



Report for Compliance with Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Name: Morton Grove Public Library
Location: 6140 Lincoln Avenue, Morton Grove, IL 60053
County: Cook
Type of Library: Village, 7 member independently elected Board of Trustees
Population served: 25,297
of Employees: 46

FINANCIAL AND BUDGET INFORMATION

Fiscal Year: January 1 – December 31
2023 Budget: \$3,691,288
EAV: 878,613,130 (tax year 2021, the most recent year available)

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Per 50 ILCS 70/10(b), the committee membership must include all the elected or appointed members of the library board of trustees, the Executive Director or other official of the Library, and two residents appointed by the President of the Library Board of Trustees.

Committee Members: Emily Macejak, Board President and Decennial Committee Chair
Joanne Pelletier, Board Secretary
Carlotta Gonzales, Board Treasurer
Mark Flores, Trustee
Mohammed Hussain, Trustee
Tamara Jost, Trustee
Laima Puzzo, Trustee
Susanne Bodner, Resident
Francis Tennant, Resident
Pamela Leffler, Executive Director

Meeting Dates: June 8, 2023 – formation of committee and first meeting
October 12, 2023 – compile information; review draft report
March 14, 2024 – review final report; approve for submission

CORE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Morton Grove Public Library uses *Serving Our Public 4.0: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries* as a guide for staff and the Library Board of Trustees during annual budget preparation and in the development and implementation of our strategic plan. *Serving Our Public 4.0* outlines standards in several areas: Core Standards; Governance and Administration; Personnel; Access; Building Infrastructure and Maintenance; Safety; Collection Management; System Member Responsibilities and Resource Sharing; Public Services: Reference and Reader's Advisory Services; Programming; Youth/Young Adult Services; Technology; and Marketing, Promotion, and Collaboration. The Library meets/exceeds all minimum standards and provides the following core programs and services:

- Operates in compliance with Illinois library law and all other statutory requirements.
- Has an organized collection of materials and information, including print resources such as books, magazines, newspapers; electronic materials including ebooks, eaudiobooks, database subscriptions, and streaming content; and other physical collections such as DVDs, CDs, video games, and Library of Things.
- Provides access to shared content (print and digital resources) through our membership in the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and Cooperative Computer Services (CCS) shared online catalog.
- Has paid, trained staff to manage all library collections and to provide and ensure access to them.
- Has trained, paid staff to provide assistance to patrons in the use of our collections and resources and in the use of resources beyond those owned by MGPL through interlibrary loan and other resource-sharing arrangements.
- Has trained, paid staff to assist users of all ages with reference and reader's advisory.
- Provides extensive programming for all ages, including early literacy programming, story times, STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math/Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) related programming, programs for school age children, teens, adults, seniors, etc.
- Provides community gathering and meeting spaces.

In addition to the core services and programs outlined above, the Morton Grove Public Library is interested in providing more 'citizen services':

- Passport services
- License plate sticker renewal
- Notary services
- Social support services

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- North Suburban Library System Library of the Year
- Deborah Dowley Preiser Marketing Award – This award recognizes a library employee or group whose excellent work in marketing over a period of several years, reflecting the importance of publicity for adult programming, given that library programming is central to the role of the library as a community center and to the library as place.
- Youth Services Librarian of the Year – This annual award is presented to a librarian serving in the state of Illinois who has made an outstanding contribution in library service to young people.

Since its inception in 1971, the award has been presented to individuals who exemplify resourcefulness, professionalism, and caring in their service to young people.

- In 2023 MGPL celebrated our 85th anniversary of the founding of the library.
- Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce – 50-year member
- Won trademark protection for the development and use of the STEMonade Stand logo and name in providing STEM based kits for local families.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS / GROUP PURCHASES

We partner with or have intergovernmental agreements with the following governmental units or other taxpayer funded entities:

Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) - RAILS is a regional library system, a government agency that provides services to libraries in the northern and west-central areas of the State of Illinois. RAILS has approximately 1,250 private, public, school, and university library members, which have a total of more than 4,000 library facilities in a 27,000 square mile area. RAILS was formed in 2011, from a merger of the Alliance, DuPage, Metropolitan, North Suburban, and Prairie Area library systems.

As a member of RAILS, the Morton Grove Public Library has access to a number of services, including:

- interlibrary delivery
- continuing education and consulting resources to library employees and trustees
- shared catalog and cataloging support
- e-content services
- museum and attractions pass program
- group purchases and vendor discounts
- networking opportunities for library employees
- targeted grant funding to member libraries

Having access to these shared services through RAILS allows us to better serve the taxpayers of Morton Grove in a variety of ways, as outlined below.

- *Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing*
No one library can afford to purchase all of the materials its patrons need. RAILS supports six shared online catalogs. A shared online catalog allows patrons from participating libraries to search all participating library catalogs in a single search. 437 libraries in RAILS belong to one of these six consortia.

The Morton Grove Public Library is a member of the Cooperative Computer Services (CCS) consortium. Our library patrons have access to the holdings of 31 libraries in the north suburban area. They can request materials to be delivered to our library via the RAILS Delivery service.

RAILS offers grants to help libraries join one of these six shared online catalogs. In 2018 the Morton Grove Public Library received a grant from RAILS in the amount of \$31,195 to help us offset the cost of joining CCS.

- *Sharing E-Resources*

RAILS' eRead Illinois service is a cooperative program that expands access to ebooks for Illinois residents. Currently, approximately 800 Illinois libraries of all types participate. Over 439,000 items were circulated via eRead Illinois in the last year. Morton Grove Public Library patrons read and/or listened to 491 ebooks and eaudiobooks from eRead Illinois in the past year.

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. Morton Grove Public Library patrons made 204 'checkouts' through the program in 2023.

- *Collaboration/Networking*

RAILS 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 wheel.'

RAILS has over 50 email discussion lists on a wide variety of topics and for almost every staff position at a public library and over 96 networking groups that meet in person or via Zoom. MGPL staff participate in these email discussion and networking groups as their positions and job responsibilities dictate.

- *Continuing Education/Consulting*

RAILS offers a variety of in-person and virtual continuing education (CE) workshops to help staff keep their skills up to date and to stay on top of the different trends affecting library service. RAILS has offered over 1,000 CE events with 37,908 attendees since 2013. Staff from the Morton Grove Public Library have and do attend these events as their positions and job responsibilities dictate.

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.

- *Discounts to Help Libraries Save Money*

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. The Morton Grove Public Library has taken advantage of over 20 of these group purchase opportunities and/or negotiated vendor discounts.

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS) – CCS is a group of 31 public libraries in the north and northwest suburbs of Chicago that share a database for circulation, acquisitions, cataloging, interlibrary loan, and an online public access catalog. In 2022 the Morton Grove Public Library received/sent approximately 40,000 items from/to these libraries. Current CCS members include

the following libraries: Algonquin Area Public Library District, Cary Area Public Library District, Crystal Lake Public Library, Des Plaines Public Library, Elmhurst Area Public Library District, Evanston Public Library, Fox River Valley Public Library District, Fremont Public Library District, Glencoe Public Library, Glenview Public Library, Grayslake Area Public Library District, Highland Park Public Library, Huntley Area Public Library District, Indian Trails Public Library District, Lake Forest Library, Lake Villa Public Library District, Lincolnwood Public Library District, McHenry Public Library District, Morton Grove Public Library, Mount Prospect Public Library, Niles-Maine District Library, Northbrook Public Library, Palatine Public Library District, Park Ridge Public Library, Prospect Heights Public Library District, Round Lake Area Public Library District, Warren-Newport Public Library District, Waukegan Public Library, Wilmette Public Library District, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District, Zion-Benton Public Library District.

Electronic Content Consortium (ECC) – The ECC is a 128-library member consortium of libraries across the State of Illinois that aims to achieve economies of scale by jointly negotiating and purchasing electronic content for use by the member libraries. The ECC currently manages the Digital Library of Illinois, an OverDrive consortium that provides ebooks and eaudiobooks to the member libraries and their users. In 2023 the Digital Library of Illinois had 3,474,090 checkouts. Morton Grove Public Library patrons have checked out over 40,000 ebooks/audiobooks in the past year alone. The Morton Grove Public Library was a founding member of the ECC and the Executive Director of MGPL, Pam Leffler, serves as the chair.

Assurance/Wellness Insurance Network (WIN) – The library participates in a group insurance plan with 13 other libraries. This helps spread the cost of insurance to a larger pool of participants.

Illinois Libraries Present (ILP) – Illinois Libraries Present is a consortium of member libraries that was formed to provide premier online events that highlight national speakers that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive for single libraries to hold on their own. This helps reduce programming costs and maximize reach by taking advantage of both virtual event platforms and the collective buying power of Illinois public libraries. Some of the nationally known authors, speakers, actors, and performers who have been booked by ILP include Jenny Lawson, Chef Kwame Onwuachi, Nick Offerman & Jeff Tweedy, Caitlin Dougherty, Marlee Matlin, Will Shortz, Danny Trejo, Kwame Alexander, Mary Roach, Jesmyn Ward, Jonathan Van Ness & Kristi Yamaguchi. Upcoming events will feature authors Neil Gaiman, Colson Whitehead, and Stephen Graham Jones, to name just a few.

School Districts – The Morton Grove Public Library also has agreements with a number of area schools and school districts to provide services and resources to the teachers and students of Morton Grove that attend those schools:

East Maine School District #63

- Melzer Elementary School

Golf School District #67

- Golf Middle School
- Hynes Elementary School

Morton Grove School District #70

- Park View School

Niles Township District for Special Education #807

- Julia Molloy Education Center

Niles Township High Schools District #219

- Niles North High School
- Niles West High School

Skokie and Morton Grove School District #69

- Edison Elementary School
- Lincoln Junior High School
- Madison Elementary School

Jerusalem Lutheran School / Early Learning Center

Morton Grove Park District

Muslim Community Center (MCC) Academy

OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Advocate Children's Hospital – The Library supports their early literacy initiatives; community health education.

AgeOptions – The Library partners with and receives grant money from AgeOptions to provide services and programs for seniors in Morton Grove and surrounding communities.

Early Childhood Alliance – ECA is a collective of over 45 multi-sector organizations committed to helping improve the lives of young children 0-5 years old and their families in the Niles Township area. The Morton Grove Public Library was a charter endorser of the ECA.

Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce – The Library is a long-time member of the Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce to support the businesses and residents of Morton Grove. We participate in local events sponsored by the Chamber and sponsor shared programming. The Executive Director of the library sits on the Chamber of Commerce Board.

Morton Grove Park District

Village of Morton Grove

Vision Morton Grove – Vision Morton Grove has been working on issues related to environmental sustainability, racial equity, welcoming communities, fair housing, a living wage, comprehensive public planning, and representational and transparent government. The library has partnered with Vision Morton Grove on shared programming around these topics.

REVIEW PROCESS

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents related to the Library in order to prepare this report:

- MGPL budget and financial documents
- MGPL intergovernmental agreements
- MGPL monthly and annual reports
- State laws applicable to libraries
- State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 et seq.)
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.)
- MGPL Policy on Public Comment – all policies reviewed biennially or as needed, whichever is soonest
- Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a)) – OMA officer training completed annually
- OMA training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b)) – all Board members have completed OMA training
- 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))
- Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Session Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d)) – The Board reviews closed session minutes two times/year, every January and July.
- IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1 et seq.)
- Statements of Economic Interest (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5 et seq.) – all applicable officials have filed statements of economic interest.
- Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(C)) – set up through the library's payroll provider, all employees complete annual sexual harassment prevention training.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE WELL?

Zero to small levy increases every year

Provision of materials for education and entertainment – In 2023 the Morton Grove Public Library circulated 320,012 items either owned by the library or received through interlibrary loan. Interlibrary loans received from other libraries totaled 21,940 items; interlibrary loans provided to other libraries totaled 22,463.

Programming – In 2023 the Morton Grove Public Library offered 1,260 programs to 23,436 patrons.

Increased accountability – The Library makes available on our website the following:

- Video recordings of all Board meetings going back to January 2018 (these video recordings are also available on the Library's YouTube channel)

- All Board meeting minutes and other documents, including monthly financial information, going back to January 2018
- Salaries of all employees with compensation higher than \$75,000 as required by Illinois Public Act 97-0609
- Annual approved budgets from 2017 to the present
- Annual audits from 2016 to the present
- All public facing and Library Board policies

Improved physical spaces without having to go to referendum – in 2020-21 the Library undertook a major renovation of our Youth Services Department and staff spaces. In 2023 we undertook exterior building improvements. We were able to do this without going to referendum with monies saved to reserves and our regular operating budget because of prudent fiscal management.

Membership in several consortia to achieve economies of scale – As mentioned previously, the Library is a member of the CCS, ILP, ECC consortia.

Revamped library services during the pandemic – While the library building was closed to the public during the early part of the pandemic, we transitioned services and programs to online and curbside, thus continuing to effectively utilize taxpayer funds and to provide meaningful and useful services to the community during a period of significant social, economic, and educational upheaval. This also allowed us to keep staff fully employed, eliminating the need for them to have to collect unemployment from the State of Illinois.

Support community and area schools with educational opportunities, programming, and collections.

Removed barriers to service and life-long learning by eliminating overdue fines and library card expiration dates.

IDENTIFIED INEFFICIENCIES/NEXT STEPS

In general, the Library is very efficient and provides a number of necessary services to the community on a relatively small budget and tax levy. As shown in this report, we already partner with several other government units and community organizations.

Public libraries were specifically designed to serve our local communities, this is true even in heavily populated areas with neighboring towns and libraries very close to one another. Communities have historically enjoyed the local control that having their own library provides them. Despite the large number of public libraries in the State of Illinois, there are still a significant number of Illinois residents that do not reside in an area that receives library services. It can be argued that it would be better and more efficient to provide every resident of Illinois with the ability to use area libraries, perhaps similar to the community college system that currently exists in the state. However, any significant changes to address perceived inefficiencies, such as the number of libraries across the State of Illinois, would require changes to Illinois law.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER or MORE EFFICIENTLY?

- Continue to seek out and form more community alliances and partnerships.
- Continue to liaise and work with the MG Park District and Village of MG to provide unique programs and services and to minimize duplication.
- Continue to look for areas in collection management/processing, programming, and other services where outsourcing is appropriate and more cost effective.
- Explore the efficacy of shared staff and/or contractual employees (presenters, service providers, etc.) with area libraries and/or other taxing bodies.
- Continue to market the Library and its services, programming, and collections to increase overall usage of the Library and to show value to the taxpayers.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS for INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY and EFFICIENCY

- Make financial and policy data more easily findable and available on the MGPL website.
- Continue to work with other libraries/taxing bodies to share resources of all types (services, staff, contractual employees, etc.) and to achieve economies of scale.

REPORT PREPARED AND SUBMITTED BY:

Pamela Leffler, Executive Director
Morton Grove Public Library
March 15, 2024