

OWLSnet Fee Structure

Revised by OWLS Board: June 2021

Revision recommended by AAC: May 2021

Adopted by OWLS Board: June 2017

Recommended by AAC: May 2017

The OWLSnet fee structure is made up of four components

1. Base fee per location
2. Five-year weighted average of three primary variables:
 - a. Physical circulation
 - b. Physical items added
 - c. Extrapolated service population
3. Credits
4. Surcharges

Base Fee

Each library site is assigned a base fee. This fee represents the approximate costs for telecommunications, local network hardware, external bandwidth, licenses, and a base level of OWLS customer support.

Primary Variables

Beyond the base fee, the balance of the OWLSnet membership fee is based on three separate variables. In order to smooth out variations from year to year, a five-year rolling average is used for each variable. The three variables are weighted equally in the development of the fee. They represent the library's size, approximate use of OWLSnet service, and population, and all come from data in the state annual report. They are:

- Circulation: checkouts and renewals of physical items.
- Physical items added.
- Extrapolated service population: This method of estimating library population is a variation on the extended county population used by DPI. It is being used here, in place of other more standard population estimates, because it allows us to compare service populations of different types of libraries, i.e. joint libraries, tribal libraries, consolidated county libraries and municipal libraries. It extrapolates service population from nonresident circulation patterns by assuming that residents and nonresidents borrow material at roughly the same rate per capita. In this calculation, the municipal service population is divided by the percentage of resident circulation to estimate service population. For example, a library with an 85% resident circulation and a municipal population of 7,500 will have an extrapolated service population of 8,824.

Credits

The Appleton Public Library, as the OWLS Resource Library, staffs a two-person cataloging department. Since the Appleton library creates their own original records, and also contributes original records to the catalog for OWLSnet libraries, the library is not charged for OWLS cataloging staff costs and receives a credit on their OWLSnet fee for services provided to the consortium.

Sites that do not receive network services from OWLS receive a credit for half of their base fee. There are currently two such branches: Birnamwood in Shawano County and Goodman-Dunbar in Marinette County.

Surcharges

Two joint school/public libraries participate in the OWLSnet consortium, Birnamwood and Florence. These sites are assessed a surcharge to ensure that the schools' participation in the consortium isn't being subsidized by other libraries or the library systems. These surcharges are based on actual cost to provide service, similar to the base fee, but exclude network hardware and bandwidth costs.

Implementation

The 2022 OWLSnet budget is approximately \$1,055,655. OWLS and NFLS will pay approximately 45% of the total cost of the OWLSnet service in 2022, while the remaining costs are distributed among OWLSnet member libraries.

Each year in May, OWLS staff present the OWLSnet budget recommendation to AAC, and the recommendation of AAC is then presented to the OWLS Board for approval in June. This budget recommendation is structured as a percentage increase in the library share of the OWLSnet budget. The fee formula is then applied to the new total budget. A library's fee may increase or decrease independently of the approved percentage based on changes in all of the libraries' primary variables.