

TOP 10 Frequently Asked Questions

About a Countywide Library in Clinton County, MO



1) Why do we need a library now?

Our country's founders believed that knowledge is power. Over the past 18 months of research and talking with hundreds of people of all income levels across the county, The Clinton County initiative's volunteers have learned that we are part of **only 9%** of Missouri's population who don't have access to this fundamental pillar of American democracy and individual liberty that can build the knowledge base of all residents. **It's time.**

We deserve the opportunity to improve our ability to manage, control, and invest our resources wisely and grow our prosperity. Libraries are critical resources for bolstering long-term economic prospects by improving the literacy rates of all ages. **Our kids deserve** every opportunity we can give them to be successful citizens!

2) Where is the new library district, and where will the library be located?

The Clinton County Commissioners defined the district as all of the county **except the city limits of Cameron**, where a municipal library district already exists through a city tax levy.

Based on 18 months of research and input from county residents in Gower, northern Holt, Lathrop, Plattsburg, Trimble, Turney, and the southern rural areas of Stewartville, Osborn, and Cameron, **67% (two-thirds)** indicated that the best location would be in **the county seat** and center, Plattsburg.

3) How much will the library cost?

A **temporary library will be launched first** to provide the county with services **as soon as** tax funds are available at the end of 2025 and early 2026. We can get started for only \$274,000. That includes hiring a library director, renting/purchasing an existing storefront or house, buying essential software and equipment, and creating a website.

As the library's programs and collections expand, efforts will launch to get the best library possible.

No new taxes will be requested for a larger building, which will be planned and built in phases as private and public funds accumulate.

4) Does a library benefit taxpayers?

YES! An accessible modern library is a practical resource that will boost the local economy, improve property values, and support workforce development. Families and individuals will **save money by accessing free resources** like books, magazines, movies, high-speed internet, computer programs, and other educational materials. Libraries foster self-education, innovation, and civic engagement! A Clinton County Library will benefit **YOU** and the people you care about!

5) What is the proposed tax levy?

A tax levy is required by state law to start a public library. Private grants that could be pursued also require voters to approve a tax levy. Almost everyone in the county will pay less than the cheapest streaming service subscription (i.e., Amazon Prime or Netflix) costs. And eBooks, audiobooks, and movies from the library don't have ads. **A library can help us fight rising costs and save money!**

Here are some examples of the proposed annual tax based on actual 2024 statements from residents in the district. Someone with:

- 110 acres of ag land could be \$16.26;
- A 1,000 sq. ft. 2-bedroom home on a single city lot may be \$40.41;
- A 1,200 sq. ft. 3-bedroom home on a third of an acre may be \$51.16;
- A 1,500 sq. ft. home with 3 small bedrooms, a barn on 8.5 acres, and 2 vehicles may be \$87.50;
- A larger 4,000 sq ft. home with outbuildings and several vehicles on 20 acres could be \$228.86.

The amount will be **\$0.25 (25 cents) per \$100.00 assessed valuation of personal and real estate property tax.** Assessment calculations are complex. They are different for everyone based on what you own and where you live.

Look at your most recent Clinton County tax statements to find your total assessed valuation and follow this formula:

FORMULA to figure your tax amount:

Total tax valuation divided by 100 and then multiplied by 0.25.

Average in Clinton County =
 $\$28,000 / 100 = \$280 \times \$0.25 = \70

6) Does anybody support starting a library in Clinton County?

YES! The list of businesses, elected officials, educators, faith community leaders, and individuals who have voiced support is too long to list here.

This effort has a solid factual footing with experienced fiscal planning and management.

The Clinton County Initiative has gathered new data and held public forums and surveys to listen to hundreds of youth and adults. The nearly 2-year feasibility study generated detailed information that is available to the public as recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees appointed by the county commissioners to read at www.maximizenwmo.org/clinton-county.

7) What is the mission of modern libraries?

Today's libraries are much more than books!

They are **vibrant hubs** that bring people of all ages together for information, job advancement, training programs, and educational events. They are **safe places** to gather, learn, and connect with neighbors.

A modern library has 21st-century tools such as:

- **Digital resources** such as eBooks, audiobooks, music, magazines, newspapers, and journals that can be expensive to buy or rent elsewhere.
- Opportunities to connect with each other and the world through **physical resources**, including books, newspapers, magazines, and other reference materials. They are also a great place to learn about the world through credible news sources and find helpful programs and services.
- **Economic development** - Libraries help businesses grow their knowledge and help them **increase their bottom lines**.
- Library technologies offer creativity tools for people of all ages. Some libraries have **learning kitchens** and **maker spaces** with sewing machines, 3-D printers, large format printers, and other equipment for hobby and professional use.
- **Programs** on recreational, conservation, and agriculture land management, hunter education, gardening, wisely leveraging technology, and more through partners like the MO Department of Conservation and MU Extension!
- **Business support services** with copiers, scanners, and computers essential for navigating today's world.
- **Local history and genealogical resources**.
- **Access to local artists** with gallery walls and public spaces to display their work.
- **Local visitor information** as a great first impression for people outside the county.

8) How will the library reflect our county's values of a "great rural life?"

The Clinton County Library will be **locally managed** and tailored to meet residents and business owners' specific needs and interests to ensure it aligns with the county's shared values. The Board of Trustees—comprised of **experienced business and nonprofit leaders**—will ensure a **qualified and professional** library director and team uphold legal and transparent policies.

9) How will controversial materials be handled?

The Clinton County Library Board of Trustees will **follow all applicable laws** and put Clinton County residents' intellectual needs and freedom first. It will be an institution that **upholds learning, not endorsement of any particular viewpoint**. All collections will be organized in designated sections based on age appropriateness. Parents will be able to guide what their children access and residents will have opportunities to provide feedback on acquisitions.

10) Who will oversee the library to ensure taxpayer money is well-spent?

The Clinton County Library Board of Trustees will oversee the library, hire a library director, set policy, and apportion funding through detailed annual budgeting and monthly monitoring processes. It is a group of five members who are residents of the library district—none of whom are elected officials—and are **appointed by the county commission**.

The Clinton County Library District was established on October 10, 2024, per Section 182.015 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. Trustees serve four-year terms except the first trustees. Two are appointed for one year, one for two years, one for three years, and one for four years from July 1, 2025, in addition to their first few months. Annually thereafter, before July 1, the County Commission will appoint successors. The initial appointees represent a wide range of the county's residents and include Christel Gollnick, president (Trimble); Trey Talley, vice president (Lathrop); Jennifer Howerton, secretary (Lathrop); Paul Pottier, treasurer (Gower); and Tony Stone, member at large (Plattsburg).

The Board plans to continue engaging residents and stakeholders of all ages – youth and adults – in the planning and implementation of library services in Clinton County.

Visit The Clinton County Initiative's website at www.maximizenwmo.org/clinton-county for more information on the feasibility study this nonprofit countywide organization has been working on since Fall 2023.