



**Homer Township Public Library**

*Supporting literacy, education, and life-long learning*

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March, 2024

Attached please find the Homer Twp. Public Library District Decennial Report.

If there are any questions, please call Alexandra Annen at Homer Library.

She can be reached at: 708-301-7908.

Best regards,

Sheree Kozel-La Ha



**HOMER TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT**  
**DECENNIAL REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT**

**March 12, 2024**

I. Homer Township Public Library District, 14320 West 151<sup>st</sup> Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491

**II. Information about our Library:**

- A. We are located in **WILL** County. There are **17 public** libraries in our County.
- B. The population of the territory in which our Library is located is: **40,759**  
(as of 2020 census).
- C. We have **31** employees of the Library.
- D. We have **7** elected Library Board Trustees.
- E. Our annual budget for FY 22/23 is: **\$2,410,000**
- F. Our Library's equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for 2023 is: **1,806,79,061**

**III. Committee members include:**

Library Board President: Dr. Eileen McCaffrey  
Library Trustee: Dr. Phyllis Dahlstrand  
Library Trustee: Kitty Mitchell  
Library Trustee: Cindy Bochenek  
Library Trustee: Dr. Rita Woods  
Library Trustee: Jane Klunk  
Library Trustee: Clare Lund  
Executive Director: Sheree Kozel-La Ha  
Library District Resident : Becky Vallejo  
Library District Resident: Patti Nakutis

Decennial Committee Meeting Dates:

May 22, 2023  
January 22, 2024  
February 26, 2024

**IV. Homer Library offers the following core services and programs:**

- Borrowing of books, audio, DVDs, board games, Wi-Fi hot spots, puzzles, resources, etc.
- Educational programs, classes, training, specialty speakers, etc. for all ages
- Interlibrary loan that covers the state of Illinois
- Bookmobile / Outreach / Homebound VIP delivery
- E-Newsletter that features programs, literacy initiatives, contests, reading clubs,
- Community seasonal and social events/celebrations/initiatives like Craft Fair, Bling Swap

- Lifelong learning materials from birth to seniors, adaptive equipment, sensory materials
- Computers for public use, internet access, printing and free Wi-Fi
- 1,000 Books before Kindergarten
- E-books and e-audiobooks
- Printing, copy center, faxing and laminating
- Study and Community Meeting Rooms
- Summer and Winter Reading Clubs
- Community Micro Pantry

Although we are tax-capped and flat-funded, which may impact substantial new program support, we are adept at how we manage finances and partner extensively to allow us to successfully do more.

**V. Awards/Recognitions - Homer Library has received the following awards, distinctions and recognitions:**

1. Business of the Year Award 2006 – Homer Twp. Chamber of Commerce
2. Innovation Award – Heritage Trail Library System
3. Community and Nature in Harmony Award – Village of Homer Glen
4. Per Capita Grant from Illinois Secretary of State annually
5. Over 50 National and Regional grants from ALA, ILA, and others in past 20 years
6. Multiple staff members have received State Recognition for their service and leadership

**VI. Intergovernmental Agreements/Partnerships with other governments:**

<u>Entity</u>	<u>Services Offered:</u>
1. Village of Homer Glen	Holiday Events annually (Trunk/Treat, Parade, Holiday Santa, etc.)
3. Homer Township	Senior Lifestyle Expo, July Parade, along with other Events
4. Chamber of Commerce	Expo & Business Community Events
5. PrairieCat	Catalog of Library's Holdings Consortium Membership gives patrons access to the holdings of public and school libraries and materials are delivered to our library via RAILS
6. LIMRiCC	Library Insurance Management and Risk Control Combination
7. RAILS	Reaching Across IL Library System agency Membership includes access to RAILS Delivery system which transports books from one library to another across the state. Homer Library receives approximately 550-600 items per year and lends approximately 50-100 items per year via RAILS Delivery. Homer Library can message across 56 RAILS email lists to share ideas and solutions to common challenges with other librarians from across the state. Library staff participate in RAILS networking groups that meet in person or via Zoom to share ideas and best practices. Our Library has taken advantage of RAILS negotiated group discounts to purchase items from different companies, saving the Library hundreds of dollars in expenditures over the last several years.
8. Homer Fire Department	CPR/AED and various Safety and Staff/Community Training
9. Find More Illinois	- Patron access to items, including specialized and academic materials.
10. eRead Illinois	- Membership allows patrons access to e-books and e-audiobooks via the Axis 360 app or website. RAILS' eRead Illinois Axis 360 service is a cooperative program that expands access to e-books for Illinois residents. Currently, approximately 24 college and university, 284 public, 478 school, and 6 specialized libraries participate. Over 439,000 items were circulated via eRead Illinois Axis 360 in the last year.
11. Explore More Illinois	- membership allows library patrons free and discounted admission, parking, and purchases from a wide variety of Illinois cultural and recreational attractions. RAILS' Explore More Illinois program allows library cardholders from across the state to reserve free and discounted admission, parking, and gift store purchases from a wide variety of Illinois cultural and recreational attractions. Currently, 422 Illinois libraries participate and there are 66 attractions.

**VII. Homer Library's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation.**

As a non-profit Library, projects and partnerships are valuable and offer many cost savings. They create win-win opportunities for the support of services, programs, projects, etc. Publicity, program speakers and sharing of resources support a reduced or conservative organizational structure via cooperative support. Partnerships are valuable for reducing budget costs, establishing extended PR opportunities, and making connections for a better understanding of the value that the library provides to the community. A by-product is that these alliances also support and motivate staff. We position the library well by building strong partnerships and adds to our credibility overall. Efficiency has increased as partnerships create training and observation opportunities for staff education and awareness which lends itself to them doing an excellent job.

#### **Partnership RAILS for Collaboration/Networking**

RAILS membership makes it possible for staff from 3,699 libraries across a 27,000 square mile area to share possible solutions to common challenges, as well as best practices. This prevents every individual library from having to recreate “the same wheel.” RAILS has a total of 56 email discussion lists, including lists on a wide variety of topics and for almost every staff position at a public library. A total of approximately 76,500 messages have been exchanged via these lists since February 2012. The list for library directors is the most popular, with 40,500 messages. The networking group directory on the RAILS website features over 96 groups that meet in person or via Zoom to share ideas and best practices.

#### **Partnership RAILS for Continuing Education/Consulting**

Membership in RAILS offers a variety of in-person and virtual continuing education (CE) workshops to help library staff keep their skills up to date and to stay on top of the different trends affecting library service. RAILS has offered over 1,004 CE events with 37,908 attendees since 2013. Many of these programs are recorded and are available for viewing via the RAILS CE Archives on the RAILS website. All Illinois public libraries can use RAILS’ FOIA/OMA hotline to receive free assistance from an attorney with basic questions on the Freedom of Information Act or Open Meetings Act. This saves each individual library from having to pay an attorney to answer the same basic questions. The hotline has been used approximately 625 times since it began in 2016.

#### **Partnership RAILS for Discounts to Save Monies**

Membership in RAILS currently offers more than 50 group purchases/discounts to help libraries save money on e-resources, training, library supplies and furnishings, and more. RAILS has saved libraries over \$3.5 million since 2019.

#### **Community Partnerships – Homer Library partners with the following organizations:**

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Services Offered</u>
Village of Homer Glen	Community Support/Programs/Expo/Initiatives
Homer Township	Senior Expo
Homer Twp. Oak Arbor	Community Support / Teen Leadership / Senior Harvest annually
Homer Glen Foundation	Veterans Memorial / Art Garden / Storywalk
Homer Glen Jr. Woman’s Club	Programs / Resources for Community
Lockport Twp. High School	Volunteers for Service Hours / Teen Leadership
School District 33C	Literacy Programs/Partnerships & Initiatives
Lemont Art Guild	Monthly Programs for Library Customers
Ability Awareness Com.	Assistance with Sensory Initiative
PTO	Summer Reading & Literacy – collect papers and hand out signs
BMO Harris Bank	Ongoing Program Support Reading Clubs / Money Smart Week
Old Plank Trail Bank	Ongoing Program Support Reading Clubs / Money Smart Week
VFW	Community Program Support / Veterans Initiatives
Boys/Girls Scouts	Volunteering / Programs

Will County Senior Services	Programs for Caregivers & Seniors
Orland Veterans Commission	Veterans Support
Homer Glen Gardeners	Programs for the community, Annual Plant Swap
Meals on Wheels	Senior & Community Support
Chamber of Commerce	Business Community Support
Dementia Caregivers Group	Senior & Community Support
P.A.W.S of Tinley Park	Teen Volunteer Leadership Projects - Community Support
Hop to It Rabbit Rescue	Teen Volunteer Leadership Projects - Community Support
Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago	Teen Volunteer Leadership Projects - Community Support
Marian Village	Teen Volunteer Leadership Projects - Senior Support
Victorian Village	Teen Volunteer Leadership Projects - Senior Support

### VIII. Review of Laws, Policies, Rules and Procedures, Training Materials, etc.

- State laws applicable to Libraries
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.)
- Policy/procedure 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))
- 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
- Sexual harassment annual training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(C))
- Intergovernmental Agreements
- Budget and financial documents
- State Ethics Laws, including Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 et seq.)
- Reports on government efficiency, including "Local Government Efficiency/Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues" by Wendell Cox (2016)
- Others (List):

### IX. What Have We Done Well?

1. Successfully increased patrons serviced with a 28% increase
2. Outreach to community has increased: seniors, adults, teens, youth & caregivers
3. Alliances, sponsorships, and partnerships have made us a strong community player
4. Conservative budget maintained at same expenditure level for past 6 years, since 2018.
5. Added 4,000SF of space for community use in three areas: Youth, Adult & Patio
6. Timely FOIA compliance averages 3-4 days.
7. Initiated 2023 sensory collection and kits for customers with programming
8. Initiated 2023 Home School family meetings and advanced collection
9. Initiated a Dementia Caregivers Group
10. Established Reading with Rex, Craft Pickups during COVID and beyond, StoryWalk community path,

11. Established Little Free Libraries in community along with 2 food pantries
12. Staff Training: inclusivity, AED, CPR, Active Shooter, A1, and partnerships with Will County Sheriff
13. Public surveys solicit community input
14. Sensory Bubble Wall 2024
15. Social Media means (FB/Instagram, etc.) are leveraged to inform patrons and customers
16. Library Staff are well-trained and exceptional in serving our community members and visitors
17. We focus on inclusivity for all abilities with programs like Inclusion Game Night.

#### **X. What Inefficiencies Did We Identify/What Are our Next Steps?**

We are extremely cooperative with groups and agencies but plan to extend our team to both advertise and publicize services and partnerships in more ways. While we are always open to resident input, with patron surveys completed annually, new surveys will continue in 2024. We will consider re-establishing a "Friends of the Library" initiative. Unfunded mandates make us more inefficient, as they impact and duplicate other reporting requirements. We routinely review Serving Our Public 4.0 as an efficient way to evaluate our progress, identify efficiencies and improve any weakness.

#### **XI. What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?**

The Homer Township Public Library District is a responsive organization that can address inefficiencies when they are identified. Outreach can always become more effective and we will continue to extend awareness through publicity and social media. Homer Library will review opportunities for additional patron engagement for programs and services here. We can continue to choose partnerships with our System agency and local government and business to stay proactive.

#### **XII. 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.

#### **XIII. Our Committee's Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency:**

- ➔ Continue our model of conservative spending and accountability.
- ➔ Continue reaching out for alliances/sponsorships/partnerships with others agencies.
- ➔ Support staff leadership on additional community committees and with educational opportunities.
- ➔ Trustee and Staff Training for library services and issues to be powerful library advocates.

**Sheree Kozel-La Ha**, Chairman, Decennial Committee

Date of Committee Approval of Report: Feb. 26, 2024

