

About Bridges

Bridges Library System is a **state funded library system** in southeastern Wisconsin. Founded in 1981 as the Waukesha County Federated Library System it transitioned to a two county system on January 1, 2016 when Jefferson County joined and the name was changed to Bridges Library System. The library system provides services to its 24 member libraries. Our mission: *Improving member libraries through leadership, collaboration, and support.*

We provide a variety of services (described below) to our libraries—continuously seeking opportunities to maximize resources, leverage our buying power, and share costs. You can learn more about us by watching a **video** produced by Milwaukee Public Television.

CAFÉ (Catalog Access for Everyone)

Bridges Library System manages the CAFÉ automation system and catalog used by all the libraries in the county. It's a Polaris-based Integrated Library System (ILS). Each member library has the ability to customize the banner for its own local needs, for example to promote an upcoming author visit. Additionally, federated searching is available in the catalog through the CAFÉ Plus link. This feature brings the databases into the catalog and makes them much more accessible. You can read more about that **here** or watch the video **here**. New in 2014 was the addition of library and community organization events into the catalog. Simply click on the "Community" tab and you can search for library events throughout Jefferson and Waukesha Counties. **Go to CAFÉ.**

Online Fee-based Reference Database Access

Bridges Library System negotiates the purchase of online reference resources shared by member libraries. This cooperative arrangement saves member libraries thousands of dollars compared to the cost of purchasing these databases individually. The access to databases allows any citizen in Jefferson and Waukesha Counties ready access to fee-based proprietary databases, such as Reference USA, Consumer Reports, Rosetta Stone, JobNow, and Ancestry.com. **Go to databases.**

E-Content Management and Support

Bridges Library System provides management and support of the Jefferson and Waukesha Counties' libraries' digital access through the Wisconsin Digital Library. This statewide resource provides access to 39,000 e-books and 11,000 e-audios that can be downloaded directly to citizens' computers and devices. New in 2014 was the beginning of the Bridges Library System contribution of local content to the statewide digital library catalog. The Wisconsin Digital Library content is funded with both local library funds and library system funds. In addition to the basic subscription, the library system participates in the "Advantage Program" designed to

shorten waiting periods for citizens in Jefferson and Waukesha Counties. **Go to Wisconsin Digital Library.**

Interlibrary Loan and Delivery Service

Materials from other libraries in the county, state or nation are available to Jefferson and Waukesha Counties' residents at their local library. The library will make the request, and Bridges Library System delivery service will bring the items requested to the local library. Bridges Library System pays for Monday through Friday delivery service at each member library as well as for the link to the statewide delivery service.

Internet Service

Public libraries in Jefferson and Waukesha Counties offer access to the Internet using a high speed connection provided to each library in part through grant funds awarded to Bridges Library System. Bridges Library System manages the connection between the internet service provider, the network provider, and the libraries. Bridges Library System offers web hosting and email services to member libraries.

Reference Service

Got a tough question from a library patron? Questions requiring research or special resources can be referred by local libraries to the System's resource library, the Waukesha Public Library. Responses are sent back to the local library. **Go to Resource Library Services.**

Youth Services

Bridges Library System offers a variety of support for youth services including leadership from a Bridges Library System librarian dedicated to youth services and special needs. Bridges Library System sponsors a summer library program workshop for youth services staff, Kids' Choice Award program, 1000 Books before Kindergarten program support, early literacy grants, summer library program incentives, 3 professional performances for each library during the summer library program, a listserv for youth services staff members and more. Bridges Library System is currently working with UW-Milwaukee on further developing an app for the 1000 Books before Kindergarten program to make recording books easy and fun for families. The app went live in 2015 and will be updated in 2016. Go to **Early Literacy, Kids' Choice** or **Summer Library Program.**

Special Needs Coordination

Bridges Library System offers coordination for special needs services in libraries, including applying for LSTA grants and supporting innovative programs, such as the Lake Country Libraries Memory Project and has been awarded grants to get hearing loops in libraries. Go to **Hearing Loops** or **Memory Project.**

Continuing Education

Continuing education workshops and meetings on library topics are sponsored by Bridges Library System to help members' library staff and board members keep up with developments in the library field. Additionally, CE grants are available for

the purpose of professional development for library staff. Go to **Continuing Education Opportunities**.

Consulting

Bridges Library System personnel work one-on-one with library staffs and local library boards whenever individualized professional help is needed. From answering questions about the annual report, to providing assistance with setting up a website, to providing new director orientations, to helping with strategic planning, the staff is ready and able to assist member libraries.

Special Equipment

Bridges Library System provides assistive equipment to your library for people with visual or hearing needs as well as access to a mobile computer lab, gaming and presentation equipment for use in member libraries. Go to **Equipment for Booking**.

Online, Instructor-Led "Gale Courses" Classes (New in 2015)

Bridges Library System will offer six-week long courses taught by college instructors and experts in the field, ensuring a high-quality, high-impact educational experience for all ages. For more information and to see the course catalog, go to **Gale Courses** offered by Bridges Library System.

E-Magazine Access (New in 2015)

Bridges Library System will help fund and manage the access to 50 e-magazines for residents of Jefferson and Waukesha Counties. A CAFE library card will be the gateway to access for popular magazines in electronic format that can be downloaded to computers and personal devices. Go to **Flipster**.

County Library Planning and County Funding Administration

Bridges Library System provides administrative services to the county library planning committees. That county library planning committees meets on a three year cycle to do strategic planning for county library services. Bridges Library System also administers the county funding formulas and makes annual budget requests to the appropriate county committees and boards. Bridges Library System receives and validates all adjacent county library requests, oversees the contract with Lakeshores Library System, and administers county library payments in Waukesha County. Waukesha County is in the process of updating its county library plan. You can read more **here**.