



Algonquin Area Public Library District

**REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH
DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT**

SUBMITTED SEPTEMBER 2024



Algonquin Area Public Library District

Harnish Main Library 2600 Harnish Drive • Algonquin, IL 60102 • 847-458-6060
Eastgate Branch 115 Eastgate Drive • Algonquin, IL 60102 • 847-658-4343

www.aapld.org

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SECTION I. Unit of government submitting this report

Name of Library: Algonquin Area Public Library District

Address of Main Library Office: 2600 Harnish Drive, Algonquin, Illinois 60102

Address of Branch Location: 115 Eastgate Drive, Algonquin, Illinois 60102

SECTION II. Information about our Library District

- A. Both of our library facilities are located in McHenry County. Our Library District serves residents in McHenry County and Kane County. Fourteen libraries serve residents of McHenry County. Sixteen libraries serve residents of Kane County.
- B. The number of people who reside within the Algonquin Area Public Library District boundaries is 40,679 as of the 2020 census.
- C. The Library employs 75 staff members.
- D. The Library's annual budget for FY24 is \$6,509,665. This amount is exclusive of anticipated capital expenditures and transfers to the Special Reserve (capital improvements) fund.
- E. The Library's equalized assessed value (EAV) for district properties in McHenry and Kane counties for tax year 2023 is \$1,549,909,383.
- F. Library taxes are approximately 3.5%-5.5% of a total property tax bill for residents within the Algonquin Area Public Library District, depending on location and other taxing bodies.

SECTION III. Information about our Committee

- A. Committee Members:
 - a. Board President: Lindsay Taylor
 - b. Board Vice President: Fatima Medrano-Sanchez
 - c. Board Secretary: Tracy Sharkey
 - d. Board Treasurer: Peter J. Pelke II
 - e. Trustee: Fred Becker
 - f. Trustee: James Johnson
 - g. Trustee: John Kennealy
 - h. Executive Director: Sara Murray (Committee Chair)
 - i. Library District Resident: Kathy Frank
 - j. Library District Resident: Janet May
 - k. Library District Resident: Bridget Scales
 - l. Library District Resident: Stephen Schaaf
- B. Dates that the Committee Met:
 - a. April 26, 2023
 - b. May 22, 2024
 - c. July 24, 2024
 - d. September 25, 2024



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SECTION IV. Core Programs or Services Offered by our Library

Our Library offers the following core services and programs:

- A. Expert, knowledgeable, and friendly staff who competently provide assistance, including:
 - Readers advisory and research
 - One-on-one assistance (with technology, equipment, research, etc.)
 - Connecting users with print, digital, and community resources
 - Access, privacy, and intellectual freedom
- B. Lending and providing access to physical and digital materials, including:
 - Print and digital books, audiobooks, and graphic novels
 - Physical, digital, and streaming movies and television shows
 - Library of Things (non-traditional items)
 - Resources available in multiple written and spoken languages
 - Excellent breadth and depth in multiple genres
 - Access through the library catalog to the collections of 30+ libraries and access to nationwide collections through interlibrary loan
 - Indication of how much was saved by using the library printed on receipts
- C. Extensive and diverse programming for all ages and a wide range of interests and abilities, including:
 - In-person, hybrid, and virtual
 - Live (synchronous), recorded, and asynchronous
 - Bus trips, in-house experts, book talks with authors, hobby development, technology classes, book clubs of various genres
 - Early literacy and other skills presented through engaging, hands-on learning opportunities
 - Makerspace with structured classes and opportunities to learn and explore independently or with a staff guide
 - Programs available in languages other than English, such as Makerspace programs in Spanish and storytimes in Polish
- D. Citizen services
 - Passport application acceptance
 - Notary services during all library hours
 - License plate sticker renewal
 - Voter registration, early voting, and election day voting
 - Blood drives
 - Test proctoring
- E. Work, collaboration, and gathering space
 - Study rooms
 - Meeting rooms
 - Computer lab
 - Children's play areas
 - Quiet reading room
 - Café spaces



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F. Outreach and home delivery

- Homebound services to personal residences for those who are unable to travel to the library
- Book and materials delivery to senior living communities
- Book discussions, craft programs, and other events at senior living communities
- Borrow By Mail service to have books and other physical materials delivered by mail to personal residences

Other core services/programs we could possibly provide:

- Outreach to senior citizens and those with disabilities - programming, materials delivery, personal time / companionship, etc.
- Parent group to provide connection for caregivers while their children are attending programs
- Access to technology to support virtual meetings (business or personal)
- Support for expertise for small businesses, legal concerns, citizenship, and estate or financial planning

SECTION V. Awards and Recognitions

Our Library has received the following awards, distinctions, and recognitions in recent years:

- Nomination by U.S. Representative Sean Casten for the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Service
- Illinois State Historical Society Centennial Award – 2021
- Village of Algonquin Rehabilitation Business Award – 2019
- Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Chamber of Commerce Club/Organization of the Year - 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
- First place Founders Days Parade entry – 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

SECTION VI. Intergovernmental Agreements

We partner with or have intergovernmental agreements with the following other governments and related agencies:

- A. Community Unit School District 300 (D300): We partner with the local school district to have access to a fiber connection for internet access. For a nominal fee, we are able to provide a faster internet connection for our patrons due to our proximity to local school district buildings.
- B. Fox River Valley Public Library District (FRVPLD) and Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library District (EJMPLD): We partner with these other libraries to provide a shared service to D300. Together, we curate and make available a collection of digital books called Community Share. These books exist on the Unbound platform.
 - a. FRVPLD, EJMPLD, and AAPLD collectively have a Memorandum of Understanding with D300 to provide the service noted above. In exchange, D300 supports the libraries by providing an option for families to register for public library cards at the same time they register for school.



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- C. Cooperative Computer Services (CCS): CCS is a consortium of 31 public libraries in the north and northwest suburbs of Chicago that share an integrated library service (ILS), which is a database for circulation, acquisitions, cataloging, interlibrary loan, and an online public access catalog. Being a member of this consortium provides the following benefits:
 - a. Cost sharing for the ILS and related software
 - b. Vastly expanded access to physical materials
 - c. Access to training, webinars, and other shared resources
 - d. Cost sharing for other optional services
- D. Wellness Insurance Network (WIN): WIN is a consortium of Illinois libraries grouped together to find financial and administrative efficiencies in providing healthcare insurance to library employees.
- A. Library Insurance Management and Risk Control Combination (LIMRiCC): LIMRiCC was established to provide conventional insurance coverage and/or self-insurance for claims against or by its participants. Libraries are pooled together as one organization in order to provide lower premiums. AAPLD participates in the LIMRiCC group for cost savings and management of unemployment compensation.
- B. Illinois Libraries Presents (ILP): AAPLD is a member of ILP with dozens of libraries across the state of Illinois. By sharing funds, we are able to provide programs and conversations with authors and other presenters that would otherwise require fees far beyond what the library could afford alone.
- C. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO): We have a Memorandum of Agreement with SHPO to recognize the historical value of our Eastgate Branch Library building. This agreement qualifies us to receive \$100,000 in state grant funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
- D. Land lease partnership with the Village of Algonquin for the 2600 Harnish Drive property

Our Library's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental and interagency cooperation in the following ways:

- Significant cost savings through IGAs A, C, D, E, and F listed above
- Group purchasing power through IGAs C, D, E, and F listed above
- Efficiencies in administration of services and/or benefits through IGAs C, D, E, and F listed above
- Access to resources we could not afford on our own through IGAs A, D, and F listed above
- Access to expanded collections of materials through IGAs B and C listed above
- Collaboration with the local school district to get more library cards and books into the hands of K-12 student through IGA B listed above
- Financial assistance with the Eastgate Branch Renovation Project, which brings our facility up to date into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through MOA G listed above
- Partnership with the Village of Algonquin for the land lease in H listed above allowed the Library to use funds to build a new building without having to purchase land, which would have been cost prohibitive to completing the building project



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SECTION VII. Community Partnerships

We partner with dozens of businesses, organizations, and entities in our community in many different ways. The following list includes significant and frequent partnerships, but is not exhaustive.

- Village of Algonquin (VoA): AAPLD's programming team frequently partners with the VoA's Parks and Rec department to enhance the offerings of community programs, including Miracle on Main, the Taylor Swift Experience, Lunchapalooza, and more.
- Village of Lake in the Hills (LITH): AAPLD's programming team frequently partners with the LITH's Parks and Rec department to enhance the offerings of community programs, such as Safety Town Trick-or-Treat, Storytime in the Park, and more.
- Algonquin Lake in the Hills Chamber of Commerce (CoC): As a member of the CoC, we attend events that highlight library resources and support community members and businesses.
- Community Unit School District 300 (D300): AAPLD staff visit K-12 schools to read and promote books, highlight library resources, offer crafting opportunities, encourage participation in the Summer Reading Program, and build connections between kids and the Library.
- School District 47 and School District 158
- Friends of the Library: We provide space for this 501(c)3 organization that in turn raises money to support the Library.
- Lake in the Hills Rotary Club
- Algonquin and Lake in the Hills Police Departments: We participate in the annual National Night Out events, collaborate on staff training, and more.
- Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Fire Protection District: We collaborate on staff training, offer Touch-a-Truck programs, and more.
- Algonquin Arts Commission
- Founders Days: We participate in the annual Founders Days parade and provide support for the annual Founders Days festival.
- District 300 and Interfaith Food Pantries: We provide books and information to be distributed to children and families that visit the food pantry, and occasionally we will host food drives or promote opportunities to volunteer at the food pantries.
- Mobile office hours for state and local elected officials: Elected officials are invited to use the library as a convenient, comfortable place to meet with constituents.
- IL Secretary of State's Office: We make our facilities available for remote Department of Motor Vehicles license plate sticker renewals and have also supported local DMV (drivers licenses) and IDOT (iPass) events.
- Illinois State Library (ISL): We are able to promote the Talking Books program available through the ISL to those who may benefit.

SECTION VIII. Review of Laws, Policies, Rules and Procedures, Training Materials, and Other Documents

We have reviewed the following (non-exhaustive) list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Library in order to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended. It is the practice of the AAPLD Board of Trustees' Policy Committee to meet at least twice annually to review policies that come due for review on a 2-to-3-year cycle.



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Policies are updated as necessitated by changing laws and statutes and/or to address changing library needs.

- State laws applicable to libraries (as found in Illinois Library Laws & Rules - January 1, 2024)
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 *et seq.*)
 - Confirmation that all Decennial Committee members have completed OMA training (per 5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
 - Designation of OMA officer (per 5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*)
 - Confirmation that FOIA officer(s) training has been completed (per 5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
 - Designation of FOIA officer(s) (per 5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
 - Computation and retention of FOIA requests (per 5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
 - Posting of required FOIA information (per 5 ILCS 140/4(a) and (b))
 - List of types or categories of FOIA records under library control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- IMRF total compensation posting (per 5 ILCS 120/7.3) – posted annually per statute
- Policy on public comment (Policy 1050: Public Comment at Board Meetings) – reviewed at least biannually
- Budget and financial documents – posted annually on the Library’s website
 - Budget & Appropriation ordinance
 - Operating budget
 - Annual financial report
 - Treasurer’s report
 - Annual levy ordinance
- Intergovernmental agreements (IGAs)
- Designation of whistleblower auditing official (per 5 ILCS 105/4.1 *et seq.*) – shared per statute
- Approved schedule of regular meetings of the library board (per 5 ILCS 120/2.03) – approved annually in April or May
- Periodic meetings to review Closed Session minutes (per 5 ILCS 120/2.06(d)) – completed twice per year as required by statute
- Confirmation that all applicable staff and officials have filed statements of economic interest (per 5 ILCS 420/4A-101 and 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5 *et seq.*) – completed annually per statute
- Annual sexual harassment prevention training for staff (per 775 ILCS 5/2-109(C)) – completed annually per statute; updated training provided by the State free of charge would be appreciated
- State ethics laws, including, but not limited to, the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 *et seq.*)
- Reports on government efficiency, including “Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments” by Wendell Cox (2016)

SECTION IX. What have we done well?

(List any budget/levy freezes or reductions in the past decade; list new programs or services offered to residents over the past decade; list any ethics ordinances adopted; timely FOIA compliance; responsiveness to public; list any new intergovernmental agreements; list any increase in number of library patrons served, etc.)



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- In 2017 and 2024, AAPLD funded multi-million-dollar capital projects with no need to go to referendum. This was achieved with forward-thinking financial planning and smart stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Community members saw significant improvements in library facilities without significant increases in library taxes.
- Developed and built the Library of Things and Makerspace in order to offer items and services that go beyond traditional library offerings. This encourages creativity and helps community members solve problems and save money.
- Completed a community survey in 2018 with responses from 1000+ neighbors who highly ranked our services and staff. 98% of respondents believe the library is essential to the community.
- We continue to offer a diversity of programming and collections to meet as many needs and interests in the community as possible while staying within budget and staff capacity. Along with professional resources, patron input and ideas are considered when curating collections, creating displays, and developing and presenting programs.
- Hired, trained, and maintained an amazing staff who work with all community members in a patient and dignified way.
- Consistency and continuity of leadership in, and support of, the Executive Director position; supporting a leader who is passionate about library and community service, supporting staff, and positive organizational culture with humility and integrity.
- Fairly compensated all staff in alignment with compensation benchmarking studies and increased percentage of contribution towards dependent healthcare coverage. We continue to offer and encourage participation in continuing education webinars, workshops, and conferences and celebrate new ideas and initiatives.
- Promotion of library programs and services through a colorful, beautifully designed newsletter (printed and delivered every 2 months) and online.
- Added several citizen services in the last several years, including passport application acceptance and license plate sticker renewal services.
- We continue to explore opportunities for partnerships and intergovernmental agreements with community agencies to expand our services, collaborate with others, and make the most of every taxpayer dollar.

SECTION X. What inefficiencies did we identify? What are our next steps?

- The number of AAPLD cardholders has been declining over the last few years, with a slight increase in the most recent year. Various efforts could be taken to try to continue increasing numbers of cardholders each year. We will continue to work with D300 to get cards into the hands of students and families.
- Parking at our Eastgate Branch Library is inadequate to serve the number of people who might visit the library simultaneously. We are working with the Village of Algonquin to add street parking directly across the street from the library, which will nearly double the number of available parking spaces.
- Outreach programs and/or school visits could be an avenue for getting information to parents about library services that may be unknown to them (Makerspace, one-on-one assistance, digital resources, non-traditional collections, etc.).



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SECTION XI. What can we do to be better or more efficient?

- More day trips or bus trips could potentially engage more non-traditional library users.
- Develop a definitive set of metrics to define the performance and success of the library.
- Continue to define the current and trending demographics of AAPLD residents and library users by multiple variables and determine how best to meet their needs. Consider the differences in demographics and needs between residents on the east side of our district versus the west side of our district.
- Continue to ensure we are meeting residents “where they are” by exploring different delivery options for materials and services as the district continues to grow and further develop.

SECTION XII. Studies on governmental efficiencies

“Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments” by Wendell Cox (2016) - An AI overview of this report includes the following highlights:

- Larger governments have higher taxes and debt: Larger municipal governments in Illinois tend to have higher taxes and debt levels per capita.
- Smaller governments spend and tax less: Smaller municipal governments in Illinois tend to spend, tax, and borrow less than larger governments.
- Township governments have lower labor costs: Township governments in Illinois have lower labor costs and taxes that are rising more slowly than other local governments.
- The report also notes that transferring services from lower cost townships to other levels of government could increase costs. Similarly, forcing consolidations and abolitions of local governments could increase taxes and spending.

This report indicates that the average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals. While Illinois may have the most units of government, it is the fifth largest state in the U.S. by population. When adjusted for population to consider the number of government units per capita, Illinois ranks 15th in the nation. When costs per capita for local governments are calculated, Illinois is not in the top 10 highest costs per person. This article breaks down the data to reveal that more units of government does not necessarily translate to more tax dollars collected from taxpayers.

“Professional Management Drives Local Government Efficiency and Effectiveness” by International City/County Management Association (2017) - This study on governmental efficiency points to successful local governments (specifically, municipalities) that are being run by professional leaders and an elected, non-partisan board or council strike a balance between leadership and management to make an important difference in the life of community residents.

“Does Consolidating Local Governments Work?” by Shayne C. Kavanagh for Government Finance Officers Association (2020) - This study looks at horizontal fragmentation (different units of government that perform similar duties but often for different geographical areas; e.g., villages and counties) compared to vertical fragmentation (different units of government that perform different duties but often for overlapping geographical areas; e.g., library districts and park districts). The study states that “the local users of a commonly owned resource will be in the best position to decide how to allocate the responsibilities for maintaining and then allocating the resource among the users of that resource. This is because local users have a sense of what their needs are and who is best



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positioned to take on the responsibilities to meet those needs.” The article states that consolidation in horizontal fragmentation is often not recommended because multiple units of government can actually economize public spending, though the research is not clear on why. The article also states that some savings may be found in consolidating vertical fragmentation, but admits that this is speculation because there is a lack of research around this type of consolidation.

SECTION XIII. Our Committee’s recommendations regarding increased accountability and efficiency

After reviewing the myriad services and expertise provided to our community by our staff and recognizing the consistent financial responsibility shown by our library leaders, we recommend that the Algonquin Area Public Library District continue to operate as an independent unit of local government. While there may be some relatively small ways in which we can find more efficiency and cost sharing, AAPLD does an incredible job of working with community partners in a synergistic approach to squeeze every bit of value from every tax dollar collected from the community. We are committed to ongoing fiscal responsibility so that we can continue to provide exceptional service from expert staff using top-notch resources without going to referendum to increase our tax rate. We are partners with other agencies and businesses, both tax funded and not, and together we are able to provide an extraordinary value for the relatively small cost to taxpayers.