.

Birth to Five Illinois – Their vision is: “Reimagining a more equitable Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system that respects family and community voice and works to ensure it is centered and prioritized at every level of decision-making in Illinois.” The library director serves on the action council for the ROE #26 region, and a staff member serves on the family council.

VIII. Review of Laws, Policies, Rules and Procedures and other Documents.

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Library in order to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

- ✓ State laws applicable to Libraries – Non-resident card ordinance & Cards for Kids Act
- ✓ Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 *et seq.*)
- ✓ Policy on public comment
- ✓ Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- ✓ All Board Members have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- ✓ Schedule of Regular Meetings of the Library Board (5 ILCS 120/2.03)
- ✓ Board member list posted and filed with State Library & County Clerk
- ✓ Illinois Freedom of Information Act: Designation of FOIA Officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a)), FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b)), Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a)), Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b)), List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Library Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- ✓ Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- NA IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- ✓ Complies with Whistleblower Act (50 ILCS 105/4.1 *et seq.*)
- ✓ All applicable officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5 *et seq.*)
- ✓ Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(C))
- ✓ State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 *et seq.*)
- Paid Leave for All Workers Act (IL SB208) – takes effect Jan. 2024, we are in the process of developing our policy and procedures.
- ✓ Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*)
- ✓ Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, Freedom to View
- ✓ Illinois Records Confidentiality Act, Privacy/Confidentiality Policy
- ✓ Interlibrary Loan Code and Resource Sharing Policy
- ✓ Our Intergovernmental Agreements
- ✓ Our financial policies and procedures
- ✓ Our budget and financial documents
- ✓ Budget & Appropriation Ordinance
- ✓ Levy Ordinance
- ✓ Annual Illinois Comptroller's Report
- ✓ Annual report of receipts and disbursements
- ✓ Illinois Public Library Annual report
- ✓ Collections Management Policy
- ✓ Library Services Policies
- ✓ Tort and Risk Management Policy
- ✓ Emergency and Disaster Prevention and Recovery Plan

IX. What have we done well?

Libraries and librarians excel in sharing – both borrowing and lending – of physical and digital resources, as well as information and expertise. **The attached year in review report** shows how much money patrons in our community have saved by borrowing physical and digital materials from the Carthage Public Library District instead of purchasing them on their own. The Interlibrary loan statistics are indicative of the money that we and other libraries saved by borrowing items from each other. Collaboration between libraries is facilitated by local networking groups, consortia membership, our regional library system RAILS, and the Illinois State Library.

In addition to the library staff using our knowledge and skills to assist our patrons, librarians share expertise with one another – everything from sample policies and templates for ordinances to ideas for programs, crafts, and bulletin boards.

Carthage Public Library District uses volunteers to help prepare craft items and for other projects, thus saving staff time and money. We strive to do the best we can with the resources that we have – facilities, space, staff time, and finances – while working to improve our situation.

The Library Board of Trustees is accountable to the public, publishing ordinances and notices as required by the law. The Library staff works to make connections with the community and to be involved in the schools and community activities. We strive to communicate through our website, Facebook pages, flyers, radio & newspaper publicity, and an e-newsletter.

X. What inefficiencies did we identify – what are our next steps?

The Library Board is already required to review Serving Our Public 4.0 Standards for Illinois Public Libraries each year, which includes reviewing the applicable library laws and our policies. We take steps to make improvements toward fulfilling and exceeding the standards each year. The amount of time we are required to spend on administrative requirements and unfunded mandates, such as this committee and report, is an inefficient use of our time and resources.

Our current building is inefficient. It was not designed to be a library, and staff do not have a line of sight from the circulation desk to the back part of the building. The upstairs, where we hold our programs, is divided into several small rooms. If we anticipate a large audience, we must hold the program off site, such as in one of the local churches. This defeats one of the purposes of programming – to bring people into the library. Going up the stairs to attend programs is difficult for many of our patrons. There is an elevator, but it is old and it is too small to meet ADA requirements.

A library building consultant and an architect determined that it would be more cost effective to construct a new one-story building, designed to be a library, than to renovate our current building. We applied for a Public Library Construction Act grant and the voters passed a bond referendum, which provided the local cost share required to receive the grant. Land was donated to us and we worked with an architect to design a new library building. However, when the project was put out for bids, the bids we received were double the amount of the original budget. We have worked with the architect to simplify the building to decrease costs, and are continuing to fund raise. The next step will be to put the revised project out for bid and hopefully to award a contract and break ground.

XI. What can we do better or more efficiently?

More publicity about the library's value to the community and all of the programs and services we offer for adults as well as children.

More creative ways to reach out to teens and other segments of the population who don't often use the library's services.

More promotion of the Cards for Kids expansion to unserved areas. When reaching out to schools to encourage library cards for students, be sure parents know that adults can also get a library card.

XII. Our Committee's Recommendations Regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency:

Boundaries of the libraries in our county could be expanded to incorporate the unserved areas so that all Hancock County residents are eligible to receive library services.

Submitted by: Amy Gee, Director, Carthage Public Library District

Date of Committee Approval of Report: October 9, 2023