



2022 Library Visit Interview Form

Library Name: Dane County Library Service

Certification Grade: 1

Date of visit: 7/19/22

Library staff present at the visit: Tracy Herold

SCLS staff present: Brinnan Shaffer

Amount of time spent at visit: 90 minutes

[Please limit this section to the answers to the specific questions, and include as much detail as possible. Report other information or observations in the “other information” section below.]

1. How are you and your staff doing?

Tracy says that they are upbeat. Things for them were pretty normal during the pandemic. They were able to keep all staff employed, including LTEs. They kept purchasing going. The Dream Bus was so new – they had to pivot and align with other agencies, handed out crafts, etc. The Bookmobile was off of the road for about 70 total days due to a radiator issue and a smashed windshield due to a wild turkey! There were a lot of modifications during this time. Tracy said that 2022 feels much more “normal.” She said that people, especially children, are rediscovering the library. She said that the summer of 2022 so far feels very robust, similar to pre-pandemic or even ratcheted up from that! They’ve hired 3 more LTE’s.

2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library’s to-do list?

Tracy says that they plan to replace the Readmobile with a 20-22 foot hybrid vehicle. This will be more fuel efficient. She’s just written a grant for this. I asked Tracy about the Ripple Project as this had been mentioned in the previous year’s visit. She said that the Ripple Project and the Beyond the Page project has sort of been spread out over 2.5 years instead of 1 year. They now have a Beyond the Page manager. A survey on diversity and inclusion was offered to all Dane County library staff and about 300 people took the survey. The Ripple Project has allowed them to centralize the planning and coordinating for things like finding people of color who are experts in certain areas and who can provide programming at libraries. They advertised for a Ripple Project intern and received only one candidate. We talked about how they might advertise this intern opportunity in the future. This internship will introduce young people of color to libraries and library work, including tech. It will highlight the types of library careers that are possible. Tracy talked about “easy grants” vs more competitive grants. She said that competitive grants are a lot of work and libraries seem to prefer the “easy grants.” Few competitive grants are submitted.

3. Are there service changes or new services from the last two years that you plan on continuing?

Tracy said that funding for the Dream Bus has been secured for the next four years. There has been a great response with great numbers. The Ripple Project has allowed Beyond the Page to expand and they can be intentional about who they pay for programs, making sure the money is going to people of color. They are “blowing up” old “library patterns” in response to the changing population of Dane County.

4. How can SCLS help?

Tracy said there are always “Koha issues,” but they really appreciate the ability to use it in their vehicles. She said that specifically there are issues accessing patrons (via name search) when they are searching for organizations (nursing homes, etc.). She also feels that BiblioNation “struggles with managing large, complex records” that have a lot to override. Tracy spoke of a “GetIt” issue as well, specifically that she wishes it was better with ISBN searches. Often, she cannot find what she is looking for with the ISBN search but then if she searches by title, there it is!

5. Is there anything else you’d like to share or discuss?

Tracy and I talked about the idea of “floating subs” for Dane County (not including MPL libraries). Could the Ripple Intern be used in this way, for example? She talked about a 2023 pilot project where there could be people who are DCLS staff but who would be available to libraries as subs. There are still a lot of details to work out. It might be fairly easy for planned sub needs like vacations and planned medical leaves, but what about if someone calls in sick? How would they deal with the fact that different libraries have different pay rates? Tracy also mentioned that she really appreciated the email from Marty with grant opportunities and their deadlines. Tracy said this is very helpful – library staff don’t have to seek out/hunt for the grants.

Other information gathered at the visit (interesting tidbits, general impressions of the library, or alternative topics):

Tracy gave me a great tour of the bookmobile and Dream Bus. I asked about the collection that is on the bookmobile and she said that they try not to have anything that is over 5 years old in the on-bus collection. They also really weeded down their entire collection when they moved from Aberg Avenue by about 20,000 items.

We talked about libraries in general buying less A/V materials as so many people are streaming things. She thinks a lot of people got into streaming during the pandemic. One good thing she noted about this was the environmental impact (buying less plastic overall).

We also talked about how many libraries are moving away from fines and how this has brought a lot of people back to the library. Tracy thinks that overdue fines almost created library spaces that were more “exclusive” and not the free and public library spaces they are intended to be. She noted that it’s not easy for everyone to get and return things in a timely manner due to things like work schedule, location, transportation, etc. Tracy said that DCL generally accepts that they are going to have to absorb a certain amount of loss from the bookmobile and Dream Bus. They already expect/accept that with things like Outreach.