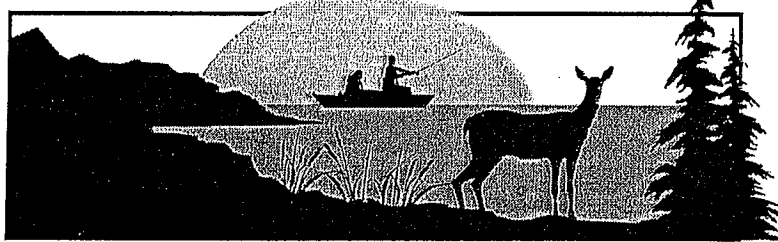


Oconto County Library Service Plan: 2010-2014

OCONTO COUNTY



A Place For You

Oconto County Library Planning Committee

June 23, 2009

Adopted by Oconto County Board of Supervisors

August 20, 2009

Executive Summary

Oconto County is required to develop a library service plan that addresses how public library service will be provided to residents of those municipalities in the county not maintaining a public library and the method and level of funding to be provided by the county for this service. In December 2008, an eleven member Library Planning Committee was appointed to develop and recommend such a plan to the Board of Supervisors.

The goals established by the Planning Committee are as follows:

GOAL 1:

Provide all county residents with access to all library services provided by all system member libraries

GOAL 2:

Ensure that the public and government officials recognize libraries as a vital and necessary service to everyone.

GOAL 3:

Fund libraries sufficiently (at least at the minimum of 100% of the Act 150 funding formula under Section 43.12, Wisconsin Statutes) in order to provide the public with current materials and technology, knowledgeable staff and educational programming.

GOAL 4:

To engage in continuous planning and education regarding the provision of public library services to Oconto County residents.

This Library Services Plan is intended to serve as a game plan to promote and provide the necessary resources for the six county libraries to carry out its mission statement.

Introduction

On June 23, 2009, the Oconto County Library Planning Committee recommended approval of this plan that set the course for library operations through 2014. A new mission statement was adopted. A set of guiding principles was put forward with strategic goals and action items articulated to guide the achievement of those goals. This report will describe in detail the Planning Committee analysis of the Oconto County library system, its goals and actions, and set out recommendations for future efforts.

Under Wisconsin law, counties that participate in public library systems are responsible for providing library services to county residents who reside outside of communities that maintain their own libraries. Because Oconto County is a member of the Nicolet Federated Library System it is required to engage in regular planning to ensure that county residents have access to adequate library services. While county library service plans can address any appropriate issues, *Wisconsin Statutes* Section 43.11 requires that the Oconto County plan address at least the following:

1. How public library service will be provided to residents of those municipalities in Oconto County not maintaining a public library. The services provided must include full access to all member libraries.
2. The method and level of funding to be provided by the County in order to implement services described in the plan, including the reimbursement of municipal libraries for providing service to residents of those jurisdictions in the county that don't operate a public library.

In December 2008, the Oconto County Board of Supervisors appointed an eleven member Library Planning Committee. (See Appendix A). The committee developed this plan, held two public hearings, and presented it to the Oconto County Board of Supervisors for approval.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Oconto County Libraries is to serve the public; to welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and pursuit of lifelong learning; to provide equal access to information, and to ideas and knowledge through books, programs and technology. The Oconto County Libraries believe in the freedom to read, to learn, and to discover.

Library Services in Oconto County

Library service in Oconto County is provided by six legally established public libraries:

Farnsworth Public Library (Oconto)
Oconto Falls Public Library
Lakes Country Public Library (Lakewood)

Gillett Public Library
Lena Public Library
Suring Area Public Library

These libraries were created under the authority of Section 43.52, *Wisconsin Statutes* by their respective cities and villages, and they are governed by municipally appointed library boards. All public library boards must have the local school district superintendent, or their designee, as a member. In addition, one member of the municipal governing body may be appointed to the library board, and up to two members may be nonresidents of the municipality. Library board members serve three-year terms.

Section 43.15(4)(b)(3), *Wisconsin Statutes*, specifies that a county must enter into written agreement with its public library system “to participate in the system and its activities and to furnish library services to residents of those municipalities in the county not maintaining a public library.” The current agreements between Oconto County and the six libraries were signed in 1987. These agreements need to be updated to reflect the goals and objectives of this plan and to further articulate the relationship between the county and the six libraries.

Libraries in the county provide a wide variety of materials, programs, and services to their patrons. Below are some selected statistics relating to library usage.

<u>Library</u>	<u>2007 Service Population</u>	<u>2008 Cardholders</u>	<u>2008 Circulation</u>	<u>2008 Internet Usage</u>	<u>2008 Library Visits (Est.)</u>
Gillett	4,626	2,176	40,555	12,759	65,000
Lakes Country	6,383	2,998	53,579	6,075	22,057
Lena	2,572	750	22,300	5,200	17,500
Farnsworth	10,108	4,624	74,900	4,971	40,000
Oconto Falls	11,777	3,938	80,232	4,681	44,716
Suring Area	<u>3,492</u>	<u>1,341</u>	<u>23,282</u>	<u>9,345</u>	<u>15,725</u>
Total	38,958	15,827	294,848	43,031	204,998

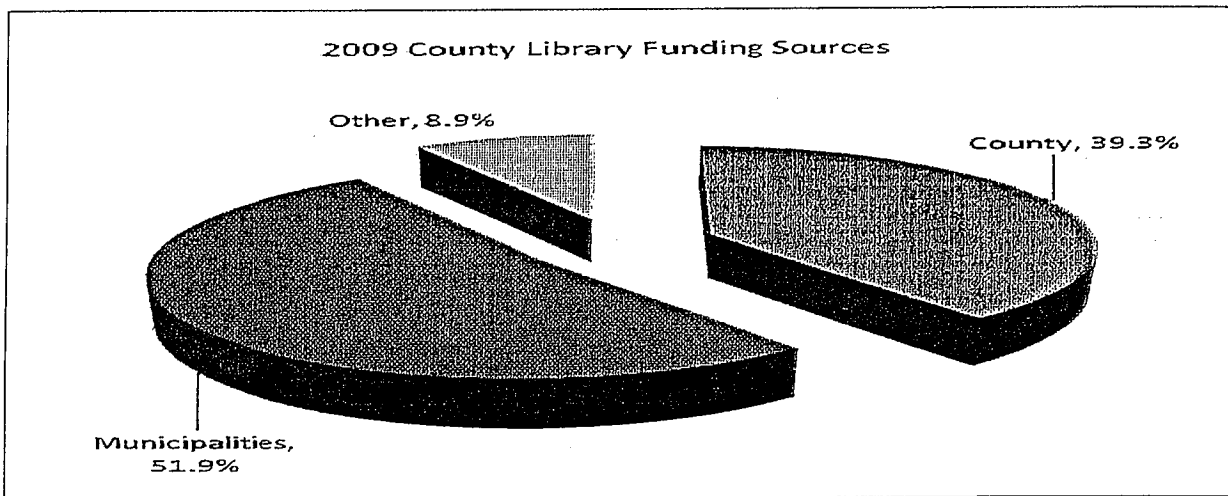
Funding for Library Services in Oconto County

Public libraries in the county receive funding from a variety of sources including cities, villages, counties, contributions, fines, and fees for services. Property taxes provide the majority of that funding.

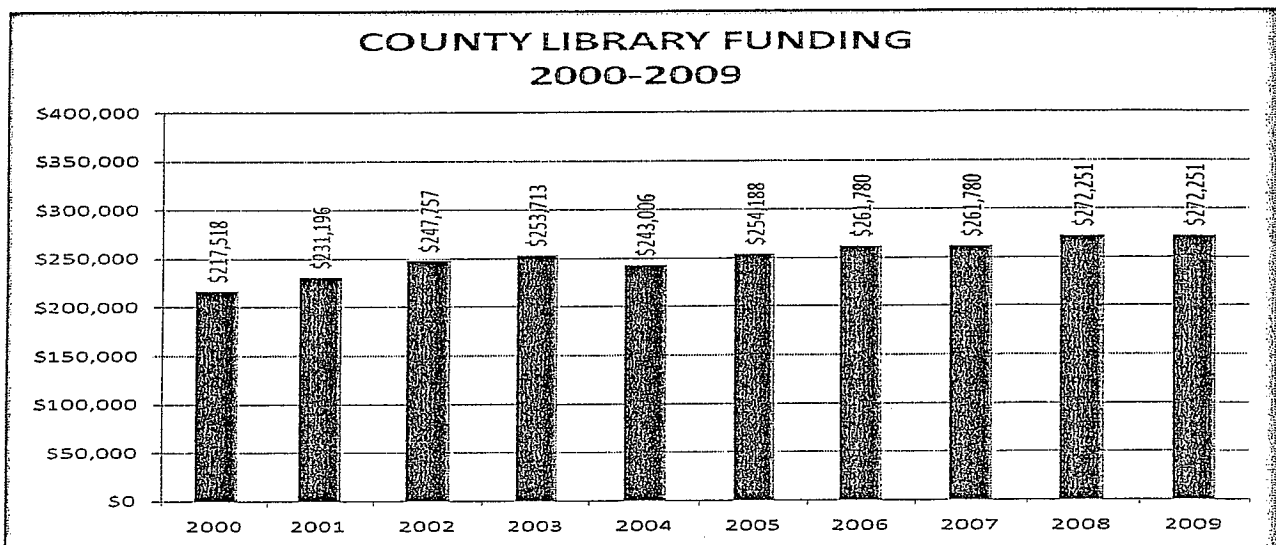
Oconto County levies a portion of the general tax on all county property, except for any municipality that provides an exemption resolution, which is allocated to the individual libraries. Currently, only the City of Oconto and City of Oconto Falls are exempted. This county library tax is used to

compensate municipal libraries for serving county residents without local libraries as required by law as well as residents in municipalities with a local library.

In 2008 the county's six public libraries received a total operating income of \$693,295. \$359,514 or 51.9% of this income came from the municipalities operating the libraries. \$272,251 or 39.3% of library revenue came from Oconto County, and \$61,530 or 8.9% came from other sources. (See pie chart below)



Oconto County's support for library services has grown 25% over the past nine years (see chart below). In 2000, Oconto County appropriated \$217,518 to support municipal libraries. In 2009, the County appropriation was \$272,251. This financial support is greatly appreciated. However, in order for the six libraries to continue to operate and fulfill the goals of this plan, additional funding is necessary. In response to this situation and recommendations from municipal library representatives and recognition that the current plan is 33 years old, the County created the County Library Services Planning Committee to draft a new plan and to address the funding issue.



County support for library service was addressed in a 1987 agreement with each library. The wording in the agreement is as follows:

Oconto County hereby agrees to ... appropriate for the above mentioned services a sum annually equal to the amount appropriated by the combined (Town/Village/City) upon application thereof. However, each annual budget for said joint library must be submitted to and approved by both parties to this agreement.

The above wording has been subject to debate. Does the second sentence allow the County Board to appropriate a lower amount since it has the power to approve the budget? The answer is debatable. In recent years, county budget appropriations for libraries has been based on the past years request. Some years that was a zero percent increase or even a decrease. In addition, some libraries received a proportionally larger share of the funding than other libraries (See table below).

Library	2008 Circulation	Circulation Share	2009 County Funding	Share of County Funding
Farnsworth	74,900	25.4%	\$94,199	34.6%
Gillett	40,555	13.8%	\$38,844	14.3%
Oconto Falls	80,232	27.2%	\$58,194	21.4%
Lakes Country	53,579	18.1%	\$36,088	13.3%
Lena	22,300	7.6%	\$17,273	6.3%
Suring Area	23,282	7.9%	\$27,623	10.2%
Total	282,322	100.0%	\$272,251	100.0%

This has resulted in a call for a more equitable funding method in order to keep the library system in Oconto County viable and to provide fair and equitable allocation of county funding. The funding method needs to take many factors into account which measure library activities in the community they serve. This plan eliminates any funding confusion and creates a new funding method.

Plan Foundation

The Oconto County Library Planning Committee created guiding principles that would lay the foundation of the plan. Below are the guiding principles that were approved.

Guiding Principles

- ❖ To maintain the independence of community libraries.
- ❖ To have no library experience a decrease in its annual appropriation solely because of the funding change.

- ❖ To meet the needs of residents with concern for all ages, backgrounds, interest, abilities and levels of education.
- ❖ To uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and serve people of all ages and at all levels of need.
- ❖ To protect each person's right to privacy and freedom from censorship in choosing library materials.
- ❖ To guide all people toward a love of reading and an awareness of books and other library materials.
- ❖ To be a place to turn to for discovery of ideas and the power of information which helps people reach life goals.
- ❖ To maintain and improve the quality of life for all citizens of the community by providing resources that enhance and contribute to individual knowledge, enlightenment and enjoyment in the most efficient manner possible.
- ❖ Libraries are integral parts of public education and an easily accessible, convenient focal point of community life, connecting the people of the region.

Goals and Actions

The above guiding principles were then used to develop four specific goals with action items for each. These goals, along with the action items, will be used to carry out the mission statement of the Oconto County Library System.

GOAL 1:

Provide all county residents with access to all library services provided by all system member libraries

Actions:

1. By agreement between local libraries, member municipalities, and Oconto County, services shall be provided to every resident of the county. (2010-2011)
2. Oconto County Libraries will continue membership in the Nicolet Federated Library System (NFLS); Oconto County shall meet all requirements under Chapter 43, Wisconsin Statutes in order to continue its membership in NFLS. (2010-2014)
3. Libraries will continue to provide on-line services to county residents through its memberships in its *Outagamie-Waupaca Library System (OWLSnet) Consortium*. (2010-2014)

4. Oconto County shall seek NFLS assistance to work with neighboring systems and counties to resolve any intersystem service inequities arising under Wisconsin Act 420, so that Oconto County libraries or libraries in other systems of NFLS member counties are compensated adequately for providing services to nonresidents. (2010-2011)
5. Oconto County will continue to maintain an Oconto County Library Services Board in accordance with this plan and with Section 43.19, Wisconsin Statutes. (2010-2014).
6. Oconto County shall designate the Oconto County Library Services Board to coordinate the implementation of countywide library services. (2010-2014).
7. Libraries will continue and expand in-house delivery of e-services in collaboration with OWLSnet. (2010-2014).
8. Libraries will continue to provide programming as they are able that brings in groups or reaches out to communities. (2010-2014)
9. Libraries should look to the business community to see what services could be provided to meet their needs. (2010-2014)
10. Libraries will respond to requests to provide off site services to the disabled and to individuals with special needs. (2010 -2014).
11. Libraries shall survey their collections each year to remain relevant & current. (2010-2014)

GOAL 2:

Ensure that the public and government officials recognize libraries as a vital and necessary service to everyone.

Actions:

1. Oconto County Library Services Board (OCLSB) in conjunction with local libraries will develop a public relations campaign to increase the public's awareness of the value and impact of Oconto County's libraries. (2010 - 2012)
2. Local libraries will inform their service areas of events and activities through on-going media communications. (2010 - 2014)
3. Libraries will continue to serve as a vibrant center for community life, offering opportunities to learn, know, gather and grow. (2010 - 2014)
4. Libraries will promote collaboration with school districts and community organizations to best utilize the resources available. Libraries will also seek opportunities to partner with other organizations to present programs of current interest. (2010 - 2014)

5. Libraries will provide staff with training opportunities which promote skills development, improve vital customer service and fulfill the library's mission. (2010 - 2014)
6. Libraries will annually review library service needs and set objectives based on statistics, surveys, and user feedback. (2010-2014)

GOAL 3:

Fund libraries sufficiently (at least at the minimum of 100% of the Act 150 funding formula under Section 43.12, Wisconsin Statutes) in order to provide the public with current materials and technology, knowledgeable staff and educational programming.

Actions:

1. Oconto County shall annually appropriate 2.1% of the previous year's county tax levy amount to compensate the public libraries in Oconto County for providing services to County residents. Oconto County shall appropriate additional funding if the 2.1% of the tax levy does not meet the minimum of Act 150 formula statutory funding levels under section 43.12, Wisconsin Statutes. (2010-2014). The planning committee that created this plan will reconvene in 2011 to review this plan's funding formula.
2. Oconto County shall pay its annual library appropriation to the public libraries in Oconto County by April 1st of each year. (2010-2014)
3. Oconto County shall allocate funding to the public libraries in Oconto County so that it will at least satisfy the "Maintenance of Effort Requirement" for membership in NFLS as required under Wisconsin Statutes. Oconto County shall annually receive circulation and expenditure data from the public libraries in Oconto County. (2010-2014)
4. Oconto County shall provide a budget to the Oconto County Library Services Board to enable them to operate and promote the libraries of the county (i.e., newsletters, flyers, presentations, media, etc.). (2010 - 2012)
5. The Oconto County Library Services Board will present an annual summary of activities of the county libraries to the County Supervisors and other elected officials by April 1st of each year. (2010 - 2014)
6. Libraries and OCLSB will investigate and develop alternative revenue streams and fund sources while seeking additional grant funding as appropriate. (2010 - 2014)
7. A uniform service agreement shall be created between each local library and Oconto County. (2010)

GOAL 4:

To engage in continuous planning and education regarding the provision of public library services to Oconto County residents.

Actions:

1. The Oconto County Library Services Board (OCLSB) shall annually review this plan and shall forward to the Oconto County Board any recommended revisions. (2010-2014)
2. The Oconto County Board may appoint a Library Planning Committee (LPC) to revise this plan or develop a new county library service plan whenever circumstances warrant during the term of this plan. (2010-2014)
3. The Oconto County Board shall appoint a LPC to review and revise this plan or develop a new county library service plan. (2014)
4. The local libraries in Oconto County shall, at least annually, provide detailed statistical information to their governing municipalities and Oconto County about services provided to residents of all jurisdictions within the county. (2010-2014)
5. The Oconto County Library Services Board shall work with all public libraries in the county to regularly share information with municipal and county officials about library use, programs, and activities provided to county residents. (2010-2014)
6. The local libraries will work with NFLS toward ongoing training for staff. (2010-2014)

Funding Allocation

The Planning Committee also determined a need to more fairly allocate the funding the county does provide county libraries. The allocation formula that was created is as follows:

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Percentage Allocation</u>
Circulation	45
Circulation to Non-Residents	20
Program Attendance	15
Total Collection	10
Total Service Population	<u>10</u>
Total	100

The statistics to calculate this formula are taken directly from reports each library must annually submit to the Nicolet Federal Library System. Each year, the figures will be inputted into the formula and applied to the county funding amount. As a result, the funding amount for each library will be known approximately 6-8 months before the actual budget year. This will allow each library ample time to draft a budget to carry out the goals as established by this plan.

The Committee also recommends that if the above formula results in a reduction in funding, that library will be held harmless. That is, they would receive at least the same amount of funding from the previous year. Any increase due to the hold harmless funding will be taken from the other libraries allocation based on the overall percentage of the total funding.

In addition, the County shall comply with the Maintenance of Effort requirement from the State. That requirement is that the funding amount must be at least the average of the last three years funding.

It is anticipated that this will result in a county library funding amount for the year 2010 to be \$360,622, an increase of \$88,371 over the 2009 level. This represents a 32.5% increase in funding from the County.

Conclusion

This Library Services Plan is intended to serve as a game plan to promote and provide the necessary resources for the six county libraries carry out its mission statement.

The Oconto County Board will need to approve this plan. A draft of the resolution to adopt this plan is included in Appendix B.

Appendix A- Oconto County Planning Committee Members

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NICOLET FEDERATED LIBRARY STAFF

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Appendix B - Proposed County Board Resolution

RESOLUTION # _____ - 09

TO: The Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Oconto County Board of Supervisors

RE: **ADOPTION OF OCONTO COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICES PLAN 2010-2014**

WHEREAS, an Ad-Hoc County Library Planning Committee was created in July 2008 to draft a new Library Services Plan; and

WHEREAS, this Committee met over the period of 6 months to create this new plan (attached); and

WHEREAS, two public hearings were held on this proposed new plan on June 23, 2009; and

WHEREAS, this new plan conforms to the requirement imposed by the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the County Library Planning Committee has recommended approval of the new plan; and

WHEREAS, the six individual library boards have approved this new plan.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Oconto County Board of Supervisors hereby adopt the attached Oconto County Library Services Plan 2010-2014.

Submitted this 20th day of August, 2009

By: FINANCE & INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Leland T. Rymer, Chairperson

Don Glynn

Thomas Gryboski

Lois Trever

Edward Young