

The Roseville Public Library began on May 1, 1936 as a small room in the old Municipal Building at 27700 Gratiot Ave, called the Erin-Roseville Public Library, which was run by the Roseville-Erin Township Library Association. The Erin Township Board gave the association a \$100 check and 733 old books from the Erin Township Library to get started. At the time, the Library's service population was approximately 9,000 and the Library sought to meet the public's demand for books. With just one part-time librarian, Beatrice Murphy, the Library was only open two hours each day, six days a week. In the first year, the Library averaged 452 books checked out each month. By 1938, the collection had grown to over 5,000 items for checkout and 549 registered borrowers. Loaned books increased from 3,606 in 1937 to 7,350 in 1938. Most of these were fiction books.



The increase in demand for library services, as the population grew, led to a branch office of the Erin-Roseville Public Library opening in the Fraser Municipal Building in 1949 for 1 year. In 1951, the Library leased the building next door, 27738 Gratiot Ave, to expand its space and the growing collection. Demand kept growing. Non-fiction books became popular and book checkouts were often around 7,500 items each month. In 1956, a new library building was constructed on the other side of Gratiot, at 27251 Gratiot Ave. At the end of 1958, Roseville became an incorporated city, and Erin Township dissolved. In 1960, the Roseville Public Library expanded its third building, doubling in size, and purchased land for a parking lot. In 1961, Beatrice Murphy, the library's first librarian, who became the Director in 1937, retired and Shirley V. Brabant, the first professionally trained Director was named as her replacement.



The 1950s showed a population explosion in Roseville, rising from 15,816 in 1950 to 50,195 in 1960. In 1970, Roseville reached its highest population of 60,529 and the construction of I-696 was in progress, and plans were made for the construction of a new Civic Center complex, to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding city. The groundbreaking was in 1974 and the official dedication was June 1975. The Civic Center Complex is home to City Hall offices, City Council Chambers and the Roseville Public Library, which all share the same building at 29777 Gratiot Ave. This is the Library's fourth and current location. The Civic Center Complex also houses Roseville Fire Station 1 & Fire Department Head Quarters, the 39<sup>th</sup> District Court, and Roseville Police Department, with SERESA just across Common Rd.



After residing in the Civic Center Complex for 21 years, the Library desperately needed more space, so an expansion and renovation project was proposed. It began with a groundbreaking event on September 23, 1996, adding 12,869 square feet of space and renovating the existing 16,282 square feet, and an additional 3,080 square foot partial basement. The completion of the expansion project was celebrated at the library dedication as part of the City's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on June 20, 1998. The expansion added a large dedicated youth space, Michigan History Room and archives storage, and more space for collections in the adult areas. The renovation also brought a new main entrance and dedicated parking lot for the Library off of Kelly Rd. & Common Rd.



With the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, the Library had to quickly adjust its services that were primarily in-person. The staff were quick to adapt, hosting virtual programs and answering reference questions from home. With federal grant funding, the Library added Wi-Fi hotspots to the collection for Roseville patrons to checkout for home internet access. The Library also added Curbside services for when people were ill, or the library had to close inside. The hotspots have become a very popular collection and Curbside services have continued. The Library also provided free COVID test kits, provided by MDHHS, from 2021 until 2025. In 2022, the Library went Fine Free, eliminating overdue fines for items that are returned late. This allowed for the reduction of barriers and removal of shame associated with late returns. For those who still wanted to pay, the Library put out a donation box at the Checkout desk, which funds prizes for reading programs, collections purchases and more. Since the Library went fine free, we've received more than \$3,300 in the donation box.



In November 2023, the residents of Roseville voted in favor of a city improvement bond proposal, which allocated some renovation funds for major upgrades for the Library, as well as both Fire Stations, DPW, Rotary Park (now George & Maggie Rollinger Park), and other City buildings. This funded 2/3 of the Library's renovation, while the rest came from the Library's own savings. This began the renovation process, with the staff diligently planning how to continue to operate at a limited capacity for the duration.

On March 31, 2025, the Library closed for Curbside-only for 1 week to set up a miniature version of the Library in the Erin Meeting Room, fondly called the Pocket Library. From April 7<sup>th</sup> until December 20<sup>th</sup>, the Library staff operated out of the Pocket Library with the newest & most popular collection items, 2 public computers, and our copier, scanner, and fax machines. Old furniture and book sale items were sold off at the middle of May and the library staff packed up the rest of the library collection on 250 large wooden book carts to be moved to storage. Library staff then moved into close quarters in the basement.





Library programs were hosted outside the library, on the library lawn or a Roseville park while weather permitted. Some programs also took place at Macomb Mall, the Recreation Center, and in the library and City Hall lobbies. Take & Make craft kits were very popular and helped bridge the gap of in-person programs. As our usual location for our Christmas Workshop event was hosting the Pocket Library, library staff set up crafts, popcorn, cotton candy, and balloon twisters in a tent in the City Hall parking lot, welcoming 400 people.



In November 2025, the residents of Roseville voted in favor of the renewal of the Library's 10-year operating millage, which continued a third of the library's operating millage at the same tax rate, with no increase. On December 22, 2025, the Library again switched to Curbside-only services as the final work on the library renovation was completed. The book carts returned and staff swiftly moved the collections to their new homes and worked tirelessly to get everything organized quickly. On March 28, 2026, the Library hosted a small "Preview" event for the Library's biggest supporters to get a first look at the library before it reopened.

On April 1, 2026, the Library re-opened to the public with full services and hours. The entire building was updated with new flooring and paint, with new ceiling tiles and lights in the public areas and a few staff areas. Four small study rooms, 3 mid-size meeting rooms, and a large conference room were added to meet demand for private spaces. A café with seating and vending machines was built to allow people to eat in the building. Custom built public service desks and shelving structures were added, as well as old shelving adjusted and re-finished. The Teen Area moved across the Library and is located next to the brand-new makerspace room. Dedicated areas were created for the public copier, scanner & fax machine and the Friends Used Book Sale.

Since re-opening, the Library has seen more foot traffic than even before the start of the renovation. Reference interactions have nearly doubled and new library card applications surpassed previous April averages in just two and a half weeks.

May 1, 2026 is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Roseville Public Library and this renovation is giving the Library new life as we head towards 100 years of service in Roseville.



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