



106 Washington Avenue, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901-4985

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 21, 2020  
**TO:** Oshkosh Public Library Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Jeff Gilderson-Duwe, Library Director  
**RE:** Proposal to use 2021 OACF Library Development Trust Funds  
Toward Tuition Support for OPL Employees Pursuing Master's  
Level Library Education

Before its dissolution earlier this year, one of the ongoing commitments of the Friends of the Oshkosh Public Library was to offer the "John V. Nichols Public Library Professional Education Scholarship." The scholarship offered support to OPL employees to pursue Master's-level education in Library and Information Science.

With the approval of the board, I propose to revive the scholarship with funds from the Library Development Fund – one of five "Trust Funds for Library Excellence" invested with the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation.

One route to excellence for OPL is to nurture the aspirations of its employees to join the ranks of professional librarianship. The Master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association is required for most Librarian positions in the United States. Wisconsin is fortunate to have two such programs at U.W.-Milwaukee and U.W.-Madison. Oshkosh Public Library benefits when current employees carry the most up-to-date thinking about library policies, procedures, and best practices from the academic setting into the workplace. In fortunate instances, we are able to place newly minted Master's Degreed Librarians in our own organization. On other occasions, they must move to take up their professional career elsewhere. Either way, OPL has played a role in nurturing the future of libraries and librarians in our state or beyond.

My specific proposal for 2021 is as follows: Any OPL employee who documents admission and enrollment in an ALA-accredited Master's Degree program in Library and Information Science will be eligible. OPL will use OACF Library Development Trust Funds to reimburse the employee \$200 per credit hour taken (about 50% of the tuition cost). The tuition support will be limited to \$2,400 per calendar year per employee. I believe that this level support may be accommodated within the annual trust fund spending plan with adequate funds available for other development projects.

I am seeking approval now for this proposal in order that we may extend this benefit to employees in time for payment of tuition for the Spring 2021 term. I understand that those payments are due in late January.

*"A Library in Every Life"*