

ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

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Library Card Eligibility

All residents of the Winnebago Public Library District are eligible for a free, non-transferable, three-year library card. The cardholder is responsible for all items borrowed on their card.

Non-residents—defined as "an individual residing in Illinois whose principal residence is not within the public library service area" [23 Ill. Adm. Code 3050.10]—may obtain service by purchasing an annual card at the closest participating public library, as determined by their current address. Once issued, a non-resident card is recognized as a valid public library card and may be used at other public libraries. The annual fee is set by the board.

The non-resident fee does not apply to a non-resident who, individually or as a partner, principal stockholder, or other joint owner, owns or leases property taxed for library service, or who is a senior administrative officer of a firm or corporation owning such taxable property within the district. Eligibility requires presentation of the most recent tax bill on the property [75 ILCS 5/4-7(12) and 75 ILCS 16/30-55.60(3)]. These cardholders receive all services the library provides to residents, including reciprocal borrowing privileges.

A non-resident disabled veteran and/or their surviving spouse or a surviving spouse of a soldier killed in the line of duty, may be issued a card without payment of fee, pursuant to 75 ILCS 5/4-7. Proof of eligibility, as required by statute, must be presented at the time of application for this card. These cards are valid for three years at which time proof of eligibility must be again presented for renewal.

Student Cards (Intergovernmental Agreement - IGA). Under an Intergovernmental Agreement with the local school district, students living outside district boundaries who attend the local school district or are homeschooled—and who are not served by another local library—are eligible for a free Winnebago Public Library card. The IGA covers students only, not other household members.

Reciprocal borrowers. Patrons whose taxes go to other libraries are issued a card that expires in alignment with their home library's expiration date.

Youth (under 18). Registrations must be signed in person by a parent or guardian. Signatures indicate an acceptance of responsibility for:

- the youth's use of all library resources including access to the Internet
- supervision of the youth's choice of materials

Winnebago Library Board Policy Manual

- timely return of all materials
- all losses and damages to materials and equipment borrowed

Library Card Registration and Use

Applicants must present at least two documents showing current residency and identification. Acceptable documents include (but are not limited to): photo ID, driver's license or state ID, firearms ID, non-photo ID, current or last month's utility/credit card bill, auto registration, imprinted checkbook with current address, driver's permit, lease, recent post office-forwarded mailing label, mortgage, or voter's registration card.

- Patrons must use their own card to check out materials.
- Lost cards that have not yet expired may be replaced for a \$1.00 fee.
- Minors under 18 may check out R-rated or unrated materials with written parental permission.
- Requested materials are held for the patron for ten days after notification.
- Due dates for inter-library loan items may vary.

Checkout Periods and Limits

Material	Loan Period	Renewals	Limit
Books, Magazines, Audio Books, Music CDs	3 weeks	1	Unlimited
STEAM Kits	3 weeks	1	2
Telescopes, Microscopes	3 weeks	1*	1**
Multi-disc sets/series (3+ discs)	2 weeks	1	5 titles
Items classified by WPL as "New" (3 months)	2 weeks	None	5 titles
DVDs	1 week	1	5 titles
Reference Material	1 week	None	5 titles

*if there are no holds; **of each variety

Returns and Renewals

The library maintains an outdoor bookdrop. Items returned while the library is open are checked in the same day; items returned after hours are considered returned the next open day. The bookdrop is not checked on days when the library is closed.

Materials may be renewed by phone, email, or online using PrairieCat.

STEAM Kits

STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) kits provide educational resources that introduce patrons of all ages to the STEAM fields and support critical thinking and deductive reasoning. Because the supply is limited:

- Kits are available on a first-come, first-serve basis; call ahead to reserve one.
- Patrons must have an active library card in good standing.
- Kit condition is assessed at checkout and at return. Patrons must report any problems experienced during the borrowing period.
- If a kit is lost, stolen, damaged, returned in parts, or otherwise not returned, the patron is responsible for repair or replacement costs.

- Staff may refuse service to anyone who abuses kits or is repeatedly late returning them. Exceptions to these rules may be made at the discretion of library administration.

Telescopes and Microscopes

Telescopes and microscopes are available for circulation when the following are met:

- The patron must be 16 or older, in good standing, and present a valid driver's license or other photo ID.
- The patron must sign a lending agreement, by which they assume all risks of use and agree not to hold the library liable for any damages.
- Staff will introduce the kit contents and review safety instructions at checkout.
- Reserved equipment must be picked up within two days, after which it goes to the next patron.

The patron is responsible for reading the instruction manual and following proper care and use procedures. All items must be returned in good condition; damage and replacement charges are based on actual repair or replacement cost.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

Interlibrary loan is an essential service, and the library participates in lending to and borrowing from other libraries under the interlibrary loan code. The library will lend its materials through ILL except for new, reference, local history materials, and kits. The library accepts responsibility for the safe return of borrowed material and will pay for items lost or damaged in its care. Certain materials may not be available through ILL.

Reference and Readers' Advisory Services

Reference and readers' advisory services are one of the library's most important functions. It includes research assistance, homework help, computer assistance, bibliographic verification, interlibrary loan assistance, and referrals. The library will:

- Provide materials and services that meet users' needs for timely, accurate, and useful information.
- Provide trained staff to assist patrons and facilitate access to the library's collections and cooperative resources.
- Help patrons use information resources and develop research strategies in multiple formats.
- Provide efficient referral and follow-through, including interlibrary loan and resource sharing.
- Keep the community informed about available services and encourage their use.

Ethics and Standards. Services are provided to all patrons on an equal, nondiscriminatory, and nonjudgmental basis, regardless of age, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, background, appearance, social or economic status, personal views, or purpose of inquiry. Patron names and transactions are confidential and are not discussed outside a professional context unless required by law. The library adheres to the Library Bill of Rights, the American Library Association Code of Ethics, and applicable copyright law.

Staff Training. All staff providing reference service receive ongoing training through in-house sessions, workshops at other libraries, webinars, and organizations such as RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Library Systems).

Availability and Delivery of Service

Services are available to any patron requesting it, regardless of residency, during all hours the library is open. Inquiries are accepted in person, by phone, mail, fax, email, and social media, and free public access computers — including the Online Access Catalog (OPAC) and selected online resources — are available to all patrons.

Whenever possible, questions are answered during the patron's visit or call. All inquiries receive an answer or status report within one working day. When in-person traffic is heavy, staff will prioritize patrons present in the library; remote inquiries may receive a return contact. Staff will work within a patron's deadline when possible and will let the patron know when a longer response time or referral is needed.

If appropriate information is not available locally, staff will refer the patron to a local or regional resource and verify that the source can meet the need. Patrons with income tax, medical, legal, advanced technical, or appraisal questions may be referred to professional sources; the library's liability insurance precludes answering in-depth questions of this kind.

Homework and student Research Support

Staff assist students by suggesting reference works, indexes, bibliographies, and items in the general collection, and by demonstrating how to use them. When appropriate, materials will be pulled and placed on in-house reserve so that adequate resources remain available to all students working on the same assignment.

Scope and Limits of Service

Staff use a wide range of sources—books, periodicals, electronic databases, the Internet, and government agencies—and provide citations to sources when answering questions. The producer of a resource, not the library, is responsible for that resource's accuracy.

Staff provide sources of information, not interpretation. They do not offer legal, medical, or tax advice and do not provide opinions or interpretation beyond the scope of their reference training. In particular, information on law, medicine, consumer issues, religion,

politics, and personal finance or tax matters is presented without interpretation, advice, analysis, or personal recommendation.

Staff will not:

- Critique or edit patron documents, including resumes;
- Complete or assist in filling out forms (including online forms);
- Troubleshoot problems with patron's personal computers or other electronic devices. (staff may help locate relevant instructions or similar information)
- Provide translation services, except when staff with appropriate language expertise are available to assist a non-English speaking patron with a reference request; otherwise, staff will refer patrons to translator resources.
- Engage in personal conversation or debate, including on religious or political topics.

Additional Limits:

- Patrons may not request to work exclusively with a particular staff member.
- Staff will set reasonable time and response limits to ensure equitable access for all patrons.
- Patrons compiling extensive research or large amounts of information will be guided to appropriate specialized sources.
- Reading and interpretation of materials is the patron's responsibility.
- Patrons must comply with the Library Conduct policy when engaging in services.

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