

Fast Facts about Wisconsin Public Libraries *

Wisconsin has 384 public libraries and 82 public library branches. All of Wisconsin's public libraries have voluntarily chosen to participate in one of the state's regional public library systems that provide efficiencies through sharing and consolidation of services. As a result, residents can use public libraries in nearly all of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin libraries continue to face the challenge of increasing demand for services with diminishing resources. During the past 5 years, the number of paid library staff decreased 1.3% and public library staff per capita decreased 2.2%. Yet in that same period, public library visits have increased 1.1% and circulation has increased 6.3%.

Compared to other states, Wisconsin ranks 10th in per capita circulation, but 21st for both total operating revenue and total operating expenditures per capita.

More than 6 in 10 state residents are registered library users. These library users made more than 33.6 million visits to Wisconsin public libraries in 2012. By comparison, season attendance for Brewer home games in 2012 was 2.8 million. Wisconsin ranks 13th nationally in registered library users.

Each week, an average number of 647,000 visits are made to Wisconsin public libraries. Season total attendance at Packer home games was about 564,000.

More than 63.6 million items were circulated by Wisconsin's public libraries in 2012, averaging 1.2 million items checked out each week. More than one-third of these circulations are children's materials.

Each year over 9.4 million items are shared between libraries to fill requests for materials not available locally. Wisconsin continues to rank 1st nationally in per capita interlibrary loans. Resource sharing coordinated by public library systems and the DPI is a model for how to use public resources efficiently.

The average per capita municipal and county property taxes paid by Wisconsin residents for public library operations in 2012 was \$36.55. Wisconsin ranks 17th in per capita local and county tax support.

Nearly all Wisconsin public libraries offer wireless Internet access to library users. Every Wisconsin library and citizen has access to thousands of online newspapers, magazines, and books through the DPI's BadgerLink service.

Wisconsin's collection of downloadable books ranks 3rd nationally in volume of use, and use of the collaborative collection more than doubled in 2012. State residents downloaded more than 1.3 million e-Books and audiobooks made available through a cooperative collection developed by local public libraries and regional public library systems.

Through Wisconsin public libraries, residents have access to online resources for career development, including help with job searches, creating resumes, and submitting employment applications.

Programs provided by public libraries and directed toward children had attendance of more than 1.6 million. Summer library program attendance for children and young adults was nearly 538,000. More than 111,000 children and young adults participated in drop-in activities.

As funding for public libraries has been limited by the economic downturn of recent years, many libraries have found it difficult to maintain historic service levels. Statewide, service levels have remained nearly the same or declined only slightly over the past 2 years. Since the changes made to Wisconsin's state library laws in 2011, it is estimated that 72% of all libraries saw a decrease in their 2012 local or county funding, and 4% remained at the previous year's level.

* Based on 2012 Wisconsin Public Library Annual Report Data available online at http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_dm-lib-stat