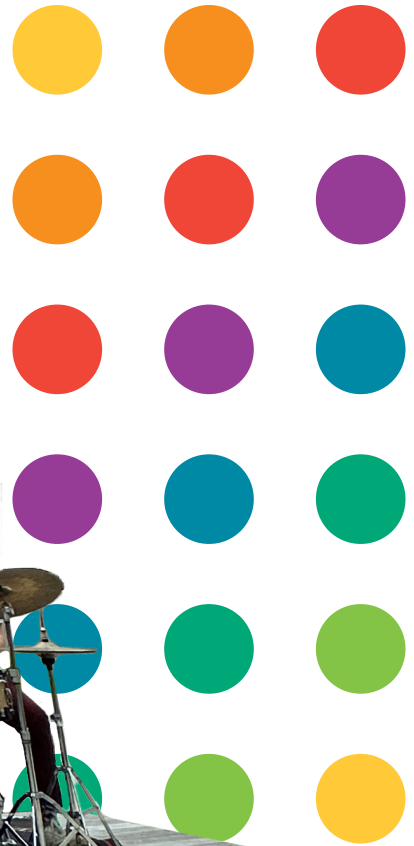


2024 Annual Report



DIRECTOR'S NOTE ●●●

The vision that still comes to mind for many people when libraries are mentioned is of stately buildings filled with dusty rays of sunshine, hushed spaces, shushing librarians, and shelves of old books. Our library still has plenty of books, but it also has soft lighting and open spaces, friendly staff, new kinds of items to check out, meeting and study rooms, technology, and events for all ages.

Our challenge is continuing to provide core services while responding to demand for new programs and services. One important goal in our Strategic Plan is to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. As such, libraries increasingly strive to make data-driven decisions on what to prioritize. We survey staff and the public. We undergo studies looking at how and when people use our library, what they use here, and what they check out to take home. If you see us with clipboards, that's what we're doing!

Just as it is with most households, most libraries do not see increases in their budgets large enough to keep up with increasing expenses. If interest and demand for a program or service wanes, we promote it, then let it go if demand stays low in order to provide something else. We figure out how to do things more efficiently and partner with many City and County departments as well as community organizations to look for fresh perspectives and economies of scale. We are grateful for the many donations, gifts, grants, and volunteer hours we've received along the way.

As we continue to work through our Strategic Plan, we see that some of our planned goals and initiatives have changed over time. Our mission, however, remains exactly the same. Promoting lifelong learning, creating collaborative spaces, and ensuring open access to diverse materials and resources are and will always be important. Our hope is that you value what we have for you, and that you take advantage of all that we offer. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Thank you for letting us be a part of your lives!

OUR MISSION

The library promotes lifelong learning, creates collaborative spaces, and supports open access to diverse materials and resources to enhance the quality of life in the community.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Kerr".

Nancy Kerr
Library Director

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

People sometimes think that the library is entirely paid for with Eau Claire residents' taxpayer dollars. That is in fact the largest single source of library funding, but it's not the only one. Please enjoy the following explanation of library funding for 2024.

THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE: \$4,702,398. That's a big number, but represents only 3.55% of the City's \$178,884,323 2024 budget. It works out to about \$161 per household.

CHARGES FOR SERVICES TO OTHER EAU CLAIRE COUNTY LIBRARIES:

\$1,004,202. Huh? Here's the deal. In Wisconsin any state resident can get a library card from any library. (It's a little more complicated than that, but close enough for this purpose.) So, say a person lives in Altoona but uses the library in Eau Claire because they work nearby. Altoona owes Eau Claire a little bit of money because their taxpayer is using our library. In the same way, our library pays a little money when our customers use another county library. This amount is based on how much it costs per item checked out, multiplied by the number of items. The total amounts are usually a wash, with each library paying out about what it takes in.

CHARGES FOR SERVICES TO ADJACENT COUNTY LIBRARIES: \$293,405.

From Chippewa, Dunn, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, and Clark counties.

THE REMAINING \$356,380 OF OUR BUDGET COMES FROM THE FOLLOWING

SOURCES. Other budgeted revenues: \$260,510. Misc. revenue: \$79,140. Charges for services: \$9,155. Fines and Fees: \$7,575 (includes copier and printer revenue, and payment for lost and damaged items).

HOW MUCH DOES IT SAVE?

\$18,415,278

We calculated that savings using the estimated price someone would have to pay to buy, subscribe to, or rent similar items or services they got for free at the library.* It all adds up to \$13,712,880 more than the money it costs to keep us running.

**THE LIBRARY
SAVES ALMOST**

4x

**MORE MONEY
THAN IT COSTS.**

*Most estimated prices in this report are derived from the Library Value Calculator. The calculator doesn't estimate e-media except for e-books, so we guesstimated the other kinds (like e-audiobooks) at the low end of experience. Meeting and study room estimates are based on the cost of comparable spaces in our area.

SAVINGS ON BOOKS & OTHER ITEMS

Imagine everyone in the community had to buy every book they read, game they played, movie they watched, and so on. Library users save a ton of money by borrowing these items. How much?

\$12,143,300

That's a savings of about \$415 per household* on physical items alone. Since not all households use the library, those that do are actually saving way more.

*Assuming each household in Eau Claire consists of 2.25 people. Don't ask.

TOTAL ITEM CIRCULATION

646,284

In library-speak, that's "How many times everything got checked out." On average, each item in the library was checked out **FIVE** times last year.

(That's a lot.)

THAT DOESN'T EVEN INCLUDE THE **84,018** INTERLIBRARY LOANS

"Interlibrary loan" is library-speak for items borrowed from around the country by special request from Reference & Information. All the items in the MORE catalog from nearby libraries in our system count as standard "circs.*"

*Short for "circulations."
Translation: checkouts.

SAVINGS BREAKDOWN BY ITEM TYPE*

Adult Books: **325,915** (\$17/ea.) =
\$5,540,555

Kids' Books: **301,295** (\$14.50/ea.)[†] =
\$4,368,777

Other Physical Items: **19,074** (\$7/ea.)[‡] =
\$133,518

Interlibrary Loans: **84,018**
(\$25/ea.) =
\$2,100,450

* See p.1 for an explanation of estimated prices.

† Using the average of Teen and Kids' Books estimates.

‡ Using the average of the magazine, audiobook, newspaper, movie, and music CD estimates.

UNSEEN SAVINGS

The library offers materials and services you can't take a picture of. The following is a roundup of the monetary value of those services. But remember, for some of our community members, they are priceless. How much did users save?

\$5,648,346

**FIND OUT HOW MUCH YOU COULD BE SAVING
AT WWW.ILOVELIBRARIES.ORG/CALCULATOR.**

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Customers borrowed a total of 192,967 digital materials, of which 13,646 were for kids.

- E-books: 75,591 (\$15/ea.)
- E-serials (like newspapers and magazines): 18,527 (\$2/ea.*)
- E-audio (like audiobooks): 97,152, (\$14/ea.*)
- E-video: 1,697 (\$4 ea.*)

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$2,537,835

*Our guesstimate based on the lower end of experience.

REFERENCE ASSISTANCE

People asked our librarians for help finding things like general information, people, organizations, and new books to read 27,502 times in 2024. The estimated cost to buy that kind of help averaged across the board is \$7.

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$192,514

INTERNET USES

There are a lot of people who still need free Internet computers. Ours were used 20,295 times at an estimated hourly price of \$12. For this calculation we are assuming one hour of use per session.

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$243,540

DATABASE USES

"Database" is library-speak for online resources that offer searchable information or online learning. We offer a number of databases, many usable at home or on the road with a library card.

- Auto Repair (All Data): 490 sessions.
- General Education (LinkedIn Learning) 8,798 sessions.
- Investment Research (Value Line): 69,940 sessions.
- Local Historical Research (RESCARTA): 41,374 sessions.
- Military Records for Genealogy (Fold3): 521 sessions.
- News (NewsBank): 10,205 sessions, and that's just starting in the fourth quarter!
- Non-Profit Foundation Directory (Candid): 241 sessions.
- Phone/Address Directory & Market Research (Data Axle Reference Solutions): 1,869 sessions.
- Recipes (AtoZ World Food): 620 sessions.

Total uses: 134,058 at an estimated cost of \$19.95 each.

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$2,674,457

ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS HELD BY THE LIBRARY

The library presents events for all ages at no charge. No library card required. From the programs you expect like storytimes, to the ones you may not know about like open houses, hands-on workshops, expert lectures, and edutainers (that's educational entertainers using fewer syllables). Check our event calendar at www.ecpubliclibrary.info/events to see what's coming up. In 2024 alone we served:

40,689 PEOPLE

BREAKDOWN BY INTENDED AGE

0-5: 313 events; 11,383 attendees
(\$7/person)

6-11: 216 events; 12,741 attendees (\$7/person)

12-18: 122 events; 1,277 attendees (\$12/person)

19+: 99 events; 4,769 attendees (\$15/person)

ALL AGES: 179 events; 10,519 attendees (\$7/person)

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$329,360

**ON
AVERAGE,
THE LIBRARY
HOLDS 2.97
EVENTS PER
DAY!**

**OF THE
929 EVENTS
WE HELD IN 2024,
192 OF THEM WERE
OFF-SITE.**

Library staff doesn't just hunker down in the building. You'll find us out and about at all sorts of community events and locations. Our staff partners with care facilities, holds off-site events like adult game nights and family activity events, and takes our BookBike all over town.

**WE MEET
PEOPLE WHERE
THEY'RE AT.
LITERALLY.**

FREE MEETING & STUDY ROOMS WERE USED BY CUSTOMERS ... 5,264 TIMES

THE LIBRARY HAS A WIDE RANGE OF STUDY, MEETING, AND EVENT ROOMS YOU CAN USE AT NO COST.

Some restrictions apply. Two-hour sessions are assumed, except for the Riverview Room. Because it's often used for larger, longer events, four hours are assumed.

- Nine Study Rooms (seat 1 to 6):
3,901 (\$30/use) = \$117,030
- Carnegie Room (seats 24):
281 (\$142/use) = \$39,902
- Two Meeting Rooms (seat 8
and 12 respectively): 737
(\$86/use) = \$63,382
- Riverview Event Room
(seats 200): 146 (\$343/use)
= \$50,078
- Hands-On Work and Event
Rooms: 199 (\$120/use)
= \$23,880
 - Die Cut Resource
Room: 49
 - Innovation Lab with kitchen
and ceiling-mounted live camera
(seats 12): 127
 - RCU Dabble Box Makerspace
(seats 64): 23

A BETTER FIT FOR YOUR EVENTS

In 2023, we collected information on how people wanted to use these spaces and modified our policy accordingly. Events no longer need to be open to the public. We created a third meeting space definition (the meeting room) to allow greater flexibility for small groups. Best of all, we made it possible for the public to book our makerspace, the RCU Dabble Box. And if that weren't special enough, people can also request a private makerspace lab complete with access to the equipment and a staff member!

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$294,272

**CONSIDER US FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT. LEARN
MORE AT WWW.ECPUBLICLIBRARY.INFO/ROOMS.**

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE STAFF ●●●

OTHER JOBS WE'VE WORKED

paralegal, clothing store clerk, college lecturer, grocery store deli, substitute teacher, car detailer, flute teacher, detective, bra specialist, private investigator, high school English teacher, accounts payable clerk, 911 dispatcher, certified peer specialist, mini-golf employee, ice cream scooper, donut salesperson, dish washer, museum docent, bartender, catering, bra specialist, private investigator, published tabletop RPG author, bookmobile driver, bookstore clerk, stay-at-home parent, semi-professional musician, international typewriter, medical transcriptionist, barista, international published tabletop RPG author, bookmobile driver, Canadian Consulate employee, fast food worker, game store clerk, video game developer, camp counselor, teaching assistant, pizza ranch buffet waitstaff, trail horse ranch hand, security, lifeguard, and winemaker/distiller.

**Median
height:**
5'7".

Best
Peanuts
character:
**Snoopy and
Woodstock**
are tied.

59.6%
of staff
members **were**
born in this
area.

Average
number of
sneezes per week:
11.25.*
*Polled during allergy
season.

Average
screen time
off the job:
2.93 hours.

706
combined
years of
service.

Read
or listened
to a total of
1,722 books
in 2024.

Pets owned:
49 cats, 31 dogs,
5 chickens, 23 fish, 3
guinea pigs, 2 leopard
geckos, and 1 houseful
of pet-like plants.

67% of
staff denied
that a hot dog is
a sandwich, but
they're wrong.

Among
staff with a
preference, "**Star
Wars**" is preferred to
"Star Trek" by a **17
to 15 ratio.**