

# Bristol Public Library Board of Directors

## Strategic Recommendations

February 2018



**SUMMIT**

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## Executive Summary

The Bristol Public Library is both a cornerstone of public exploration, learning and civic engagement in our community and one of the crown jewels of Downtown Bristol. The Bristol Public Library Board of Trustees and staff are to be congratulated for leading the library through a remarkable decade of success punctuated by the building of a state of the art library facility, the institution of the Jones Learning Lab and both the creation and expansion of the first teen library in the region.

The challenge going forward is not how to replicate the successes of the past but to discover new horizons for the future – a future that looks very different from the past. Over the past year and a half under the supervision of Executive Director Amy Kimani and the Bristol Public Library Board of Trustees under chairs Carl Williams, Jr. and Gloria Oster, the Summit Companies has developed a set of recommendations that build on the successes of the past to create an even greater future.

The Bristol Public Library's clearly articulated strategic intent and brand promise is to expand minds and promote community within our twin city. Through numerous citizen focus groups and discussions with library staff and board members, the following initiatives are either in progress or under consideration:

- Implement Integrated Social Media Communications Strategy
- Increase Resource Rich, Skill-Sharing Community Programming
- Increase Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships
- Increase Intergenerational and Multi-Generational Programming
- Provide Better Services for the Downtown Homeless Population
- Implement Quality Measurement and Benchmarking
- Increase the Number of Master Librarians on Staff
- Integrate Programming, Partnerships and Promotion for Greater Community Impact!

## Process Overview

The strategic recommended development process involved five elements: (1) an initial board and staff survey based on the Public Library Association, (2) an on-site observation of library operations, (3) community focus groups and library tours, (4) an exhaustive board governance excellence survey and (5) an analytical comparison with similar libraries nationwide using two national databases.

This report will be used in a daylong staff-board workshop, the purpose which will be to write the next book in the Bristol Public Library's history within our community through the implementation of these recommendations, modified as the board and staff deem appropriate, over the course of the next five fiscal years.

## Data Collection and Analysis

### Initial Board and Staff Survey

In October 2016, we began the strategic planning process by conducting a survey with the board and staff using a questionnaire based on the Public Library Association (PLA) Service Areas. The survey and analysis were designed to provide important, directionally useful information regarding board and staff priorities by identifying where there is broad agreement in service area priorities and where there is less agreement or gaps in priorities. The areas of broad agreement have validated the Service Areas that both the board and staff agree are core operations of our public library. The gaps have provided useful insight into Service Area foci that need more clarification between board and staff.

The board and staff agreed that the library should provide these services (in order of priority):

1. Providing access to information for individuals to educate themselves on a wide array of topics
2. Providing reading, viewing, and listening materials for residents to enjoy in their leisure time
3. Answering questions for individuals on a wide array of topics
4. Providing a comfortable and welcoming safe space for individuals and groups
5. Providing residents with public internet access
6. Providing support to adults and teens to improve their literacy
7. Educating individuals on how to collect, evaluate, and use information

The board and staff agreed that the public library should not provide the following services (in order of priority):

1. Providing business owners and nonprofit directors with the resources and information to lead their organizations
2. Assisting new immigrants with successfully participating in American life
3. Assisting students with homework
4. Helping individuals be informed and prepared to fulfill their civic duties and fully participate in community decision making
5. Helping young children learn to read and write before they enter school

There was disagreement between the board and staff as to whether the library should offer the following services:

1. Assisting individuals with accessing the resources that they need to make decisions about their health, wealth, and other life choices
2. Providing individuals with the resources to express their creativity in multiple forms of media

## **Expanding Minds: Readiness and Research**

Any gaps between the board and staff seem to indicate either: (1) a difference of opinion on the importance of these service areas to the overall mission or (2) a difference in understanding what work product these service areas are supposed to deliver. An example of the latter is the role of the library in supporting students with school assignments. Executive Director Kimani noted that the staff are very clear that: (1) they do not feel it is their role to provide homework assistance because they do not want to confuse students with methodologies that may be different than those used by different teachers in different classes from different schools and (2) the evidence is at best mixed regarding whether or not it is beneficial to teach children to learn to read and write before they enter school. However as noted later in this report, Rogers Public Library is a peer library that offers literacy readiness classes for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Providing readiness classes is not teaching reading but would nonetheless be a valuable service to parents and children alike.

Library users and the community need to be better informed regarding the role library staff should play in supporting student homework assignments. There is a nuanced difference between providing resources for students to prepare assignments and actually providing assistance in preparing the assignments. The former is consistent with the highest ranked service area by the staff in “providing access to information for individuals to educate themselves on a wide array of topics,” whereas the latter is clearly the role of teachers rather than librarians. In other words, it is the librarian’s role to assist the student in conducting their research by following the teacher’s guidelines. The librarian’s role is not to assist in preparing the assignment but only to assist students in conducting their research. The classical role of librarians has been to filter, sort and index materials, which is more important than ever in the digital age.

## **Building Community: Convening**

The question regarding BPL’s role in promoting civic engagement is something that also warrants further deliberation since “Building Community” is prominently articulated in the BPL mission statement. It should be noted that the library consultants interviewed by the Nobel and Kegley Foundation Trustees when developing the plans for the new library indicated that libraries were becoming the new center for civic and community engagement in the public sphere. One consultant even remarked that the library was taking the place of the City Hall as the center of community life.

In one sense, this is consistent with “providing a comfortable and welcoming safe space for individuals and groups.” This raises the question, to what extent is simply providing space “building community?” And the follow-up question is to what degree should the library take a leadership role in active convening? In *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block states:

Convening leaders create and manage social space within which citizens get deeply engaged. Through this engagement, citizens discover that it is in their power to resolve something or at least move the action forward. Engagement, and the accountability that grows out of it, occurs when we ask people to be in charge of their own experience and act on the well-being of the whole. Leaders do this by naming a new context and convening people into new conversations through questions that demand personal investment. This is what triggers the choice to be accountable for those things over which we can have power, even though we may have no control.

There are many issues in our community that could be addressed by this level of cross-disciplinary community wide conveying including but not limited to: addiction, childhood obesity and diabetes, homelessness, economic development and many others. The library could, for example, host a community conversation series with sponsorships from relevant community organizations that have expertise on pressing topics selected for community wide conversation.

Both the board and staff expressly agreed that helping immigrants assimilate into our community was not the role of the public library. It is unclear whether or not this sentiment is a result of the recent anti-immigration mood that is sweeping the country or whether there are concerns about serving legal versus illegal immigrants or whether serving that population is interpreted as going beyond the library's function to provide information. Inarguably, the public schools and universities in our region have benefited from foreign exchange students and our community has benefited from many prominent businesses that were started by first generation Americans. So, this is an important policy question that should be reconsidered from a community rather than political perspective. The reasonable ranges of solutions to this policy question are wide enough to accommodate reasonable positions offered by reasonable people. Whatever the solution, the policy should be consistent with the library's function to provide information that assists legal immigrants to the same degree as other citizens.

## On-Site Observation

During the months of November and December 2016, the library was observed during morning and afternoon operating hours. The children and teen areas are clearly underutilized during school hours. The most significant observation of note is the large population of homeless patrons that utilize the library during the morning and early afternoon hours. One staff member responded on the survey that they suspected that some of these patrons could be engaging in illicit activities. Our observation is that their behavior is generally appropriate, although it appears that some of these patrons may be intellectually low functioning while some others may suffer from behavioral health issues. Many of these patrons spend the majority of their time listening to music, texting and browsing on their smart phones. Others spend their time studying newspaper articles and periodicals. The selection of articles and periodicals would seem to suggest that some portion of our homeless patrons have postsecondary education. These are anecdotal rather than scientific observations and are meant to convey a sense that these patrons are not necessarily a demographically monolithic group. It has been reported that our homeless patrons include former physicians, attorneys, police officers, college

1 Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler (2009), 88

professors as well as veterans of our armed forces. However, caution is strongly recommended as we are only speaking in general rather than clinical terms and it is not our intention to label patrons but rather to share observations that professional guidance on this issue is recommended for the benefit of these citizens and patrons in the interest of the common good.

To be very clear, many board members and staff are deeply concerned for the wellbeing of homeless citizens who have no other place to go during the daytime and many may not be employable. This raises important operational considerations with significant moral, ethical and legal implications. First, would this population be better served, for example, by a day center staffed with social service professionals who can assist them in finding suitable housing, employment and behavioral health services? Second, because many in this population are using the library as a daytime shelter for protection against the elements rather than for traditional library services, are some traditional users like mothers with young children, teens, and the elderly discouraged from using the library during the day?

Again, to be very clear, raising this issue is not in any way meant to disparage or discriminate against homeless citizens nor is there any intent to discontinue services for this population segment. They have every right to use public services and it is in the public good that they have someplace to go during the day. The question is not should we, but rather, how do we best serve our homeless in a manner that will allow them to flourish relative to their context. With this background, we have initiated a work group with social service professionals and relevant United Way agencies to carefully study this issue over the coming year and provide a report with evidence-based recommendations to the board and our community by the end of the next fiscal year.

Getting back to the fundamental point, we recommend that the board and staff fully consider these issues and develop a clearly articulated philosophy regarding its role in promoting civic engagement since “Building Community” is something that most fruitfully occurs in the context of *res publica*. Walter Isaacson made the following observation on libraries and the common good in his biography of Benjamin Franklin, the founder of the first subscription library in The United States:

A fundamental aspect of Franklin’s life, and of the American society he helped to create, was that individualism and communitarianism, so seemingly contradictory, were interwoven. . . . Franklin was the epitome of this admixture of self-reliance and civic involvement, and what he exemplified became part of American character. . . . The Library Company of Philadelphia was incorporated in 1731, when Franklin was 27. Its motto, written by Franklin, reflected the connection he made between goodness and godliness: *Communiter Bona profunderere Deum est* (To pour forth benefits for the common good is divine). . . . “These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans,” Franklin later noted, and “made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries.”

It is not our role to convince the board one way or the other on how it should promulgate its mission, but it is our objective to invite the board to engage in an intentional conversation on the “Building Community” component of its mission to determine what it means as well as how it should be pursued and to what degree.

2 Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 103-4

## Community Focus Groups and Library Tours

A series of focus group meetings with library tours were conducted during the first part of calendar year 2017. There were two adult focus groups, two teen focus groups and one senior focus group. Following the library tour the most common comments were “The Bristol Public Library is Bristol’s best kept secret” and “Wow! I had no idea all this was here!”

Focus group attendees were asked to brainstorm in the following three areas: (1) programs and services, (2) materials, media and tech and (3) marketing and communications. The focus groups developed the following general recommendations:

- Become a skills-sharing community hub
- More afternoon/ afterschool programs for teens and tweens
- Offer combined adult/children programs (e.g., parent-child and grandparent child)
- Promote/cross-sell programs between departments (e.g., promote adult programs in children’s areas, promote special programs)
- Offer more evening programs on interesting topics
- Develop more community partnerships
- Social media, social media, social media
- Market to group dynamics: “All come or none come”

Focus group participants expressed strong interest for increased arts and skills-based programming in collaboration with local experts and other community institutions and businesses (e.g., BCM, BMS, Lowe’s etc.). Importantly, a partnership programming strategy can be designed to increase library visits, total number and diversity of programs, and may improve program quality. Local young people also asked for more multigenerational program, so they could enjoy the library with their older relatives and family friends. The supervision of those programs is critical and will require internal resource commitment; however, this could be a budget neutral way to significantly increase programming without adding staff. The Partnership Program initiative fits perfectly with BPL’s brand promise, “Expanding Minds and Building Community.” Recommendations from the focus groups will be covered in more depth later in this report.

## Board Governance Excellence Survey

A comprehensive board governance survey was conducted in late February 2017. Seven trustees responded to the survey, which included 81 questions regarding all facets of board management oversight. A duplicate question was included in the survey to compare rater consistency: “The Library is actively engaging new

3 <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2015/11/managing-libraries/lj-index/class-of-2015/americas-star-libraries-2015-top-rated-libraries/>. Note that this analysis uses the 2015 data since the analysis began before the 2016 data was released.



patrons with its marketing.” Raters responded with a high degree of consistency to the duplicate question (71.4%). The raters scores were converted to z-scores to adjust for individual rater central tendency.

The items with the lowest scores were identified as follows:

	Z-Score	Opportunities for Improvement
The Library is receiving as much media coverage as it needs	-1.74	
The Board has a clear conflict of interest policy in place and board members sign COI disclosures at least annually	-1.46	
The Library's services are marketed effectively to the community	-1.38	
The patrons are aware of all of the services that the Library provides	-1.33	
Most of the community is familiar with the services that the Library provides	-1.14	
The Library has an effective process in place for recruiting new volunteers	-1.04	
The Library is actively engaging new patrons with its marketing	-0.97	
The Library has a strong process in place for measuring the effectiveness of its marketing	-0.95	
The Library has the necessary tools available to adequately communicate with and inform the community of its activities	-0.92	
The Library is actively engaging new patrons with its marketing	-0.92	

TABLE 1: LIBRARY BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The items with the most positive ratings were identified as:

	Z-Score	Leverage for Success
The Library regularly looks for opportunities to improve different aspects of its operations	0.70	
The Board and Executive Director have well-coordinated duties and complement each other's efforts	0.70	
Board discussions during meetings stay on topic and focus on important issues	0.71	
The Library is able to keep debt at a reasonable and manageable level	0.71	
All policies are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they are relevant and compliant	0.83	
All members of the Board are familiar with the Library's mission, vision, and values	0.87	
Critical decisions are made with careful analysis of all sides of the issue	0.88	
All Board meetings follow a clear agenda that is published at least a week in advance of the meeting	0.89	
Board meetings are held at regular intervals and begin and end on time	0.90	
The current financial statements provide useful and clear information to decision makers	1.10	

TABLE 2: LIBRARY BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT STRENGTHS TO LEVERAGE FOR SUCCESS

Clearly, the board of trustees has identified marketing as its number one deficiency. The board has also rated its board governance practices as a strength. What is striking about this data is that highest and lowest responses share a remarkably consistent theme: governance is the library's strength and marketing is the library's weakness. The former is apparent by even a cursory review of the minutes which demonstrate that management and the board are working very hard to update both governance and operating policies and procedures. The board is also equally concerned that marketing remains a significant deficiency. Our observations over the course of our study have confirmed that the board has correctly identified its top strength and weakness.

## Comparison with Other Libraries

### Comparison with Regional and National Libraries

#### Library Magazine Comparisons

During the month of November 2016, we examined the prior year's public library rankings in Library Magazine. This survey contains statistical information on 9,310 public libraries in the United States. The per capita data had to be manually corrected because, as Amy Kimani noted, the Library Magazine database only reported the population of Bristol, Virginia, rather than the combined population of both cities.

However, comparison against even similar sized libraries can be misleading because many of those libraries are located in communities with very different demographic and socio-economic profiles. For example, the leading 5-Star library that is reported as similar in size to BPL is the Mary Riley Stiles Library in Falls Church, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C. where income and education levels are markedly higher. While many of the 5-Star Library measures are relevant, benchmarking against libraries with similar sized budgets may be very misleading (see Exhibit A).

Therefore, the database was filtered to examine 33 libraries in the country with similar budget and demographics to the BPL. The criteria included libraries with a budget of between \$1,800,000 and \$2,000,000 (See Exhibit B). In relation to similar sized libraries across the country, the BPL is generating higher number of visits per annum when compared to the average.

However, the comparison with this data set reveals that BPL's per capita visits trail Hickory Public Library in North Carolina and per capita program attendance trails Roger's Public Library in Arkansas. These measures are, in effect, market penetration measures. They measure how much of the population is using the public library. The assumption throughout this report is that increasing library utilization positively impacts literacy, lifelong learning and enhances civic engagement, all of which taken together fulfills the BPL's mission statement to be about the business of "Expanding Minds. Building Community."

4. Keith Curry Lance & Ray Lyons, "America's Star Libraries, 2015: Top-Rated Libraries," in The Library Journal, November 2, 2015, <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2015/11/managing-libraries/lj-index/class-of-2015/americas-star-libraries-2015-top-rated-libraries/>, accessed November 2016. Note: this analysis uses the 2015 data since this analysis began before the 2016 data was released.

	POPULATION	BUDGET	VISITS
BRISTOL PUBLIC LIBRARY	45,000	\$1,917,552	246,887
SAMPLE AVERAGE (33 LIBRARIES)	41,695	\$1,889,402	213,214
VARIANCE AGAINST SAMPLE	3,305	28,150	33,673

TABLE 3: BPL BUDGET AND VISITS PER ANNUM COMPARED WITH NATIONAL COMPS

Library	City	St	Population	Expenditures	Score	Per Capita Circulation	Per Capita Visits	Per Capita Program Attendance	Online Usage Per Capita	Total FTEs	Volumes	Collection Expenditures
Rogers Public Library (Adjusted)	Rogers	AR	56,000	\$1,962,471	720	12.25	3.80	0.93	0.93	40.90	145,222	\$280,275
Henderson County Public Library	Henderson	KY	46,513	\$1,869,855	449	8.87	4.76	0.19	0.80	25.00	98,936	\$320,024
Marshall County Public Library	Benton	KY	31,344	\$1,926,246	622	16.81	6.69	0.41	0.82	29.50	181,624	\$275,183
Scott County Public Library	Georgetown	KY	49,057	\$1,808,290	496	8.26	4.10	0.51	0.95	23.01	95,647	\$257,966
Hickory Public Library	Hickory	NC	40,039	\$1,927,412	671	8.15	9.13	0.59	1.79	24.94	120,278	\$299,945
Bristol Public Library (Adjusted)	Bristol	VA	44,544	\$1,919,373	Na	7.86	5.50	0.43	1.16	28.50	151,836	\$136,233
<b>Sample Average</b>			44,583	1,902,275	592	10.37	5.66	0.51	1.07	28.64	132,257	261,604
<b>BPL Variance to Average</b>			(39)	17,099	NA	(2.50)	(0.16)	(0.08)	0.09	(0.14)	19,579	(125,371)

TABLE 4: REGIONAL LIBRARY JOURNAL 5-STAR DATABASE COMPARISONS

### Hickory Public Library

The Hickory Public Library is in Hickory, North Carolina. Hickory is located in the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA and is the principal city. The population of Hickory was reported as 40,010 in the 2010 Census. Per capita income was reported at \$23,263. Bristol TN-VA has a combined population of 44,544 and a weighted average per capita income of \$18,045. The Hickory Public Library has two locations, the Patrick Beaver Memorial Library and the Ridgeview branch. One feature that may drive up per capita library visitation is that the main library is located on a campus that includes the Hickory Museum of Art, Catawba Science Center, the Hickory Choral Society and the United Arts Council. The branch library is located 1.5 miles from the main library and features bestsellers, DVDs, magazines, children's materials and computer workstations. The

5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hickory%2C\\_North\\_Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hickory%2C_North_Carolina)

6. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol,\\_Tennessee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol,_Tennessee), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol,\\_Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol,_Virginia)

Hickory Public Library is a branch of city government and does not host its own website. The library calendar located on the city government website indicates that the library offers an extensive and varied array of programming to accommodate all ages and interests including youth software coding, resume writing, children's book reading with therapy dogs, a Lego club, yoga, bingo and health related discussion groups (e.g., dementia, aging OCD).

Library attendance is dramatically impacted during special programs from the adjacent public venues. A staff librarian reported that there is a spike in visits and circulation during programs held at the science or art museums collocated on the campus. There is no publically available data with a breakdown of per capita visits between the main and branch libraries. From a cursory view of the calendar, it appears that approximately 40% of the programming is held at the branch library.

## **Rogers Public Library**

Rogers Public Library is in Rogers, Arkansas which is one city in the Fayetteville – Springdale – Rogers Metropolitan Area. Bentonville, the home of Walmart, is also located in this area. The city of Rogers has 55,964 residents and a per capita income of \$19,76. Again, Bristol TN-VA has a combined population of 44,544 and a weighted average per capita income of \$18,045. Seventy percent of the students in the Rogers' service area are on free and reduced lunch and 38% are Hispanic. Rogers' adjusted per capita program attendance is basically double BPL's per capita program attendance, .93 for Rogers compared to .43 for BPL.

To identify possible reasons for this difference, we noted that Rogers' website is attractive and easy to navigate. Rogers had six events scheduled for the Thursday that the website was accessed including: "Geek Display", "Drop in Tech Help", "Preschool Class for Ages 3 to 5 Years", "Full STEAM Ahead!" For Ages 5 – 12 Years, "Teen Movie Night" and a college sorority meeting. By contrast, BPL's website home page featured an upcoming event that occurred four months in the past. Navigating to the calendar page, only one program was listed "The Casual Word," which was the only recurring Thursday program on the main calendar for the month. There was a separate calendar for the Jones Creative Center that listed four recurring Thursday programs: GED, Adult Coloring, ESL and Creative Writing. BPL is offering five recurring Thursday programs to Rogers' six; additionally, BPL programs are not organized by age or other demographic and are promoted on two separate calendars that are not simple to navigate nor could they be easily accessed on mobile technology. As noted in this report, BPL is in the process of upgrading their website.

Rogers' Executive Director Judy Casey reports that the key factors for their strong program attendance is: (1) systematic outreach, (2) an annual author's program, (3) state initiatives to promote STEM and STEAM and (4) the public's interest in lifelong learning. First, the library staff implemented a deliberate process whereby staff members make three to five outreach calls every week. The staff also holds regular book

7. <http://www.hickorync.gov/content/library>

8. Both per capita program attendance figures are adjusted because the population of the respective communities is lower as reported in the Library Journal database than in the census numbers reported in Wikipedia.

talks at each of the schools. Additionally, the staff arranges speaking engagements at each school to recruit students for the summer reading club reaching between 10,000 – 15,000 students in grades K-6. Teachers and administrators support this initiative because it helps students maintain proficiency over the summer so that students get back up to speed more quickly at the start of the new term, which ultimately has a favorable effect on students standardized test scores. The Rogers Library Foundation and Friends group also sponsor a children’s author three-day visit to the library for conversations with 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. This attracts between 2,500 and 4,000 students per year. The state of Arkansas leads the nation in providing early coding education and heavily supports STEM and STEAM education in the public schools. Rogers Public Library has oriented a portion of its programming around these popular state initiatives. Like Bristol, Rogers’ service area is economically bifurcated. Both Walmart and Tyson Food’s corporate headquarters are located in nearby Bentonville, so a portion of their patrons from young families to retirees are more highly educated who deeply value lifelong learning. Director Casey stated that she views public libraries as the equivalent of free public universities. In fact, they intentionally market many of their programs using such terms as “Classes,” “Hands On” and “STEM” because that more effectively attracts their patron’s interest.

While Rogers significantly outperforms Bristol in programming, it should be noted that Bristol outperforms Rogers in per capita visits. Casey explains that this is largely due to the fact that neighboring communities have upgraded their libraries over the past decade or so. Most significantly, Bentonville opened a new 38,000 square foot downtown library in October 2006 which continues to draw patrons from Rogers.

It should also be noted that the second-best average program attendance performer in the regional peer group was the Clark County Library in Winchester, Kentucky where the population is 18,368 and the per capita income is \$15,611. Their website is unexceptional and the calendar is populated with yoga classes held throughout the week. Yoga classes that attract adults aside, they also outperform BPL in average children’s and youth program attendance. It should be noted that they have nine master degreed librarians on staff. Despite having a reported legal service area population of 35,758 people, their annual visits are half that of Bristol. Perhaps that is attributable to low density and a large service area as only half of their service area population is in the town where they are located.

## **Website Comparisons**

Additionally, the web sites for three high-ranking libraries embedded in somewhat similar sized communities nationwide were examined to reveal any unique program or service offerings (See Exhibit C). The following examples are offered only for illustrative purposes with the suggestion that department level benchmarking be performed by staff as part of the overall strategic planning process, since they have the experience to know what new programs and services might be relevant to our community in the context of available resources. The following are a few of the interesting services that caught our attention: The Simsbury Public Library in Connecticut (\$1.8 million budget and 1.183 per capita program attendance) offers a “Kil-a-Watt” program that allows residents to check out a special meter to determine what is driving their home energy usage to help them identify where they may be wasting electricity. They also provide museum passes and offer homebound book delivery. The Middleton Public Library in Wisconsin (\$1.8 million budget and .763 per capita program attendance) offers bi-lingual (Spanish-English) story time, a Tech Tuesdays program and

hosts a chess club all for children. They also provide dating and health information for teens. Middleton also offers technology training for adults in electronic mail, photo editing and newsletter creation. The Way Public Library in Ohio (\$1.8 million budget and .731 per capita program attendance) provides virtual and augmented reality gear for patrons to use in the library in addition to providing "Adventures in Science" science kits to teachers and homeschooling families. They also host a homeschoolers book talk. These observations lead us to recommend that BPL explore more ways for homeschoolers to utilize the children's department and especially the new teen area, since those areas are underutilized during school days. The Adventures in Science Kits and Virtual Reality programming, or something similar, may be something to considered as additional services to offer through the new Jones Creative Lab.

### **Public Library Data Services Comparisons**

Professional librarians cite concerns that the Library Journal data is often stale and sometimes the use of per capita calculations can be misleading, as in the case of Bristol where the population reported excludes the population of Bristol, Tennessee. The result is that the comparative statistics are overstated for the Bristol Public Library. Some professional librarians prefer the using the Public Library Data Service database, which reports more extensive data on 9,252 libraries.

### **BPL Ranking versus PLDS Comparison Libraries**

The following table provides absolute rankings for the comparison libraries as well as Bristol's relative ranking to the others based on library service area population, where Bristol ranks 10th. Bristol ranks 11th in total income (budget) versus the comparison libraries. The comparison libraries were selected based on service area population and total income, so the similarity between Bristol's ranking for both of those variables makes the relative ranking more compelling. To find benchmark comparisons in this database, the data was filtered to identify libraries with budgets ranging from \$1,800,000 to \$2,000,000 in cities with populations of between 40,000 and 50,000 people.

Bristol ranked 11th in total income and ranked 21st in staff expense although it had the 4th largest staff out of the 33 in comparison. This may be due to the fact that Bristol ranked 25th in master librarians even though it ranked 1st in number of librarians.

Bristol ranked 13th in both number of annual visits and book volume, 22nd in reference inquiries and 22nd in total circulation. On the other hand, the BPL ranked 4th in total programs, 2nd in youth programs and 14th in children's programs. It should be noted that children and youth programming represent over 90% of BPL programming in 2015. The youth ranking shouldn't be surprising as BPL featured the first teen library in this region and has been staffed with gifted teen librarians for much of the past ten years. Additionally, the Jones Creative Center was just getting off of the ground when these statistics were registered and the impact of that department will undoubtedly positively impact programming statistics going forward.

MEASURE		RANK	RELATIVE RANK VS. POPULATION
Legal Service Area Population	POPU_LSA	10	0
No. Master Librarians	MASTER	25	-15
No. Librarians	LIBRARIA	1	9
Total Staff	TOTSTAFF	4	6
Total Income from all sources	TOTINCM	11	-1
Staff Expense	STAFFEXP	21	-11
Book Volume	BKVOL	8	2
Hours Open	HRS_OPEN	8	2
Reference	REFERENC	22	-12
Total Circulation	TOTCIR	22	-12
Total Programs	TOTPRO	4	6
Kids Program	KIDPRO	8	2
Youth Programs	YAPRO	2	8
Total Program Attendance	TOTATTEN	13	-3
Total Kids Program Attendance	KIDATTEN	14	-4
Total Youth Attendance	YAATTEN	2	8
No. Visits per Year	VISITS	13	-3

TABLE 5: BPL RANKING AGAINST PUBLIC LIBRARY DATABASE SERVICE COMPS

Note: TOTATTEN, KIDATTEN, YAATTEN represent program attendance for those respective age groups. VISITS represent the total number of library visitors over the course of the year.

### Direct Comparison with Local Libraries

In this section, we examine how Bristol Public Library compares to its Tri-Cities peers in Johnson City and Kingsport. This information was compiled courtesy of the Johnson City Public Library.

STATISTICS	KINGSPORT	JOHNSON CITY	BRISTOL
Total budget	\$1,278,275	\$1,902,875	\$2,006,492
Salary/benefits budget	\$906,548	\$1,297,592	\$1,245,626
Materials budget	\$149,643	\$153,315	\$113,732
Full-time equivalent	19.16	31.73	28.35
Circulation	264,251	558,514	280,164
Reference Questions	21,537	20,506	23,379
Number of programs	585	1,313	1,170
Program attendance	13,552	40,725	21,972

TABLE 6. LOCAL COMPARISONS. SOURCE: JOHNSON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Bristol has the highest total budget of the three libraries, second highest salary and benefits budget as well as the second highest number of FTEs and lowest material budget. Salaries and benefits represent 62.1% of the total budget for Bristol compared with 68.2% for Johnson City and 70.9% for Kingsport, respectively. Materials expenditures represent 5.7% of the total budget for Bristol compared with 8.1% for Johnson City and 11.7% for Kingsport, respectively. Bristol has the second highest number of programs and the second highest program attendance in the Tri-Cities. Bristol averages 18.8 attendees per program while Johnson City averages 31.0 and Kingsport 23.2, respectively.

		ATTENDANCE/PROGRAM			VISITS/HR
		TOT	KID	YA	
AVERAGES	BRISTOL	20.2	23.0	18.8	43.2
	TRI	27.2	31.6	13.6	68.7
VARIANCE	TRI	(6.99)	(8.68)	5.14	(25.5)

TABLE 7. PROGRAM AVERAGE ATTENDANCE

Data from the PLU database indicates that Bristol has three to five less Master Librarians compared to Kingsport and Johnson City, respectively. Bristol is also open approximately 2,400 hours more per year than its local peers. Executive director Kimani reports that the high additional hours reported in Bristol is due to the hours added to the total by the Avoca Branch Library. Neither Johnson City or Kingsport have a branch library. As the table above indicates, Bristol has five more youth (young adults) on average attend its programs compared to its Tri-Cities peers, while the average number of attendees for children’s programs is sharply lower. Again, it will be noted later in the report that youth program attendance drives up library visits, so it is positive that Bristol excels in that program category. Bristol not surprisingly has nine percent more annual visits than its local peers presumably due to Bristol’s significantly longer operating hours and second location but also averages sharply fewer visits/hour as a system.

### Accounting for Avoca

In the Public Library Service Database, BPL reports the combined statistics for both the Bristol main branch and the Avoca branch. An attempt was made to disaggregate the data using BPL’s internal reports:

According to this data, the main branch generates one visit for every \$7.61 spent while the Avoca branch generates one visit for every \$9.45 spent. The main branch also experiences 68.8 visits per hour open while the Avoca branch generates 8.7 visits per hour open. Additionally, the average attendance per program for the main library is 24.3 versus 11.3 for Avoca. Average children’s programs attendance is 27.5 for the main library versus 11.4 for Avoca. When examining the main branch program attendance by itself, the main branch program attendance statistics exceed the national averages whereas they were below the national average on a combined basis for total and children’s programs. In other words, the main branch exceeds the national average attendance per program for adult, youth and children’s programs, but is below average for children’s and adult’s programs on a combined basis in comparison to local peers and similar sized libraries across the nation (See table 9, below). The main library alone also exceeds the average visits per hours open compared to the



	COMBINED	MAIN	AVOCA	
MASTER	4.8			
LIBRARIA	27.6			
TOTSTAFF	28.6			
TOTINCM	1,917,552	1,715,552	202,000	
STAFFEXP	1,171,320			
BKVOL	150,636			
HRS_OPEN	5,720	3,276	2,444	
REFERENC	18,134	17,114	1,044	
TOTCIR	312,565	270,735	38,718	*
TOTPRO	985	727	201	**
KIDPRO	540	389	151	
YAPRO	345	345	-	
TOTATTEN	19,931	17,658	2,273	
KIDATTEN	12,402	10,688	1,714	
YAATTEN	6,478	6,478	-	
VISITS	246,887	225,505	21,382	
<b>ATTEND/PROG</b>				
TOT	20.2	24.3	11.3	
KID	23.0	27.5	11.4	
YA	18.8	18.8	N/A	
ADULT	10.51	9.84	11.18	***
<b>VISITS</b>				
PER TOTINCM	\$ 7.77	\$ 7.61	\$ 9.45	
PER HRS_OPEN	43.2	68.8	8.7	

**Notes:**

\* There is an immaterial difference between the PLS database and BPL internal reports

\*\* There is a material difference between the PLS database and BPL internal reports

\*\*\* From internal reports

TABLE 8: MAIN AND AVOCA COMPARISON

averages for the Tri-Cities, the libraries across Tennessee and Virginia, the relevant national comparison libraries as well as the averages for the nation.

There is a new initiative being implemented in late 2017/early 2018 to increase Avoca branch utilization by also delivering programs at Avoca that are developed and offered at the main library. For example, 60 people recently signed up for painting classes at Avoca. Those classes were developed and delivered at the main library, where they were oversubscribed.

		COMBINED ATTENDANCE/PROGRAM			MAIN ONLY ATTENDANCE/PROGRAM		
		TOT	KID	YA	TOT	KID	YA
<b>AVERAGES</b>	<b>BRISTOL</b>	20.2	23.0	18.8	24.3	27.5	18.8
	<b>TRI</b>	27.2	31.6	13.6	27.2	31.6	13.6
	<b>TN-VA</b>	24.6	27.7	17.3	24.6	27.7	17.3
	<b>COMPS</b>	25.4	32.2	15.5	25.4	32.2	15.5
	<b>ALL</b>	22.4	27.1	15.8	22.4	27.1	15.8
<b>VARIANCE</b>	<b>TRI</b>	(7.0)	(8.7)	5.1	(2.9)	(4.2)	5.1
	<b>TN-VA</b>	(4.4)	(4.8)	1.4	(0.3)	(0.3)	1.4
	<b>COMPS</b>	(5.2)	(9.2)	3.3	(1.2)	(4.7)	3.3
	<b>ALL</b>	(2.2)	(4.1)	3.0	1.9	0.4	3.0

TABLE 9: ATTENDANCE BY PROGRAM COMBINED AND MAIN BRANCH ONLY

The data clearly demonstrates that the main library is crushing local, regional and national attendance in average program attendance for youth/young adult programs. However, we must also consider the per capita program attendance from the 5-Star Library database that suggests there are opportunities to grow market participation in BPL's overall program per capita attendance to compare favorably with national averages. In other words, BPL will need to reach a larger portion of the community to match its peers in market share of the service area population. That being said, the main library is outperforming the country in youth (young adult) programs. BPL's Teen Center is clearly a national model that is world class in comparison to rural libraries nationwide. What the BPL does it does very well. It just needs to do more of it to capture a greater number of citizens.

## Statistical Research: Drivers that Increase Library Usage

Finally, The Public Library Database was exhaustively analyzed using multiple regression analysis to identify the factors that increase library utilization as expressed in visits per year. The analysis sample included national, regional and state comparisons.

The analysis of 9,250 libraries across the United States revealed that the factor that drove attendance most was the number of master degreed librarians on staff followed by the number of librarians on staff. The number of youth programs was an important factor but a distant third in terms of impact. The regression model estimates that each additional master librarian would increase annual visits by approximately 6,200 per year while each additional librarian would generate approximately 1,300 additional visits per year. In other words, the model predicts that the impact of a master degreed librarian is five times greater than the addition of a librarian with a bachelors or associates degree (see Exhibit E). It should be noted that regression models make general predictions that are not precisely applicable to any one specific context. So, while regression models provide valuable insights into how a set of variables influence outcomes in general direction and magnitude. Therefore, models serve a generally predictive function and are not met to predict outcomes with exact precision in any one specific context. Where precision is reported in this analysis, it is only to provide the reader with a sense of the direction and magnitude of the influence key variables have on desired outcomes.

Following the national analysis, we prepared a regional analysis by studying the data on 476 libraries across Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina. Similar to the national analysis, master librarians were the leading driver of increased library visitation with the model predicting that each additional master librarian would generate approximately 5,800 visits. What was surprising in this model is that number of librarians was actually negatively correlated with increased library usage. In fact, the difference in this model was stunning because it suggests that adding non-master degreed librarians generally has a negative effect on library usage with approximately 4,300 fewer visits per year for each non-MLS librarian added to the staff. In other words, the model suggests that adding non-master degreed librarians has a negative impact on library utilization almost to the extent that adding master librarians has a positive effect. Like the national regression model, the regional model predicted that adding youth programs also had a positive effect on increasing number of visits (see Exhibit F).

Conversely, the analysis of 276 libraries in Tennessee and Virginia surprisingly and unexpectedly revealed that adding master librarians was negatively correlated to increased library utilization, implying that adding master librarians would result in decreased annual number of visits. This seems counterintuitive and contradicts the national regression model. However, increasing number of youth (young adult) programs is strongly and positively correlated with library visits in both the national and state studies. In essence the analysis revealed that each youth program could be expected to generate approximately 180 visits on average. One of the most surprising general findings of our analysis is that children's (kids) programs are negatively correlated with library usage (see Exhibit G).

How do we explain the contradiction regarding master librarians? In Tennessee, there are 272 master librarians and 555 librarians reported employed in libraries throughout the state. In Tennessee, there are an average of 3 librarians per library and 135 libraries (72.6%) do not have a master librarian on staff. The most positive factors that drive library visits in Tennessee is youth programs and, in contradiction to the national and regional data, children's programs. Also, it should be noted that the number of non-MLS degreed librarians appeared to be positively correlated to usage but the confidence level was low enough to be removed from the final model (see Exhibit H).

In contrast to Tennessee, 85 out of 91 libraries (93.4%) in Virginia have master degreed librarians on staff with an average of 11 librarians on staff. There are also 898 master librarians reported working in Virginia libraries. It should be noted that 240 (26.7%) of those master librarians are employed in the suburban counties of Alexandria, Prince William and Spotsylvania surrounding Washington, DC. However, the high level of MLS degreed librarians in Northern Virginia may have peaked in favor of hiring master degrees in "analogous fields," like public administration, information and data analytics, social work, etc., according to a recent report in Public Libraries Magazine where:

In a study, Re-Envisioning the MLS, the University of Maryland iSchool's MLS program in conjunction with the Information Policy and Access Center (iPAC) determined that libraries in the Maryland, D.C., and Virginia area were less likely to seek and hire professionals with an MLS due to funding uncertainties or the need for professionals with other skills and qualifications.

9. Laura O'Grady, "The MLS Catch-22," in Public Libraries Online, January 2, 2018, accessed Jan. 30, 2018

The number of librarians on staff was the least statistically significant factor in the model, perhaps due to the sheer prevalence of librarians throughout the Commonwealth. Staff expense and total number of staff were the next least statistically significant factors in library visits followed by surprisingly the number of master librarians on staff. Master librarians were also negatively correlated with library visits, but the confidence level for that statistic was very low. Similar to the national and regional data, number of children's programs had a markedly negative impact on library visits.

The impact of master librarians on the national and region analysis make intuitive sense, since master librarians have been exposed to more concepts and techniques than bachelor or associate degreed librarians. To be certain, there are very likely classification differences between librarians and clerical staff across the country, but the effect of those differences probably diminishes as the sample size increases. Conversely, the definition of master librarians is pretty clear cut. Either one has a master degree or not. cursory analysis of the Tennessee data suggest that librarians are positively correlated to library utilization but the model is not statistically robust. The fact that master librarians are not a factor in the Tennessee model can be attributed to the fact that the vast majority of Tennessee libraries do not have master librarians, so there is simply not enough data to measure master librarian impact. Conversely, the small sample size in Virginia (n=90) may have affected the analysis given the extraordinary prevalence of master librarians throughout the Commonwealth.

For additional context, the states with the highest average number of associate and bachelor librarians in proportion to total staff are Mississippi (69.1%), Vermont (61.2%), New Hampshire (58.8%), Iowa (56.9%), Kentucky (54.5%) and West Virginia (55.3%). The states with the lowest average of associate and bachelor librarians in proportion to total staff are Georgia (21.4%), Washington (21.6%), Nevada (25.5%), Montana (25.9%). Virginia and Tennessee follow closely at 26.6% and 30.2% respectively. The states with the highest number of master degreed librarians as a proportion of total staff are Rhode Island (34.8%), Massachusetts (33.6%) and Connecticut (33%). The states with the lowest average number of MLS librarians as a percentage of total staff are Montana (9.4%), Nebraska (11.9%), South Dakota (12.5%) and Idaho (12.8%). Tennessee falls on the lower end of the range at 12.5%, while Virginia lands in the upper middle at 24% (See exhibit K).

Executive Director Kimani explains that Tennessee in effect discourages hiring MLS degreed librarians by not reimbursing libraries for the value of the advanced degree and that some master librarians are even paid at minimum wage. This is in contrast to the Commonwealth of Virginia where library executive directors are required to have a master of library science degree. This is completely ironic since the Commonwealth of Virginia does not have either an undergraduate or graduate degree library sciences program while the University of Tennessee offers a bachelor, master and doctorate of library sciences degree.

What we can conclude with a great deal of certainty is that master degreed librarians are the biggest driver in increased library utilization across the country. Similarly, we can say with certainty that children's programs have a negative impact on visits per annum across our analysis in most samples. Conversely, youth programs have a positive impact on library usage in most samples. The huge disparity in master librarians in Tennessee versus Virginia clearly impacts the two data sets but further research would have to be conducted to fully unpack that phenomenon. However, the national data set is robust enough for us to conclude that number of master librarians followed by youth and adult programs are positively correlated with library utilization and would appear to confirm our intuition in that regard.

## Recommended Goals

### Chapter 1: Implement Integrated Social Media Communications Strategy

The Bristol Public Library's facilities are second to none in our area. Community support is high and BPL hosts a full list of events for all types of people. The renovations to the teen area are fantastic and the building is a prominent feature in downtown Bristol. The BPL's website, blog, and social media have a vast amount of content. However, focus group participants frequently commented that they were unaware of all of the programs and services that the library offers to our community. This observation offers one explanation for BPL's relatively strong number of participants per program while also experiencing a comparatively weak per capita program participation rate in relation to national averages. In other words, BPL has solid attendance for the programming it offers, but a relatively lower percentage of the population participates in library programming compared to similar sized libraries in similar sized communities. This also validates that the Board of Trustees has correctly identified that marketing is the number one improvement priority going forward.

Our marketing department analyzed the BPL social media platform and confirmed that the website design is out of date. BPL has begun updating its website. As part of that update, it will need to be optimized for mobile devices. There is now a logical flow on the homepage for information and the new current menu is much less overwhelming and confusing. However, the branding for web, social, blog and other social media must be consistent. BPL will need to have the improved website integrated with Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn and Snapchat pages all sending cohesive messages designed to reach intended audiences. BPL has different social media accounts for adults, teens, and children. This creates more work for staff and can contribute to patron confusion. Most social media platforms do not allow ages thirteen and under to even sign up for social media accounts, so the children's Facebook page should be accessed only under adult supervision. Many teens are migrating away from Facebook and Twitter and transitioning to Instagram, Snapchat, and other platforms.

BPL needs to create a consistent look and feel for all digital presentations (websites, social media, blog posts) through linking an interactive calendar from the main websites and driving information out to social media. Video is increasingly the preferred way to communicate over many social media platforms. Video posts receive 83% more shares than other types of posts on Facebook. More emphasis needs to be placed on live stream resource presentations and posts to video sites like YouTube and Vimeo for archiving. These same resources can be used to attract new patrons through traditional media channels through free or reduced fee television and radio public service announcements and local cable channel programming.

The bottom line is that people are busy. Patrons and potential patrons have so many more options for entertainment and activities. BPL is competing in an overstimulated, oversaturated media marketplace. BPL must cut thru the clutter, be clear in its marketing message and leverage the right social media channels, at the right time with the right message to communicate with and fully engage the community. This is the most important work that needs to be done in order to increase BPL market and mind share in the community.

## Chapter 2: Increase Resource Rich, Skill-Sharing Community Programming

Becoming the skills sharing community hub involves recruiting volunteers who are hobbyist with special skills through an open invitation to join a volunteer program team. These volunteers would hold workshops in a variety of topics including: beekeeping, organic gardening, culinary arts, quilting, crocheting, Cricut machines and woodworking. The volunteers would need to be vetted and have their backgrounds checked, if they offer children or teen programs. This concept involves creating a network of specialists who offer their services *gratis* to the community in a way that creates additional programming without incurring additional staff costs beyond the time and cost of program coordination. It also fosters community loyalty by expanding the number of volunteers and patrons. This is a powerful way for BPL to fulfill its mission in “Building Community.” Additionally, this strategy has the potential to dramatically increase per capita program attendance.

Along with these recommendations, focus group attendees suggested that BPL consider developing a checkout program for tools, equipment and instruments used in the skill sharing programs being offered. The executive director has worked at a library located on Lake Erie where the library checked out fishing equipment. In fact, these type of loan programs are becoming more prevalent around the country. Please refer to Exhibit L, “Need Pruning Shears or a Ukulele? Try the Public Library (WSJ 3/20/17).” In a related suggestion, one focus group suggested the library become an exchange center for tools, equipment and instruments (basically, the swap shop concept). Staff felt this was a novel idea but would be too time intensive and could create potential liability issues.

Though some types of checkout, loan and exchange services have validity, others create liability issues that would need to be addressed. Therefore, it was determined that other priorities need to be addressed and this concept may have to wait to a later time. However, the downward trend in the print book market suggests that supplementing the book loan program with other items will be necessary for libraries to remain highly relevant to the populations that they serve.

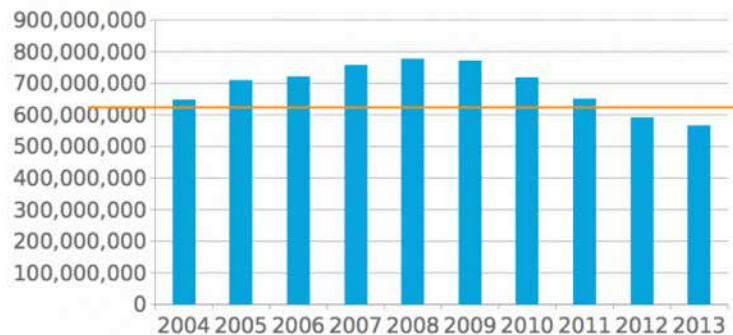
Adopting a tool, equipment and instrument lending program at some point in the future will increase visits to the library and create habit forming utilization of the library with new users. To grow market share, one must first grow mind share. The following excerpt from consumer executives A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin reveal the importance of developing habit-forming consumer behavior, which is a necessary step in growing mind share:

In short, research into the workings of the human brain suggests that the mind loves automaticity more than just about anything else—certainly more than engaging in conscious consideration. Given a choice, it would like to do the same things over and over again. If the mind develops a view over

10. As examples, our focus groups suggested books and tools related to beekeeping, organic gardening, culinary arts, crocheting, Cricut and woodworking. such as beekeeping, organic gardening, culinary arts, quilting, crocheting, cricket machines and woodworking.

## US print book market: Long Term Trends

Source: Nielsen BookScan 2004-2013



Source: The 2015 Public Library Data Service: Characteristics and Trends

time that Tide gets clothes cleaner, and Tide is available and accessible on the store shelf or the web page, the easy, familiar thing to do is to buy Tide yet another time.

A driving reason to choose the leading product in the market, therefore, is simply that it is the easiest thing to do: In whatever distribution channel you shop, it will be the most prominent offering. In the supermarket, the mass merchandiser, or the drugstore, it will dominate the shelf. In addition, you have probably bought it before from that very shelf. Doing so again is the easiest possible action you can take. Not only that, but every time you buy another unit of the brand in question, you make it easier to do—for which the mind applauds you. . . .

But if it is to extend that initial competitive advantage, the company must invest in turning its proposition into a habit rather than a choice. Hence, we can formally define cumulative advantage as the layer that a company builds on its initial competitive advantage by making its product or service an ever more instinctively comfortable choice for the customer.

Executive Director Kimani shares the following anecdotal story to support this insight. She worked in a library that had an entire wall filled with *Chilton Automotive Manuals*. She targeted library advertising using brochure distribution in local garages and automotive parts store throughout the community. This resulted not only in more people coming to the library to use the manuals but also to checkout videos and attend library events. Sometimes one doesn't need a better mousetrap, one simply needs a mousetrap.

The Bristol Public Library has to compete with a wide universe of educational, enrichment and entertainment options available to patrons. Increasing the offering of stimulating programming offerings along with simple alternative lending options will help make visiting the BPL not just a choice but a healthy habit.

11.A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin, "Customer Loyalty is Overrated, Instead Focus on Habit: A Theory of Cumulative Advantage," in *The Harvard Business Review*, January – February 2012.

## Chapter 3: Increase Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

Focus group attendees also recommended that BPL increase community partnership programming with a wide variety of partners including: A! Magazine, Arts Guild, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Birthplace of Country Music, Bristol Bar Association, Bristol Homeschool Associations, Local CPAs, River's Way and Young Life. Partnering and networking with these organizations would increase per capita attendance and facilitate developing new and non-traditional patron groups who may not visit the library at all or do so very infrequently.

The Williamsburg Regional Library has developed the following Community Partnership Program that could serve as a guide for the Bristol Public Library:

Williamsburg Regional Library collaborations with community partners strengthen the library's ability to fulfill its mission and helps the library meet the needs of all members of the community. The library's partnerships:

- flow out of the library's mission and vision
- are a library-wide strategy
- are centrally coordinated
- are a formal process

**Definition of a Partnership:** Libraries have collaborative relationships with many community entities. To acknowledge the importance of all library-community relationships, but to differentiate between the levels of library-partner involvement, the Williamsburg Regional Library has defined the term partnership to include four types of relationships: glances, dates, engagements, and marriages.

**Glance:** any overture or contact between the library and a community group.

**Date:** an agreement between the library and a community partner to accomplish a specific short-term activity or commitment.

**Engagement:** an agreement between the library and a community partner to work together toward a marriage after an initial experimental phase. Engagements are temporal; they either evolve into a marriage, dissolve, or downsize to a date.

**Marriage:** a formal agreement between the library and a community partner with compatible goals, to share the work, share the risk, and share the results or proceeds. The library and the community partner jointly invest in resources, experience mutual benefits, and share risk, responsibility, authority, and accountability. Marriages are formed for the long-term benefit to the partners.



### **Potential Partners**

- Businesses
- Civic Groups
- Nonprofit organizations - local, state, national
- Schools and colleges
- Libraries
- Government agencies - local, state, federal

### **Reasons to Use the Partnership Tool:**

- Reach new library users
- Reach current library patrons in a new way
- Tap into community assets and strengths
- Gain support for library resources/programs
- Gain valuable feedback
- Create new library resources

We noted earlier in the report that the Hickory, North Carolina library benefits from being collocated to the city's science and art museums. The library experiences increased library visits following special events at those museums. Likewise, the BPL could partner more closely, for example, with the Birthplace of Country Music, the Paramount and Theatre Bristol to offer coordinated package programs or events throughout the course of the year, which would increase attendance at all of these important downtown institutions.

## **Chapter 4: Increase Intergenerational and Multi-General Programming**

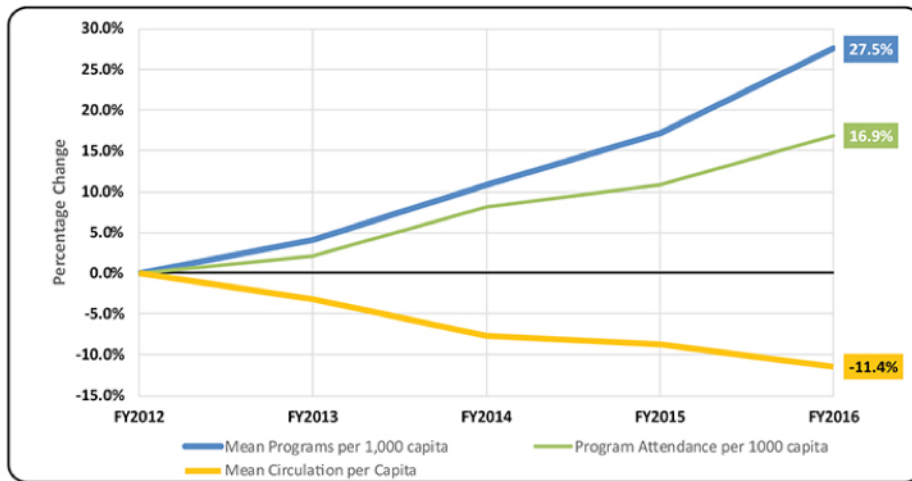
The 2017 Public Library Data Service Report: Characteristics and Trends reports:

In contrast to the downward trend in circulation/capita (-11.4 percent since FY2012), there has been significant growth in programs per capita (27.5 percent since FY2012) and program attendance per capita (16.9 percent since FY2012) (Figure 12). Interestingly, circulation/capita has decreased annually at a rate of -3.0 percent since FY2012, programs per capita have increased by more than twice that rate (6.3 percent) and attendance per capita a rate of 4.0 percent.

12.<https://www.wrl.org/about-us/community-partnership-program>, accessed January 31, 2018

13.Ian Reid; edited by Carl Thompson, "The 2017 Public Library Data Service Report: Characteristics and Trends," in Public Libraries Online, December 4, 2017: <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2018/01/efficient-librarianship-a-new-path-for-the-profession/>, accessed on Jan. 29, 2018

Figure 12. Percentage Change Annual Mean Programs per 1000 Capita and Annual Mean Circulation, Continuously Responding Libraries (N=429)



Source: *The 2017 Public Library Data Service Report: Characteristics and Trends*

Two adult focus groups and a YWCA teen focus group suggested that the library develop more programming such as parent-child and grandparent-grandchild programs. The programs were envisioned as programs or book clubs where a child or teen would participate with a parent or grandparent. It was also suggested that BPL explore ways to interconnect child, teen, adult and senior programming by, for example, offer cross platform programs around a common theme. Additionally, one focus adult group suggested that more attention be given to cross-marketing between age platforms such as the children taking home bookmarks that advertise upcoming programs to share with their teen siblings, parents and grandparents and vice versa. These focus group programming recommendations are consistent with and validated by the trends reported by the Public Library Data Service. It seems intuitive that multi-generational programming will also increase per capita program attendance. To support that intuition, our regression analysis confirmed that youth and adult programs increase library utilization. This recommendation is basically a cross-selling strategy that will draw more users into the library and increase annual per capita visits.

All focus groups indicated an appetite for more programming on the scale of the Rogers, Arkansas library. In order to achieve their level of success, the programming will not only need to be developed, it will have to be marketed over social media and through direct outreach initiatives such as those used by Rogers. This recommendation will likely need to be supported by adding Master Librarians to the staff (see Chapter 7, below).

## Chapter 5: Provide Better Services for the Downtown Homeless Population

The BPL has a number of homeless patrons that use the library on a daily basis. Some use the library for traditional services while many use the library for shelter from the elements or as simply a place to rest. During the on-site observation phase of this project, it became clear that the homeless patrons require services that the BPL is not equipped to provide. The library has occasionally had social workers available for all patrons, but homeless patrons have daily needs that periodic or episodic services cannot address. For this reason,

Johnson City has established a downtown homeless day center where homeless citizens can congregate, watch television, have access to Wi-Fi, restrooms, showers and a laundry room. Additionally, the day center offers medical services provided by the ETSU College of Nursing and has a full-time case worker on staff.

Executive Director Kimani and The Summit Companies have convened a homeless day center exploratory working group to develop a plan for a day center to provide services that better fit our homeless population. The working group is composed of the BPL Executive Director, the United Way of Bristol Executive Director, a city councilperson and BPL board member, a team member from Bristol Housing and Redevelopment Authority, a staff member from both cities, the Executive Director for the Haven of Rest, a representative from the Appalachian Regional Coalition for Homelessness, two local clergy and a homeless patron among others.

The creation of a day center in Bristol will ensure that our homeless population receive the care and services that they need including the opportunity to transition back into stable housing if that is their desire. For others, their special needs can be addressed so that they have an opportunity to flourish to the extent their unique circumstances allow.

It should also be noted that convening this group at the Bristol Public Library is exactly the type of “Building Community” activity that exemplifies the emerging role of public libraries as the new center of civic life in the public sphere. Convening grass roots working groups like this empower citizens to find resourceful, cost effective solutions to pressing community challenges, which can help to reduce the burden on city governments and taxpayers.

## Chapter 6: Implement Net Promoter Score and Outcome Measurement

The Bristol Public Library should also select best in class libraries from demographically similar areas and arrange to develop a collaborative relationship to share best in class practices. In this report, we have used the Hickory Public Library in Hickory, North Carolina, and the Rogers Public Library in Rogers, Arkansas, as benchmarks because they have similar service area populations and are in areas that have similar economic and demographic profiles with our community. The Rogers Public Library appears to be smaller and has fewer visits per capita than Bristol. However, Rogers has a much greater focus on programs and marketing, which drives up per capita program attendance and effectively increases its service area market penetration. The Hickory Library system is similar to BPL in that it is a main library with a branch, though it has markedly higher per capita visits. These libraries or ones similar to them should be selected and used as benchmark libraries where best practices are shared back and forth. At a minimum, we recommend that BPL develop and implement five year plans to increase per capita visits and program attendance in line with Hickory and Rogers, respectively (see Table 4).

BPL Trustee and Vice Chair Paul Conco, who is a retired college administrator, recommends that the BPL implement regular program evaluations. These evaluations are helpful in gauging participant satisfaction with both the content and experience of the program and provide invaluable feedback to the program provider

regarding their preparedness and effectiveness. Program evaluations are beginning to be introduced by the staff though it will take some time to properly implement this practice so that it becomes the norm and the feedback effectively utilized.

As a starting point, we recommend that the library implement Net Promoter Score to measure the patron service experience and loyalty. NPS is a ten-point scale, single question survey that asks, “how likely are you recommend BPL to a friend or colleague?” The real time response gauges the patron’s customer experience at the point of service. Many service organizations are placing tablets at the point of service so that customers can rate their experience right on the spot. While the NPS tool lacks the granular detail that more detailed surveys provide, it is inexpensive to deploy and it quickly identifies areas for improvement. As importantly, the staff will appreciate the immediate feedback from patrons, which will encourage greater engagement with patrons to gain valuable new insights into their customer service preferences.

In the intermediate term, we recommend that the library adopt outcome measures beyond per capita visits and program attendance into its performance self-assessment. For example, Rogers Public Library has begun to measure city school reading scores as a proxy for the effectiveness of its K-6 reading programs. Of course, reading scores primarily measure student work in public schools though the work of the library in readiness programs and summer book clubs has a meaningful impact. As stated earlier in this report, it is not the public library’s responsibility to teach reading but it has an important role to play in promoting reading and literacy with families. It should be noted that one of the measures that our region’s new health system, Ballad Health, will be measured on by the State of Tennessee is reading at grade level rate by the third grade. Why should a health system be measured by third grade reading levels? There is a very strong correlation between health and literacy. Improving health literacy for adults begins with improving reading literacy for children. Increases in reading literacy earlier in life drive improved health related behavior later in life. Understanding this relationship, Ballad Health will be investing in literacy programs to improve not just third grade reading scores but healthier lifestyles over the long term.

The premise behind these set of recommendations is that increased library per capita visits and per capita program participation will improve literacy and civic engagement. Focusing on these outcome metrics is very important to determine the success of new initiatives. Additional outcome measures should eventually be established that identify improvements in literacy rates and civic engagement, analogous to those used by Rogers and Ballad Health. These measures are even more important to gauge the library’s social impact or social return on investment (SROI).

## Chapter 7: Increase number of Master Librarians on Staff

In order to accomplish these lists of recommendations, the BPL board and management should consider transitioning to a higher percentage staff complement of master degreed librarians. The regression analysis compellingly reveals that library utilization is most highly correlated with number of master librarians on staff. At minimum the BPL should add two full-time equivalent master libraries to match the Rogers and Hickory Public Libraries, respectively. The American Library Association policy 54.2 states: “The master’s degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association (or from a master’s level program in

library and information studies accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country) is the appropriate professional degree for librarians.” Master librarians are more than librarians, they are highly trained, efficient knowledge workers:

The role of a library worker has changed due to the twin disruptions of the Internet and diminished budgets. With more information available from our smart devices than can be contained in our physical collections, we are no longer the guardians and gatekeepers of knowledge. With less money available, setting clear budget priorities is essential. We are in a period of professional reevaluation where we cannot afford to be passive observers. We must actively lead the change. To face the challenge of knowledge work, we need to become Efficient Librarians.

An Efficient Librarian is an elite knowledge worker navigating the complexity of the post-Internet information world. The Efficient Librarian combines the skill sets of a librarian with the best productivity and efficiency practices to become a powerful consultant and decision-maker. He or she masters the ability to traverse the streams of information flowing throughout our increasingly digital world and then in turn helps others learn these skills.

However, there is a great deal of debate in library circles about whether or not a master of library science (or information science) degree by itself will create value in the future for both librarians and libraries. In fact, *Forbes* famously reported that the MLS or MLIS degree was the least valuable in higher education:

Library and information science degree-holders bring in \$57,600 mid-career, on average. Common jobs for them are school librarian, library director and reference librarian, and there are expected to be just 8.5% more of them by 2020. The low pay rank and estimated growth rank make library and information science the worst master’s degree for jobs right now.

Washington Post columnist Valerie Strauss took exception to the *Forbes* report by noting that librarians have very high job satisfaction because the important services they provide society:

Librarians find fulfillment in their work because they provide essential services for patrons of public, school, college, university and other libraries. The range of services they offer matter greatly to their communities: assistance finding jobs; free, reliable and organized access to books, the Internet and other sources of information and entertainment; research and reference assistance; and, programs for children, immigrants and other groups with specific needs, plus much more.

14. The American Library Association website,

[http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/accreditedprograms/faq#appropriate\\_degree\\_for\\_librarian](http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/accreditedprograms/faq#appropriate_degree_for_librarian): accessed Jan. 29, 2018.

15. Douglas Crane, “Efficient Librarianship – A New Path for the Profession,” in *Public Libraries Online*, January 23, 2018: <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2018/01/efficient-librarianship-a-new-path-for-the-profession/>, accessed Jan. 29, 2018

16. Jacquelyn Smith, “The Best and Worst Master’s Degrees for Jobs,” in *Forbes*, June 8, 2012, accessed Jan. 29, 2018

In more than 16,000 public libraries across the U.S, librarians offer a lifeline to people trying to adapt to challenging economic circumstances by providing technology training and online resources for employment, access to government resources, continuing education, retooling for new careers and starting a small business. More than 74 percent of libraries offer software and other resources to help patrons create resumes and employment materials, and 72 percent of libraries report that staffs help patrons complete online job applications. Libraries have also fueled renewed interest in and use of library services. Americans are capitalizing on free access to books, magazines, e-books, DVDs, the Internet and professional assistance. More than ever, libraries are community hubs, and it is the librarian who works to maintain a safe harbor for teens, a point of contact for the elderly and a place to nurture lifelong learning for all.

As stated earlier, there is a trend in libraries to hire candidates with master degrees in other fields, such as public administration, marketing, data analytics and social work. While that may be an appropriate consideration for larger libraries in metropolitan cities and suburbs, it may not necessarily be the case for rural communities like ours where we need staff to maintain core function and services while innovating where time and resources permit. Perhaps there is a happy medium where the BPL can build out its staff with MLS degreed librarians who have taken electives and had work experience in innovative areas that fit our community context. Where possible, it is also suggested that the BPL support staff librarians in pursuing their MLS or analog master degrees to more creatively, effectively and efficiently support the mission of the BPL in “Expanding Minds. Building Community”.

## Conclusion: Integrate Programming, Partnerships and Promotion for Greater Community Impact!

Integration is the key to success. Integration leverages the components of a plan into a coherent strategy. The stated strategic intent and brand promise of the Bristol Public Library is “Expanding Minds. Building Community.” All of the elements of the strategy must be strengthened and linked to generate greater social impact and fulfill the stated brand promise.

In that context, the next step in this process is to hold a board and staff strategic plan implementation work session to address the recommendations in this report and decide which ones to adopt, which ones to modify and which ones to defer. Priorities will need to be established and detailed implementation plans developed in order to work within existing resource limitations. It is critical that the long-term staffing plan be modified to support the strategic plan. Summit can provide access to very inexpensive software tools to track progress toward these strategic plan implementation goals and key performance indicators once they are officially adopted.

17. Valerie Strauss, “The worst masters’ degree?” in *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2012: accessed Jan. 29, 2018

18. Laura O’Grady, “The MLS Catch-22,” in *Public Libraries Online*, January 2, 2018, accessed Jan. 30, 2018

Additionally, it is recommended that the Bristol Public Library Board of Trustees under staff supervision assemble a working group to develop, plan and implement a skills-sharing community program including partnerships with other non-profits. This group should be comprised of staff and board representatives and include the focus group participants who envisioned this option. Executive Director Kimani maintained and retained a list of those participants. Additionally, the staff should be tasked with developing multigenerational programming. In both cases, these programs should be designed around curriculum strategies that promote reading and encourage higher library utilization by the broader population.

The enhanced programming will be most effectively promoted by an integrated social and traditional media campaign driven off a calendar on the main website. Measuring against predetermined benchmarks will determine the effectiveness of strategy implementation.

The importance of linking these elements together in a coherent, executable strategy cannot be overstated. The Bristol Public Library board and staff have consistently demonstrated professional excellence and a relentless drive for continuous improvement. Effectively executing a coherent, tightly linked strategy based on these recommendations will provide even greater social impact and return on investment for our community and transform the Bristol Public Library into a highly efficient and effective national model for others to emulate.





Note: The combined population of Bristol TN-VA is approximately 45,000 based on the 2010 Census. This represents a manual adjustment to the reported population both in the Library Magazine and Public Library Data Service databases, which only report the population of Bristol, VA.

**Exhibit B:** Library Journal 5-Star Database Libraries with Budgets between \$1.8 and \$2 million and service area populations between \$35,000 and 55,000 people.

LIBRARY	CITY	STATE	SERVICE AREA POPULATION	BUDGET	VISITS / YEAR
CARSON CITY LIBRARY	CARSON CITY	NV	53,969	\$1,843,664.00	284,716
PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY	PEABODY	MA	52,044	\$1,889,168.00	293,130
IRONDEQUOIT PUBLIC LIBRARY	ROCHESTER	NY	51,692	\$1,929,278.00	274,677
GLENDORA LIBRARY & CULTURAL CENTER	GLENDORA	CA	51,463	\$1,965,192.00	278,254
LOGAN LIBRARY	LOGAN	UT	48,997	\$1,912,230.00	255,643
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY FREE LIBRARY	CENTREVILLE	MD	48,595	\$1,891,329.00	211,988
STILLWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY	STILLWATER	OK	48,406	\$1,832,572.00	244,691
REDFORD TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY	REDFORD	MI	48,362	\$1,913,268.00	167,589
PICKERINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY	PICKERINGTON	OH	47,944	\$1,821,083.00	159,068
BRISTOL PUBLIC LIBRARY	BRISTOL	VA	45,000*	\$1,917,552.00	246,887
MARION PUBLIC LIBRARY	MARION	IA	42,381	\$1,850,786.00	330,163
FLETCHER FREE	BURLINGTON	VT	42,211	\$1,831,111.00	260,000
CROWN POINT COMMUNITY PUBLIC LIBRARY	CROWN POINT	IN	41,810	\$1,884,118.00	256,010
SUN PRAIRIE PUBLIC LIBRARY	SUN PRAIRIE	WI	41,415	\$1,819,613.00	219,893
WILLIAM T COZBY PUBLIC LIBRARY	COPPELL	TX	40,678	\$1,923,965.00	235,955
LINDEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	LINDEN	NJ	40,499	\$1,840,243.00	65,000
CEDAR FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY	CEDAR FALLS	IA	40,421	\$1,949,771.00	243,635
NEW CASTLE-HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	NEW CASTLE	IN	40,389	\$1,843,298.00	199,465
MONTROSE REGIONAL LIBRARY DISTRICT	MONTROSE	CO	40,203	\$1,978,434.00	208,467
PREBLE COUNTY DISTRICT LIBRARY	EATON	OH	39,569	\$1,932,790.00	137,228
DEFIANCE PUBLIC LIBRARY	DEFIANCE	OH	39,037	\$1,881,210.00	51,844
ROGERS PUBLIC LIBRARY	ROGERS	AR	56,000*	\$1,927,774.00	214,441
GOSHEN PUBLIC LIBRARY	GOSHEN	IN	37,608	\$1,878,224.00	203,898
NEW LENOX PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT	NEW LENOX	IL	36,847	\$1,935,688.00	157,599
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP LIB SYSTEM	GLENSIDE	PA	36,793	\$1,935,201.00	265,888
MENOMONEE FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY	MENOMONEE FALLS	WI	36,692	\$1,842,825.00	149,830
TRUMBULL LIBRARY	TRUMBULL	CT	36,578	\$1,833,317.00	251,088
BEAUREGARD PARISH	DERIDDER	LA	36,462	\$1,879,124.00	89,357
PETER WHITE PUBLIC LIBRARY	MARQUETTE	MI	36,441	\$1,892,827.00	261,458
MOORESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	MOORESVILLE	NC	36,391	\$1,902,108.00	226,543
GREENUP COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	GREENUP	KY	36,308	\$1,983,697.00	130,367
PENFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY	PENFIELD	NY	36,242	\$1,835,525.00	242,241
UNIVERSITY CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY	UNIVERSITY CITY	MO	35,371	\$1,882,336.00	249,439
JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	SEYMOUR	IN	35,296	\$1,888,493.00	216,490

\* The combined population of Bristol TN-VA is approximately 45,000 based on the 2010 Census. This represents a manual adjustment to the reported population both in the Library Magazine and Public Library Data Service databases, which only report the population of Bristol, VA. Likewise, the 2010 Census as reported in Wikipedia states that Rogers Public Library is 55,964. This adjustment restates the per capita visits as approximately 5.5 and 3.8, respectively.

## Exhibit C: Website Content: Select 5 Star Comparison Libraries

MARY RILEY STYLES PUBLIC LIBRARY (VA)	SIMSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY (CT)	MIDDLETON PUBLIC LIBRARY (WI)	WAY PUBLIC LIBRARY (OH)
General Services	General Services	General Services	We Offer:
Ask a Librarian			eBooks, downloadable audio books, and Hoopla streaming media
Book Sales	Notary Service		Videos, CDs, DVDs
Computers & Wi-Fi		Computer Stations	Books on CD
Fax Machine & Scanners	Library Equipment	Laser printers	300+ magazines and newspapers
Meeting Room	Internet access computers	Media Maker Lab	Atlases and road maps
Microfilm & Microfiche Readers	Laser printers		Investment news
Photocopiers	Fax machine (outgoing only)		College Resources
Proctored Exam Request			Community activities postings
Special Needs Services	Typewriter		Free computer and WiFi access
Tax Forms	Copy machines		
	Equipment to check out:		Special Features:
			Four meeting rooms and two conference rooms
	Kill-a-watt (find out how much energy you use)		Book discussion groups
	Yeti USB Microphone		WGTE-PBS Program Club ("Reel Opinions")
	More Library Services		Book Buddy home delivery
			Research databases
Borrowing	Borrowing	Borrowing	Consumer information
Email Notifications	Get a Library Card	LIBRARY CARDS	Computer classes
Fines & Fees	Meeting Rooms	EBOOKS AND OTHER DIGITAL MEDIA	Technology computer lab
Interlibrary Loans	Computers & Technology		Self-Checkout station for books and magazines
Library Cards	Homebound Services		
Loan Limits	Notary Public		Equipment you can use in-house:
Renewing Materials	Innovators' Workshop		Typewriter
Your Account	Study Rooms		Color copier
	Equipment for Public Use		Black & White and Color Laser printers
	Museum Passes		Book scanner
	Art		Large screen TV
	Book Clubs		Merlin Enhanced Vision System
			Wheelchair
			Strollers
			Handicap accessible walker
			Shopping baskets
	Teens	Teens	Teens
	Teen Job Center	Just Hanging Out	Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality
	Teen Advisory Board	Dating & Health	Pizza & Pages Book Club
	College Resources	College/Career	
	Resources for Book Lovers	Internet Basics	
	Volunteer	Tutoring	
		3DS Club	
Youth & Teen Services	Children's Programs	Teen Advisory Committee (TAC)	
Children's Services	Chess & GO Club	tutor.com	
Teen Services	LEGO® Engineers		
	Music with Marie	Children's Programs	Children's Programs
Featured Youth Programs	Sensory Sunday	Big Kids Storytime	Storytime
Preschool Storytime	STEAM Ahead (Science)	Little Kids Storytime	Adventures in Science - Science Kits for Teachers and Homeschooling Families
Mother Goose Rhyme Time	Everybody Plays (Activities)	Baby Lapsit Storytime	Bookaneers Book Club (Book and Movie)
Monthly Programs & Activities	Storytimes (pre-schoolers)	Tiny Tots Storytime	Homeschoolers' Book Talk
Summer Reading Program	Hola Bebé	Bilingual Spanish-English Storytime	Early Learning Center
Teen Summer Reading Program	Born to Read	Chess Club	Children's programs
Winter Reading Program	Story Stars (w/ live animals)	Tech Tuesday	Larimer Children's Collection
Early Literacy Center Hours	Little Movers	Books & Cooks	Pick Up & Go collections for busy parents
Library Tours	Storytime with Mrs. Macri (w/ songs)		Intergenerational programs
Teen Volunteers			Reel Talk and Reel Art film discussions
Book Clubs			
Teen Time Program			
Adult Programs	Adult Programs	Adult Programs	Adult Programs
Adult Summer Reading Program		Creative Writing Group for Adults	Topical Tuesday Lecture Series
Book Discussion Groups		Adult Book Discussion	Book Buddies (Homebound outreach)
Computer & Internet Tutoring		Mark Stein, author of 'How the States Got Their Shapes'	Computer Classes
Volunteers		Drop-in Technology Help	Book Sales
		Friends Programming	Cake Decorating Contest
		Friends Book Sorting	Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality
		Friends Book Sale	
		A panel discussion on housing issues at the Middleton Public Library featuring community leaders and staff from Middleton Outreach Ministry.	
		An evening of events considering Matthew Desmond's "Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City," the 2016-17 Go Big Read selection	
		TECHNOLOGY CLASSES	
		Gmail and More!	
		Photos for Mac	
		Creating Holiday Newsletters	

## Exhibit D

STABR	CITY_M	POPU_LSA	MASTER	LIBRARIA	TOTSTAFF	TOTINCM	STAFFEXP	BKVOL	HRS_OPEN	REFERENC	TOTCIR	TOTPRO	KIDPRO	YAPRO	TOTATTEN	KIDATTEN	YAATTEN	VISITS		
VA	BRISTOL	17,702	4.8	27.6	28.6	1,917,552	1,171,320	150,636	5,720	18,134	312,565	985	540	345	19,931	12,402	6,478	246,887		
AVERAGES	TRI	64,387	8.4	9.4	25.5	1,547,650	1,094,708	119,054	3,283	19,973	379,367	704	550	37	19,169	17,392	505	225,390		
	TN-VA	52,488	4.2	5.6	20.2	1,458,884	968,631	104,445	5,550	37,111	353,634	573	351	52	14,120	9,726	899	204,452		
	COMPS	41,695	5.8	8.1	24.4	1,889,402	1,236,191	117,610	4,653	28,022	409,006	718	424	69	18,254	13,675	1,074	213,214		
	ALL	34,307	4	5	15	1,343,793	829,342	81,370	4,007	27,691	245,485	513	290	49	11,489	7,863	780	150,967		
VARIANCE	TRI	(46,685)	(4)	18	3	369,902	76,612	31,583	2,437	(1,839)	(66,802)	281	(10)	308	763	(4,990)	5,974	21,497		
	TN-VA	(34,786)	1	22	8	458,668	202,689	46,191	170	(18,977)	(41,069)	412	189	293	5,811	2,676	5,579	42,435		
	COMPS	(23,993)	(1)	19	4	28,150	(64,871)	33,026	1,067	(9,888)	(96,441)	267	116	276	1,677	(1,273)	5,404	33,673		
	ALL	(16,605)	1	22	13	573,759	341,978	69,266	1,713	(9,557)	67,080	472	250	296	8,442	4,539	5,698	95,920		
ATTENDANCE/PROGRAM																				
															TOT	KID	YA	VISITS/HR		
													AVERAGES	BRISTOL	20.2	23.0	18.8	43.2		
														TRI	27.2	31.6	13.6	68.7		
														TN-VA	24.6	27.7	17.3	36.8		
														COMPS	25.4	32.2	15.5	45.8		
														ALL	22.4	27.1	15.8	37.7		
															VARIANCE	TRI	(6.99)	(8.68)	5.14	(25.5)
																TN-VA	(4.40)	(4.77)	1.44	6.3
																COMPS	(5.21)	(9.25)	3.30	(2.7)
																ALL	(2.17)	(4.13)	2.99	5.5

## Exhibit E: Regression analysis on 9,250 libraries across the nation

### SUMMARY OUTPUT

#### Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.97823928
R Square	0.95695208
Adjusted R S	0.95691482
Standard Err	114988.926
Observations	9250

#### ANOVA

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	8	2.7162E+15	3.3953E+14	25678.3446	0
Residual	9241	1.2219E+14	1.3222E+10		
Total	9249	2.8384E+15			

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%	
Intercept	-9458.6304	1444.63643	-6.5474123	6.1658E-11	-12290.437	-6626.8241	-12290.437	-6626.8241	
2054	0.76164704	0.0207298	36.7416454	5.742E-276	0.72101205	0.80228203	0.72101205	0.80228203	POPU_LSA
0	6214.00191	345.903294	17.9645641	5.8965E-71	5535.9551	6892.04872	5535.9551	6892.04872	MASTER
0.68	1310.10542	261.716282	5.00582315	5.6651E-07	797.083742	1823.1271	797.083742	1823.1271	LIBRARIA
30232	0.01791445	0.0008245	21.72776	3.92E-102	0.01629826	0.01953065	0.01629826	0.01953065	TOTINCM
1370	11.0477037	0.38367201	28.7946563	1.1E-174	10.2956218	11.7997855	10.2956218	11.7997855	HRS_OPEN
510	-0.0218432	0.01530758	-1.4269527	0.15362731	-0.0518494	0.00816304	-0.0518494	0.00816304	REFERENC
13257	0.1352808	0.002453	55.14902	0	0.13047237	0.14008923	0.13047237	0.14008923	TOTCIR
0	92.7766911	9.51663247	9.74889924	2.3892E-22	74.1219908	111.431391	74.1219908	111.431391	YAPRO

## Exhibit F: Regression analysis on 475 libraries in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina

### SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.97139588
R Square	0.94360996
Adjusted R S	0.94264189
Standard Err	122933.36
Observations	475

### ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	8	1.1785E+14	1.4731E+13	974.733899	1.949E-285
Residual	466	7.0425E+12	1.5113E+10		
Total	474	1.2489E+14			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>	
Intercept	-1613.5188	8448.87634	-0.1909744	0.84862885	-18216.133	14989.0953	-18216.133	14989.0953	
0	5805.0771	1775.64505	3.26927789	0.00115803	2315.81434	9294.33987	2315.81434	9294.33987	MASTER
5	-4267.627	1278.05584	-3.3391553	0.00090775	-6779.0933	-1756.1607	-6779.0933	-1756.1607	LIBRARIA
403677	0.01698782	0.00599139	2.83537323	0.00477631	0.00521434	0.0287613	0.00521434	0.0287613	TOTINCM
32774	0.82066873	0.07998084	10.2608163	2.08E-22	0.66350096	0.97783651	0.66350096	0.97783651	BKVOL
4673	5.01148523	1.71579341	2.92079757	0.00366077	1.63983498	8.38313547	1.63983498	8.38313547	HRS_OPEN
1820	0.38305316	0.07301609	5.24614757	2.3622E-07	0.23957161	0.52653472	0.23957161	0.52653472	REFERENC
89051	0.15351413	0.01184231	12.9631889	4.9361E-33	0.13024319	0.17678508	0.13024319	0.17678508	TOTCIR
0	130.580823	37.0320097	3.52616086	0.00046334	57.8104165	203.35123	57.8104165	203.35123	YAPRO

## Exhibit G: Regression analysis on 276 libraries in Tennessee and Virginia

### SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.993559
R Square	0.9871595
Adjusted R S	0.98672504
Standard Err	57493.4837
Observations	276

### ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	9	6.7596E+13	7.5107E+12	2272.18854	6.535E-246
Residual	266	8.7926E+11	3305500668		
Total	275	6.8476E+13			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>	
Intercept	2963.15426	4838.6824	0.61238867	0.54080378	-6563.8355	12490.1441	-6563.8355	12490.1441	
0	-2098.2101	1184.65699	-1.7711541	0.07768014	-4430.7077	234.287497	-4430.7077	234.287497	MASTER
227322	0.05327686	0.00478801	11.1271421	7.2451E-24	0.04384964	0.06270408	0.04384964	0.06270408	TOTINCM
32526	0.28696848	0.06332153	4.53192609	8.8395E-06	0.16229331	0.41164365	0.16229331	0.41164365	BKVOL
5200	6.75994648	1.43103149	4.72382791	3.7514E-06	3.94235664	9.57753632	3.94235664	9.57753632	HRS_OPEN
737	0.27674674	0.04917302	5.62801981	4.6187E-08	0.17992888	0.37356461	0.17992888	0.37356461	REFERENC
68429	0.1368415	0.00801323	17.0769467	1.1869E-44	0.12106407	0.15261893	0.12106407	0.15261893	TOTCIR
205	36.6736859	16.3637979	2.24114757	0.02584169	4.45463892	68.8927328	4.45463892	68.8927328	TOTPRO
131	-67.331661	20.365623	-3.306143	0.00107605	-107.42999	-27.233331	-107.42999	-27.233331	KIDPRO
6	177.455677	30.5468752	5.80929067	1.7869E-08	117.311253	237.600102	117.311253	237.600102	YAPRO

## Exhibit H: Regression analysis on 185 libraries in Tennessee

### SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.99566902
R Square	0.9913568
Adjusted R S	0.99096393
Standard Err	30972.0262
Observations	185

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	8	1.9365E+13	2.4206E+12	2523.35372	3.167E-177
Residual	176	1.6883E+11	959266405		
Total	184	1.9533E+13			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>	
Intercept	1784.9513	3209.21166	0.55619619	0.57878318	-4548.5383	8118.44086	-4548.5383	8118.44086	
24781	0.39720483	0.15561792	2.5524363	0.01154685	0.09008751	0.70432216	0.09008751	0.70432216	POPU_LSA
227322	0.05840482	0.02013498	2.90066406	0.00419898	0.01866774	0.0981419	0.01866774	0.0981419	TOTINCM
141973	-0.0691431	0.03654189	-1.8921611	0.06011148	-0.1412598	0.00297354	-0.1412598	0.00297354	STAFFEXP
32526	0.56000726	0.09906329	5.65302512	6.2551E-08	0.36450246	0.75551207	0.36450246	0.75551207	BKVOL
737	0.44346978	0.1234784	3.59147653	0.00042639	0.19978091	0.68715865	0.19978091	0.68715865	REFERENC
68429	0.12044772	0.03282055	3.66988742	0.00032146	0.05567524	0.1852202	0.05567524	0.1852202	TOTCIR
131	52.8303625	20.1061316	2.62757469	0.00935891	13.1502204	92.5105045	13.1502204	92.5105045	KIDPRO
6	229.788762	37.4988771	6.12788379	5.6782E-09	155.783438	303.794085	155.783438	303.794085	YAPRO

## Exhibit I: Regression analysis for 90 libraries in Virginia

### SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.99242849
R Square	0.9849143
Adjusted R S	0.98382377
Standard Err	88355.6009
Observations	90

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	6	4.2304E+13	7.0506E+12	903.150128	2.309E-73
Residual	83	6.4796E+11	7806712206		
Total	89	4.2952E+13			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>	
Intercept	8475.794	15102.893	0.56120334	0.576171	-21563.253	38514.8407	-21563.253	38514.8407	
147391	-0.8325866	0.37099897	-2.244175	0.0274829	-1.5704887	-0.0946846	-1.5704887	-0.0946846	POPU_LSA
7228265	0.06191537	0.00833328	7.42988814	8.7746E-11	0.04534081	0.07848994	0.04534081	0.07848994	TOTINCM
394563	0.35148534	0.16902269	2.07951566	0.04065617	0.015306	0.68766468	0.015306	0.68766468	BKVOL
13416	10.3101886	2.69668848	3.82327757	0.00025376	4.94658366	15.6737935	4.94658366	15.6737935	HRS_OPEN
1339000	0.17454405	0.01054332	16.5549455	5.0081E-28	0.15357381	0.19551428	0.15357381	0.19551428	TOTCIR
1470	-30.552447	17.9439058	-1.7026643	0.09237334	-66.242154	5.13726003	-66.242154	5.13726003	KIDPRO

## Exhibit J: Public Library Database Service Comparison Libraries

LIBNAME	POPU_LSA	MASTER	LIBRARIA	TOTSTAFF	TOTINCM	BKVOL	HRS_OPEN	REFERENC	TOTCIR	TOTPRO	KIDPRO	YAPRO	VISITS
CARSON CITY LIBRARY	53969	5.0	5.0	16.0	1843664	81200	3839	80640	351285	507	310	55	284716
PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY	52044	6.1	12.7	28.4	1889168	134956	7363	15979	254561	1669	484	414	293130
IRONDEQUOIT PUBLIC LIBRARY	51692	7.9	7.9	23.6	1929278	79847	3098	37639	682457	642	244	87	274677
GLENDORA LIBRARY & CULTURAL	51463	6.0	6.0	22.0	1965192	99214	2550	39736	333633	713	663	27	278254
LOGAN LIBRARY	48997	7.0	10.0	22.1	1912230	168606	3016	21809	960312	681	384	54	255643
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY FREE LIB	48595	9.0	9.0	24.0	1891329	88167	5624	8218	370876	516	331	35	211988
STILLWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY	48406	3.0	11.5	25.5	1832572	89944	3640	53144	362895	755	485	78	244691
REDFORD TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIB	48362	6.5	6.5	21.0	1913268	163391	2631	41274	253879	398	256	44	167589
PICKERINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY	47944	4.0	8.1	18.5	1821083	99371	3432	8476	574199	885	827	21	159068
BRISTOL PUBLIC LIBRARY	45000	4.8	27.6	28.6	1917552	150636	5720	18134	312565	985	540	345	246887
MARION PUBLIC LIBRARY	42381	5.0	6.0	23.3	1850786	170525	3256	18240	777726	786	300	34	330163
FLETCHER FREE	42211	6.0	6.0	20.1	1831111	125348	3016	3276	354025	773	274	51	260000
CROWN POINT COMMUNITY PUBLI	41810	4.4	4.4	17.7	1884118	102644	5824	51263	290521	764	354	5	256010
SUN PRAIRIE PUBLIC LIBRARY	41415	6.2	7.2	23.3	1819613	104911	3476	46592	665167	578	340	44	219893
WILLIAM T COZBY PUBLIC LIBRARY	40678	10.5	10.5	20.5	1923965	69873	3012	18820	509235	445	332	68	235955
LINDEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	40499	5.8	5.8	16.5	1840243	74936	2808	8000	41766	160	114	0	65000
CEDAR FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY	40421	2.5	5.0	20.2	1949771	99709	3409	26799	518845	691	401	51	243635
NEW CASTLE-HENRY COUNTY PUB	40389	9.0	10.0	49.1	1843298	155392	4820	16604	320517	454	171	134	199465
MONTROSE REGIONAL LIBRARY D	40203	6.8	9.6	22.7	1978434	109301	5125	14391	303082	833	497	44	208467
PREBLE COUNTY DISTRICT LIBRAR	39569	3.0	10.4	34.5	1932790	112969	14456	14612	255495	883	378	78	137228
DEFIANCE PUBLIC LIBRARY	39037	3.0	3.0	26.4	1881210	33643	6604	4888	277630	643	399	132	51844
ROGERS PUBLIC LIBRARY	56000	7.0	11.6	32.4	1927774	136555	3352	55704	439238	980	743	150	214441
GOSHEN PUBLIC LIBRARY	37608	6.2	8.4	24.1	1878224	145565	2860	27686	482431	330	207	111	203898
NEW LENOX PUBLIC LIBRARY DIST	36847	5.3	5.3	25.7	1935688	145593	2808	15837	258401	703	446	71	157599
CHELTENHAM TWNSHP LIB SYSTEM	36793	8.3	8.3	25.4	1935201	119377	8952	18312	417952	865	570	23	265888
MENOMONEE FALLS PUBLIC LIBRA	36692	5.0	5.0	21.5	1842825	116941	3328	17399	359151	373	219	12	149830
TRUMBULL LIBRARY	36578	9.2	12.8	26.3	1833317	154551	4945	17550	445058	702	439	35	251088
BEAUREGARD PARISH	36462	4.0	9.6	27.7	1879124	61780	5590	24941	271970	389	182	52	89357
PETER WHITE PUBLIC LIBRARY	36441	5.4	17.5	25.6	1892827	206760	3211	63078	274613	701	403	70	261458
MOORESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	36391	6.0	7.0	26.3	1902108	120675	3070	32240	506793	1111	935	55	226543
GREENUP COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRAR	36308	2.0	11.0	18.0	1983697	138511	9360	48949	259698	608	295	0	130367
PENFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY	36242	8.4	8.4	22.9	1835525	120504	3165	19029	603770	878	513	129	242241
UNIVERSITY CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY	35371	5.0	5.0	24.9	1882336	182247	3744	24385	422974	533	355	63	249439
JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRAR	35296	4.0	4.0	28.4	1888493	68114	8151	29211	297051	1729	1157	62	216490

**Exhibit K:**

STATE	LIBRARIES	TOTAL STAFF	LIBRARIANS	MLS LIBRARIANS	AVG LIBRARIANS / LIBRARY	AVG MLS LIBRARIANS / LIBRARY	AVG % LIBRARIANS / TOTAL STAFF	AVG % MLS LIBRARIANS / TOTAL STAFF
AK	86	311.4	118.3	58.9	1.4	0.7	38.0%	18.9%
AL	224	1,719.5	730.8	328.1	3.3	1.5	42.5%	19.1%
AR	58	1,005.9	282.6	145.1	4.9	2.5	28.1%	14.4%
AS	1	10.0	7.0	1.0	7.0	1.0	70.0%	10.0%
AZ	90	2,052.9	560.6	474.0	6.2	5.3	27.3%	23.1%
CA	184	11,779.2	3,268.8	3,080.3	17.8	16.7	27.8%	26.1%
CO	114	3,323.6	980.2	727.8	8.6	6.4	29.5%	21.9%
CT	192	2,290.4	1,087.0	756.1	5.7	3.9	47.5%	33.0%
DC	1	542.6	163.0	163.0	163.0	163.0	30.0%	30.0%
DE	21	324.7	122.7	63.2	5.8	3.0	37.8%	19.5%
FL	80	6,125.7	1,929.2	1,679.7	24.1	21.0	31.5%	27.4%
GA	63	2,701.0	577.0	577.0	9.2	9.2	21.4%	21.4%
GU	1	21.0	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
HI	1	547.5	154.0	152.0	154.0	152.0	28.1%	27.8%
IA	543	1,741.9	991.5	298.9	1.8	0.6	56.9%	17.2%
ID	103	780.0	221.1	100.2	2.1	1.0	28.3%	12.8%
IL	625	8,617.2	3,172.5	2,172.0	5.1	3.5	36.8%	25.2%
IN	237	4,403.0	1,463.5	968.6	6.2	4.1	33.2%	22.0%
KS	329	1,722.9	703.0	275.8	2.1	0.8	40.8%	16.0%
KY	119	2,219.1	1,209.1	363.1	10.2	3.1	54.5%	16.4%
LA	68	2,698.3	1,178.2	457.6	17.3	6.7	43.7%	17.0%
MA	370	3,770.3	1,841.7	1,266.9	5.0	3.4	48.8%	33.6%
MD	24	3,587.0	1,330.0	662.0	55.4	27.6	37.1%	18.5%
ME	263	690.3	346.2	153.9	1.3	0.6	50.1%	22.3%
MI	394	4,731.4	1,752.5	1,220.5	4.4	3.1	37.0%	25.8%
MN	137	2,162.4	777.5	525.3	5.7	3.8	36.0%	24.3%
MO	149	3,156.5	819.0	296.5	5.5	2.0	25.9%	9.4%
MS	52	915.5	632.4	130.5	12.2	2.5	69.1%	14.3%
MT	82	382.6	190.3	68.2	2.3	0.8	49.7%	17.8%
NC	80	2,966.4	800.2	743.6	10.0	9.3	27.0%	25.1%
ND	80	237.1	132.3	38.1	1.7	0.5	55.8%	16.1%
NE	267	777.6	341.8	92.5	1.3	0.3	44.0%	11.9%
NH	229	821.9	483.5	224.5	2.1	1.0	58.8%	27.3%
NJ	296	4,597.6	1,405.9	1,164.0	4.7	3.9	30.6%	25.3%
NM	95	672.1	288.3	126.8	3.0	1.3	42.9%	18.9%
NV	22	794.2	202.6	164.0	9.2	7.5	25.5%	20.6%
NY	756	12,470.0	4,212.5	3,575.3	5.6	4.7	33.8%	28.7%
OH	251	8,950.5	2,608.6	1,922.5	10.4	7.7	29.1%	21.5%
OK	119	1,423.5	736.2	338.2	6.2	2.8	51.7%	23.8%
OR	132	1,848.3	521.5	435.8	4.0	3.3	28.2%	23.6%
PA	456	4,489.3	1,482.5	1,179.6	3.3	2.6	33.0%	26.3%
RI	48	622.4	269.7	216.7	5.6	4.5	43.3%	34.8%
SC	42	1,881.9	594.2	471.1	14.1	11.2	31.6%	25.0%
SD	113	349.3	176.7	43.5	1.6	0.4	50.6%	12.5%
TN	186	1,839.1	554.9	271.6	3.0	1.5	30.2%	14.8%
TX	557	6,874.8	2,440.9	1,678.0	4.4	3.0	35.5%	24.4%
UT	73	1,258.2	387.1	224.0	5.3	3.1	30.8%	17.8%
VA	91	3,744.4	996.9	897.7	11.0	9.9	26.6%	24.0%
VT	184	355.7	217.7	67.2	1.2	0.4	61.2%	18.9%
WA	62	3,883.1	838.5	798.2	13.5	12.9	21.6%	20.6%
WI	381	3,051.8	1,148.1	711.9	3.0	1.9	37.6%	23.3%
WV	97	663.0	366.5	95.1	3.8	1.0	55.3%	14.3%
WY	23	456.5	172.3	61.7	7.5	2.7	37.8%	13.5%

## Exhibit L

Need Pruning Shears or a Ukulele? Try the Public Library

By Lucette Langando, Wall Street Journal, 3/20/17

Librarian Kelly Harris remembers when prepping for the summer meant acquiring the hottest beach books. “As long as we had multiple copies of the big summer reads, people came,” Ms. Harris says. Not anymore. Last year, the Hampton Library in Bridgehampton, N.Y., where Ms. Harris works, started lending beach chairs, as well as sand pails and shovels.

Across the country, libraries are lending out things such as bongo drums, chimney-cleaning brushes, karaoke machines and cotton-candy makers in a bid to attract patrons in an era where books aren’t always enough.

At age 35, Ms. Harris is hardly an old-timer, though she feels like one. Now director of the Hampton Library, she waxes nostalgic about when “The Da Vinci Code” came out in 2003. There was a six-month hold on the blockbuster thriller, she says, “and people would wait.”

Those days are over, she says, eclipsed by streaming media, e-books and express delivery. To get people in the door, she eliminated fines on overdue material. Now, patrons can stuff money into a “guilt jar” on the circulation desk. Like other librarians, she also is looking beyond lending books—far beyond.

The Southold Free Library in Southold, N.Y., is lending fishing poles and tackle boxes, and has a telescope aspiring stargazers can borrow. The Ann Arbor District Library in Michigan offers musical instruments including boomwhackers and theremins. The library in Shrewsbury, Mass., lends pruning shears, a weed and root remover and other gardening tools.

And in Oregon, Brendan Lax, the self-styled “librarian of things” has made YouTube videos hawking the Hillsboro Public Library’s borrowable delights. The library’s offerings include bubble machines, a gold-panning kit and a metal detector.

Mr. Lax, whose real title is “Collection Development Librarian,” says he tries to acquire objects people wouldn’t think of owning. “You wouldn’t go out and buy a big industrial popcorn popper,” he says, but the library will loan you one for a couple of days.

To generate buzz for the chimney-cleaning brushes, Mr. Lax dressed up as an old-fashioned British sweep and adopted a cockney accent for a video where he and a colleague channeling her inner Mary Poppins lip-synced the movie’s “Chim Chim Cher-ee” song-and-dance number.

Lending out novel items can bring twists. In Southold, one patron brought back a tackle box he had borrowed and complained he had found a dead fish inside. In Ann Arbor, a patron returned a replica of a prehistoric woolly mammoth tooth, which had been broken in many pieces and then meticulously glued back together. Typically, borrowing non-books from libraries is free, and there are late fees when they are overdue. Several libraries are “lending” flower and vegetable seeds. Will they get them back? Probably not, says Rebecca Judd, of the Bainbridge Island branch of the Kitsap Regional Library, near Seattle, which makes available packets of seeds to grow zinnias, tomatoes, spinach and carrots. The seeds are stored in the old wooden drawers of the card catalog, which once tracked the library’s books. Ideally, patrons bring seeds back after their harvest, but Ms. Judd, the library branch manager, acknowledges: “There are more seeds going out than coming in.”

Julie Todaro, president of the American Library Association, a professional group, recalls that the Houston Public Library, where she worked in the early 1970s, once lent framed prints of famous paintings. “You could check out a van Gogh reproduction,” she says.

“We want to be needed,” says Dr. Todaro, who applauds libraries’ efforts to reinvent themselves. Lisa Downing, director of the Forbes Library in Northampton, Mass., says, “I feel the



writing is on the wall—and I love being relevant.” A few years ago, the Forbes began lending ukuleles. They were a hit with patrons so the library branched out into bongo drums and banjos, among other instruments. Recently, the library asked people what else they would like to borrow. Ms. Downing says she tries to keep an open mind at survey responses, such as requests for kayaks, canoes and snowshoes, but did a double take when someone suggested a Geiger counter. There were two requests for kittens and puppies.

While she can't see cats and dogs hunkering down in the library, she says, “Who knows?” Snowshoes are a serious contender, she allows, adding, “These programs take a leap of faith.”

Some librarians say the unorthodox loans aren't a survival strategy but a response to what their communities want. “We are not doing this to make it through some cataclysm. It is not about ‘books are over,’” says Eli Neiburger, deputy director of the Ann Arbor District Library, who adds that libraries have questioned their offerings for decades. Early in the 20th century, he says, there were debates about whether libraries should stock popular fiction or carry children's books.

While Ann Arbor lets patrons take out a sewing machine and a spinning wheel, books remain in demand. “They have declined slightly, but we still circulate hundreds of thousands,” he says.

The library also loans theremins, a type of electronic instrument dating to the 1920s. The theremin's spooky tones evoke soundtracks from old sci-fi and horror movies, Mr. Neiburger says, and tend to grate on parents after their children spend hours tinkering with the instrument. “It starts being obnoxious,” he says, “and it has to go back to the library.”

Ellen Dolan, director of the Shrewsbury Public Library in Massachusetts, and reference librarian Walker Evans, with gardening tools the library lends. Online, the Shrewsbury

Public Library is touting its “exciting” new collection of garden tools, a gift from a local garden club, including branch loppers, a posthole digger and a pitchfork. Ellen Dolan, the director, draws the line at power tools such as sanders and saws. She also says books don't appear imperiled here: Circulation at the Shrewsbury library has grown, she says.

The Hampton Library in Bridgehampton is trying to figure out what to do for an encore. Lending bicycles would be popular but isn't so easy. Louise Collins, president of the library's board of trustees and a physician, worries someone on a borrowed bike could have an accident. Dr. Collins considered lending helmets, too, until she became concerned about the prospect of lice. Bottom line: No helmets and no bicycles.

In Southold, library director Caroline MacArthur wants to install a book stand in the local laundromat. Patrons could read during the wash and dry cycles, then take books home.

As far as loans beyond fishing poles and the telescope, Ms. MacArthur has a really zany notion: “Maybe a beach bag with—I hesitate to say it —books.”

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“Bad libraries built  
good libraries  
great libraries built

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**R. David**

build collections,  
build services,  
build communities.”

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**Lankes**





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