

West Bloomfield Library Annual Report



2025



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Cathy Russ
Executive
Library Director

Letter from the Director

2025 was a year of projects and progress. Our priority was to start implementing pledges we made to the community during the 2024 millage proposal. Chief amongst those pledges was building, technology, and collection improvements. The articles in these pages describe our accomplishments in those areas. The work continues in 2026 and beyond, and we will keep you updated every step of the way.

We also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Main Library building! The community joined in the festivities and shared their Library Love with us. Please enjoy a couple of the comments we received—the library staff and I certainly did! We appreciate our community so much and the way you support your library invigorates us every day.

There is a lot to anticipate in 2026, including the 25th anniversary of the expansion of the Westacres Branch. We look forward to bringing you the best services, collections, programs and spaces in 2026, and we can't wait to see you.



Improvements to Library Spaces

The library began work on capital improvement projects promised in the library's 2024 millage proposal.

The Main Library marked its 25 year anniversary while completing several major planned replacement projects. The adult area was recarpeted. Exterior improvements included a roof replacement and repairs to copper and wood siding. HVAC upgrades also addressed longstanding heating inconsistencies.

New furniture was added to support visiting families in the youth area at both branches. A balance bar and sensory boards were added to the Westacres Activity Center to engage the library's youngest visitors. At the Main Library, a new chair was added to help caregivers monitor and engage with children by the popular playhouse and light table area.

The Main Library opened the Comfort Room, a lactation and sensory-friendly space next to the family restrooms. The room includes acoustic panels and a rocking chair, floor seating, sink, sensory toys, and book basket.

The Main Library's outdoor spaces were updated to offer more engaging and educational experiences for families. Additions include musical instruments on the youth terrace and a giant Adirondack chair marking the Storybook Trail trailhead. *Funded by a generous bequest from the estate of James H. Neubacher.*

Both branches improved accessibility to collections and spaces.

Enhancements include wider shelf spacing at the Main Library, a forthcoming 24/7 holds pickup locker at the Westacres Branch, and the purchase of an outreach van for community events in 2026. *Van funded by a generous bequest from the Ruth and Stanley Elbling Trust and a donation from Gary Davis in memory of Sally Davis.*



"There are lots of activities for kids to do in the library. The library opens doors for my family that otherwise would not be open."¹

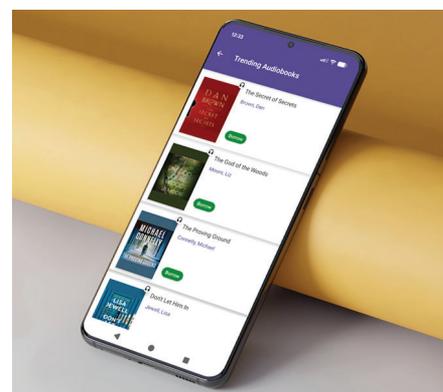
Improvements to Digital Services

With interest in the eLibrary growing, the library increased funding for digital services as promised in its 2024 millage proposal.

The eLibrary continues to grow in popularity. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, eBooks saw a 8% increase in circulation. ESerial (magazines and newspapers) saw a 12% increase in circulation. EAudiobooks saw an astonishing 25% increase in circulation.

Librarians have nearly doubled the number of adult eLibrary titles ordered in 2025.

Over 1,720 unique youth and adult titles were added to the eLibrary, representing a 34% increase in eBooks across CloudLibrary and Libby and a 71% increase in eAudiobooks on CloudLibrary. The eLibrary will continue to grow in 2026 to meet demand, even as publishers raise costs for libraries. Libraries are now charged about \$40 per eBook license and \$68 per eAudiobook license.



"Being able to access [eLibrary materials] is a life changer, especially in the ability to listen to audiobooks while I run, on a commute, or on a lazy Sunday."¹

As the community's need for digital services grows, the library's services respond to meet demand. Expanded tech tutoring availability has enabled a 14% increase in total sessions attended in 2025.

¹ Library Survey Response

Improvements to IT Infrastructure

Updates to the IT infrastructure ensure the library remains cutting-edge and maintains 2024 millage proposal promises.

The library has brought technology infrastructure in line with best practices. This included migrating all computers to the secure Windows 11 OS, launching internal cybersecurity trainings, migrating library notices to a new platform, and replacing security cameras.

New, easy-to-use self-checkout stations were installed at both branches. The stations have optional accessibility, language, and receipt features.

In response to popular request, the library launched a new app, available on Apple or Android devices. The app allows library members to more easily search the catalog, place holds, and access library cards for the whole family.



"Library staff always seems eager to help with any questions or help with using the new check-out machines."¹

Continued Excellence

The greater West Bloomfield community expects excellence from its library—an expectation the library promised to continue meeting across services, programs, and collections in its 2024 millage proposal.

Additional technology and study tools are now available for in-building use. External disk drives, fidget tools, headphones (regular and noise-cancelling), whiteboards, study aides, anatomy models, charging cables, and more available upon request at the Information Desk at both branches. *Some items limited to residents and students.*

The library expanded on successes from prior years in large-scale programming. A second annual Shop Small event was held, with turnout nearly doubled since the first. The Local Author Fair saw a 17% increase in attendance and moved beyond the walls of the Meeting Room. The Halloween Storybook Stroll expanded following its popularity in 2024, allowing for a 77% increase in attendance in 2025. The Book Group Reception brought in author Lisa Unger, drawing a 57% increase in attendance. Finally, the library welcomed author Shelby Van Pelt in a first-ever partnership with the Bloomfield Township Public Library, hosted at the Berman Center and drawing over 500 attendees. *Author visits and Shop Small event sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*



"Our library [has] so many amazing programs and services. The activities for kids and adults are varied and exciting. We constantly come to the library and recommend it to our friends all the time!"¹

Library staff proactively contracted with more vendors for ordering collections, expanding purchasing options for library books and media in case of supply chain disruptions. When the leading supplier of library content (West Bloomfield's primary supplier) announced its closure and subsequent widespread cancellations of preordered materials, the availability of these alternative vendors lessened the impact of delayed new materials for the West Bloomfield community.

Administrators added an additional professional development day focused on staff and patron safety. As a result, 72% of library staff have been certified and trained to administer first aid, use AEDs, and perform CPR.

GIFTS FROM THE Friends of the Library

The Friends of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library fundraises through memberships, Friendship purchases, and other campaigns to enhance library services and pay for special events. Funds are used annually to support library reading programs, children’s literacy projects, and more.

VR at the Library

The Friends’ 2024 Giving Tuesday campaign raised funds for the library to expand its collection of Virtual Reality (VR) headsets. In 2025, these new headsets brought VR technology to 61 library visitors through the “Adventures in VR” event series.

VR in School Outreach

Librarians also brought headsets into local schools for lunch and classroom programs. In 2026, teachers have requested the library bring VR into classrooms for virtual tours of sites like the Great Pyramids of Egypt and simulated dissection labs.

Playscapes Campaign Exceeds Goal

In 2025, the Friends’ Giving Tuesday campaign raised \$22,305—a full \$7,000 over their fundraising goal! The campaign aimed to order new playscapes for the library. Installation is expected in 2026.

Cathy Russ, Executive Library Director
 Jeff Crocker, Associate Library Director

Board of Trustees

- Carol A. Kravetz, President
- Raman Singh, Vice President
- Rhonda Orr, Treasurer
- Jennifer Taylor Boykins, Secretary
- Kari Eickemeyer, Deputy Secretary/Treasurer
- Cory Nummer, Trustee

A Community of Readers



Popularity of Physical & Digital Resources

84% of materials circulated were physical; 16% were digital, marking a 3% increase in digital circulation since the previous fiscal year.



Library Visits

The library logged 768,877 visits in the 2024-25 fiscal year—an increase of 4% from the prior fiscal year. That’s the equivalent of every person in the library’s service area visiting the library about 11 times over one year, or 9 visitors every 5 minutes the library was open.



WiFi Usage

The number of visitors connecting to the library’s WiFi increased by 22% in the 2024-25 fiscal year.



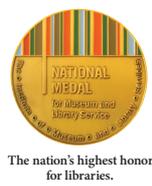
Reference Transactions

The library had 279,834 reference transactions in the 2024-25 fiscal year, representing an increase of 8% from the prior fiscal year. This means the library averaged one reference transaction every 1.5 minutes it was open.



Member Satisfaction

When asked how likely they would be to recommend the library to friends or family, nearly 800 library members polled collectively rated the library a 94 Net Promoter Score. According to the library’s marketing software, the average rating among libraries is 87, while businesses average 70.



MAIN LIBRARY

4600 Walnut Lake Road
 (248) 682-2120
 Email: wbref@wblib.org
 Text: (248) 648-3368

WESTACRES BRANCH

7321 Commerce Road
 (248) 363-4022
 Email: wacref@wblib.org

HOURS OF SERVICE

Monday – Thursday:	9 AM – 9 PM
Friday & Saturday:	9 AM – 6 PM
Sunday (Main):	Noon – 6 PM
Sunday (Main, Summer):	Noon – 5 PM
Sunday (Westacres):	Noon – 5 PM

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