



Director Search 2021



Work and Play in Tompkins County

What makes Ithaca unique? Is it the towering waterfalls, lush ice-age gorges, endless panoramic views? Is it the hiking, the biking, the boating? Is it the beauty of Cayuga Lake, the longest of the Finger Lakes? Perhaps.



Cayuga Lake.

Photo Courtesy Visit Ithaca.

But perhaps it's something more. Maybe it's the buzz from Cornell University and Ithaca College. You feel it everywhere—in our museums, our galleries, and in our restaurants. You hear it in our theaters, our nightclubs, our Finger Lakes festivals. You see it downtown on our pedestrian mall, the Ithaca Commons, where PhDs cross paths with street musicians and families stroll the solar system on an interactive "planet walk." You experience it in Ithaca's hotels, B&B's and waterfront cabins.

You can't put your finger on it, but there's something special going on here. The bumper stickers say "Ithaca is Gorges," but it's more than that. Ithaca is beautiful and smart and always unexpected. It's intense and laid-back and disdainful of convention. Ithaca is Ithaca. There's a vibe here unlike anywhere else in America. And experiencing it is the only way to discover it. Visit the [Visit Ithaca](https://www.visitithaca.com) website to learn more.



Located in the heart of Ithaca's urban core, TCPL is a one-seat ride on regional transit from virtually anywhere in Tompkins County.

Tompkins County Public Library

A Fine-Free and Forward-Looking Library

Located in Ithaca, New York, and founded by [Ezra Cornell](#) in 1864, the Tompkins County Public Library is an award-winning library with a storied history. It serves the nearly 102,000 residents of Tompkins County, as well as library users in Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, and Tioga counties through its role as the Central Library for the [Finger Lakes Library System](#).



The Tween area gives tweens a distinct space separate from teens and little ones, and features an extensive collection of graphic novels for that age group, among other resources.

TCPL's central vision is to create a library "where everyone can belong and find joy in learning, discovery, and personal growth." Fine free since 2019, the Library has been recognized nationally for its [service to patrons with disabilities](#) and its [diverse picture book collection](#), among other honors.

The Library has a designated Children's area, as well as Tween, Teen, and Adult spaces. In addition to the typical collections of books, magazines, movies, newspapers, audiobooks, and eBooks, the Library features a Digital Lab, Local History room, Makerspace, Teen Center, meeting and study space, and two large community rooms for community and library events.



The Makerspace is a creative hub for experienced and novice makers alike, and includes a 3D printer, laser cutter (pictured above), recording equipment, sewing machines, button-makers, and more.

The Library offers programs and outreach events for all ages, including a summer story hour in DeWitt Park, Overdrive training at senior residential homes, work with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, and participation in the annual Ithaca Festival Parade March.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library has devoted itself to finding creative ways to continue to serve the public. Examples include online and radio programming, social media chats, express Internet stations, curbside pickup, partnerships with local school systems, and “book and binge bundles,” among other efforts.

Community Support

The Library is cherished in the community and benefits from the devoted support of key local allies. The [Friends of the Tompkins County Public Library](#) holds some of the largest book sales in the country twice a year. Generous grants from the Friends support

Library collections and programs. Justifiably proud of their accomplishments, the Friends group is an essential partner in the Library’s success.

Another valuable ally is the [Tompkins County Public Library Foundation](#), which supports the Library through fundraising and inspiring community support. The Foundation serves as a bridge between the Library and the community, encouraging engagement through philanthropy and participation.

Guided by the input of patrons and non-users alike, the Library’s Board of Trustees and Strategic Plan Committee have crafted a new [mission and vision](#) which put our patrons front and center. Our organization’s first-ever equity statement demonstrates our unwavering commitment to ensuring TCPL is a place for everyone, and our values express that which we hold most dear. Upon these foundations, we have arrayed a set of strategic goals, unified around the theme of sustaining our current work, and building upon it to welcome and serve even more people, how and where they need us. Learn more by visiting the [library’s website](#).

TCPL at a Glance

- Central Library of the five-county **Finger Lakes Library System** consortium
- **35,000** registered borrowers
- Annual circulation of approximately **800,000**
- **77,000** Internet sessions per year
- More than **40,000** children and adults reached through programming and outreach in 2018
- Over **3,000** children, teens, and adults registered for summer reading programs
- **Hundreds** of community groups meet regularly at the library, free of charge
- Nearly **500** volunteers provide more than **9,600** annual hours of service to the library
- Close to **7,000** social media followers

Equity Statement

Tompkins County Public Library (TCPL) believes that the library is for everyone. We value diverse opinions and respect free speech. Different points of view are allowed and welcomed.

TCPL also supports patrons' right to a library environment free of harassment and intimidation. TCPL views all manifestations of prejudice and intolerance that target particular individuals or interfere with patrons' ability to use the library as contradictory to our mission and violations of our Code of Conduct. We expect patrons and staff to contribute to a welcoming environment.

Governance

The Tompkins County Public Library is governed by a Board of Trustees (the Board) appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature. Trustees are bound by the duties of integrity, responsibility, respect, and loyalty.

The Board is accountable to the:

- Library's mission and cultural heritage;
- values and principles that guide and shape the library's mission;
- public interest and public trust; and,
- legitimate and relevant interests of the Library's various constituencies.

The Board broadly defines the mission of the Library, determines generally the types of programs the Library will offer, and is ultimately accountable for the quality of the Library experience. The Board also bears special responsibility to help the Library anticipate natural or manmade disasters or other crises that may profoundly disrupt the operation and/or financial stability of the institution.

Maintaining the Library's fiscal integrity is fundamental to the Board's responsibilities. The Board bears ultimate legal responsibility for approving the Library's annual budget and for monitoring the Library's fiscal welfare. The Board is the ultimate fiduciary of the Library, even though day-to-day operations are properly delegated to its administration.

One of the Board's most important duties is to select a Library Director who provides vision and leadership not only for both the library and our greater community. The Board also determines the Director's compensation and assesses the Director's performance.

The Position

The Tompkins County Public Library Director is a New York State Civil Service position hired through the Tompkins County Department of Human Resources. The full job description and minimum qualifications are available on the [Tompkins County website](#).

Minimum Qualifications

Graduation from an ALA-accredited school or program with a graduate degree in library or information studies *and* possession of—or eligibility for—a New York State Public Librarian’s Professional Certificate *and* eight years of satisfactory professional library experience in a library of recognized standing, two years of which must have been in an administrative capacity.¹

Summary of Essential Duties

As a professional librarian and leader under the general direction of the Board of Trustees, the Library Director has overall responsibility for carrying out the goals and objectives of the Tompkins County Public Library and for supervising its professional librarians and support staff. This responsibility includes the management of annual and long-range planning, service delivery, comprehensive programs, government relations, public and community relations, physical facilities, fiscal affairs, resource development, personnel and labor relations, and compliance with all laws and regulations. The Director also ensures that the library goals and objectives reflect the library’s strategic plan, including its mission statement and the needs of populations to be served, and that these goals and objectives are communicated to the library’s public. The Director performs all related duties as required.

Civil Service

The Civil Service governs the hiring of the Library’s director, and the majority of its employees. This position does require participation in a Civil Service Exam, although it is not an exam in the traditional sense. Rather, the exam is a “Training and Experience Exam” that is essentially a list of questions regarding the candidate’s education and experience as relevant to the director position. To learn more, please visit the [New York State Library Association Guide to Civil Service in New York State](#).

¹ Administrative experience shall include—but not be limited to—at least two activities such as institutional planning, organizing, budgeting, communicating, or any other experience that would be considered qualifying as determined by the Tompkins County Commissioner of Human Resources.

The Ideal Candidate

Community Builder

- Works collaboratively with the Library Board, Library staff, the Friends, the Library Foundation, local government officials and key stakeholders to chart and execute the Library's mission
- Communicates with community residents, library customers, and library staff with openness and responsiveness
- Has a high level of political astuteness in working with both elected and appointed officials at all levels of government and other key community stakeholders
- Is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Acts with a high level of integrity and develops relationships based on dependability and honesty
- Works successfully with local leaders in nonprofits, education, local elected officials and businesses
- Demonstrates cultural competence and has a history of responsiveness to community residents, library users, and library staff
- Is customer service-oriented
- Is active in professional and civic organizations

Communicator

- Develops and communicates a shared vision of library services
- Advocates passionately and effectively for the library, its staff, the services it provides, and the constituencies it serves
- Communicates openly, clearly, logically, and concisely
- Serves as an eloquent, effective, and visible voice for the library in the community and interacts effectively with the media
- Provides timely, accurate, and relevant information on critical issues to the Library Board, library staff, colleagues, and the public
- Is an attentive and respectful listener
- Has a sense of humor

Innovative and Visionary Leader

- Creates and nurtures an environment in which excellence and innovation thrive
- Develops and communicates a compelling vision of a modern public library, with services and programs responsive to community needs and interests
- Promotes a transformational culture that guides, supports, and advocates for Library employees and volunteers
- Has a knowledge of current trends and best practices in public libraries
- Continuously works to improve the customer experience by identifying and developing excellent staff and implementing new services and technology
- Has a proven track record of managing change and fostering continuous improvement including alternative service delivery initiatives
- Exhibits intellectual curiosity and demonstrates a commitment to personal lifelong learning

Selection Process and Timeline

The Board of Trustees will offer an attractive and competitive salary commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. The current salary range is \$95,000 - \$125,000. In addition, a benefits package will be provided that includes health insurance, retirement contributions, and paid leave.

How to Apply

Visit <https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/personnel> to apply:

1. On the left side of the screen, choose "Vacancy List."
2. Find the TCPL Library Director opportunity to review the full job description.
3. Select "Apply."
4. Create your profile to continue. Complete the application and upload a cover letter and curriculum vitae or résumé and any other supporting documentation you would like us to consider. Call 607-274-5526 for assistance with any questions or challenges.

Applicants must submit complete applications by January 31, 2021 to be considered for the position.

The Tompkins County Public Library is committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage others with similar values to apply.

Timeline

A selection committee comprised of Trustees, Library Staff, and other Library Stakeholders will be screening applications and conducting interviews. Candidates selected for initial interviews should hear from us by March 22, 2021. We expect all interviews to be conducted remotely, given our current public health crisis.

Initial interviews are expected to be held during the week of March 29, 2021

Final interviews are expected to be conducted the week of April 12, 2021. Each finalist should plan on a full day of interview activity and interaction.

We would like to fill the position by no later than June 1, 2021.

Learn more about the County, the library system, the position, and how to apply by emailing Michelle Benjamin at mbenjamin@tcpl.org or call 607-272-4557 x228.