

New Castle Public Library

207 East North Street
New Castle, Pa. 16101

“Knowledge Is For Life”

Here are some FAQs you will want to know.

As of April 13, 2023

1. Why is the elevator broken? Was it maintained? Can the elevator be fixed or switched out?

The elevator, even after being maintained for almost 43 years, has reached the end of its useful life. The elevator has been regularly maintained and inspected by the library. The needed repairs make it more cost effective to replace the elevator.
2. When will the elevator be replaced? How much longer is the library going to be located on the first floor?

Upon an agreement with the City of New Castle, the owner of the building, the timeline will be determined and the installation period will be 4–8 months once the contract for the elevator is executed.
3. How much does it cost to replace the elevator? Are bids currently being solicited?

The cost of the elevator and its associated electrical components is between \$120,000 and \$175,000. Bids are currently being solicited.
4. Why can we not go upstairs/downstairs?

Without the elevator, we cannot provide access to either the basement or the 2nd floor for the public because of ADA-compliance requirements and liability.
5. Who is to pay for these improvements?

The work—maintenance and capital improvements—is pending an agreement with the City of New Castle.
6. Are there any fundraising efforts for the elevator?

A funding strategy is currently pending an agreement with the City of New Castle.
7. Why not look into grants?

The library has lined up possible grant opportunities; however, grantors and the Keystone Grant (State Library grant) require a lease or agreement in place. As soon as we have a lease in place, we can apply for these available grants.
8. Why didn't the Library ask the commissioners for money?

In the process of acquiring a lease agreement, this process will be spelled out. The commissioners have been informed regularly on the status of our pending agreement with the City of New Castle.

9. Where did previous surpluses in your budget go? The New Castle Public Library is not required to have a balanced budget. Surpluses go toward rebuilding emergency reserves.
10. Are there any funds available at this point? How much money has been retained for replacement? Grant options are available and we will pursue them following a lease agreement.
11. Is the Library allowed to spend / should we spend Library money on the building? Until a lease agreement is executed, we do not know how to proceed. Without ownership, the library cannot contract to replace the elevator.
12. How are the finances given by the City of New Castle? Following a City of New Castle referendum in the 1970s, property owners provide a fraction of a mill of their real estate tax to the library. The City of New Castle collects these funds and transmits the full amount to the New Castle Public Library. Money received from the City of New Castle has significantly decreased from when the building was constructed in 1979–80 because of a drop in the tax base.
13. How are finances given by Lawrence County? Lawrence County provides a budgetary allocation each year to the Lawrence County Federated Library System, which was formed in 1998. Through this system, a formula is used to distribute money to the three libraries in Lawrence County.
14. Do we want the City of New Castle in “our” library? The Library Board of Trustees would consider any reasonable resolutions to the problem with public input.
15. Is there enough room for the City of New Castle to relocate their offices within the New Castle Public Library? Upon request, on November 9, 2022, the Library provided four options to the City of New Castle for possible space arrangements on the first floor.
16. What will happen regarding parking if the City of New Castle relocates to the Library? If that happens, proper accommodations will be made for parking.
17. Why is there no agreement between the City of New Castle and the New Castle Public Library? No agreement was made when the current library was built in 1979. The current Library board only recently discovered this fact.
18. Why is the City of New Castle not doing anything about the building/repairs? This question should be addressed to the City officials.

19. Am I giving the City of New Castle money in my will/estate? If you desire to donate to the New Castle Public Library, monies can be designated for exclusive purposes. We recommend that potential donors speak with their attorneys in consultation with the library.
20. Who owns the current building? Who owned the previous buildings? The current (1980–) property on the corner of North and Mill Streets is owned by the City of New Castle.
- The previous (1938–1980) property, located on the corner of North and Mercer Streets also was owned by the City of New Castle.
- However, the 1925–1938 property, at the corner of North and Jefferson Streets was owned by the New Castle Public Library.
21. Why would you put the safety of our children at risk on the first floor? Is the library safe? We believe children using our Library are safe. Our staff is particularly attentive to our youngest patrons. The safety of all of our patrons is the most important thing to the Library.
22. Why isn't there a separate restroom for the children? Where is there a place to change my child? There is a process in place to modify the current restrooms as family restrooms to accommodate our situation.
23. Where are all of the toys? These toys are currently being utilized for programming or are safely stored away.
24. How has children's programming been impacted by the relocation to the first floor? The amount of programming for children has increased. This has resulted in us serving more children more often.
25. How long will the Friends have a designated space on the first floor? A space on the first floor will be provided until the Friends can return to their previous space downstairs.
26. How has this impacted the Friends' finances? Being upstairs has provided more awareness of our Friends of New Castle Public Library's Book Cellar. While book sales have slightly decreased, non-book sales have increased. The Friends are doing everything possible to accommodate customers.