

# 2025

## COMMUNITY IMPACT





# READ WITH EVERYONE



Get your library card at [MyEPL.org/signup](https://MyEPL.org/signup)

## Greetings from the Executive Director

I first visited the Elkhart Public Library in 2025.

I walked through the front doors and saw the familiar sights of any great library:

Books.

Friendly, engaged staff.

Children proudly leading their parents through the building.

More books.

People learning something new, finding a story that stays with them, meeting up with a neighbor, or spending time together in a space that feels welcoming and safe. Libraries are not just places to find information — they're places where memories are created.

As a librarian and leader, I also saw tremendous potential. Potential for stronger, more welcoming community gathering spaces. Potential for an easier, more intuitive experience for visitors trying to find what they need. Potential for flexible spaces designed not only for today, but for what our community will ask of its library in the years ahead.

Elkhart Public Library is already successful — just look at all of the stories and statistics on the pages that follow. Our community clearly finds value here every day through the resources we provide, the help we offer, and the programs and experiences we create. The numbers,



and the feedback we receive, confirm what we know: EPL plays an important role in a vibrant and diverse community.

When I officially joined EPL in October 2025, I stepped into an anchor institution that was already thriving — and I felt incredibly fortunate to do so.

Whether this is your first visit to EPL or you've been here more times than you can count, I hope you'll take pride in the thoughtful work our staff does day in and day out. And as we plan for the future throughout 2026, I hope you'll share your ideas with us — what's working, what you'd like to see more of, and how we can continue to grow alongside our community.

I look forward to the work ahead — together.

**Kristen Edson**  
Executive Director



# Find us

Locations, hours, contact info

## HOURS

Monday	9 a.m - 7 p.m.
Tuesday	9 a.m - 7 p.m.
Wednesday	9 a.m - 7 p.m.
Thursday	9 a.m - 7 p.m.
Friday	9 a.m - 6 p.m.
Saturday	9 a.m - 3 p.m.
Sunday	Closed

## WE'RE ONLINE

For a complete calendar of all future events, visit [MyEPL.org/events](https://myepl.org/events)

## FOLLOW US @MYEPL



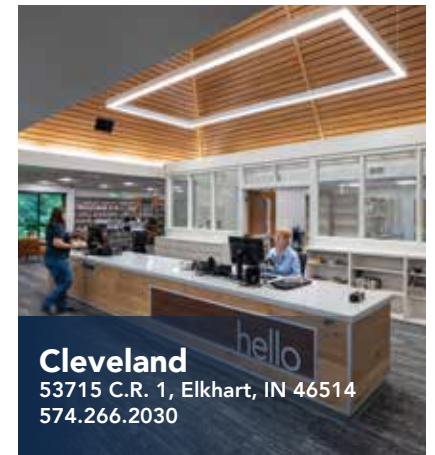
### Downtown

300 S. Second St., Elkhart, IN 46516  
574.522.5669



### Dunlap

58485 C.R. 13, Elkhart, IN 46516  
574.875.3100



### Cleveland

53715 C.R. 1, Elkhart, IN 46514  
574.266.2030



### Osolo

3429 E. Bristol St., Elkhart, IN 46514  
574.264.7234



### Pierre Moran

2400 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517  
574.294.6418



# Strategic Plan

Elkhart Public Library is entering the final year of its current strategic plan. We'll need your input on where we go from here, but check out some of our successes.

Update the downtown children's room so it is fun, interactive and inclusive.

- Expanded play space
- STEAM Lab
- More space for kids books

Provide regular opportunities for organizations to raise awareness and generate connections.

- Teen job fairs
- Morning Meet-Up with Council on Aging
- Open Doors with ADEC
- Purdue Extension classes
- Education opportunities with city and county parks

Expand Growing Readers initiative

- Hired Spanish-speaking tutor
- Connected with Building Strong Brains Coalition

Improve overall services

- Connecting with new property owners
- Adding Notary Public services
- Offer training on artificial intelligence
- Advance outreach with El Puente and Goshen Chronicles

Read the entire current plan at [MyEPL.org/goals](https://www.elkhartpubliclibrary.org/goals).





Cardholders

50,724

*people have the card that unlocks their potential*

In the past 10 years, the overall total of cardholders has been virtually unchanged.

20,600

K-12 students in our district have access to educational materials in our Digital Library.



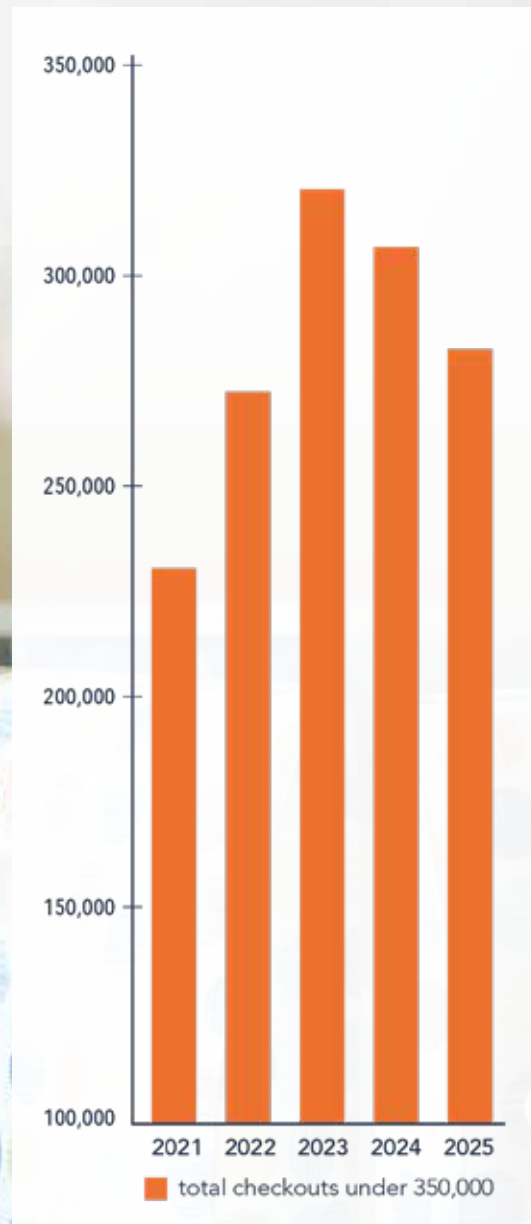
Don't have the card?  
Sign up for free today:  
[MyEPL.org/card](https://myEPL.org/card)





# Circulation

Checkouts of all materials – includes books, discs and magazines



**804**

suggestions of books  
to add to our collection  
[MyEPL.org/suggest](https://myepl.org/suggest)

**79**

recommendations  
given for new reading  
[MyEPL.org/matchbook](https://myepl.org/matchbook)

**59,872**

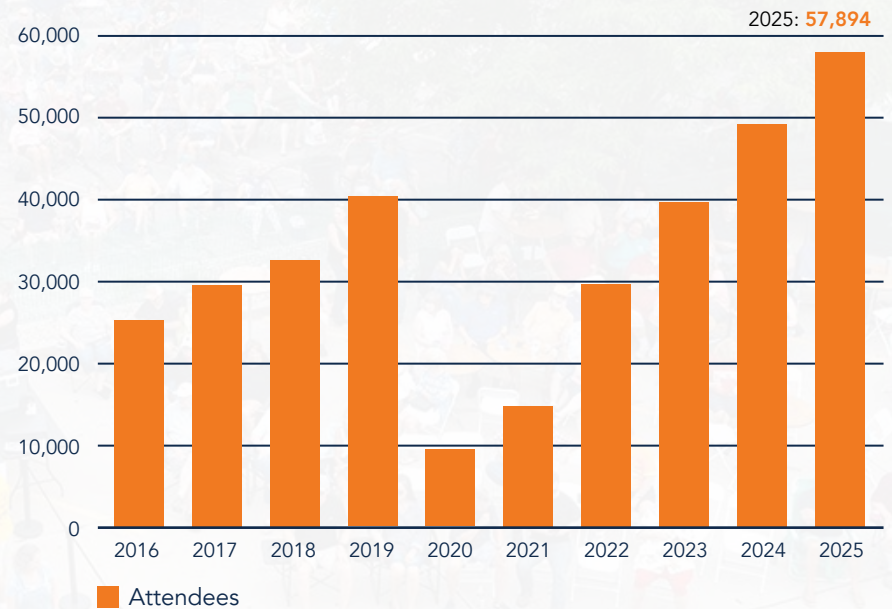
items sent between Elkhart  
and Goshen public libraries  
[MyEPL.org/consortium](https://myepl.org/consortium)





# Programs

## Event Attendance



Quality events bring people to Elkhart Public Library. As the 14th largest library district in Indiana, we have the seventh-highest program attendance. That means people see what they like at EPL and they keep coming back with their friends and family.

Storytimes | Skill building | Live music | Arts and crafts | Book discussions



See what's next:  
[MyEPL.org/events](https://myepl.org/events)



# Child and Student Services

For the third year in a row, physical checkouts of books for kids and young adults accounted for more than 50 percent of EPL activity. In 2025, the total number was 115,221 books! Just 10 years ago, total children's circulation was hovering at about 30 percent.

More than

**7,000**

kids got ready for kindergarten through Storytimes, Growing Readers and other early literacy programming

**958**

students from Elkhart schools visited downtown during field trips with transportation funding provided by The Friends of EPL.

**16.2**

Increase year-over-year in attendance at preschool programs

**14,441**

students saw EPL staff through classroom visits



Reading Champions

**27**

high-achieving students and teachers honored since 2024 with the support of Friends of Elkhart Public Library. Classrooms throughout the Elkhart receive books for their libraries along with recognition.

Homework Help

**242**

students getting assistance

**48**

volunteers from National Honor Society



# Summer Reading

Elkhart Public Library's signature program finished another record-setting summer

**93,254**

days of reading logged

**614**

participants read all 60 days, nearly one-third of the total readers

**144**

readers have been participating for at least five years

**60.5%**

of participants completed six weeks of reading

**79.3%**

of participants competed at least three weeks of reading

**2,369**

kids registered for a reading challenge, a 10 percent increase from 2024







# GrowingReaders

ELKHART PUBLIC LIBRARY

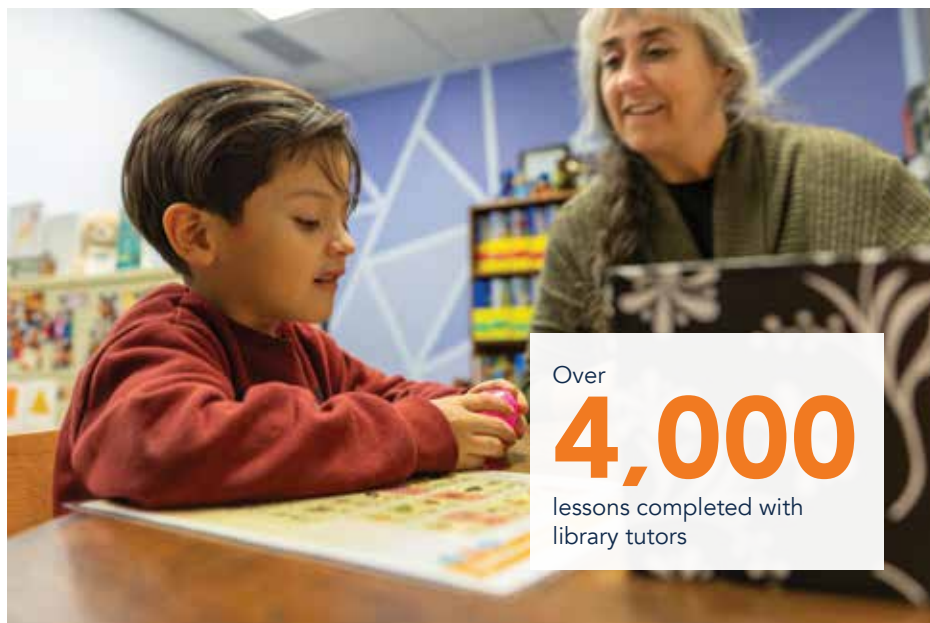
Teachers see the difference one year to the next with reading tutoring program



Join the Growing Readers movement by visiting [MyEPL.org/GrowingReaders](https://MyEPL.org/GrowingReaders)



Check your child's kindergarten readiness at [MyEPL.org/PreK](https://MyEPL.org/PreK)



Over

# 4,000

lessons completed with library tutors

# 135

students achieving their personal goals

# 24

kindergarten assessments completed





# What's New

From Open Doors to Morning Meet-Ups and more, Elkhart Public Library continues its tradition of building partnerships.

EPL now offers regular programming with ADEC and Council on Aging. Working with the University of Notre Dame, we've expanded literacy classes for parents of newborns. Places like Freshieez, Taco Bell, Chick-Fil-A and the Indiana Dinosaur Museum came in big to join Ranger Distribution Inc. in support of our Summer Reading Challenge.

EPL also adapted space within its downtown children's room to create more play space for toddler and a hands-on STEAM Lab for students.

**63,114**

items added to EPL's collection in 2025

**266**

free Notary Public appointments

**90**

book club kits available for checkout

## New digital resources added in 2025



Barron's



Kanopy



The Mailbox Plus



Sanborn Maps



Newspapers.com World Edition

## STEAM Kits now available downtown

LEGOs

3D pen

Microscope

K'inex construction sets

Marble run

Spirographs

Craft supplies

Evo robots

Dash robots

Little Bits circuits





# Digital Library Usage



How do you provide customer service in the online age? Elkhart Public Library makes sure **MyEPL.org/info247** is always open and stocked with ebooks, streaming media, research materials, and educational resources.

The most popular services with books, music, movies and more

**150,261**

Libby Checkouts

**61,175**

Hoopla Checkouts

**511**

Kanopy plays

\*service started in August 2025

## News and Finance



**1. Value Line**  
(investment ratings and news; small/mid-cap reports) - 13,209 views



**2. New York Times Digital**  
(breaking news and world class journalism)



**3. America's News**  
(more than 3,000 daily papers)



**4. PressReader**  
(same-day publications, just as they appear in print)



**5. Weiss Financial Ratings**  
(unbiased ratings of providers and funds; MediGap tools)

## Lifelong Learning

### Adults



**1. Value Line**  
(investment ratings)



**2. PressReader**  
(same-day news publications)



**3. LinkedIn Learning**  
(self-paced professional development)



**4. Niche Academy**  
(educational tutorials)



**5. Transparent Language**  
(skill building in 140 languages)

### Preschool and K-12



**1. Britannica**  
(searchable encyclopedia) - 1,812 sessions



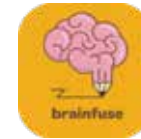
**2. ABC Mouse**  
(phonics, math and music for ages 3-8)



**3. Comics Plus**  
(new releases and classics)



**4. Novelist Plus**  
(read-a-likes and lists)



**5. Brainfuse**  
(tutoring and writers lab)



# Help Yourself

Use of library technology services

**16,659**

computer stations  
sessions in 2025

**2,359**

faxes sent for users

**261,516**

pages produced in  
print/copy services

**265**

average wifi uses  
per day at library  
locations

**7,217**

users of wireless  
on-demand printing



## Experience Passes

**1,010**

checked out tickets to local museums, parks and  
attractions checked out by cardholders, saving  
families money

**\$44,360.26**

savings in admission fees





Online catalog

**52,406 users**  
**1.3 million views**



MyEPL.org

**134,949 users**  
**416,949 views**



EPL Databases

**15,647**  
**unique visits**

to EPL's searchable local history  
and obituary archive in 2025

Top 7 MyEPL.org pages:

Digital Library

**19,571 views**

Local history and obituaries

**15,647**

Events

**12,397**

Card signup

**10,075**

Locations and hours

**8,614**

Palm Sunday remembered

**7,146**

Curbside Concerts

**5,055**



# Ask a Librarian

You brought us 45,475 questions last year, and 13,886 of them allowed our staff to work with you on business and personal research, teach you the ins and outs of computer programs and systems, or walk you through finding what you needed in the Digital Library.

## Some of your questions:

- *Who writes like Rick Atkinson?*
- *What movies were showing at the Elco Theatre on Christmas Day 1972?*
- *How do I renew my German passport?*
- *Can you give me information on FODMAP?*
- *Can you tell me where I can vote and what is on the ballot?*

## Meeting Spaces

Elkhart Public Library offers rooms ranging in size from one person to 100 – free of charge to cardholders and local organizations. See for yourself and book today:

**[MyEPL.org/meeting-rooms](https://myepl.org/meeting-rooms)**.

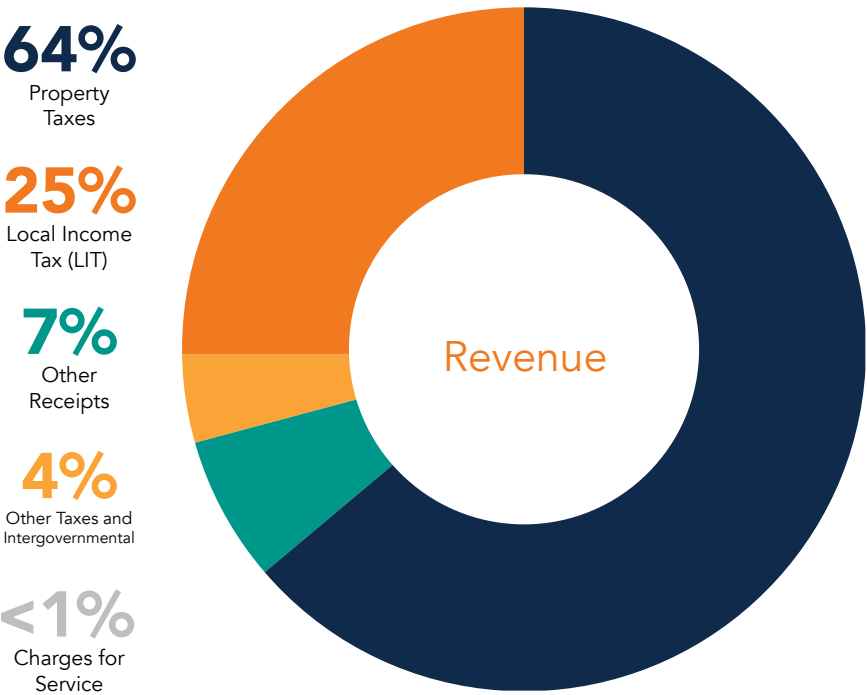
# 878

uses by community groups in 2025



# Budget Allocations

Elkhart Public Library's Trustees ensure our library is financially strong, with a balanced budget and appropriate spending. One issue to keep an eye on will be the General Assembly's changes to property and income taxes. Local governments, schools, and public libraries face uncertain revenue collections in future years.

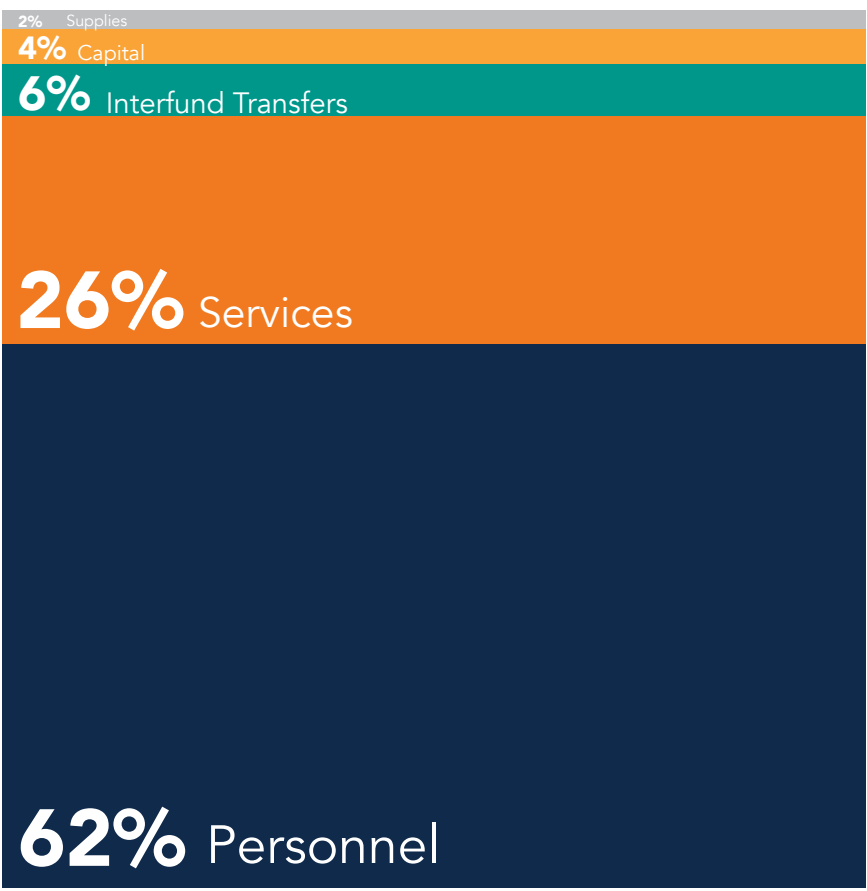


**\$20,081**  
Amount of donations EPL received [MyEPL.org/Donate](#)

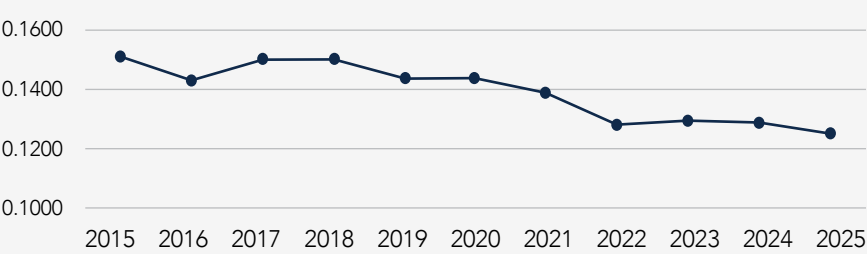
## Tax Rates

Living within its means, Elkhart Public Library's property tax rate has trended downward in recent years. EPL continues to meet its obligation to repay the \$4.5 million borrowed for the branch renovations in 2020-22, and the next steps are being taken to assess all facilities for the next generation of use.

## Expenses



## Certified Tax Rate - General Fund





# EPL Board of Trustees

Seven community leaders with diverse backgrounds and interests are appointed to four-year terms on the EPL Board of Trustees. They meet monthly – their meeting schedule, agendas, and details are posted at [MyEPL.org/leadership](https://myepi.org/leadership).



**James Rieckhoff,**  
President  
Appointed by  
Elkhart County  
Council  
Term July 1, 2023-  
June 30, 2027



**Jeri Stahr,**  
Vice President  
Appointed by  
Elkhart School  
Board  
Term July 1, 2023-  
June 30, 2027



**Laura Steffen,**  
Secretary  
Appointed by  
Elkhart County  
commissioners  
Term July 1, 2022-  
June 30, 2026



**Dan Holtz,**  
Member  
Appointed by  
Elkhart County  
commissioners  
Term July 1, 2025-  
June 30, 2029



**Cynthia Dunlop,**  
Member  
Appointed by  
Elkhart School  
Board  
Term July 1, 2024-  
June 30, 2028



**Janet Gruwell,**  
Member  
Appointed by  
Concord School  
Board  
Term July 1, 2022-  
June 30, 2026



**Yuliana Rivera Arce,**  
Member  
Appointed by  
Elkhart County  
Council  
Term Aug. 17, 2023-  
June 30, 2027



## Friends of EPL

For more than 15 years, Friends of Elkhart Public Library Inc. has provided financial support for EPL services, programs and initiatives. The Friends raise funds through annual memberships, grant writing, and monthly book sales.



To become a member and volunteer, visit  
[MyEPL.org/friends](https://myepi.org/friends)



The Friends supported a number of library programs, including Kona Ice at Fun in the Sun events.



# Timeline of EPL History

Looking back at key moments

Andrew Carnegie gives \$37,000 to Elkhart's Andrew H. "Hub" Beardsley to start a library. Beardsley and his wife, Helen, secure local financial support for a building.

The Carnegie library opens at the northeast corner of Second and High streets in downtown Elkhart. The collection builds to 7,793 books within a year.

Helen Beardsley purchases a special vehicle for the library to deliver books to neighborhoods. The vehicle was put on display at a national library convention in Detroit that year.

A victim of the Great Depression, EPL sells its bookmobile for \$75.

Esther Martin joins the EPL Board of Trustees, beginning her 35 years of service.

Esther's husband, Ross Martin of NIBCO Inc., begins his family's focus on philanthropy, taking steps to establish the Martin Foundation.

1901

1903

1922

1930s

1943

1954



1958

1961

1963

1975

1987

1989

»

A new bookmobile travels to locations from Elkhart to Middlebury, making regular stops at locations every two weeks. People check out 50,000 books a year from the mobile library.

With the Carnegie building showing its age, the Martin family raises the \$1 million necessary to break ground and build a new downtown library.

At the March 31 dedication, Ross Martin, a champion for the library, spoke, and Elkhart artist Ted Drake contributed work, including a mural and carvings.

Pierre Moran Branch opens in the mall.

Osolo Branch opens at 3429 E. Bristol St., on land donated by Max and Elizabeth Walker.

Pierre Moran Branch relocates from the mall to its current location between Benham Avenue and Prairie Street, next to Sears. Also, EPL introduces its first computerized catalog of materials.



## 1997

EPL launches its first web page.

EPL acquires additional space downtown from the old First National Bank building. The annex houses audiovisual materials, staff offices and the computer center through the years.

Cleveland Branch opens to ensure EPL serves each of its townships with a standalone location.

Cardholders collectively set an EPL record, checking out 1,120,253 items. Books and audiovisual materials were about a 50-50 split.

Library leaders announce an effort to build a new downtown location on the site of the former Elkhart Foundry near the east bank of the river. The ambitious plans are scrapped two years later.

## 2014

In July, Elkhart and Goshen form a public library consortium, sharing costs and materials across both systems.

EPL sells the last of its bookmobiles, one of which is purchased by Better World Books.

Dunlap Branch opens on C.R. 13.

## 1992 1995 2001 2004 2005 2015



## 2016

Elkhart Public Library cuts the ribbon on its most recent substantial renovation of the downtown facility, a project which includes the installation of an ADA-accessible elevator.

## 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the creation of new programs and services, including home delivery, Curbside Concerts and, with support from Elkhart Rotary and the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, the launch of the Book Bus.

## 2021

EPL joins the Indiana Digital Library, giving patrons access to thousands more ebooks and audiobooks through Libby.

## 2022

All four neighborhood branch locations finish receiving needed enhancements in a \$4.5 million renovation project.

## 2024

Elkhart Public Library events attract nearly 50,000 attendees, ranking seventh out of all libraries in Indiana.

## 2025

Digital Library checkouts top 200,000 items for the first time, and the dedicated space for the children's room downtown grows for the first time in 60 years to allow more space for free play and STEAM-related education.



“

**It is the people here, they know my kids' names. We've been coming to programs since they were in diapers, they remember them. It feels like Cheers when we walk in here. Everyone knows our name here.**

- Kim Shearer, patron

## Employment

The library is a welcoming place to work

Pride in the work: Our experienced and knowledgeable staff reduces the need to spend tax dollars re-training, preserves our institutional trust, and serves the community with speed and accuracy.



To see available positions visit [MyEPL.org/jobs](https://myepl.org/jobs)

Stability in workforce:

**7.51%**

annual turnover rate

Desired workplace: Average of

**45**

applicants for each of 12 posted positions in 2025







## **MISSION**

Elkhart Public Library informs, inspires and empowers our diverse communities.

## **VISION**

Helping every person develop their fullest potential and our diverse communities grow strong and connected.