

Library Millage FAQ

What is the library asking for?

The library is asking voters to renew its ten-year operating millage, restoring the full mill originally approved by voters in 1992 before the annual reduction of this rate by the Headlee Amendment.

Why does the library need the millage?

The library receives NO revenue from the Waterford Township general fund. This dedicated millage represents 90% of the library's annual operating budget. Without it, the continued operation of the library would be in jeopardy.

What is the millage rate?

The current library millage rate is 0.8397 per \$1,000 of taxable value. An additional 0.1603 mill per \$1,000 will restore the full 1 mill.

Will this be an added expense for homeowners?

In part. For example, a residential home with a taxable value of \$73,180

- \$61.45 – estimated cost for the renewal portion, **which you are already paying**
- \$11.73 – estimated cost for the smaller, additional amount to restore 1 mill
- \$73.18 – estimated combined total for the first year

When is the election?

The library millage renewal will be on the primary ballot on August 2, 2022.

Why do we need a public Library in Waterford?

The library helps the community navigate through the increasingly complex world of information. It supports

- Students in formal, informal and online education programs
- Residents seeking to enrich their personal knowledge and interests
- Job seekers and business owners
- Remote & in-person access to resources on the Internet

Is there a high demand for Library services?

Yes, there is. On average

- 21,345 items are checked out every month (print & eContent)
- 230 new Library cards are issued each month
- 2,140 library visitors per day (in-person & remote)
- 34% of those in-person visitors use library computers for Internet access
- 48,000 uses per month of remote services, e.g. information databases and downloadable eContent

In addition, patrons use the library as a community center to attend

- Lectures on topics of general interest
- Job interviews and staff training
- Children's programs

- Workshops, group study, tutor sessions, or to use the quiet study

Even during the restrictions on in-person services during the pandemic, the library met patron needs by increasing access to remote resources by 40% and offering curbside delivery of physical materials.

Who uses Library services?

Over half of the household of Waterford Township have at least 1 library cardholder. Patrons range in age from 2 years to 90+ years and come from every walk of life. The library offers remote access to downloadable titles for loan, streaming services for movies and television programs as well as access to information databases. Library staff also provide guidance on using this technology.

How will the library use the millage funds?

The millage funds support all operations of the library. This includes maintenance of books and periodicals, acquisition of additional materials, professional staff, facility maintenance and operation, technology and such special services as the delivery of materials to homebound residents. The additional revenue will enable restoration of service hours on Fridays, which were suspended due to revenue losses caused by the last recession.

Can't the Library cut costs and reduce the millage amount?

The library has already had to cut costs because of the impact of the recession and the steady decline of the funds generated by the library millage due to Headlee rollbacks almost annually. In that time, the library has lost over \$645,000 in revenue annually from the millage. In response, the library has implemented many cost-cutting measures to stay within its shrinking budget, including

- Reducing staff by 14 positions
- Reducing service hours by 51.8% per week, a combination of closing the Branch Library and suspending service hours on Fridays
- Reducing spending on the materials by about 40% annually

If the millage is approved, will those cuts be restored?

Yes. The millage will also allow the library to add staff to restore service hours on Fridays and accelerate the rate at which repairs and maintenance to our heavily used building can be made, (now 30 years old). It will afford increased spending on the collections to meet the increasing demand for downloadable eBooks and streaming services, which are formats that are more costly to provide. The library will continue to provide high-quality services to its patrons through its collaborations and partnerships with state and regional library consortia to share collections and electronic resources.

Why have overdue fines been eliminated?

Revenues from fines have been steadily declining over the past 5 years. As of 2019 they were approximately .26% of total revenues.

- Items borrowed electronically never become overdue but simply disappear from the borrower's e-reading device on the due date.

- The circulation system is now configured to automatically renew items on the due date for the maximum number of renewals, as long as no other borrowers are waiting for them, further reducing these revenues.
- The cost of collecting overdue fines is greater than the revenues they generate.
- Fines are not an incentive for the timely return of items borrowed.
- Fines can be a disincentive for residents on tight household budgets, often with school-aged children, to make full use of the library's collection as overdue fines are unanticipated expenses.

What else can be done to sustain the library?

As a careful steward of public funds, the library has explored, and will continue to explore, other cost-saving measures, collaborations and ways to generate additional revenue for the benefit of its patrons and the citizens of Waterford Township. These include the Friends of the Library who raise funds in support of services, the Waterford Genealogical Society who support research tools to assist genealogists and master gardeners in the Library Garden Club who established and maintain the gardens at the library's entrance.