

THE VALUE OF KENTUCKY'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES: USING ROI TO EXPLAIN YOUR LIBRARY'S IMPACT

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Acknowledgements

IMLS Subgrant

KDLA Commissioned

Partnership with Blueprint Kentucky

We changed our name! CEDIK is now Blueprint Kentucky.



Kentucky's Rural Economy

October 2025 | New report shares data trends on Kentucky's rural economy.

[Read the report](#)

Engaged Communities. Vibrant Economies.

As a unit in the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment since 2010, Blueprint Kentucky embraces our mission through engagement, research and instruction. Along with our partners in [Kentucky Cooperative Extension](#) we connect the resources of our land-grant university with Kentucky communities. We do this by connecting communities to people, place and purpose.



Library support

- [Ask a Librarian](#)
- [Public Library Director's Toolkit](#)
- [Kits](#)
- [Funding for Libraries](#)
- [Library Policies](#)
- [Library Programs](#)
- [Library Staff Development](#)
- [Public Library Directories, Standards, and Statistics](#)
- [Trustees](#)
- [Kentucky Public Library Directory](#)
- [KY Public Library Services Return on Investment](#)

KY Public Library Services Return on Investment



Kentucky Department for Libraries & Archives

Public Library System Report ▼
 Jefferson County ▼

Kentucky Public Library Services Return on Investment

Public libraries play an important role in education, workforce development, and community wellbeing. The return on investment (ROI) is the ratio between the benefits of services provided and the library spending. The benefits combine two measures: the impact of library operations, and the market value of library programs and services.

Economic Impact of Library Operations

Reflects how library spending and employment circulate through the local economy.

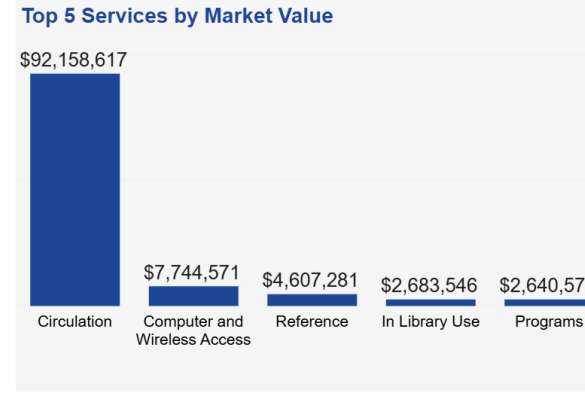
	Employment	Income	Value Added	Output
Total Effect	364	\$18,601,024	\$17,405,682	\$43,983,287

Market Value of Library Programs and Services

Captures the monetary value of programs, circulation, internet access, and other library services.

County Population	772,144
People Entering Library*	1,766,135
Total Material Circulated	3,825,616
Book Circulation (physical)	1,942,619
Electronic Materials	1,605,856
Wireless Sessions	1,547,131
Reference Transactions	658,183

* Some people visit more than one time



Total Market Value of Programs and Services: \$110,289,812

Public Library Return on Investment (ROI)

Estimates the local economic benefits of public spending on library programs and services.

Return on Investment (ROI) = Benefits/Spending: \$5.83

For every \$1 invested by the public library, the community receives in return \$5.83.

Texas Public Libraries

Economic Benefits and Return on Investment



COMMUNITIES SEE A RETURN OF

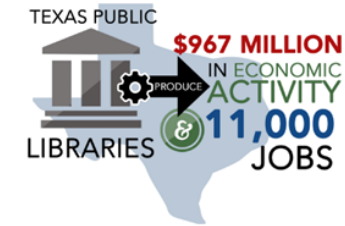
\$4.64

IN ACCESS TO RESOURCES,
PROGRAMMING, SERVICES,
AND TECHNOLOGY



TEXAS PUBLIC LIBRARIES OFFER
\$1.652 BILLION
IN SERVICES INCLUDING

- EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
- WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS
- BOOKS AND DIGITAL MEDIA
- RESEARCH DATABASES (AND MORE!)



Texas State Library and Archives Commission

This report was prepared by the

Bureau of Business Research IC² Institute

The University of Texas at Austin

January 2017



America's Health and Economic Powerhouse

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the world's premier health research agency, driving scientific advances that save lives and improve health. But the NIH is also an economic powerhouse, creating jobs and fueling economic activity in communities across the country, as well as driving innovation that supports America's global leadership.



A POWERFUL
RETURN ON
INVESTMENT



\$1 NIH FUNDED
RESEARCH

=



\$2.56

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



A powerful return on investment

In Fiscal Year 2024, the \$36.94 billion awarded to researchers in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia supported **407,782 jobs** and **\$94.58 billion** in new economic activity nationwide.

AN EXPONENTIAL IMPACT

Setting Expectations

Numbers are low(ish) now due to declining library usage in recent years, but this is on an upward trend

Many new library activities are not counted in ROI studies

Rural library ROI is lower than state numbers



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Inventory & Operations Director - D.A.P. / Distributed Art Publishers - New York, NY.

NEXT JOB ▶

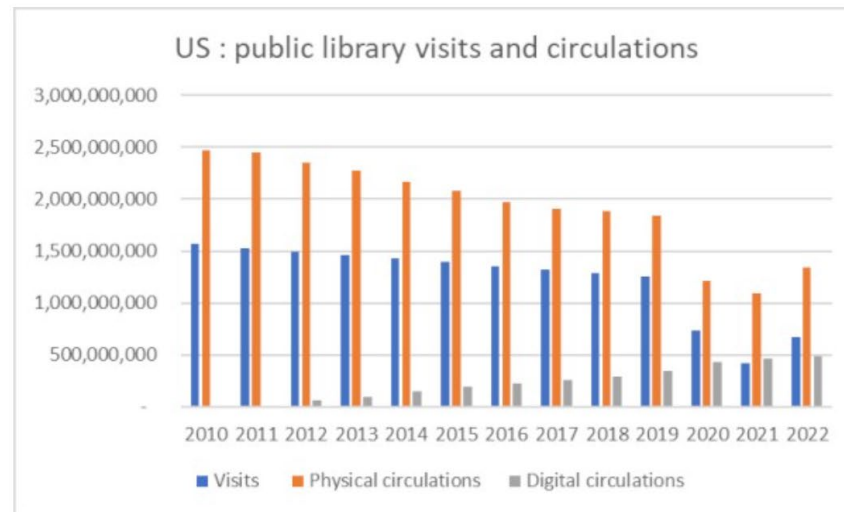
The Quiet Crisis Facing U.S. Public Libraries

The latest IMLS data show library visits are half what they were a decade ago—where is the response from library leaders?

By Tim Coates | Jun 28, 2024



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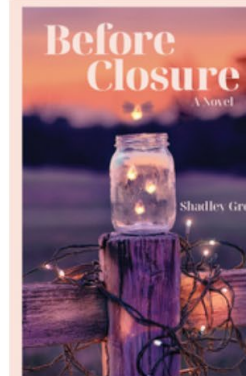


The Freckle Report

According to most recent data from the [Institute of Museum and Library services annual Public Library Survey](#), released earlier this month, gate counts at U.S. public libraries (that is, in-person visits) rose in 2022 over 2021. Overall, however, physical library visits—which have been in a troubling decline for more than a decade—remain dramatically lower than before the pandemic. IMLS counted about 671 million physical visits in 2022 vs. roughly 1.25 billion in 2019, the year before the pandemic shutdowns. And over the last decade, the average number of library visits per user per year has fallen by nearly half (49.1%).

QUICKLINKS

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BEFORE CLOSURE
A Novel
A family drama about a man and his two adult children facing the emotional aftermath of his wife and their mother walking out on the family without warning.
Shadley Grei, Kingbird Press.
\$16.99 (268p)
ISBN: 978-1-965629-00-0

MORE FROM PW



The Big Indie Books of Fall 2025



5 Kitchen Memoirs for Fans of 'The Bear'



blink



Service	Value
Circulation of Materials	\$410,463,913
In-Library Use	\$16,157,874
Bookmobile and Outreach Services	\$6,687,265
Interlibrary Loan	\$1,322,575
Electronic Database Access	\$12,920,770
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Volunteers	\$1,371,551
Total All Services	\$549,330,807

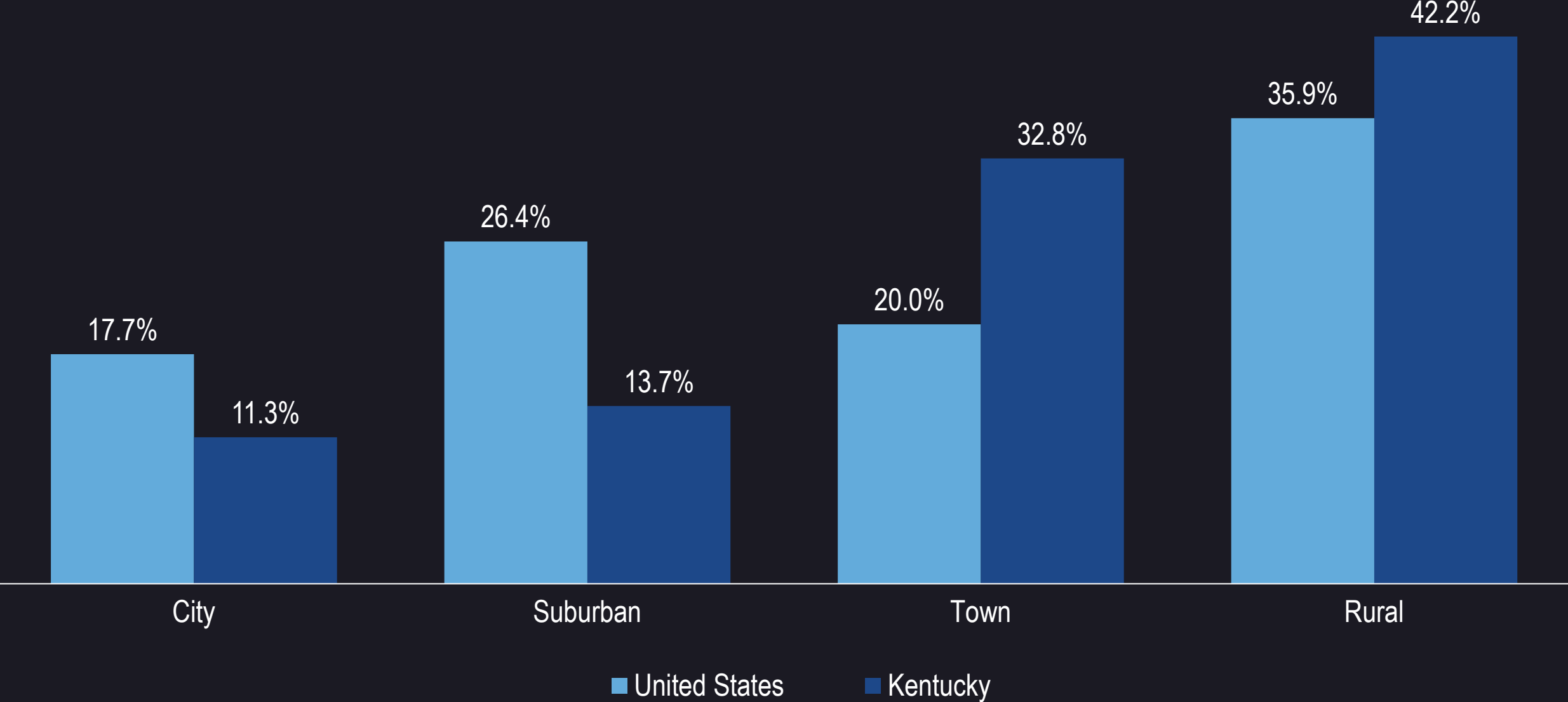
Impact of Expenditures is \$189.8M
(salary + capital + purchases)

Total Investment: \$245.2 million

Total benefit = \$189.8M + \$549.3M = \$739.1

ROI = Total Benefit/Total Investment =
\$739.1 / \$245.2 = \$3.01

Figure 1: Public Library Main Buildings and Branches, by Locale



Labor and Operational Impacts

Impact	Employment (FTE)	Labor Income (Millions)	Value Added (Millions)	Output (Millions)
Direct Effect	2,431	\$129.8	\$99.1	\$103.1
Indirect Effect	31	\$1.6	\$2.3	\$4.4
Induced Effect	691	\$29.6	\$49.2	\$82.2
Total Effect	3,153	\$161.0	\$150.6	\$189.8

Library Value Calculator

How valuable is your local library? Use this handy Library Value Calculator, adapted from tools created by the Massachusetts Library Association and the Chelmsford (Mass.) Library.

Quick Links

[Contact Congress](#)

Advocacy & Public Policy ▾

Getting Started ▾

State & Local Resources ▾

Federal Resources ▾

Talking Points & Tools ▾

Input Your Use	Value of Your Library Use Library Materials & Services	Value of Your Use
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Adult Books Borrowed	\$ 17.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	YA Books Borrowed	\$ 12.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Childrens Books Borrowed	\$ 17.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Audiobooks Borrowed	\$ 9.95
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Interlibrary Loan Requests	\$ 25.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	eBooks Downloaded	\$ 15.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Magazines Read	\$ 5.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Newspapers Read	\$ 9.50
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Movies Borrowed	\$ 4.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	CDs Borrowed	\$ 9.95
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Music Downloaded	\$ 1.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Meeting Room Use (per hour)	\$ 25.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Adult Program Attended	\$ 15.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Young Adult Program Attended	\$ 12.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Childrens Program Attended	\$ 7.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Museum Passes Borrowed	\$ 20.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Computer Use (per hour)	\$ 12.00
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Database Searches	\$ 19.95
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Reference Assistance	\$ 7.00

Calculate The Value of Your Library Use \$ 243.35

Circulation Market Value

Materials	Market Value	Circulation	Total Value
Adult Books	\$17	6,661,422	\$113,244,174
Young Adult Books	\$12	1,023,331	\$12,279,972
Children's Books	\$17	7,562,226	\$128,557,842
Audiobooks	\$10	341,488	\$3,414,880
Audio - Other	\$10	206,054	\$2,060,054
Video	\$4	3,179,059	\$12,716,236
Audiovisual - Other	\$30	95,405	\$2,862,150
eBooks and Other Electronic Items	\$15	9,021,907	\$135,328,605
Total		28,090,892	\$410,463,913

A1	Question Number			
	A	B	C	D
1	Question Number		M1	M2
2	Description			
3				
4	KY0001	Adair County Public Library	homeschool kits	264
5	KY0002	Allen County Public Library	n/a	n/a
6	KY0003	Anderson County Public Library	5 Hotspots	188
7	KY0117	Ballard/Carlisle Public Library	Seed Library	25
8	KY0006	Bath County Memorial Library	Seed Library	5200
9	KY0006	Bath County Memorial Library	GED testing	240
10	KY0007	Bell County Public Library System	In-house Use	3155
11	KY0008	Boone County Public Library District	Total Hours Meeting Rooms Used	25940
12	KY0008	Boone County Public Library District	Outreach Visits (Not Including Bookmobile)	1755
13	KY0010	Boyd County Public Library	In house Laptop Circulation and Maker Space equipment	2621
14	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	In-House books	10,360
15	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Newspapers	204
16	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Seeds	921
17	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Test Proctoring	16
18	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Memory Lab	36
19	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Notarizations	306
20	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Chat	58
21	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Child AWE computers	2419
22	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Roving Collections	60
23	KY0011	Boyle County Public Library	Omeka/Digital	3168
24	KY0012	Breathitt County Public Library	Special Collection/Archives Use	542
25	KY0013	Breckinridge County Public Library	Seed Library	374 people
26	KY0014	Bullitt County Library District	Library of Things	786
27	KY0014	Bullitt County Library District	GoTotes	996
28	KY0014	Bullitt County Library District	Hotspots	772
29	KY0014	Bullitt County Library District	Chromebooks	82
30	KY0014	Bullitt County Library District	Board Games	454
31	KY0014	Bullitt County Library District	Video Games	2,924
32	KY0015	Butler County Public Library	Seed Library	703 packs
33	KY0017	Calloway County Public Library		0
34	KY0018	Campbell County Public Library District	Total Smartphone App Downloads since Mar 2014	28,802
35	KY0018	Campbell County Public Library District	Total Smartphone App Screenviews FY2022-23	1,147,156
36	KY0018	Campbell County Public Library District	Number of Digital Cardholders	4027
37	KY0018	Campbell County Public Library District	Number of Dolly Parton Imagination Library Registrations	3065
38	KY0018	Campbell County Public Library District	Number of Dolly Parton Imagination Library Graduates (Since Inception)	2520
39	KY0121	Carter County Public Library	Seed Library	110
40	KY0020	Casey County Public Library	Notary Services	74
41	KY0020	Casey County Public Library	Seed Library	10
42	KY0022	Clark County Public Library	Seed Library	53,825
43	KY0022	Clark County Public Library	Notary Service	263
44	KY0023	Clay County Public Library	Fishing Poles and Tackle	8
45	KY0024	Clinton County Public Library	Science N Play 2 Go Exhibit	2660
46	KY0025	Crittenden County Public Library	Hotspot Circulation	96
47	KY0026	Cumberland County Public Library		0
48	KY0046	Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library	Seed Library	0
49	KY0027	Daviess County Public Library District	Seed Library	6411
50	KY0027	Daviess County Public Library District	Notary Service	2134

Additional Circulation

1,245,745 circulating items counted above were delivered through bookmobiles. At a shipping market value of \$5, that adds \$6,228,725

52,903 items were borrowed through Interlibrary Loan. Those are not included in the previous calculations, and at \$25 each, have a market value of \$1,322,575

In-House Circulation

People entering library: 10,695,029

If 10% read a magazine (valued at \$5 each): \$5,571,681

If 10% read a newspaper like the WSJ (\$8.5 each):
\$10,586,193

Total In-Library Use: \$16,157,874

Programming Market Value

	Number of Programs	Value per program per attendee	Total Attendance	Total value
Children's Programs	45,063	\$7	1,191,855	\$8,342,985
Young Adult Programs	8,878	\$12	157,637	\$1,891,644
Adult Programs	24,900	\$15	385,245	\$5,778,675
Other Programs	10,718	\$12	694,998	\$8,339,976
Total	89,559		2,429,735	\$24,353,280

Computers and WiFi

Computer usage: $1,841,691 \times \$12 = \$22,100,292$

WiFi sessions: $6,813,021 \times \$5 = \$34,065,105$

Online Databases

Database searches: $5.7 \text{ million} \times \$2 = \$12.9 \text{ million}$

Article downloads: $406,059 \times \$19.95 = \8.1 million

First figure used for market value estimate

Reference

Final calculation was based on a value of \$7 per question, which combined an average labor value of \$2.07 to \$2.42 with the value of library materials.

2,497,346 questions x \$7 = \$17,481,282

Volunteers

Current survey results with a 2/3 response rate has us at 48,074 hours.

$$48,074 \times \$28.53 = \$1,371,551$$

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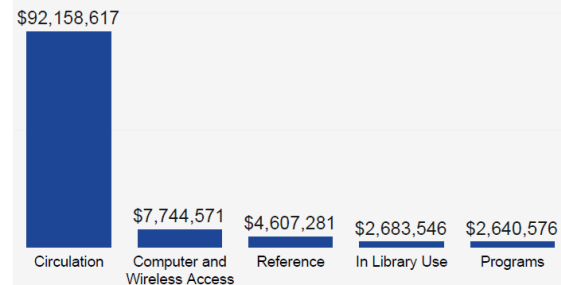
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Top 5 Services by Market Value



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This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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