

Kaukauna Public Library Staffing Assessment
Phase I
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Section I: Core Services

The Kaukauna Public Library educates, inspires, and connects individuals and the community through materials, services, and programs.

Materials: The Kaukauna Public Library offers both physical and electronic materials for the informational, educational, and entertainment needs of the community.

- Each item added to the collection must be selected, ordered, barcoded, and processed. The items need to be shelved, they need to be routinely weeded, and they need overall management, which includes looking for gaps in the collection, such as subject area gaps, or gaps in series. Further, we also have to look at usage statistics for purchasing, as well as high demand holds to ensure we have enough copies to fulfill demand. We also need to stay on top of emerging trends.

Services: The Kaukauna Public Library offers services in the following forms: circulation, readers advisory, reference, printing, copying, faxing, laminating, public internet access computers, wireless internet, technology instruction, notary, proctoring, meeting room bookings, teacher packs, field trips, local history resources, microfilm digital reader, remote printing, little free pantry, homebound book delivery, volunteering, and play spaces.

- Staff must be present at service points to assist patrons and answer telephone calls. While our self-check machines are currently assisting with half of the total check outs, patrons do approach the service desk for more than just checking out materials. At service points staff help patrons: place holds, find the location of an item, get a recommendation of what to read/listen to, answer reference questions, get a library card, update a library card, pay a bill, make copies, scan, fax, print and copy, issue guest passes, help with Wifi connection, assist with the local history room, assist with remote printing, assist with e-resource sign up, basic computer help, book study rooms and meeting rooms, as well as more simple technology questions.
- Staff also assist schools, homeschool groups, and childcare centers with services such as teacher packs, which are personalized selections by age and reading level of topics for classroom use, as well as tailored, often common-core field trips.
- Staff must also ensure the facility is clean. Janitorial service only comes after hours. Issues such as potty accidents and vomit are typically cleaned by staff. Play areas must be reset three times a day and staff are responsible for spraying disinfectant on hard surface toys, as that is not part of our cleaning service contract.
- The Library accepts both volunteers and court-ordered community service volunteers, as well as workforce development individuals.
- Services need to be properly marketed, which includes both print and electronic formats, including but not limited to informational brochures, flyers, posters, newsletters, the website and social media sites. We are also currently translating all print materials into Spanish as well.
- As part of customer service, we must also offer a safe space. Staff continually watch cameras, address behavioral issues, and at times, reach out for additional support from EMS or PD.

Programs: The Kaukauna Public Library offers programming that supports the growth and development of individuals as a whole, recognizing the importance of literacy and lifelong learning, as well as mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing.

- Public libraries remain one of the only free enrichment, entertainment, and information entities left. The only cost of using the public library would be damage to an item or the use of office services such as printing, copying, and faxing.
- Libraries today are expected to have a vast array of programs available to all ages.
- Staff spend time planning and researching programs, prepping programs, and performing programs. Staff also spend time booking performers and presenters, and negotiating contracts.
- Programs need to be properly marketed as well. Surveys indicate that social media is the best way to reach our patrons about programs. This requires a presence on all major social media outlets, a library specific newsletter, maintaining an event calendar online and in print, as well as adding events into

- existing community calendars.
- Marketing resources are often designed and printed in-house to keep costs down, which requires staff time in creating, printing, and folding.

Section II: Existing Staffing Levels

Historical Significance:

In the 2011 budget book, the Library had 10 FTE and was serving a population of 15,562 municipal residents, as compared to 2024 serving 17,701, with a current FTE of 10.24. In that 13-year period, the library has only grown staff by .24 FTE and has grown the square footage of the Library from 11,000 square feet to over 26,000 square feet.

Current Significance:

The Kaukauna Public Library serves more than just the municipal population of Kaukauna; according to the Department of Public Instruction, our 2023 extended service population served was 24,446. *(The City of Kaukauna receives compensation annually for services rendered to residents outside of the municipality that do not have a home library based on their address. Anticipated preliminary county allocations for 2025: \$326,706; up over \$16,000 from the prior year.)*

Per §43 we are legally required to submit an annual service report to the state, which is used to create the [Wisconsin Public Library Standards](#). These standards are created using data from all 380 of the public libraries in the state. The last edition, published in 2018, is based on figures from 2016 annual reports. One of the categories in the standards compares FTE to service population, both municipal and extended county, citing the number of FTE recommended per 1,000 service population.

Please note that the service population for this figure, Figure 1, is 24,446; so .5 FTE per 1,000 served, for a projected FTE of 12 to reach Tier 1 compliance, which is the considered, *“the minimum services that should be available to all residents of the state.”* Please note that we are not currently in Tier 1 compliance.

Figure 1:

FTE Staff per 1,000 Service Population

	999 and under	1,000 to 1,999	2,000 to 2,999	3,000 to 4,999	5,000 to 6,499	6,500 to 8,999	9,000 to 12,999	13,000 to 18,999	19,000 to 34,999	35,000 to 69,999	70,000 to 99,999	100,000 and over
Tier 1	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
Tier 2	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Tier 3	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6

Please note that municipal population for this figure. Figure 2, is 17,701; so .7 FTE per 1,000 served for a projected FTE of 11.9 to reach Tier 1 compliance. Please note that we are not currently in Tier 1 compliance in this figure either.

Figure 2:

FTE Staff per 1,000 Service Population

	999 and under	1,000 to 1,999	2,000 to 2,999	3,000 to 4,999	5,000 to 6,499	6,500 to 8,999	9,000 to 12,999	13,000 to 18,999	19,000 to 34,999	35,000 to 69,999	70,000 to 99,999	100,000 and over
Tier 1	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4
Tier 2	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5
Tier 3	2.8	2.4	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6

Per the 2016 state standards, we are currently 1.76 FTE short of the extended county standards and 1.66 FTE short of

municipal population served standards.

We anticipate that the state will increase these figures in the release of the seventh edition of service standards, as the data is currently eight years old. We hypothesize that when the next edition is released by the state, we will be further from Tier 1 compliance.

Existing Staff Levels:

To properly staff the Library and avoid emergency closures due to lack of staffing, we currently rely heavily on seasonal staff, known as On-Calls. Our On-Call expenditures in 2023 were \$33,780.74. The average part-time library assistant in 2023 costed \$21,071. The required use of On-Calls does support our need for additional staffing, as our On-Call usage equates to roughly 1.75 part-time staff members.

While On-Call staff will remain critical to the Library, there are some downsides to continuing the course of replacing regular staff with seasonal staff. Many of our On-Call staff retain other full or part-time positions, which mean they are only available to help during specific hours. Of the ten On-Calls we currently employ, six are employed elsewhere. As such, there are times where we reach out to all of our On-Call staff and no one is available to come in. A majority of our staff also have WRS hour's restrictions; of the 24 staff, only six are full time, which means that the other 17 staff have hour's restrictions, so that they do not enter into WRS (if they are not already grandfathered in due to longevity).

We excel at maximizing staff for full efficiency. All staff are cross-trained to work at all service points and complete all circulation tasks. This is not a traditional library approach, but has been born out of necessity. Most libraries do not have a fully cross-trained staff. They have a core staff dedicated to Youth Services, which maintain the youth area, youth collections; youth service desk and youth programs. Those libraries also have adult services departments, which manage a reference or information desk, adult collections and spaces, as well as adult programs. They also often have circulation departments, which run the main circulation desk, as well as all the back room circulation work, like check in and check out. Further, they also have an acquisitions/cataloging department, who are responsible for all materials acquisitions and processing, as well as an IT department. While it is excellent customer service to have a staff so well trained, I am not aware of any libraries in the area that have their IT person staffing a service desk, for example. There is no reason why that position cannot be trained in customer service, but the point being made is that we are so lacking in staff that we have had to make service desk work a core part of all job responsibilities, because we need to have the desks covered.

We do not have specialized departments, which also means that all our Library Assistants must also take on tasks that are not traditionally held by Library Assistants. Our Library Assistants are also currently Circulation Clerks, Pages (shelvers), and on top of those other roles, many have specialized services, like Communications Coordinator, Local Historian, Native American Outreach & Engagement Coordinator, Hispanic Outreach Coordinator, Programmer, and Billing Coordinator.

As mentioned previously, we have access to statistics from every library in the state. The newly released 2023 preliminary statistics allow us to view the libraries serving a very close service population to ours. I have narrowed down the statistics to highlight the two libraries directly below us in extended service population served, as well as the two libraries directly above us in extended service population served. We currently have the second lowest staffing level in the grouping.

Library Municipality	Resident Population	Extended Service Population	FTE
New Richmond	10,824	25,416	10.16
Sussex	12,022	24,943	15.39
Kaukauna	17,701	24,446	10.24
Verona	15,553	24,092	24.23
Menasha	18,576	23,916	19.24

We are not currently operating with enough staff to meet core requirements properly, however, I would like to note that the staff here consistently go above and beyond, and they are extremely passionate about their work, which makes it very much look like we are adequately staffed from the outside.

Existing Staff in Regards to Core Services:

In terms of the volume of materials held, we are not near meeting state Tier 1 standards, although the recent increases to the materials budget line is helping us reach our goal of compliance, which we have finally attained in the category of materials budget allocation. While this is mostly a budgetary concern, increases to this line do increase our volume of work. In 2023, the library checked out 141,597 items, a mix between staff checkout and self-checkout. More staggering, as we are part of a consortium, staff hand-checked in 180,011 items. A CIP has been submitted and approved to increase efficiency by installing an automated materials handler. This will absolutely free up time in regards to the staff handling of checked-in materials. However, it will not free up enough staff time to address the lack of FTE on site or number of staff in the building during operational hours.

I am currently assisting in the materials processing procedure myself because we need additional assistance in the process to keep it timely, and because I am the full time staff member that is the best versed in assigning reading levels at this time. It is not typical for a Library Director in a municipality this large to be processing materials, but I help because it speeds up the process and reduces errors, and I am very aware that the current workload of my two librarians is not sustainable. If someone not well versed in this assigns the title to the wrong collection it is processed wrong on a computer and the physical tags on the item are likely wrong as well. When the process begins error free it saves time and the money of processing supplies. We also need our high demand items to be ready to circulate on their release date, which means working ahead of those dates. County allocations increase when we generate a higher cost of a circulation. The “cost of circulation” is determined by a funding formula (differing by county), which looks at the total operating expenditures, eligible operating expenditures (rent does not qualify in one of our county formulas), total circulation of materials, and the number of residents checking out materials from that county that don’t have a library to serve them. Those formulas generate the cost of one check out to that resident, and then per statute, those counties are legally obligated to pay at least 70% of that cost per circulation back to us.

Please note the life cycle of a single library material below. We currently manage 68,039 items.

1. Item has to be selected, often based on staff reading trade selection journals.
2. Item has to be put into a vendor cart.
3. Item has to be ordered by staff.
4. Items are unboxed and cross-referenced with their inventory sheets.
5. Items are barcoded.
6. Items are searched by ISBN. If they already have a bibliographic record, they are added to the collection short-hand and assigned a collection code. If they do not have a record they are set aside and must have records located in OCLC, or if it is an unusual item not in OCLC, we have to wait for OWLS and APL to create the records for us, so the item must sit until that is completed. 48 other libraries utilize their cataloging expertise as well.
7. Bibliographic records are then completed, and spine labels and other labeling must be added physically to the item.
8. The item is checked in and can move into circulation.
9. Staff or self-checks will record an item being checked out and in.
10. Periodically, staff may have to manage this item to replace it if it is damaged, to ensure that all the volumes in the series are present if it belong to one, or to evaluate it for weeding or to be retained.
11. When an item has reached it’s “shelf life” it must be deleted out of the system.
12. Once the item is deleted out of the computer system, its RFID tag must be deactivated, the barcode must be blacked out and then the item has to be moved into the lower level storage unit to sit until the next book sale, where the item will then come back up from storage.

In all, the process often involves at least four people per item. Therefore, an increase to our materials budget also means an increase in staff time required to process those materials. While our materials allocation has finally hit Tier 1 compliance, our total volume held by item type is not in compliance, meaning we do not currently have enough items in our collection to meet the Tier 1 standards that should be available to our users.

With an average of just four regular staff members in the building during all operational hours, two are often at service points, a third is checking in/managing back room work, and the additional staff member may be in a library program or completing their designated work tasks. We also currently rely almost entirely on volunteers to shelve our materials. That is not standard practice within libraries. Most libraries rely on paid shelvers, called Pages, of which we currently employ none. We receive numerous requests for paid work for high school students and for some of our workforce development interns, which would typically fill these Page positions. It would be ideal to not only support individuals with disabilities with this type of employment, but also to spark an interest in high school students in local government. While we are grateful for our volunteers, they are not paid employees, nor do they all shelve regularly. As such, shelving errors can occur. This does lead to additional staff time to find missing materials. Ideally, we should have some trained, paid, and regularly staffed library Pages in the library with volunteers who help them. The faster materials are put back on shelf, the faster they are available to be checked out again, the higher our circulation, the greater potential increase in county allocation payments.

Programs and events are critical to both public libraries and the community. Public libraries remain one of the last free places in the United States. Free enrichment opportunities are critical to our community. Preschool storytimes offer parents and caregivers the tools to model pre-reading skills with their children, but also the opportunity to connect with other parents, as well as to bring the joy and magic of reading to children at an early age. During the summer, the older children get, the further they can regress with the lack of consistent schooling. As such, public libraries put in a great effort to make fun summer learning opportunities for students, like Summer Reading Program, to ensure that we can help combat summer learning loss. While reading is certainly the focus of our learning programs, we even include math worksheets, for example, as part of the program, because new studies indicate that math actually has a higher learning loss over summer than reading. While this should be a focus area of schools, summer school programs do continue to be reduced; some running for only 12-15 days in June.

The library also focuses on adult programming, as well as preschool, school-age, and teen programming. Social isolation is a real issue for older adults in our community. In an Imagine Fox Cities well-being survey, a respondent from Kaukauna was highlighted during a research presentation, having stated in the comment section of their survey that, "As you age, you are forgotten; you fall into the crack of a sidewalk, never to be thought of again." We offer many programs for adults here that are free, as many older adults live on a fixed income, that help combat social isolation. In comparison to the libraries closest to us in extended county population served, our time has been wisely spent in self-directed activities, outperforming most other library's by a fair margin, and we also offer nearly two times the number of in person programs of the libraries per FTE.

Library Municipality	Total Participation in Self Directed Activities	In Person Onsite Programs	In Person Onsite Attendance	FTE	Self Directed Participation to FTE Ratio	Number of In Person Programs to FTE Ratio	Attendance to FTE Ratio
New Richmond	1,340	235	7,010	10.16	132	23	690
Sussex	10,439	242	7,771	15.39	678	16	505
Kaukauna	9,074	493	8,889	10.24	886	48	868
Verona	4,412	610	22,301	24.23	182	25	920
Menasha	5,527	421	14,448	19.24	287	22	751

In terms of services, if we view operational hours, we are currently meeting Tier 1 standards based on both the municipal and extended county population. We are currently open to the public a total of 61 hours a week. That does only place an average of four regular staff members in the building an hour. The Library Board requires three staff members to be in the building to be open. If we look at the size of this public building, most of which is accessible to the public, each of those four staff members is then responsible for managing roughly 6,650 square feet. The average home in Wisconsin is between 1,600-1,800 square feet; so we are asking staff to be responsible for a space roughly the size of

four homes each. On Saturdays, we run our lowest staffing at three people, which means they are each responsible for roughly 8,955 square feet of the building, or roughly five 1,700 square foot homes.

We also currently have two public service points, both the main circulation desk and youth services desk, which must be staffed during all operational hours. Our third service point, which is not open to the public, is our workroom check in station. During the summer we often have to have a third person be ready to help at either desk with the increased volume of people in the building.

It is critical in our operational planning here to be considering the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. The state has developed the criteria for public libraries, ranking them as Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. When the City participated in the compensation study, it was noted that we were looking to have our compensation structure be competitive, so we can be a premier employer in the region. Our library is still not meeting Tier I standards as a public library and Tier I standards are considered to be the basic of what we should be offering to our residents. Our future goal is and should be for our library to reach Tier II compliance, which is noted as “an expansion of services beyond the basic.” Tier III libraries are considered as offering “the highest level of service” to residents. The goal for our library to be a Tier II library does fall within the City Strategic Plan, specifically in being a Community of Choice. Public libraries contribute to economic development and offer free enrichment to residents. It has been a major concern of mine that we are not in Tier I compliance, which we are addressing in our own Library Strategic Plan to the best of our ability. To be in compliance, we must meet the criteria in each category, which we are not currently doing.

Future Staffing Levels:

As the Library exists today, it is missing several core-positions: Assistant Director, Cataloging/Technical Services Librarian, Public Services Coordinator, and Pages.

Historically, the Kaukauna Public Library has had an Assistant Director given the size of the service population. I made the difficult decision to eliminate the Assistant Director position after their resignation because we needed a Youth Services Librarian. Even very small rural public libraries have Youth Services Librarians and while we had one in the past, the scope of the position with the move to this facility required us to have a more formal position beyond Director, to ensure the smooth operation of the facility. As a trained Youth Services Librarian, I completed both the responsibility of Youth Services Librarian and Assistant Director in the position in the past. The prior Assistant Director resigned because they did not want to be both the Youth Services Librarian and the Assistant Director, so we felt it was extremely important to hire a Youth Service Librarian instead and then add back the Assistant Director when financially feasible. This absorbing of full-time positions into already full-time positions is very commonplace here. I am currently fulfilling the duties of both the Director and Assistant Director, and I have noted in performance reviews that it is difficult to complete all tasks necessary to both positions. As a salaried employee, I understand that the scope of work does require meetings outside of business hours, but the scale of this position is far beyond that.

The Public Services Coordinator position was eliminated because we desperately needed an Adult Services Librarian, which is also a core library position that we did not have. Our Adult Services Librarian is currently operating as both the Adult Services Librarian and a large portion of the Public Services Coordinator position, as is our Administrative Coordinator, who is also sharing duties of the Public Services Coordinator position. We need to free up the Adult Services Librarians' time from meeting room bookings and volunteer coordination, so that they can spend more time on collection management, which is currently rarely being done. We need to free up our Administrative Coordinators time making the service desk schedule, so that they can focus more on Administrative tasks, as maintaining the service desk schedule should be a role filled by the Public Services Coordinator.

To my knowledge, we have never had a Cataloging/Technical Services Librarian. The Technology Coordinator has been operating within this capacity since 2012, at the rate of pay of a non-librarian. We have done nothing but increase the amount of technology in the building as well, which requires managing, as well as increasing our materials allocations, which also increases the workload. A Cataloging/Technical Services Librarian should require an MLIS degree with an emphasis in cataloging, as it is an extremely specific and detail focused position. We currently rely on Appleton Public Library and OWLS for cataloging assistance, which can slow down our process. Over the years, the increase in nontraditional items, such as STEM kits, musical instruments, needing cataloging to circulate has also increased the level

of detail in work. The Technology Coordinator spends a majority of their time in the Cataloging/Technical Services Librarian role, as materials are more important in the scope of work and we have no one else on staff to do it. Again, I continue to be extremely impressed with the staff here taking on more than one role within the building and making it work. It would be nice in the future for the Technology Coordinator to actually have the time to manage the technology in the building.

The increase in need for both marketing and a high social media presence also come into play with our Library Assistant: Communications Coordinator. It is critical to increasing our usage, which increases our revenue when the community is aware of what we have to offer. The position Library Assistant: Communications Coordinator is essentially half Communications and half Library Assistant, however the continuing burden of communications/design needs continues to require more than half of the position, yet we rely on the other half for Library Assistant work at service points. We are currently designing and printing all of our own materials to keep costs as low as possible. We create program guides, handouts, brochures, and newsletters, as well as maintain several social media accounts, and post to different community calendars, as well as maintain our own website and website calendar of events. We learned during our strategic planning here that people do not know about all the things our public library offers, so we knew that focusing on communications would be critical. This position also requires a higher level of skill, specifically in that regarding design, marketing, and advertising than a typical assistant position, but it has retained a classification as such.

There are also several part-time positions that should be considered in future for full-time positions. For example, our Youth Services Librarian has expressed a need for a full-time Library Assistant: Programmer, as we need to retain someone long term to assist in programming for the sake of continuity and because we plan our program schedules far in advance. When someone resigns and they are a programmer, at times, we may be forced to cancel up to five months of scheduled programs if it is something another programmer cannot take on. Another example would be our Local Historian. Their knowledge is regularly requested, however they spend so much time at the service desk that they are rarely available to assist patrons or continue the archival work in the Local History Room. Without volunteers, we would be years behind in projects in that space. At this time, we are the only official organization publicly collecting and archiving historical Kaukauna books, photographs, maps, and documents available to the public. Pages would be an ideal way to ensure continuity of shelving and a way to include both high school students and people with disabilities on our staff.

Lastly, we currently have no maintenance or janitorial staff during operating hours. While the landlord is responsible for some maintenance and janitorial, the library suite itself is responsible for all repairs, maintenance, and cleaning. Staff assist with routine cleaning already, but are also expected to do smaller human pathogen cleaning themselves including, urine, feces, vomit, and blood. The library does employ a cleaning service and when feasible, has the cleaning service cleaning those pathogens as able, however cleaning service typically arrives after closing. Examples of maintenance work staff have been doing for the library themselves: replacing carpet squares, touching up paint, installing fixtures, repairing sink faucets, building custom equipment such as displays, puppet stage, as well as equipment assembly, book cart wheel replacements, and hanging fixtures. It would be ideal to have either access to a staff member that could assist with maintenance, repairs, or cleaning, or to have someone at the City that could be helping with these issues as they arise. We recently had to change our meeting room policy to state that we cannot guarantee room setup for bookings. A large gathering with a request of 75 chairs for example, can take up to 30 minutes for one person to setup. It is not the best customer service to expect patrons to set up their own meeting rooms; further, our conference room tables are quite delicate and can tip over quite easily. We prefer to set up the rooms in advance, however we are just not finding the time to do so for every booking. As such, it would also be ideal to have access to additional staff to assist with the setup for these events.

Overall, our largest position turnover continues to be the part-time positions, which is very taxing on all the staff here. Further, turnover also has an impact on Human Resources, IT, and Finance. Vacancies require additional work in the recruitment and interview process, and then training takes between 8-12 weeks, which is done predominately by fulltime staff. Trainees require job shadows, which means they must have another staff person with them on desk and we are already short-staffed from the vacancy. The level of training required of staff working the service desk is considerable. Being consistently understaffed and then having a lot of seasonal staff means that we spend a significant amount of time training, as well as additional time helping at service points because there is no way that seasonal staff

can actively retain the amount of knowledge required of service desk work if they are not working regular shifts.

Here is an example of Verona Public Library's 2024 Staffing Levels:

Director
Assistant Director
Community Engagement Librarian
Administrative Assistant
Youth Services (3)
Reference Supervisor
Reference Librarian (2)
Circulation Supervisor
Adult Programming Supervisor
Technical Services
Reference Librarian/Communications Coordinator
Library Assistant (18)
Summer Library LTE
Pages (13)

Here is an example of Menasha Public Library's 2024 Staffing Levels:

Library Director
Business Manager
Building Maintenance
Programming Manager
Public Services Manager
Librarian II (6)
Librarian I (2)
Public Services Lead/Library Clerk
Library Assistant I (4)
Library Assistant II (3)
Pages (2)

Here is ours:

Library Director
Adult Services Librarian
Youth Services Librarian
Administrative Coordinator/Library Assistant
Technology Coordinator
Communications Coordinator/Library Assistant
Library Assistants (8)
On-Call Fill Staff (10)

Section II: Library Patrons

Per the Department of Public Instruction, our extended service population area (service to our municipal residents and the residents in areas without a public library to serve them) is 24,446 people.

The Library currently has 10,211 cardholders. Those cardholders reside in Outagamie, Brown, Calumet and Winnebago counties. However, not everyone that visits the library is a cardholder, nor do they have to be to use the space.

The Library currently offers programs and materials for infants to adults, so we serve every stage of life. Our 2023 programs reached 11,455 people, with an average of 18 people per program.

Our 2023 door count was 98,018. That equates to roughly 31 people served each operational hour open. The average number of staff during each of the operational hours is four.

Section IV: Non-Core Activity Offerings

The Kaukauna Public Library has very few non-core related activities that we are currently doing.

The role of public libraries has shifted greatly in the last 30 years. Public libraries are no longer warehouses of books. According to a feature by Jennifer Howards on the National Endowment for the Humanities blog: *“There aren’t many truly public places left in America. Most of our shared spaces require money or a certain social status to access. Malls exist to sell people things. Museums discourage loiterers. Coffee shops expect patrons to purchase a drink or snack if they want to enjoy the premises. One place, though, remains open to everybody. The public library requires nothing of its visitors: no purchase, no membership fees, no dress code.”*

Regardless of the changes in technology and a country divided by racial, ethnic, political and socioeconomic divides, libraries still serve everyone. In an op-ed in the New York Times, Eric Klinenberg, a sociologist wrote, “Libraries don’t just provide free access to books and other cultural materials, they also offer things like companionship for older adults, de facto childcare for busy parents, language instruction for immigrants and welcoming public spaces for the poor, the homeless and young people.”

We have been told that public libraries will not exist in the future because we will not have physical materials. Public libraries in the United States are not going anywhere. In 2023, we checked out 141,597 physical items, as compared to only 30,763 electronic items, and this is the crux of the image issue that public libraries in the United States face. We are more than just a warehouse of books now. Our programming and services are just as critical today as the materials we house. We have become community centers with a focus on lifelong learning and information.

Some may argue that a food pantry is not a core-service for public libraries, which would be an argument based on what libraries once were, not what they are and need to be in today’s world. In a 2021 keynote at the annual Wisconsin Library Association Conference Felton Thomas Jr., Cleveland Public Library CEO, said, “If you aren’t feeding people at your library, you are already behind the game.” This is not an uncommon practice and I firmly believe that this is now considered a core function of public libraries.

As basic needs services continue to condense into large urban areas, and transportation continues to be major barrier of people in need, public libraries have been put into a position to be institutions of social services now. We are seeing many libraries staff social workers to help meet the needs of their community. It is something that I requested with the use of ARPA funds several years ago.

Non-core activities may include our notary and proctor services.

Section V: Non-Core Activities to Offer

As stated earlier, our Library remains above the curve in terms of trending library services. There are a few non-core activities that we could be offering; however, space is the largest constraint in pursuing them.

We could be offering additional “maker” opportunities. The new Appleton Public Library, the Menasha Public Library, and Neenah Public Library offer maker spaces or the use of items such as 3D printers, often found in maker spaces.

Additional art display spaces, in a gallery type setting are also common in public libraries. Menasha has a large space dedicated to art exhibits, as does Waupaca Public Library.

We currently do not have the space to offer a large “library of things,” but many public libraries are cataloging and circulating items that patrons may only use once or something that they may not want to buy without trying. This is economical for patrons, and environmentally friendly. Little Chute Public Library has a very robust library of things. We currently offer ukuleles, STEM kits, and memory care kits as our nontraditional “library of things.” However, libraries around the state have been circulating items from fishing poles, to carpet cleaners, to power tools, to Nesco roasters, and even specialty birthday cake character pans.

Section VI: Removal of Non-Core Activity Offerings

Notaries continue to be used, but the data is trending downward. At one point, we had two notaries, one who worked primarily day shift, and another that worked evenings. We offered this service because it was requested and banks often require you to pay for the service. With the separation of a staff member, we now only offer one notary, which continues to the decrease, as it is only available during the day. As many notaries work standard business hours, our evening offering was extremely appealing to individuals who work who need the service. This is a service that we could consider stopping. It is currently only available when the one staff member works. In 2021, the two staff members notarized 30 times. In 2022, they notarized 27 times. In 2023, they notarized 19 times.

Proctoring has also been slow until very recently. We proctored 5 times in 2021 and 6 times in 2022. 2023 was the slowest year, proctoring only once. This year to date, I have proctored three tests. Offering this service does not really hinder our work though, nor does it have a cost. I only accept proctor students when it fits in my schedule, and I am still able to work on my computer while I proctor.