



CRETE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

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**CRETE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE
WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT**

I. Unit of government submitting this report

Name of Library: Crete Public Library District (CPLD)

Address of Main Library Office: 1177 N. Main St., Crete, IL 60417

II. Information about our Library

A. We are located in Will County.

B. The population of the territory in which our Library is located is 17,099.

C. We have 24 employees of the Library (not including board members).

D. Our annual budget for FY 2023-2023 is: \$2,125,575

E. Our Library District's equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for 2023 is \$402,877,325.00

III. Information about Our Committee

A. Committee Members

| Title | Name |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Board President | Heather Van Zyl |
| Vice President | Leslee Williams |
| Treasurer | Tim Brennan |
| Secretary | Suzanne Oliver |
| Trustee | Jackie McKethen |
| Trustee | Phyllis Monks |
| Trustee | Judi Boehner |
| Director | David Sieffert |
| Assistant Director | Tiffany Amschl |
| Library Resident | Chris LeVault |
| Library Resident | Becky Hrdlicka |

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Will County Board

Note: Per 50 ILCS 70/10(b), the committee membership must include all the elected or appointed members of the library board of trustees (President and Trustees), the Executive Director or other official of the Library, and two residents appointed by the Board President. The President may appoint more than two residents if deemed appropriate.

B. Dates that our Committee Met (50 ILCS 70/20)

First Meeting (must occur prior to June 10, 2023): June 6th, 2023

Second Meeting: November 15th, 2023

Third Meeting: February 17th, 2024

IV. Core Programs or Services Offered by our Library

A. Our Library offers the following core services and programs:

In addition to our own collection of over 63,000 circulating items, we give borrowers access to over 10 million different physical materials through our library consortium SWAN (System Wide Automated Network). We also offer access to thousands of electronically available resources, which are able to be accessed from anywhere at any time by a cardholder. These digital services provide access to databases including Ancestry.com, Academic Search Premier, Medline, Novelist, and more. Additionally, Crete Public Library District offers downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, and movies through digital resources like Hoopla, Libby, and Boundless. We also offer a multitude of programs and strive to offer opportunities to patrons of all ages. Just last year, the Library was able to offer over 750 programs with an estimated participation of over 11,000. These programs are offered in addition to the many in-person services that are available every day, such as access to notaries, voter registration, test proctoring, technology help, scanning, faxing, license plate renewals, homebound materials delivery, as well as participating in the Illinois State Library's Talking Book and Braille Service.

B. Other core services/programs we could possibly provide:

The Library, in partnership with the Village of Crete, Crete Township, and the Crete Park District, recently completed a community-wide survey to engage residents about the effectiveness of district services, but also to inquire about potentially new services and programs. The Library received a lot of positive feedback, which included a desire for additional programming space and also a community garden. In September of 2023, the Library began the process of building both an outdoor programming pavilion and new community garden.

Additionally, the 2023 community survey identified that patrons had a desire to see an increase in technology programming. This will be an area of focus for our future programming efforts.

V. Intergovernmental Agreements

We partner with or have Intergovernmental Agreements and/or ongoing relationships with the following other governments:

| Entity | Services Offered |
|--|---|
| Crete-Monee District 201-U | Classroom visits, book talks, teacher support through interlibrary loans and other services |
| Crete Park District | Participation in community events, including Community StoryWalk, Acorn Fest, Park-A-Palooza, etc. |
| Village of Crete, Crete Township Crete Park District, and School District 201-U | Participation in monthly PR\Marketing roundtable meeting |
| Crete School District 201-U | Host Coffee Connections program, which serves as job training coffee shop inside of the Library to help multi-needs students gain valuable job experience |
| Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) | Participation in a regional library system which provides interlibrary transportation, continuing education, and more |
| System Wide Automation Network (SWAN) | Participation in large library consortium to provide processing assistance, database support, |

technical services, continuing education, and more

Crete Police Department

Collaboration to host local programs and community-wide educational events

Northern Illinois Food Bank

The Library hosts a SNAP Coordinator monthly to assist residents with applications and to resolve issues.

Mobile Workforce Center of Will County

Host mobile vehicle monthly in the Library parking lot during the spring, summer, and fall months to help people find and apply for jobs, and to provide assistance with resumes and cover letters.

Our Library's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following ways:

The CPLD prides itself on collaboration with other taxing bodies in the community and we believe that we have increased our efficiency within the community in a variety of ways.

Foremost, the Library keeps an open line of communication with the other taxing districts in town. Administrators meet quarterly for a roundtable discussion on issues facing our individual organizations or that we are facing together as a community. Further, many opportunities for collaboration are born out of these meetings. For instance, the Library has recently engaged in discussions with the other taxing districts on collectively fighting shared property tax objections which affect all districts.

The Library also participates in a monthly roundtable discussion with the public relations and marketing representatives for each of the other taxing districts to share news of upcoming events and also to collaborate on shared marketing initiatives. Most recently, the Library has worked with the Village of Crete to help develop a new marketing campaign to draw new residents to the area for shopping and other events.

VI. Community Partnerships

We partner with the following organizations (*list as many as you have*):

| Entity | Services Offered |
|--|---|
| Village Woods and St. James Manor retirement homes | Homebound delivery and reader's advisory services |
| Crete Chamber of Commerce | Participant in monthly meetings, participation in annual Crete Country Christmas program |
| Evil Horse Brewing | Hosts a monthly local trivia night for Library and restaurant patrons |
| Crete Laundry and Dry Cleaning | The Library brings books monthly for children and adults to read at the laundromat and/or take home with them. |
| Angels on Assignment | At the holiday season, the Library collects purchased and handmade mittens, scarves, and hats for Angels on Assignment to distribute to local families in need. |
| Bag Lady Outreach | Library works with local non-profit to house a toiletries locker at the Library that offers free supplies to those in need. |
| Crete Lions Club | The Library has active participation with the Crete Lion's Club and attends monthly meetings. |
| Crete Woman's Club | |

The Library partners with the Crete Woman's Club on a variety of projects, including the maintenance of the outdoor butterfly garden.

VII. Review of Laws, Policies, Rules and Procedures, Training Materials, 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
- 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)
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*)
- 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))
- IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (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))
- Our Intergovernmental Agreements
- Our budget and financial documents
- State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 *et seq.*)
- Reports on government efficiency, including "Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments" by Wendell Cox (2016);

VIII. What Have We Done Well? (List any budget/levy freezes or reductions in the past decade; list new programs or services offered to residents over the past decade; list any ethics ordinances adopted; timely FOIA compliance; responsiveness to public; list any new intergovernmental agreements; list any increase in number of library patrons served, etc.)

The Library has consistently demonstrated responsible stewardship of public funds by offering resources and enrichment opportunities tailored to the needs and interests of our community. From 2012 to 2022, we hosted over 5,000 programs attended by more than 100,000 people and loaned over a million items.

In compliance with legal requirements, we diligently conduct our annual audit and believe that the clean audit reports reflect our fiduciary diligence. The response time to Freedom of Information Act document requests averages two days (5 days for commercial requests). We ensure that all necessary financial and Open Meetings Act-related documents are up to date and posted on our website and on-site.

In the latest community survey conducted in 2023, the Crete Public Library District ranked highest in resident satisfaction among all local taxing bodies, with 90% of respondents stating they were either "completely" or "very satisfied" with Library facilities. Additionally, in the 2023 survey, 90% of respondents rated the Library's overall program quality as either "good" or "excellent."

To uphold this high standard of library service and public trust, we have implemented numerous policies and procedures to safeguard funds and ensure the highest standards of employee/trustee conduct. These policies include the adoption of the American Library Association's Ethics Statement for Trustees into the policy manual, a more robust, specific, and transparent investment policy, and strict adherence to policies such as "Authority to Spend," "Gift," "Conflict of Interest," and others meant to inspire public trust and ensure unimpeachable conduct.

IX. What Inefficiencies Did We Identify/What Are our Next Steps?

While the Library maintains a concerted effort to work with the other taxing districts within the community of Crete, there is always room for improvement. The Library District would like to see some of the collaborative marketing and public relations efforts expand, with the possibility of a shared community-wide mailer which would include pertinent news and events from all of the organizations in town in an effort to keep residents better informed. Additionally, the Library would like to also look internally at how we can be more efficient in streamlining our own communication with residents. Some tentative ideas include filming a monthly Library update show for our website and social media pages or a website overhaul.

X. What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?

The Crete Public Library District currently finds itself at a crossroads when it comes to technology support. We have recently moved away from an off-site managed services contract, which was extremely costly and not a particularly collaborative partnership for the Library. We have moved to bring some of these services in-house in an effort to find better solutions for both staff and patrons.

XI. Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

In preparing this report, we reviewed several studies on local government efficiency. These studies show that the average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals. Our District currently serves almost 18,000 residents, primarily in Crete and Crete Township - but also in parts of Steger and University Park. We monitor changes in our community's needs closely so that we may serve them as efficiently as possible.

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

The Committee believes that the Library is committed to accountability and efficiency, and both are used as guiding principles in the day-to-day operations of the Library and the higher-level decision-making of the Library Administration and Board. That being said, we recognize that there is always an opportunity for improvement, and the Library is dedicated to remaining diligent in reviewing our internal processes to enhance our accountability and efficiency. The committee believes that these should be regular topics as part of our scheduled monthly board meetings. Additionally, there will be a concerted effort by both the Library Board and the Library staff to seek out continuing education topics that cover these two items.

Note: This Report must be filed with the county (or counties) no later than 18 months after the first committee meeting.

Submitted by: Heather Van Zyl, Board President
Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee

Date of Committee Approval of Report: February 21st, 2024