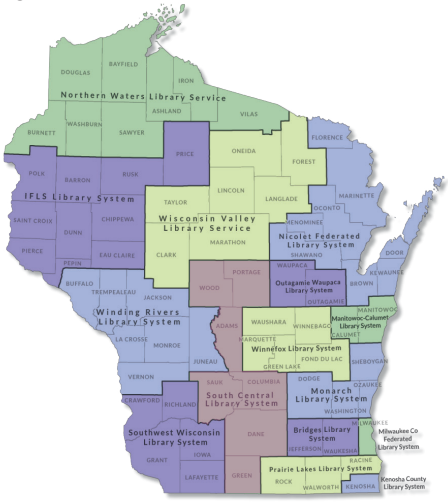
Libraries and Systems
South Central Library System

The South Central Library System (SCLS) is one of 15 systems in Wisconsin, and serves 54 public libraries and 924,372 residents in Adams, Columbia, Dane, Green, Portage, Sauk and Wood Counties. SCLS provides services like:



- LINKcat (the online tool through which you reserve library materials from your own library, or other libraries within SCLS)
- Delivery (the red trucks that bring you materials from other libraries)
- Technology support for 1,320 library computers
- Youth services and outreach support
- Graphics/marketing/printing
- Continuing education for library staff
- Building design services
- Library administration/management/law support
- Web design services and support
- Cooperative purchasing

A primary benefit of system membership is participation in the shared library catalog LINKcat. This online catalog makes the collection of each library available to the residents of all other LINKcat libraries. In 2023 over 7.9 million physical items and 1.7 million digital items were checked out by patrons of SCLS member libraries. At a conservative estimate of $20 average price per item, this represents more than $194 million in value to patrons for this service along because they could borrow books instead of purchasing them.

Also valuable to libraries is the SCLS Delivery Service, which moves library materials from library to library within SCLS. In 2023, our red truck delivery service carried about 10 million items among SCLS member libraries making 17,800 stops over a distance of 400,000 miles.

SCLS member libraries have access to a robust continuing education program. In 2024, more than 3,200 staff members from all types of libraries attended the 44 continuing education programs offered by SCLS. Most of these were webinars that were recorded for later viewing, and the 445 recordings in our archive were viewed 2,000 times in 2024 alone. SSCLS offers regular online check-in meetings with Adult & Inclusive Services, Youth Services, Library Directors, and State Agency Librarians reaching library staff at all levels.

Working together through system membership, the impact of library resources and services are enhanced and magnified to help serve all residents of the seven-county area. Systems and their member libraries have always been on the cutting edge with cooperative agreements and resource sharing which greatly reduce duplication of services.

The relationship between public libraries and the South Central Library System helps ensure that libraries are able to provide quality programs and services to their residents, which is the mission of our system. It is a dynamic relationship that has grown over the past 50 years, and one that will serve libraries well as we continue to work together to meet the needs of library patrons.

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