

Richland Public Library

2023-2025 Written Plan



The Richland Public Library's mission is to improve the community's quality of life by providing and promoting access to information and materials of an educational and recreational nature to all patrons. The library will provide a wide selection of current materials in a variety of formats and subject areas, offer opportunities for ongoing growth and development, and provide a safe and reliable place to meet and interact with others.

Current technologies will be implemented to ensure equal access to information, technology, and electronic resources for all.

The library will contribute to the overall well-being of the community by supporting an educated, self-reliant citizenry and promoting lifelong learning in a welcoming and respectful atmosphere.

The Richland Public Library wishes to thank the following people for their support, efforts and interest in supporting the Richland Public Library and formulating our 2023-2025 Written Plan:

City of Richland Mayor Tom Hoekstra

City Clerk Susan Carroll

Library Board of Trustees: Mike Adrian, Melody Anderson, Luanne Archer, Karen Baker, Carol Ann Harrington, Warren Winborn.

Library Staff: Cindy McCan and Melody Rehm

Special thanks to Southeast District Consultant Becky Heil and Gary Krob at the State Data Center.

Background and Data:

Note: The following statistics were gathered from the State Data Center’s City Quick Facts and County Quick Facts with a link located on the State Library of Iowa’s website. The updated figures in red are the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year period estimates.

Richland is located in Keokuk County in southeast Iowa.

Race and Ethnic Origin: According to the 2020 census, 93% of Richland’s residents are White, 5.9% are 2 or more races, 2.6% are Hispanic, 0.4% are Black and 0.7% are “other”.

Population size: Richland’s population has remained relatively stable since 1900. Richland reached its peak population of 713 in 1930 and its low point of 522 in 1990. Since 2000 the population has decreased from 587 to 542, a drop of 7.7%. It is too early to determine if this decrease in population is a long term trend or just part of past population fluctuations.

Education in Richland: The students of Richland are in the Pekin Community School District, located 10.6 miles away in Packwood, IA. According to the American Community Survey’s 5-year estimates (2015-2019), 39% of Richland residents have graduated from High School and 56% have continued on to college. Only 5% have not received a high school diploma.

Median household incomes and unemployment rates: Richland’s Unemployment Rate dropped from an average of 6.7% (2010-2014 5-year average) to 5.4% (2015-2019 5 year average). The poverty rates dropped from 9.0% (average between 2010-2014) to 7.4% (2015-2019 5 year average). This is lower than the overall Keokuk County poverty rate average of 9.9%. At the same time the median household income in Richland has risen from an estimated income (2010-2014) of \$50,729 to an estimated income (2015-2019) of \$50,833. This is a bit lower than Keokuk County’s (2015-2019) estimated median household income of \$52,881.

Age: (2015-2019) Richland's median age is 46.8 years old. Ages (2015-2019): 0-19= 142; 20-39= 93; 40-59= 200; 60+ = 148). Compared to state populations it is a slightly older population.

History: The Richland Public Library was founded in 1938 by the Woman's club. It started with 200 books to loan to the community. Today's building was opened in 1977 and boasts a physical collection of over 9600 books, magazines, DVDs, and books-on-CD and over 96,000 eBooks, digital audiobooks and other electronic materials.

Conclusion: Richland is a fairly homogenous small, rural community with an educated citizenry.

Library Trends:

Technology:

Over the last decade Internet access in Richland has gradually improved, becoming faster and cheaper. The Pekin Community School District provides all students in grades 7 through 12 with laptops to use at school and at home. Likewise, cell phone reception and affordability has also improved and many residents now own smart phones.

Due to these changes, Richland Public Library has seen its computer use decline among teens and adults. Computer use by youths, however, has remained fairly steady.

Circulation:

Our circulation took a bit hit during the Covid-19 pandemic but was already showing signs of decline previous to the pandemic. Richland is a small community where the check-out behavior of just a few families can have a large effect on our overall circulation rates. Many families, especially during the pandemic, subscribed to movie streaming services which has had a big effect on our DVD circulation.

As a response to the technology and circulation trends, the Library Board joined the Bridges consortium in FY20. Bridges has remained consistently popular.

Programming:

Our children's and teen in-house programming came to a stop during the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time we focused on activity packets families could pick up from the library and complete at home. We also continued with our summer and winter reading logs; books were picked up at the library (curbside pick-up and later, in-house browsing by appointment) and read at home.

We started children's in-house programs again in June of 2021 and saw strong participation among elementary-aged students. During the FY 2022 school year we've been running 3 afterschool programs: Tuesday's Kids Club; Wednesday's Lego Club and Thursday's Kids Book Club. Our biggest obstacle to expanding our children's programming and starting teen programming is a lack of volunteers to assist with the programs.

Our adult programming came to a close once the pandemic hit, except for our adult book club which went virtual during the pandemic and is now back as an in-person program. As of January 2022 we will begin a winter monthly series of various topics for adults.

Goals and Objectives:

The Richland Public Library plays a vital and relevant role in the town of Richland. The library not only provides access to information and recreation, it also strives to be a place for people to meet, interact and make connections; where citizens can develop a sense of place by learning about Richland's history as well as learning about current and future events and opportunities.

The Richland Public Library's Trustees and Director will review the following goals and objectives on an annual basis to evaluate the progress being made and make any changes deemed necessary.

- 1. Goal: To provide the community with a modern and welcoming community space.**
 - a. Objectives: Assess the library's current space and find ways to modernize and make the library a more appealing place to relax and socialize.**
 - i. Form a beautification committee to recommend library improvements. (August 2022)
 - ii. Find a theme or single art style to unify the library's look and create a warm, cheerful and welcoming atmosphere. (August 2023)
 - iii. Lighten the interior of the library by replacing or painting the dark paneling. (June 2025)
 - iv. Replace the computer chairs. (June 2022)
- 2. Goal: To offer the community a circulating collection that is easier and more appealing to browse.**
 - a. Objectives: to make it easier for community members of all ages to find and use our materials.**
 - i. Continue to promote Bridges.
 - ii. Continue to increase our Large Print section. (ongoing)
 - iii. Continue to weed, condense and improve our non-fiction section.
 - iv. Focus on a large weeding project in the children's area specifically picture books and early readers. (August 2022 and then ongoing)
 - v. Replace or modify the picture book shelving to make browsing more child-friendly. (June 2025)
- 3. Goal: Increase the community's access to the library's technology.**
 - a. Objective: Provide the community with additional ways to access the library's e-content by providing e-readers. (August 2023)**
 - b. New patron and staff computers. (2025).**
- 4. Goal: Increase the attendance at our programs.**

- a. **Objective: Offer the community new and more relevant programming.**
 - i. Look for grants and other programs to fund adult programs.
 - ii. Include one-time classes, such as speakers or art classes, and ongoing programs such as a coffee social club or game day.
 - iii. Teen program: recruit volunteers to lead a weekly or monthly program for students in 6th through 8th grade. (June 2022)
 - b. **Objective: Bring programming to the Pekin Community School District**
 - i. Restart outreach programming at the Pekin Community School District for middle and high school students once all Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. (September 2022).
 - a. Battle of the Books
 - b. Book Club
 - c. Gaming Club
 - ii. Start possible outreach programs to elementary students.
5. **Goal: Increase community involvement in the library and increase PR.**
- a. **Objective: Find community businesses and clubs to partner with**
 - i. Develop and sponsor new programs. (December 2023)
 - b. **Objective: Create a Local History Program:**
 - i. Interview residents for a “*This is Richland*” project. (Sept 2024)
 - c. **Objective: Create a “Library Holiday” celebrating the founding of the library (September 2024)**
 - i. Hold an annual Open House for volunteers, business sponsors, City Hall, City Council and County Supervisors.
 - ii. Open house fun day for kids.

Approved by the Board: 11/20/19

Approve by the Board: 3/16/22