

Longwood Public Library, Middle Island, New York, USA



Longwood Public Library Interior. Image credit: Longwood Public Library

Library Service Overview

The Longwood Public Library services the Middle Island area of New York, USA. It is a single branch library that was certified as a 'Sustainable Library' in August 2021 through the 'Sustainable Libraries Initiative.' Prior to achieving this certification, the library achieved a Green Business Partnership in April 2021. The library includes a dedicated teen area, a children's room, story room, community room and also hosts a local history room. In addition, it provides services to teachers and home-schooling families and job seekers.

Policy on Environment and Sustainability

The Longwood Public Library gained its Sustainable Library Certification in August 2021 through the Sustainable Library Certification program recognised by IFLA. The [Library's press release](#) regarding this award describes the accreditation process and priorities, while their [public statement on sustainability](#) explains some of the processes associated with their sustainability work.

Program/initiative/infrastructure Summary

Gaining certification as a Sustainable Library required Longwood to comply with a 'Triple Bottom Line' definition of sustainability where they had to demonstrate their programs and services were 'environmentally sound', 'economically feasible', and 'socially equitable'. In doing so, they were praised for their building design along with their consideration of their communities' needs when designing sustainable services and programs.

Longwood has written an Environmental Policy that states the library will observe all relevant environmental regulations, prevent pollution, train staff to understand sustainability issues and practices, and communicate their sustainability practices to patrons. In addition, they have committed to a process of continuous improvement that will be demonstrated

by measuring the library's environmental impacts. To enable the measurement of the library's environmental impact, Longwood regularly measures their Greenhouse Gas emissions by metric tons of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalents – [Ecometrica](#) provides a good explanation of this measure and why it is an important indicator of sustainable practices. Longwood was able to measure emissions from their use of natural gas, and their use of air conditioning and refrigeration. They were able to reduce these emissions through better maintenance of air conditioning machinery. Longwood encourages staff to reduce their use of electricity when they can, and requests that staff work virtually from home when possible to reduce commuting-related emissions. Staff working on site found ways to reuse and recycle items as an alternative to disposal. Unavoidable emissions were offset by the creation of renewable energy via solar roof panels. Staff are also encouraged to take part in wellness activities and support this through forming a Safety & Wellness Committee.

Some simple methods of 'green cleaning' were introduced by the maintenance staff including the use of reusable cloth towels as an alternative to disposable wipes. These clothes are washed and air-dried each day. Environment-friendly cleaning fluids are used throughout the building and all maintenance staff have received training in environmentally sustainable practices.

Recycling bins for paper, plastics and cans are available throughout the building for the use of staff and visitors. No weeded collection items or obsolete equipment are discarded, but are instead sold on, donated, or if in poor condition, recycled. Outside the library building, bike racks and reserved parking places for hybrid and low-emission cars are located at the front entrance to encourage the use of these vehicles. Also outside the library, lawns have been replaced by native trees to attract local species of animals and insects. An additional benefit of planting native trees is that they have reduced need for additional water, fertilizers or pesticides compared with introduced species.

Library users can participate in community programs designed by the library on topics such as recycling, climate change, native plants, sustainable gardening and seed diversity. Earth Day is celebrated each year with library patrons. Community partnerships have been developed between the library and external government departments, for-profit and not-for-profit organisations to deliver projects such as 'Little Free Libraries' in local parks, and a free food pantry outside the library building, stocked by community donations.

Longwood's commitment to sustainability is supported by their 'Future Sustainability Goals' that include continuing to monitor emissions and operating their building as sustainably as possible. They will continue to train staff and patrons in sustainable practices, reduce waste, decrease business travel, increase 'green purchasing' and seek out new community partnerships.