Introduction

Benchmarking is an important tool that helps organizations move forward, compare themselves to peers, and reflect. The information can be used to gain critical insight and initiate change.

In the fall of 2015, Lauterbach & Amen, LLP conducted a benchmarking study of a sample of Illinois libraries in counties including: DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, and Cook. This study compares key data of 24 libraries located within these counties. The data was compiled from responses to a 20-question online survey. Data found in the Demographic, Budget, Information Technology, Services, and Future sections was provided by the survey participants.

Also included in this study is a “Finances” section that examines data from a wider sample of 63 local libraries. All financial data is from 2014, and was pulled from public records located on the Illinois Comptroller website, as well as published audit reports.

This 2015 Illinois Library Benchmarking Report is provided by certified public accounting firm Lauterbach & Amen, LLP, a mid-sized firm founded in 1997 and located in Warrenville, IL. Lauterbach & Amen’s services include Actuarial, Audit, Consulting, Pension, and Tax.

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Libraries included in the survey:

- Addison Public Library
- Algonquin Area Public Library
- Antioch Public Library District
- Aurora Public Library
- Barrington Area Library
- Bartlett Public Library District
- Batavia Public Library
- Bensenville Community Public Library
- Bloomingdale Public Library
- Brookfield Public Library
- Carol Stream Public Library
- Cary Area Public Library District
- Cook Memorial Public Library District
- Des Plaines Public Library
- Downers Grove Public Library
- Eisenhower Public Library District
- Ela Area Public Library District
- Elk Grove Public Library
- Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library District
- Elmhurst Public Library
- Forest Park Public Library
- Fountaindale Public Library District
- Fox Lake Public Library District
- Fox River Grove Public Library
- Fox River Valley Public Library District
- Fremont Public Library District
- Gail Borden Public Library District
- Geneva Public Library District
- Glen Ellyn Public Library
- Glenside Public Library District
- Grayslake Area Public Library District
- Helen M. Plum Memorial Public Library District
- Huntley Area Public Library
- Indian Prairie Public Library
- Indian Trails Public Library District
- Itasca Community Library
- Kaneville Public Library
- Lake Villa Public Library District
- Lincolnwood Public Library District
- Lisle Public Library District
- Messenger Public Library of North Aurora
- Naperville Public Library
- Oak Brook Public Library
- Oswego Public Library District
- Poplar Creek Public Library District
- Riverside Public Library
- Roselle Public Library District
- Round Lake Area Public Library District
- St. Charles Public Library District
- Sugar Grove Public Library
- Town and Country Public Library District
- Vernon Area Public Library District
- Villa Park Public Library
- Warren-Newport Public Library District
- Warrenville Public Library District
- Wauconda Area Public Library District
- Westmont Public Library
- Wheaton Public Library
- Winfield Public Library
- Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District
- Wood Dale Public Library
- Woodridge Public Library
- Zion-Benton Public Library District

Lauterbach & Amen would like to thank all the participating libraries for being involved in this project!
A look at the survey respondents’ demographics:

**Counties**
- McHenry: 8%
- Lake: 16%
- Kane: 29%
- DuPage: 25%
- Cook: 20%
- Will: 4%

**Type**
- 35% Component Units
- 58% Library Districts
- 1% Of each reported having multiple branches

**Titles**
- 75% Director
- 12% Business Manager
- 8% Finance/Personnel Coordinator
- 5% Assistant Director of Support Services
DEMOGRAPHICS

Staff

- **Full Time Employees**
  - 31% 26-49 PEOPLE
  - 32% ≤ 25 PEOPLE
  - 11% 50-74 PEOPLE
  - 4% 75-100 PEOPLE

- **Part Time Employees**
  - 48% 26-49 PEOPLE
  - 32% ≤ 25 PEOPLE
  - 8% 75-100 PEOPLE
  - 12% 50-74 PEOPLE

Circulation (estimated annual)

- 32% ≤ 200K
- 16% 400-600K
- 8% 800-1MIL
- 20% 200-400K
- 8% 600-800K
- 16% 1MIL +
**Note:**

All “Finances” information in this section is from 2014. This data was pulled from 63 libraries’ public records, located on the Illinois Comptroller website and published audit reports.
Average 2014 library expenditure per capita was:

By county, those numbers were:

- DuPage: $122.97
- Lake: $116.99
- Kane: $108.56
- Cook: $149.91

Property Taxes accounted for 91.1% of total library revenue.
BUDGET

2014 Capital expenditure budget:

- $0: 15%
- < $100,000: 30%
- $5mil+: 5%
- $1mil-$5mil: 15%
- $100k-$500k: 35%

Upgrades included in 2014 capital budgets:

- Technology: 94%
- Program Items: 18%
- Office Equipment: 47%
- Renovations: 53%
- Furniture/Shelving: 71%

Other: Roof, Boiler, Architectural Professional Services
Areas that are seeing increased spending or support:

Heavy

1. Personnel
2. Digital content collections and services
3. Library technology equipment and software
4. Operations

Moderate

1. Online subscription acquisitions
2. Book acquisitions
3. Multimedia/streaming media
4. Periodicals/serials acquisitions
5. Cloud-based solutions
6. Library hours/availability
7. Print subscriptions/acquisitions
8. Special career or business development assistance programs
9. 3D printing facilities

Facility upgrades/maintenance is the #1 area that libraries are dedicating the most spending and support.

Note: Items listed above are ranked in order of most responses (top) to least.
## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

### Current IT tools and platforms used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool/Platform</th>
<th>Usage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Library Catalog/OPAC</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Library System (ILS)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN/WAN/wireless network</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet/extranet/website</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCs/kiosks/laptops/mobile devices</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based (IM or email) reference service</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentication solutions</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebook readers</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link resolvers</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/video teleconferencing</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Resource Management System</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery services</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFID check-in/check-out, inventory control</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-scale management system</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D printers</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Which accounting software do you use?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Usage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QuickBooks</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abila</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTE</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackbaud</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The digital revolution has markedly changed the way people access information. Libraries are rising to the challenge, and are responding to the changing times by providing the types of products and services this new age requires.
SERVICES

How many online platforms does your library utilize?

[Bar chart showing the percentage of libraries utilizing different online platforms.]

- Website: 100%
- Social networking (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram): 95%
- Blogs: 66%
- Apps: 42%
- Reviews & Ratings: 28%
- Audio or video channels (e.g., YouTube): 38%
- Tagging and rating: 14%

Web-based services provided:

- eBooks: 95%
- Downloads: 81%
- Apps: 48%
- eMusic: 67%
- Document Sharing Web Apps: 5%
Top 10 challenges libraries are facing in the next five years:

1. Finding and retaining knowledgeable staff
2. Keeping up with changes in information technology
3. Maintaining services with tight budgets
4. Competing with public online services and offerings
5. Keeping facilities open and at preferred operational levels
6. Identifying new sources of funding
7. Migrating print content to digital formats
8. Legal compliance
9. Maintaining an aging facility and planning for a modern facility
10. Justifying programming expenses for community needs
Does your library have a strategic plan?

Yes: 86%
No: 14%

It's under construction!

Outsourced Services:

- Legal: 92%
- Accounting: 56%
- IT: 56%
- HR: 16%
- Marketing/PR: 4%
There are 5 offerings that all libraries felt were the most valuable to the community they serve:

- Access to computers that provide internet (plus wifi)
- Community space for the public to use individually or for meetings
- Friendly, knowledgeable staff
- Diverse materials collections
- Programs and services for all ages and interests (including technology training, job skills, homework help)

...and it’s all provided at no cost!
Lauterbach & Amen, LLP (L&A) is a mid-sized public accounting firm founded in 1997 by two partners, Sherry Lauterbach and Ron Amen. The firm has a longstanding reputation for an unrivaled commitment to quality service; clients appreciate its small-firm values and large-firm capabilities.

L&A's foundation is in the governmental sector, including: pension funds, municipalities, park districts, libraries, fire districts, and other units of government. Over the years, the firm has extended client relationships to other entities outside of government. L&A provides those entities with the same core values of client service and quality – simultaneously continuing its commitment to being the proven leader in the governmental accounting and benefits industry.

About Lauterbach & Amen

1. 86% of libraries have a strategic plan
2. #1 challenge is finding and retaining knowledgeable staff
3. Property taxes account for 91.1% of total library revenue
4. Heavy spending on facility upgrades or maintenance in 2014
5. The average Finance Department cost is 2% of revenue

Lauterbach & Amen, LLP