CAFÉ

CAFÉ (Catalog Access for Everyone) is a shared integrated library system (ILS) operated by the Bridges Library System acting as an agency of Waukesha and Jefferson Counties. CAFÉ, which provides ready access to 2.3 million items, enables resource sharing, provides automated library services, promotes communication and cooperation among member libraries, researches and implements new information technologies, and saves for future hardware and software replacements. The sharing of costs and collections results in significant savings for member libraries as well as greatly expanded access to resources, resulting in efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars. CAFÉ is funded by its member libraries through membership fees. Fees are assessed annually and are based on a formula that charges libraries based on the number of staff licenses it requires.

Until 2011 CAFÉ was owned and operated by Waukesha Public Library for 14 of 16 member libraries. The Waukesha Public Library, Waukesha County Federated Library System (the library system name prior to becoming Bridges Library System), member libraries, and the Waukesha County Board agreed to the transfer of funding and governance responsibilities. That transfer took place in April of 2011. By 2013, all 16 Waukesha County libraries were members of CAFÉ. In December of 2015, the eight libraries of Jefferson County migrated to CAFÉ as a result of the approaching addition of Jefferson County to the library system. On January 1, 2016, the library system, formerly known as the Waukesha County Federated Library System, became the Bridges Library System.

CAFÉ operating funding for 2017 is set at $431,246. Bridges Library System contracts with the Waukesha Public Library for system administrator services and space, contracts with the automation vendor (Polaris/Innovative Interfaces, Inc.), and manages operations.   At the end of 2016, the CAFÉ fund balance (being held in reserve for future system software and hardware replacement) will be approximately $440,000.