

June 10, 2020

The La Crosse Library Board of Trustees is saddened to share that due to a city-wide budget shortfall, we are facing drastic reductions in municipal funding to the library, the result of which is both a permanent and temporary reduction in force. This will have a considerable impact on our library services and programs.

As our patrons know, the library is first and foremost a service organization. It is our amazing and award-winning staff who make the library the treasure it is. They work tirelessly to provide new services, select and process materials, to develop responsive programming, and to ensure that our patrons have the information, education and connection they need. They assist with everything from early literacy development to job searching to collaborations across city departments, local businesses and organizations who serve youth while providing a safe, free, and welcoming community space for our diverse residents and their varied needs within our city.

Unfortunately, the bulk of our operating budget goes to the salaries of those same staff members. When facing shortfalls of this measure, we have little recourse but to eliminate positions. 15 of our Librarians, Associates, Assistants and support staff are being permanently laid off, three open positions will remain unfilled while those remaining face long term and intermittent furloughs.

While this course of action is not anything the Board would ever choose, the realities of the COVID-19 crisis must be faced, and our goal is to move forward with a viable model of service as we confront these new realities.

Because we know that the library is an essential resource for so many people of all ages and from all walks of life—especially during an impending economic recession—the library leadership team is working on a plan to restore those services it can during the coming months and to develop a sustainable structure moving forward.

You may find more information on the city's decisions regarding funding the various departments in La Crosse [here](#). Information on the library's budget, staffing and services can be found [here](#).