



CITY OF SOUTH MILWAUKEE

APRIL 7, 2026 REFERENDUM

**VOTE
TUESDAY,
APRIL 7**

On April 7, 2026, City of South Milwaukee voters will be asked if they support a \$425,000 increase in the property tax levy going forward to **restore services at the public library to pre-pandemic levels**.

The impact would be an increase of approximately **\$60 annually or \$5 monthly** for a City home assessed at the median value of \$225,000.

WHY REFERENDUM?

The City of South Milwaukee is facing a critical decision about how to **fund and sustain its library services**. The City has been reducing the library's budget in recent years to maintain vital services—such as public safety, public health, and public works—as it manages within tight levy limits.



As a result of budget cuts, the South Milwaukee Public Library is currently open the fewest hours of any library in Milwaukee County, receives among the lowest amount of local revenue per resident, and has decreased its budget for new materials.



Without additional funding, the library will have to make **additional cuts to its operating hours, available materials, and library staff**.



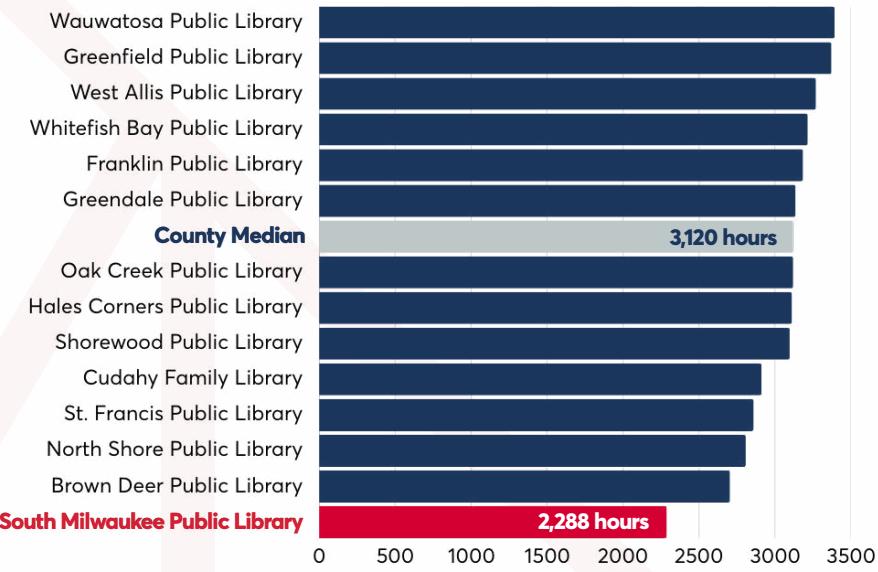
BUDGET ALLOCATED TO LIBRARY



South Milwaukee Public Library budget has decreased by **nearly 20%** from 2019 to 2025.

Because of state-imposed levy limits, the City of South Milwaukee must ask for approval from taxpayers through a referendum to increase the tax levy to fund these services.

OPEN LIBRARY HOURS (2023)



Source: Wisconsin Policy Forum Report: **"A New Chapter"** (2023)

Due to budget cuts, the South Milwaukee Public Library is currently open the fewest hours of any library in Milwaukee County — 26.7% below the county median.



IF A MAJORITY VOTE "YES"



The library would restore its hours of operation to pre-pandemic levels — **from 44 to a projected 54 hours per week, a 23% increase** — and restore and enhance programming.



The library will be able to **restore its budget** for new books, media, and additional digital materials.

If the referendum is approved by a majority of voters, the library will restore services to pre-pandemic levels by **restoring operating hours, improving available materials, and offering additional programming and services.**

An approved referendum would help the library align more closely with county service levels and meet resident expectations for access and programming.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF THE LIBRARY REFERENDUM

If City residents approve the referendum, the estimated property tax impact would be \$27 annually per \$100,000 in assessed value, which for the median \$225,000 home in South Milwaukee is about \$60 per year. The total tax levy in 2026 would increase by \$425,000, beginning with property tax bills issued in December 2026.

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT \$425,000 TOTAL INCREASE		
ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE	ESTIMATED TAX IMPACT PER YEAR	ESTIMATED TAX IMPACT PER MONTH
\$100,000	\$27	\$2
\$225,000	\$60	\$5

IF A MAJORITY VOTE "NO"

CITY RESIDENTS CAN CAST THEIR VOTE ONE OF THREE WAYS:

- Through absentee mail-in ballots
- Early in-person voting at the City Clerk's office from March 24 – April 3, or
- In-person voting on election day, April 7, 2026.

ON APRIL 7, POLLING PLACES WILL OPEN AT 7:00 A.M. AND CLOSE AT 8:00 P.M.

Wisconsin voters are required to show an acceptable photo ID in order to vote.

For more information, please visit www.southmilwaukee.gov/578/Library-Referendum-2026 or email referendum@southmilwaukee.gov

If the referendum does not pass, **the City will have to make difficult decisions about the library's future.** This could mean eliminating additional staff positions, which will require further reductions to hours of operation and available programming and services, as well as further cuts to the library's collections budget.

VOTE APRIL 7

Additional voting information, including early voting details, can be found on myvote.wi.gov

