

Public Mandates and Priorities

PMAP - 8: Reorganizing Library Systems by County

Recommendation #18 of the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform in their final report entitled *Streamlining Local Government* is to reorganize Indiana's library systems by counties and provide permanent library service to all citizens. As of 2011, Indiana has 240 library districts serving communities ranging in population from 180 to 878,000. Almost half (125) of all districts serve a population of less than 10,000. These small districts serve less than 7.6 percent of the population and account for only 6 percent of the total statewide circulation. Many small districts exceed the state average per capita cost for operating expenditures and for staffing. At the same time an estimated 238,000 citizens in 32 counties do not have access to library services in the county in which they live; 23 counties contain territory that is underserved by contractual library service.

The report states that the overarching goal of libraries should be to maximize access to services, materials, and other information resources at the lowest possible cost. It recommends the mandated reorganization of library districts across the state into 92 county-wide systems, with the option to reorganize into multi-county districts when prudent. The goal is to address current unserved citizens and underserved areas and to achieve economies of scale within administrative and purchasing expenditures.

Johnson County has three library districts: the Johnson County Public Library, the Greenwood Public Library and the Edinburgh-Wright Hageman Public Library. There is no unserved population in Johnson County.

Reorganizing library systems by county and mandating library service to those residents currently not taxed for library service will require action by the State Legislature.

Implications for JCPL

- JCPL could be mandated to merge with the Greenwood and Edinburgh Public Libraries.
- The make-up of the JCPL Board could change significantly.
- JCPL has an opportunity to study the concept of "regional services" to determine what might be feasible to offer on a broader cost effective basis to other libraries in a number of areas, i.e. Public Service, Technical Services, Administration, Human Resource Management, Finance, Information Technology and Facilities Management.