Library Service Through Municipal-County Partnerships
About Us

The Library Development & Legislative Committee (LD&L) is the Wisconsin Library Association’s legislative committee.
Residents annually borrowed 53.3 million physical items in 2016 without regard to county boundaries, an average of 9.2 per person.

WI League of Municipalities reports that libraries consistently rank at the top of the list of valuable local services throughout the State.

Libraries reflect and respond to their communities and are governed by a local citizen board of trustees.
State Library Governance

Wisconsin has 381 public libraries, of four types, throughout the State.

- Municipal & Joint Libraries (366)
- Consolidated County Libraries (9)  (ex. Marathon County Library)
- Tribal Libraries (4)  (ex. Ben Guthrie Lac du Flambeau Public Library)
- City/County Libraries (2)  (Langlade Co., Rusk Co.)
Wisconsin’s Public Libraries
Issue:
Unreimbursed use of municipal libraries by residents of non-library communities in their county

Legislative solution:

Act 150 (1997)

Required counties to partially reimburse libraries for providing library service to residents who live in municipalities without libraries
Another issue:
Unreimbursed use of municipal libraries by residents of non-library communities in adjacent counties.
Jefferson County line is 1.96 miles from the Oconomowoc Public Library
Legislative solution:

**Act 420 (2005)**

Extended the Act 150 county funding requirement to partially reimburse libraries in adjacent counties.
Who Uses the Local Library?

City of Oconomowoc Residents: 50%

Waukesha County Non-library Community Residents: 28%

Jefferson County Non-library Community Residents: 17%

Without legislative solutions, city of Oconomowoc residents would bear 100% of the cost of funding & operating the library for all users.
2016 potential contributions if proportionate to use:

City of Oconomowoc Residents: 50% (66% potential contributions)

Waukesha County Non-library Community Residents: 28% (22% potential contributions)

Jefferson County Non-library Community Residents: 17% (8% potential contributions)
**Misconception:**

Reimbursements are made by one county to another county

**Facts:**

Act 420 permits individual libraries to invoice adjacent counties for reimbursement.

Sometimes those libraries are county libraries; usually they are municipal.
Misconception:
Reimbursements would not be required if non-library community residents used their home county libraries.

Facts:
If non-library community residents used their home county libraries, their county would need to reimburse those libraries under Act 150.
Misconception:

It always costs taxpayers more if they use an adjacent county library than if they use a home county library.

Facts:

Libraries are reimbursed based on the number of checkouts and the “unit cost” of those checkouts.

In some cases, an adjacent county library’s cost is lower than the in-county libraries, creating a cost savings.
**Misconception:**

Reimbursements disrupt county budgets and take funds from other needs.

**Facts:**

Libraries invoice counties in one year for payment the following year, allowing for budgeted reimbursements.

The county library tax is a special service tax that is exempt from levy limits.

It does not interfere with a county’s ability to adequately fund its in-county libraries or meet other needs.
One Wisconsin county’s misconceptions

“If these materials were loaned by (our two in-county libraries) there would be zero cost to (our) County. We have our own libraries...Let’s use them and save taxpayer dollars for something that is needed.”

- County Administrator
The same Wisconsin county’s facts

Reimbursement rate to each in-county library: $2.89 per checkout

Reimbursement rate to the adjacent county library: $2.33

It costs 24% more to use the less conveniently located in-county libraries.

Using another county’s library saved this county’s taxpayers nearly $13,000 last year.
Benefits

• Counties pay only for services actually used

• County library payments are exempt from levy limits

• Counties are not required to reimburse for capital costs

• Counties save money reimbursing existing libraries instead of building, stocking, and staffing more libraries

• Municipalities with libraries are relieved of some of the costs of serving residents of municipalities that have chosen not to build their own libraries
Potential pitfalls of trying to change the legislation

- Pit counties against counties and municipalities
- Pit counties against the League of Municipalities
- Put legislators in no-win situations
- Create unhappy constituents
Current legislation works

Current solutions are fair and allow all residents of Wisconsin access to the library of their choice.
Strong libraries build strong communities. Strong communities help strengthen the state of Wisconsin and improve the quality of life for its residents.
Thank You!

Connie Meyer, Director
Bridges Library System &
Co-Chair, WLA Legislative Committee
cmeyer@bridgeslibrarysystem.org

Kathy Pletcher, Trustee
Nicolet Federated Library System &
Co-Chair, WLA Legislative Committee
klpletcher@gmail.com

Kathy Klager, Director
Pauline Haass Public Library (Sussex, WI)
WLA Legislative Committee Member
kbklager@phpl.lib.wi.us