SETH MICHAEL JAMES

Indiana | sethmjames@pm.me | linkedin.com/in/sethmjames | Open to remote or relocation

SUMMARY

Public library director with more than 15 years in libraries who gets complex projects approved and delivered. Leads a staff of more than 20 and a budget of over $2.3 million, working with a Board of Trustees, two county governments, township boards, and a school board. Initiated and delivered a $4.6 million renovation, and selected, negotiated, and launched a new integrated library system.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Multi-Stakeholder Relationship Management
- Budget Ownership and Resource Allocation
- Team Leadership and Coaching
- Cross-Functional Collaboration
- Vendor Selection and Contract Negotiation
- Discovery and Needs Assessment
- Project Delivery and Change Management
- Metadata and Knowledge Organization

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Library Director | Nappanee Public Library, Nappanee, Indiana *2022 to present*

Strategic, operational, and financial leadership of a public library serving 10,000+ residents in a rural, culturally diverse community with a large Amish population.

- Initiated a $4.6M interior renovation, won approval from the city council, county council, and Board of Trustees, and led it to completion under budget, with three closure days.
- Ran the selection of a new integrated library system: led a committee that scored three vendors on cost, support, process fit, and migration experience, negotiated the contract, and won Board of Trustees approval. Managed the vendor through implementation and the 2024 launch, and oversaw training for all staff.
- Led the creation of a new strategic plan, informed by a community survey offered online and on paper. The plan was formally implemented in early 2026.
- Lead a staff of more than 20, including 7 direct reports, and manage an annual operating budget of over $2.3 million.
- Work closely with a Board of Trustees, two counties' commissioners and councils, multiple township boards, and a school board, and manage relationships with local leaders, business owners, and community stakeholders.
- Present to the Board of Trustees 13+ times a year, and have never lost a vote before the Board, the county councils and commissioners, or the school board.
- Oversee the local history museum, its exhibits, and its large-scale digitization projects.

Special Collections Manager | Vigo County Public Library, Terre Haute, Indiana *2018 to 2022*

- Supervised four employees across reference services and archival processing.
- Managed the selection and execution of large-scale digitization projects, including the LSTA-funded John A. Curry Architectural Works project of more than 4,000 images, now published on Indiana Memory.
- Taught library resources and archival research to university classes.

Earlier roles

Assistant to the Head of Public Services, Lilly Library, Indiana University | *2016 to 2018*

Information Assistant, Monroe County Public Library, Bloomington, Indiana | *2016 to 2018*

Course Assistant, Department of History, Indiana University | *2017 to 2018*

Assistant to the Director, Albion District Library, Albion, Michigan | *2013 to 2015*. Supervised eight part-time staff and handled accounts payable, invoicing, and payroll.

Reference and Circulation Assistant, Hillsdale College library | *2008 to 2012*

SKILLS

CRM: Salesforce (Trailhead, in progress)

Sales methodology: Challenger Sale, SPIN Selling

Technical: Integrated library systems, archival management systems, metadata schema, digitization workflows

EDUCATION

Master of Library Science, Indiana University | *2018*. Specialization in rare books and manuscripts.

Master of History, Indiana University | *2018*

Bachelor of Arts in English, Hillsdale College | *2012*

Indiana State Library Certification (LC2)