



2025

COMMUNITY IMPACT





READ WITH EVERYONE



Get your library card at 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

FOLLOW US @MYEPL



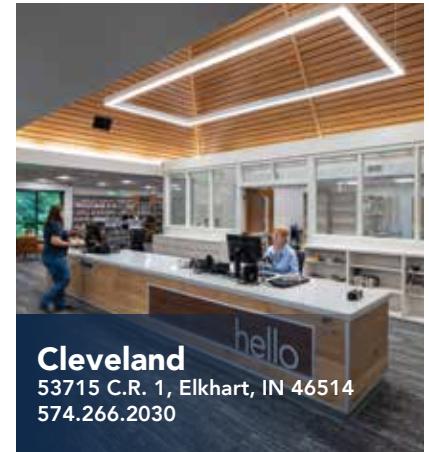
Downtown

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.



Cardholders

50724

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.

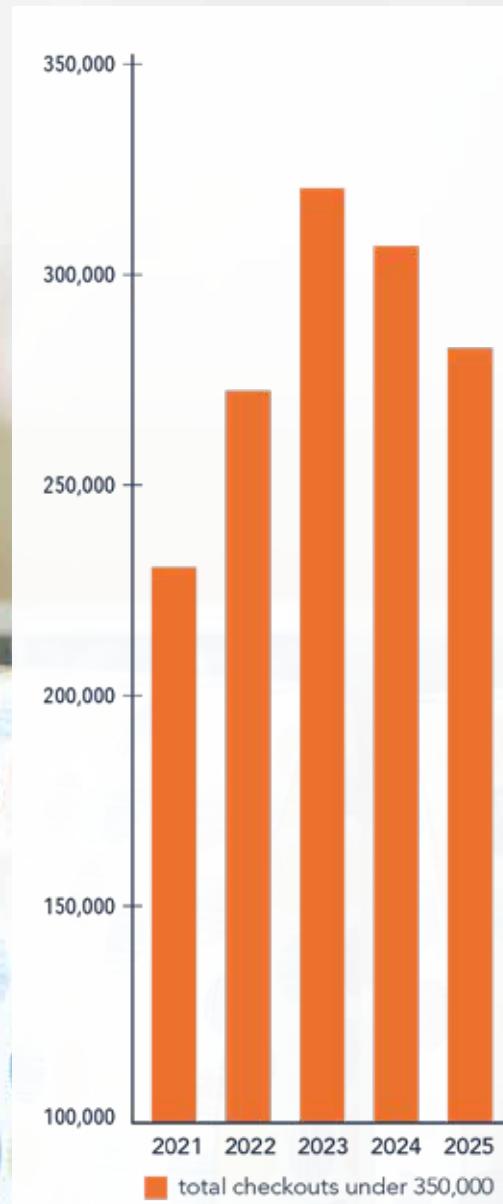


Don't have the card?
Sign up for free today:
MyEPL.org/card



Circulation

Checkouts of all materials – includes books, discs and magazines



804
suggestions of books
to add to our collection
MyEPL.org/suggest

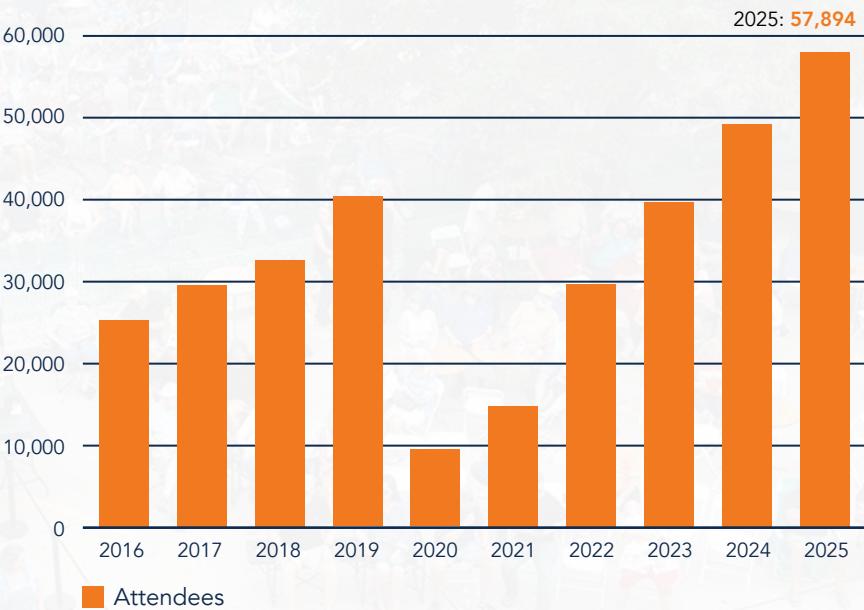
79
recommendations
given for new reading
MyEPL.org/matchbook

59,872
items sent between Elkhart
and Goshen public libraries
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

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





Growing Readers

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



Check your child's kindergarten readiness at MyEPL.org/PreK



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'kinex 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

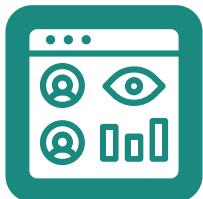
\$44,360.26

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

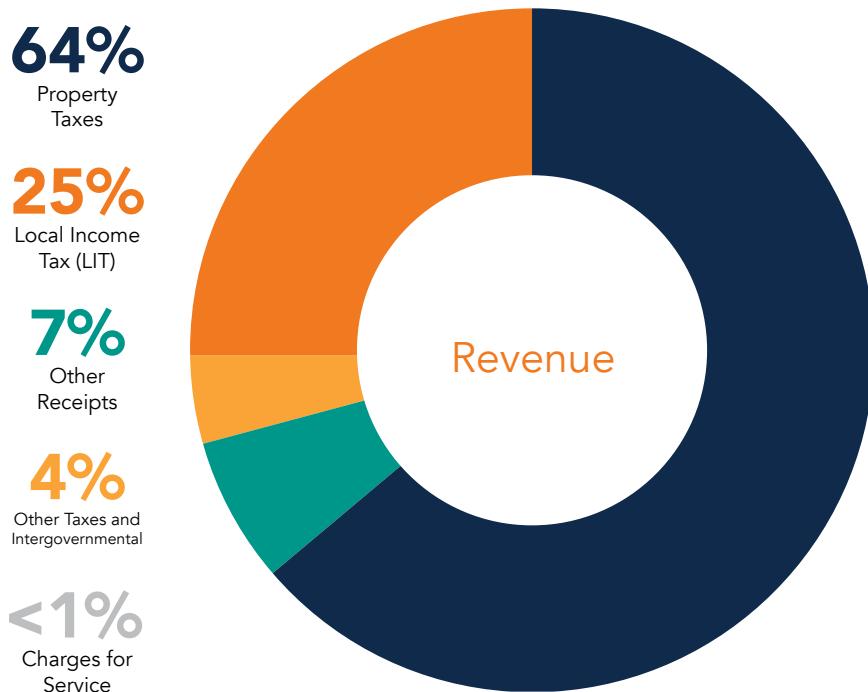
878

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

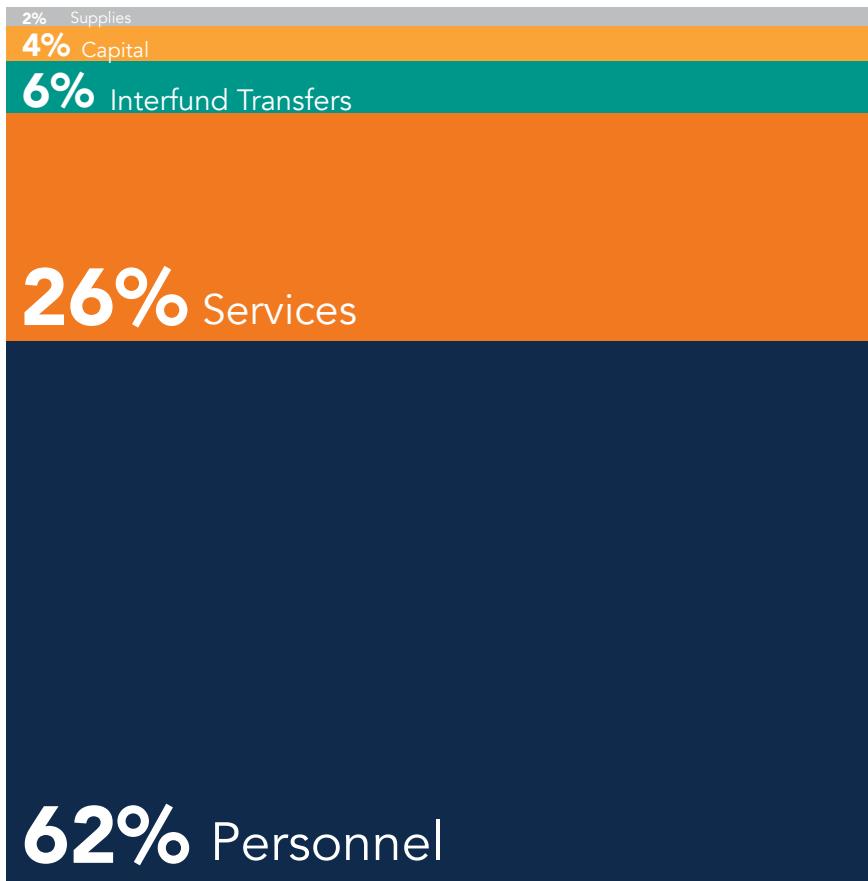
Amount of donations EPL received MyEPL.org/Donate



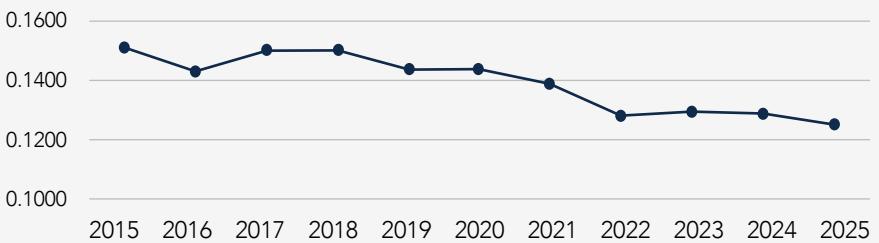
Tax Rates

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.



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



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.

Dunlap Branch opens on C.R. 13.

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.

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.

» 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

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.