



Library News

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Changes to Library Web Pages

Please check out the library pages on the [NWSC web site](#) under “Student Life.” I have revised several of the database links, replacing those not frequently used with more relevant sites for students, faculty, and staff. The information on COVID-19 changes rapidly and it is important to have the latest information which specifically pertains to one’s locality. Conse-

quently, there are now links available to COVID-19 and other health information for [Cook](#) and [Lake](#) Counties. In addition to providing the latest COVID-19 statistics, these local sites contain valuable information on the demographics and particular health concerns of specific locations. For example, statistics on obesity, substance abuse, and behavioral health issues are

provided. This information will help students as they prepare for employment in local communities. For health-related statistics for the nation at large, visit the [CDC FastStats](#) site.

And, remember that all of the resources on the Library pages are available 24/7, to instructors, students, and staff via the NWSC web site.

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Libraries Step Up During COVID-19

Most public library patrons learned that their local public libraries switched to “Curbside Service” during the lockdowns caused by COVID-19, like so many private businesses and retail sites. Many libraries did so much more to meet the needs of their communities during this ex-

traordinary time. A truly remarkable example of this is the Highwood Public Library in Highwood, Illinois. Highwood is a suburban city in Lake County, of approximately 5,400 residents. The population is roughly 50 percent Latino and 50 percent Italian American. The majority of employed residents work in the restaurant industry.

Consequently, when COVID-19 hit, many families were without an income and struggled to feed their families. The Highwood Public Library joined with other community organizations and became a food distribution site, serving as many as 300 families per month. (continued on p.2)



*Highwood Public
Library wins
national
recognition for its
service to the local
community*

Libraries Step Up During COVID-19 (cont. from p.1)

As these community relationships expanded, the library became a site for COVID-19 testing and eventually, for vaccines. The library also has strong ties to the local school district and provides tutoring and Zoom training for students. For these services and others the library was performing even before COVID-19, the library was awarded the very prestigious and coveted National Medal for Museum and Library Service in 2021, from the Insti-

tute of Museum and Library Services. The Highwood Public Library was one of only six libraries to receive this award in the nation-wide contest.

The important role played by public libraries in their communities has led to the Institute of Museum and Library Services to partner with the CDC in a program entitled, [Communities for Immunity](#). This venture will provide support to local libraries and museums in disseminating

accurate information about the vaccines and vaccine safety, with the goal of reducing vaccine hesitancy among the public, especially in areas of high risk for the virus. This program recognizes the vital role local libraries and museums play in the public health and safety of our local communities.

Biblioboard Access to Library Resources

Illinois residents have a multitude of free, full text resources available to them via Biblioboard: library.biblioboard.com. This site provides access to over 44,000 items, including e-books, images, and video clips. Titles from small presses and publishers, as well as the classics are featured. There are also collections designed

especially for children, including graphic novels, comics, and art and activity projects. Local public libraries have also contributed special collections which reflect their local history and communities.

Open Access Textbooks

Due to the increasing costs of college textbooks, as well as the accessibility afforded by technology, there have been recent efforts in developing electronic textbook materials at the college level. Students and instructors are aware of the drastic increases in the cost of textbooks in recent years. The expense of purchasing textbooks can put the cost of higher education out of reach for many students. Students on some campuses are able to rent textbooks, either from the college bookstore or from online sources, such as Amazon. Many students try to survive without purchasing required textbooks in order to save money, thus jeopardizing the successful completion of their coursework.

CARLI (Consortium of Ac-

ademic & Research Libraries in Illinois) and the University of Illinois recently received a 1.08 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education in order to create and expand the use of open (free) access textbooks. These textbooks are often referred to as “open educational resources,” or OER. The grant is a result of the Affordable College Textbook Act, sponsored by Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois, as well Senators from Maine, Minnesota, Arizona, and Colorado.

This grant is funding a pilot project that is targeting textbooks in the health and human development (psychology, social work, etc.) subject areas. Medical and health related texts are some of the most expensive, so this is good news for

institutions, instructors, and students studying and working in the health care fields.

Open textbooks are freely available online and can be downloaded and shared. The program affords instructors the opportunity to create their own educational resources for their students. The official name of the program is Illinois Support for Creation of Open Educational Resources (SCOERs), and the grant period is from September, 2021 thru August, 2024. The effectiveness of the use of the open textbooks will be measured in terms of cost savings to students as well as student learning outcomes.



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