

# White Oak Library District

## April 1, 2025 Referendum Talking Points

Here are some often asked questions and our answers:

### **When can residents vote on this referendum?**

The White Oak Library District's referendum question will appear on the ballot in the April 1, 2025 Consolidated Election. The actual language that will appear on the ballot is as follows:

"Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the White Oak Library District, Will County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.0286% above the limiting rate for levy year 2023 and be equal to 0.208% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2025?"

(1) The approximate amount of taxes extendable at the most recently extended limiting rate is \$4,689,455, and the approximate amount of taxes extendable if the proposition is approved is \$5,437,050.

(2) For the 2025 levy year the approximate amount of the additional tax extendable against property containing a single family residence and having a fair market value at the time of the referendum of \$100,000 is estimated to be \$9.53.

(3) If the proposition is approved, the aggregate extension for the 2025 levy year will be determined by the limiting rate set forth in the proposition, rather than the otherwise applicable limiting rate calculated under the provisions of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (commonly known as the Property Tax Cap Law).

### **In plain language, what exactly is the library asking for?**

The White Oak Library District is asking voters to approve a measure that would increase the library's operating rate, known in Illinois as our "limiting rate". Currently the library's limiting rate is 17.94 cents per \$100 of assessed value and we are asking the public to approve increasing that to 20.8 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

### **What does it mean when we refer to "Assessed Value" vs "Market Value"?**

**Market Value** is just as it sounds. That is the amount you could expect to get if you sold your home.

**Assessed Value** is a calculation that Will County does to determine a property's value for tax purposes. In a nutshell, the County takes a conservative estimate of a property's **Market Value**, then they divide that amount by 3, and then they divide that new amount by \$100 to get the **Assessed Value**. This is why we say our current tax rate is 17.94 cents per \$100 of **Assessed Value**.

So to determine the **Assessed Value** of a home with a **Market Value** of \$215,000, you would first divide \$215,000 by 3, giving you \$71,666. Then you would divide \$71,666 by 100, giving you \$717 of **Assessed Value**.

Homestead Act Exemptions and Senior Exemptions lower the **Assessed Value** even more.

### **If this passes, what exactly will it cost me?**

The library is asking to increase its limiting rate (i.e. the rate that provides operational funding) from 17.94 cents per \$100 of assed value to 20.8 cents per \$100 of assessed value. There are several ways to calculate how this will impact a given homeowner in the District.

1. If this measure passes, a home's property tax bill will be increased by \$9.53 per \$100,000 of the home's **Market Value** (i.e. the market value being the amount you could expect to get if you sold your home).

2. Average homes in the district will see an increase of about \$20 per year to their tax bill. Broken down, that is \$1.68 more per month.

### **Didn't the library just pass a referendum recently?**

The short answer is no. The last time the public voted to approve operational funding for our libraries was in 1929. In 2016 the library began asking for an increase to our operational funding. Since 2016 we have asked several times but we have not been successful (though we have come very close). Based on what we have learned through a series of public focus group meetings in 2024, this referendum is our best chance to improve our libraries.

### **If this passes, what exactly will I get for my money?**

If the library's referendum is successful, we will increase the library's hours, increase our services to seniors and young children, and increase our online and virtual services.

### **Can't the library find other ways to fund the expansion of services to our residents?**

The White Oak Library District has been working hard on this over the past 5 years. In that time we have significantly increased the amount of grant funding we have received. We have also launched a library Foundation which in turn is raising money to go into an endowment fund. The interest earned from that endowment fund in turn comes to the library as an additional source of income. This will someday lead to \$50,000 or more in library income per year, but that reality is still many years away.

### **I don't know much about the library. What does it do for the communities it serves?**

The White Oak Library District operates three branch library facilities, located in Crest Hill, Lockport, and Romeoville. Of course the library offers traditional materials for the public to borrow, such as books, magazines, audiobooks, music, movies, etc. In fact, the library loans about 550,000 items per year to its residents. In addition to those physical items, the library also offers downloadable e-books, e-audiobooks, and e-magazines as well as streaming music and video media. Our three libraries also serve as important cultural hubs for their communities. We provide educational and entertaining programming for all ages. Our libraries offer everything from pre-school story times to after school programming; tax preparation assistance to passport processing; ESL classes to citizenship prep classes; and thoughtful lectures and programs of a historic or cultural nature. We regularly see around 50,000 attendees at our various programs annually.

### **Our property taxes are too high! Can't the library tighten its belt & make do with current funding levels?**

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as our three communities exploded with population growth, our library continued to find ways to do more with less. After 30 years of finding creative ways to serve our expanding communities without adding new funding, the growth of our population has finally outstripped our ability to adequately and equitably serve our patrons. In a nutshell, for a century we got it done without asking for more while all of the taxing bodies around us saw multiple increases to their funding.

### **Should I vote yes for this?**

We cannot tell you how to vote, but a "yes" vote means that you want the library to have more funding and a "no" vote means you do not want the library to have more funding.

**Just the  
Facts** 