


VOTE
May 7, 2024



On May 7, 2024, residents of the Van Buren District Library service area will vote on a millage increase.

Have more questions about the proposed millage?
Visit VBDL's Frequently Asked Page at vbdl.org/millage2024

Quick FAQs

Why is the Library asking for a millage increase?

In a word, inflation. The extraordinarily high inflation in recent years has eroded the Library District's budget. Library materials, computer equipment, and professional services have all experienced inflation and affected the library's budget. In fact, from December 2017 through November 2023 cumulative inflation increased 25%. Increased operating costs have eaten away at the library's budget. For instance, energy costs have increased 59% since 2020.

Over time, the library's annual revenue has not kept up with inflation and increasing operational costs.

What will a millage increase cost the average homeowner?

For the average home in VBDL's service area with a market value of \$160,000, the .4 millage would amount to a \$32 annual increase in property taxes.

If the requested millage increase is approved by the voters, what would VBDL do with the funds?

There are four main ways the proposed millage increase would benefit the community.

Continue and increase the mobile Internet hotspot lending program.

If the millage increase passes, not only will the Library District continue the mobile Internet hotspot lending program, but would also double it. Currently, there are 210 devices, or 30 per library branch, though all units are most often checked-out. Doubling the program would mean 420 devices, or 60 per location.

Add Library materials delivery service for homebound individuals.

For those who are homebound due to infirmity or age, the Library District would implement a program to deliver materials to their homes via the US Postal Service. Homebound individuals would be able to request these items by phone or email. Once they are finished using the items, they would be able to easily return the items from their home to the library, also through the US Postal service, free-of-charge.

Increase events and classes.

Modern libraries have evolved into community centers, hubs to connect people to the world around them, and to each other. The Library District would double its annual events, classes, and programs budget from \$42,000 per year to \$84,000 per year. This would mean more opportunities for the community to learn and connect.

Keep VBDL staff compensation competitive to retain and attract qualified people.

The Library District currently has 57 staff members. In order to attract and retain talent in an economy with a shrinking labor force, the Library District would enhance compensation to remain competitive.

Library clerks, the backbone of the Library District's staff, currently start at \$13.10 per hour. For comparison, McDonald's in Paw Paw starts at \$13.75 per hour. The managers of five of the Library District's seven branches are part-time without health insurance benefits, but what's expected of them is a full-time commitment. The five VBDL branch managers who are currently part-time would be offered full-time positions with health insurance benefits. All other VBDL staff would receive retention increases, subject to approval by the Library Board.



Go to
www.michigan.gov/vote
to locate your polling place
or register to vote.



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