

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch

Wednesday

July 16, 2025

Board Orientation/Refresher — 1:00 pm

Board of Trustees Meeting to immediately follow

Budget & Finance Committee *will NOT* meet



**Blackwater Regional Library
Franklin Branch**

**280 N. College Dr.
Franklin, Virginia 23851**



Please notify Amy at 757-653-0298 x 304 if you are unable to attend or need directions.

Board Packet Contents

July 16, 2025

- Agenda – July 2025
- Minutes – June 2025
- Library Director's Report
- Library Bills
- Amended FY24-25 Budget
- Monthly Statistics Report – June 2025
- Staffing and Workshop Report

**Blackwater Regional Library
Board Meeting
July 16, 2025**

Agenda

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – July 2025

Approval of Minutes – June 2025

Public Comment

Correspondence

Director's Report

Committee Reports

- Budget and Finance
- Personnel and Policy
- Long Range Planning
 - Board Retreat

Review of Approval of Accounts Payable and File for Annual Audit

Unfinished Business

New Business

- Amended FY24-25 Budget
- Committee Assignments FY25-26

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Announcement of Next Meeting

- September 17, 2025

Adjournment

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
June 18, 2025**

Present

Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Jennifer Cuthbertson – Southampton County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Terri Hedgepeth – City of Franklin
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County
Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County
Jessica Moore – Sussex County
Pam Vaughan – Isle of Wight County
Bill Worsham – Southampton County
Ben Neal – Library Director
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

None

Agenda

Ms. Moore moved, and Ms. Vaughan seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

Minutes

Ms. Briggs moved, and Ms. Lease seconded the minutes be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

Public Comment

Angela Brown with the Western Tidewater Community Services Board had questions regarding children under 18 receiving library cards. Mr. Neal and Ms. Lauver explained BRL's policy and card options for group visits.

Correspondence

Mr. Neal informed the Board that Karen Richardson would replace Ms. Moore on the Board for Sussex County, effective July 1, 2025.

Library Director's Report

Ms. Lauver gave an overview of BRL's Summer Reading Program that kicks off June 23, 2025. *Color Our World* will focus on engaging youth in art, literacy and educational activities to stem creativity throughout the summer. Summer Explorers Story Time offers preschool children the opportunity to explore and expand their boundaries with dynamic early literacy activities. She provided brochures and information to all Trustees and explained how to find programs and events on our website and social media.

BRL maintains its strong presence in the community with fun and educational programs in all localities. We also donated 400 books to the CHIP office for distribution to its families.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Moore – BRL appears to have full funding for FY2026 in all localities.

Personnel & Policy – Ms. Vaughan – committee met, but did not have a quorum. Photo Enforcement Citation policy will fall under New Business.

Long Range Planning – Mr. Neal – The first community conversation at StoreHouse Coffee in Franklin on June 12, 2025 was very successful with approximately 20 attendees. Notes from the meeting are in handouts. Thank you to those Trustees who were able to attend. Ms. Hedgepeth stated that even StoreHouse customers not there for the meeting had good things to add to the conversation.

Accounts Payable

Ms. Moore moved, and Ms. Herrala seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

Unfinished Business

Election of Officers for FY2026 – Ms. Dawson – The proposed slate of officers for fiscal year 2026 is Deborah Dawson, Chair; Pam Lease, Vice-Chair; and Ora Briggs, Secretary. Ms. Dawson asked for nominations from the floor – there were none. Ms. Moore moved, and Mr. Worsham seconded that nominations be closed and the slate of officers be accepted as proposed. The vote was unanimous. Ms. Vaughan moved, and Ms. Hedgepeth seconded that the slate of officers be elected as proposed. The vote was unanimous.

New Business

Acknowledgement of Outgoing Board Members – Mr. Neal and Ms. Dawson expressed their gratitude to outgoing Trustees Terri Hedgepeth, Jessica Moore, Pam Vaughan and Bill Worsham. Each of these Trustees chaired committees and/or the Board during their years of service.

Photo Enforcement Citation Policy – Ms. Vaughan – a draft of the policy was distributed with the packet. Mr. Neal reviewed the policy and asked for questions. There was not a quorum at the committee meeting, but those present consented to recommend approval of the policy. Ms. Herrala moved, and Ms. Vaughan seconded that the policy be accepted as presented. The vote was unanimous.

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Ms. Lease – expressed thanks to outgoing Trustees

Ms. Hedgepeth – enjoyed serving on the Board

Ms. Claggett – expressed thanks to outgoing Trustees. Sorority will participate in Juneteenth activities in Smithfield and Surry

Ms. Lippard – expressed thanks to outgoing Trustees. Summer Reading looks fun!

Ms. Briggs – expressed thanks to outgoing Trustees. Sussex Community Coalition started a men's group. They are doing great things! Basketball and pickleball courts are complete. Received a \$325,000 grant to renovate daycare center!

Ms. Cuthbertson – was inspired by a 20 year-old at community conversation. Lots of good things happening!

Ms. Vaughan – will still be around to help with Windsor library! Loves the library and enjoyed serving on the Board.

Ms. Herrala - expressed thanks to outgoing Trustees

Ms. Moore – Find your passion and follow it! The library has been her passion, and she will still be around to help!

Mr. Worsham – to continuing Trustees – Carry on and keep pushing forward!

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be Board Orientation/Refresher on July 16, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch. The Board meeting will immediately follow.

Adjournment

Ms. Briggs moved, and Ms. Claggett seconded the meeting be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for
Sylvia Claggett, Secretary



Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex
www.blackwaterlib.org

Director's Report

June 2025

Administration Updates

- Libraries served as Cooling Centers during heat wave in late June
- Summer Reading Program is off to a solid start with over 5,000 children's books checked out during kick-off week!
- Library held first Community Conversations event for Strategic Planning process at Storehouse Coffee in Franklin. About 20 members of the community attended, and future events are being scheduled for late Summer.



Community Impact



Bookworm Discoveries Partnership
with IOWC Museum



Library presence at multiple
Juneteenth Celebrations

18 Outreach Programs and Activities in the Community in June
reaching approximately 700 people

City of Franklin

- The library hosted true crime author, Ron Peterson, Jr. for a book talk about his latest book “In the Wind.” A large crowd enjoyed refreshments and hearing about his work & the cases involved
- The library also kicked off its Summer Reading Program this month, with “The Adventure of the Missing Color”, the audience had the opportunity to assist the performer act out the tale and participate in science experiments
- Franklin Branch staff continued to provide deposit collections and pop-up libraries for The Village at Woods Edge and East Pavilion



Isle of Wight County

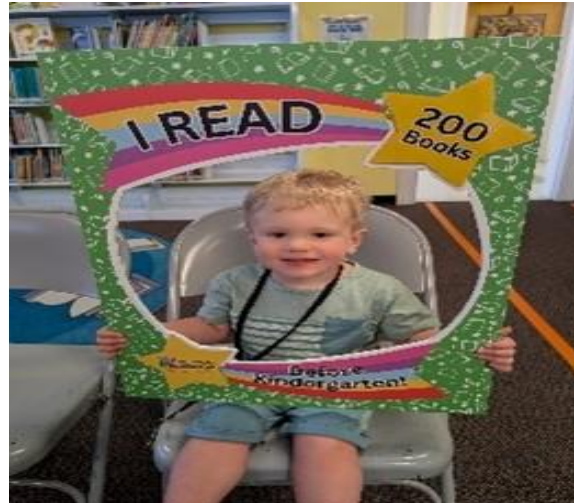
- Big kick-off for Summer Reading at Smithfield and Carrollton branches, and at the Windsor Branch's kick-off event at Town Center, due to limited space at branch. Fun educational events in all three communities saw a combined attendance of over 500 families
- Carrollton Branch hosted six Kindergarten classes from Carrollton Elementary for Storytimes provide by library staff in early June, Windsor staff presented at Carrsville Elementary's Career Day and Outreach staff hosted a Storytime for Isle of Wight RISE program
- Smithfield Branch participated in the town's Juneteenth celebration and provided a Juneteenth-themed StoryWalk for the event.

Between Outreach and In-House programming, 44 programs reaching over 1800 members of the community were delivered in IOW County in June



Southampton County

- Courtland branch's SRP kickoff events featured a reptile show, and was a big hit with attendees of all ages.
- Courtland crafters created designer bookmarks at June's Craftsy program
- Library locations continue to see an uptick in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program with our new milestone picture frames!



Surry County

- Summer Reading began with Surry having a fun Sand Art Project, and Claremont hosting the Virginia Living Museum with their program, “Nature’s Palette”.
- Surry Branch was pleased to host local author, Tracy Gilchrist as she discussed her book, “I, Rose” about her journey with cancer with interested readers
- Surry & Claremont branches both received bags with educational materials and goodies to giveaway to patrons from the American Heart Association



Sussex County

- Both branches had a great kick-off to Summer Reading, with Waverly having a Magic Show and Wakefield having a petting zoo
- Waverly branch hosted their June Farmers Market, which continues to provide a great resource for the community and vendors alike.
- Both branches held a special drawing for a Moonlight Storytime Projector for SRP participants



Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

June 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
AFLAC				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11644	-961.61
06/30/2025	Bill		633724	961.61
Amazon Capital Services				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11645	-10,104.19
06/30/2025	Bill		1HKP-PH1C-W1K1	1,235.08
06/30/2025	Bill		193C-XMHY-NX3X	8,869.11
Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11646	-9,280.00
06/30/2025	Bill		000877024F	9,280.00
AT&T				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11647	-3.39
06/30/2025	Bill		2080904494	3.39
Baker & Taylor				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		327942734	-5,500.67
06/18/2025	Bill		5019546860	5,500.67
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11648	-5,140.05
06/30/2025	Bill		5019569361	5,140.05
Baker & Taylor - Laminate				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		327940361	-446.56
06/18/2025	Bill		5019549149	446.56
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11649	-879.52
06/30/2025	Bill		5019571926	879.52
Blackstone Publishing				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11650	-72.48
06/30/2025	Bill		2200847	36.24
06/30/2025	Bill		2202583	36.24
Cengage Learning, Inc./Gale				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11651	-113.24
06/30/2025	Bill		999100612537	32.79
06/30/2025	Vendor Credit		999100580800	-33.11
06/30/2025	Bill		999100603747	32.79
06/30/2025	Bill		999100588327	80.77
06/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)			-179.89
06/18/2025	Bill		999100499270	48.73
06/18/2025	Bill		999100556894	131.16

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

June 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
Dataprise LLC				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11652	-50,691.16
06/30/2025	Bill		MSP36926	800.90
06/30/2025	Bill		MSP36800	6,300.06
06/30/2025	Bill		A-36607	40,270.00
06/30/2025	Bill		CW36333	220.00
06/30/2025	Bill		CW36320	724.00
06/30/2025	Bill		CW34854	360.00
06/30/2025	Bill		CW34804	1,198.80
06/30/2025	Bill		MSP35251	817.40
06/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)			-6,288.11
06/18/2025	Bill		MSP34076	6,288.11
Document Systems, Inc.				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11653	-3,036.76
06/30/2025	Bill		146254	3,036.76
Dominion Energy Virginia				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11654	-2,315.41
06/30/2025	Bill		3233130008 6.30.2025	2,315.41
Kanopy, Inc.				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11655	-500.00
06/30/2025	Bill		456253	500.00
Library Ideas				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11656	-2,592.00
06/30/2025	Bill		2025-1037	2,592.00
Marlin Leasing Corporation				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		200269669229	-1,598.72
06/18/2025	Bill		40605251	1,598.72
Midwest Tape				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11657	-6,479.67
04/30/2025	Bill		507038968	3,084.58
06/30/2025	Bill		507307698	3,395.09
06/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)			-369.70
06/18/2025	Bill		507275134	369.70
Midwest Tape (Hoopla)				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11658	-55,000.00

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

June 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
06/30/2025	Bill		507410628	55,000.00
Overdrive, Inc				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		cr8fe1t0	-7,363.60
06/18/2025	Bill		03100DA25189809	52.49
06/18/2025	Bill		03100DA25185209	535.87
06/18/2025	Bill		03100CO25180736	6,693.49
06/18/2025	Bill		3100DA25180550	81.75
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11659	-1,381.10
06/30/2025	Bill		03100DA25198183	587.23
06/30/2025	Bill		03100DA25192586	793.87
Petty Cash				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11636	-898.20
06/18/2025	Bill		6.18.2025 petty cash	898.20
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11660	-276.99
06/30/2025	Bill		6.30.2025 Petty Cash	276.99
Quadient Postage				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		BH3797936092	-250.00
06/30/2025	Bill		8140 0461 6.22.2025	250.00
Queen B's Cleaning Service				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11662	-1,096.50
06/30/2025	Bill		1836	1,096.50
SenSource				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11663	-18,746.00
06/30/2025	Bill		63320	18,746.00
Sentara Health Plans				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11664	-18,462.00
06/30/2025	Bill		9991926	18,462.00
Southampton County				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11665	-60.00
06/30/2025	Bill		Acct 46 6.16.2025	60.00
Southampton County (1)				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11666	-399.27
06/30/2025	Bill		2025-06 (June gas)	399.27

Spectrum Enterprise

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

June 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		0886726126	-71.97
06/18/2025	Bill		089740301060125	71.97
T & A Repairs, LLC.				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11637	-20.00
06/18/2025	Bill		38251	20.00
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11667	-133.62
06/30/2025	Bill		38424	133.62
Terry Andrews				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11668	-274.71
06/30/2025	Bill		SM Disc 6.27.2025	274.71
The Library Corporation				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11638	-1,254.00
06/18/2025	Bill		SO12000704	1,254.00
Total Business Solutions				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11639	-519.90
06/18/2025	Bill		296715	519.90
Towne Insurance Agency, LLC				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		274251	-4,980.00
06/18/2025	Bill		182423	4,980.00
TowneBank/Card Services				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		CBE4579877	-7,969.14
06/18/2025	Bill		6457 0001 6.12.2025	7,969.14
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11669	-3,870.63
06/30/2025	Bill		6457 0001 6.30.2025	3,870.63
Unique Management Services, Inc.				
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11670	-5,170.00
06/30/2025	Bill		6140781	5,170.00
06/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)			-139.80
06/18/2025	Bill		6139822	139.80
United States Treasury				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11640	-128.39
06/18/2025	Bill		Form 720 6.30.2025	128.39
Verizon (1)				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3141113/3141114	-163.30

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

June 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
06/18/2025	Bill		935119692 6.9.2025 (S	81.65
06/18/2025	Bill		961660704 6.9.2025	81.65
06/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11671	-63.21
06/30/2025	Bill		624106825 6.22.2025	63.21
Verizon Wireless				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		4147299539	-2,840.71
06/18/2025	Bill		6115563563	2,840.71
Womack Publishing Company, Inc.				
06/18/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11641	-112.00
06/18/2025	Bill		150825	56.00
06/18/2025	Bill		150830	56.00

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BUDGET 2024-2025

LOCAL - 13.50 Minimum - amended 7.16.2025 - DRAFT

	Approved 11.15.2023	Amended
LOCAL OPERATING EXPENSES	2024-2025	2024-2025
PERSONNEL		
Salaries	1,226,248	1,201,248
FICA	99,722	99,722
Health Insurance	304,258	274,258
VRS	139,593	139,243
Unemployment	3,000	500
TOTAL PERSONNEL	1,772,821	1,714,971
OPERATIONS		
Advertising	1000	1000
Automation	68700	68700
Audit	10000	10000
Childrens Programming	6000	6000
Computer Replacement	5000	100
Headquarters Bldg Maint/Utilities (50% shared)	32000	32000
Downloadables	0	55000
Dues	1000	3000
Fiscal Agent Compensation per Contract	16000	16000
Insurance	38000	38000
Internet (E-Rate)	54475	54475
Legal	1000	3450
Library Administration	6000	8500
Direct Deposit	3600	4800
Office Supplies	15000	9800
Postage	2000	5000
Staff Training/Travel	5000	9800
Staff Travel	2500	0
Telephone	23000	23000
Vehicles		
Gas	5500	5000
Maintenance	3500	3500
TOTAL OPERATIONS	299,275	357,125
TOTAL PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONS	2,072,096	2,072,096
CREDITS FROM INCOME		
Fines & Fees	32000	32000
Johnson Trust	4000	4000
W. C. Rawls Trust	55000	55000
E-Rate Income	43494	43494
TOTAL INCOME FROM CREDITS	134,494	134,494
TOTAL BUDGET FOR LOCALITY DISTRIBUTION	1,937,602	1,937,602

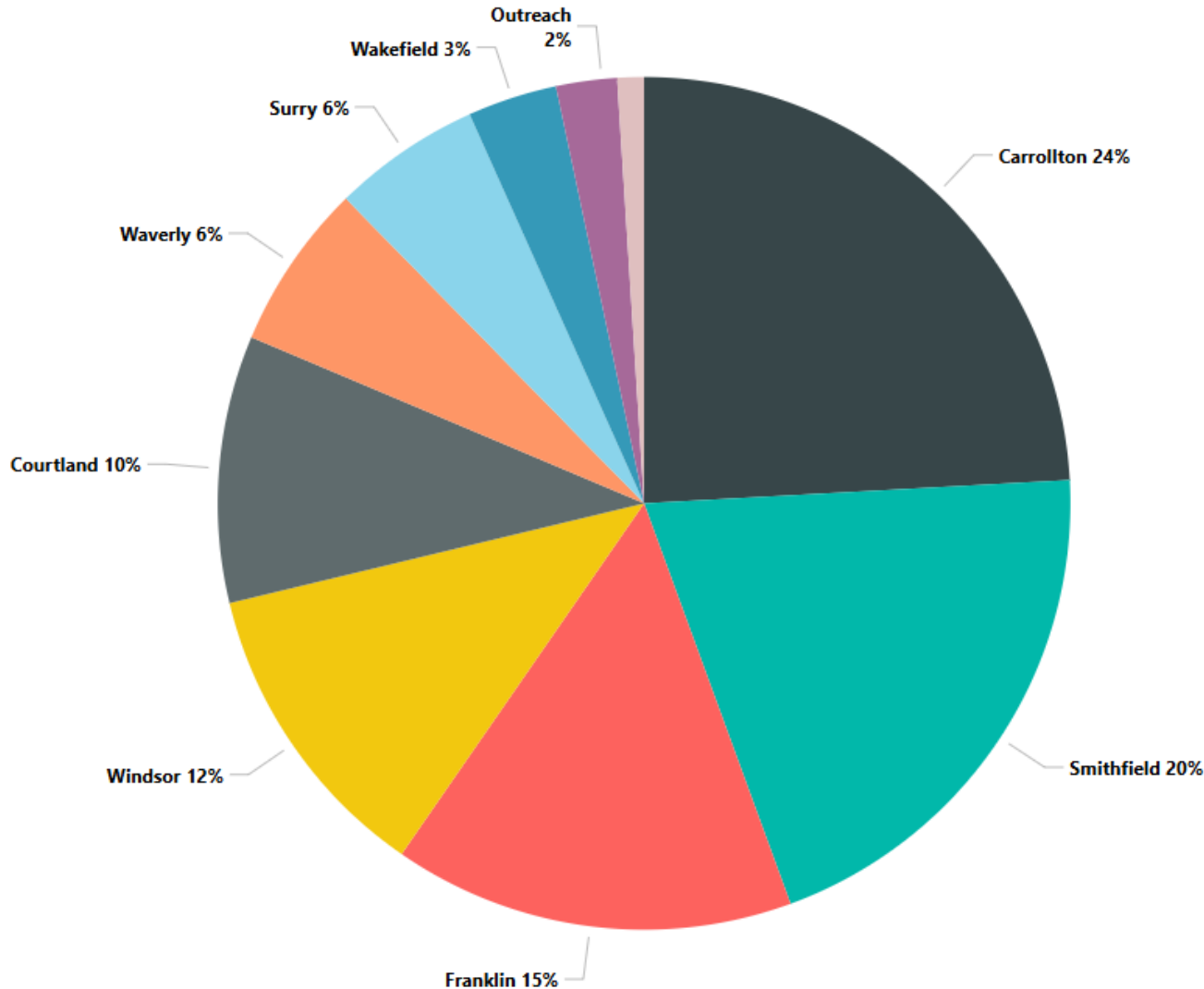


Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex
www.blackwaterlib.org

June 2025

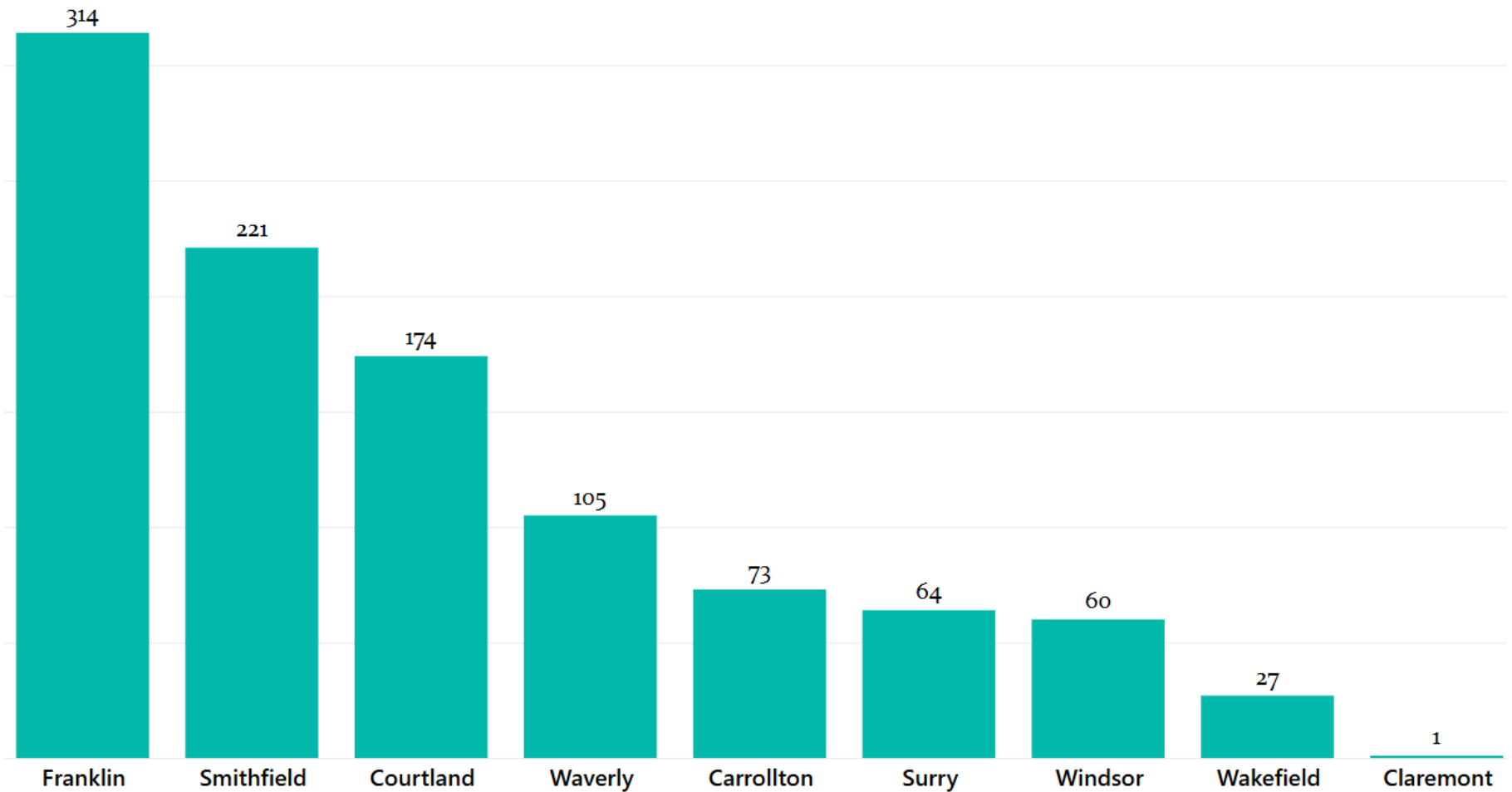
Statistics

Monthly Report: Patron Count

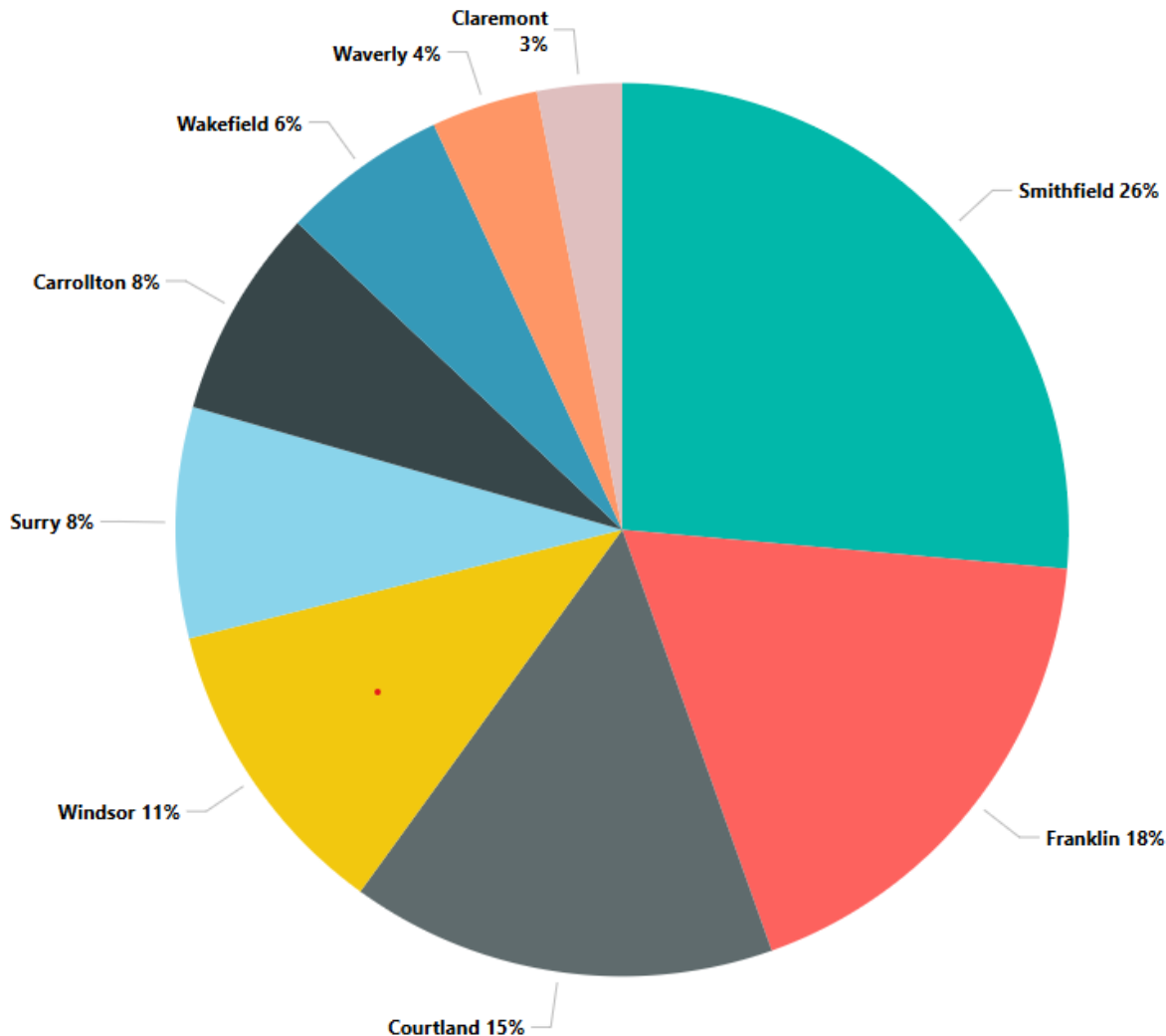


Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	3891
Claremont	163
Courtland	1633
Franklin	2453
Outreach	372
Smithfield	3272
Surry	906
Wakefield	547
Waverly	1017
Windsor	1873
Total	16127

Monthly Report: In-House Internet

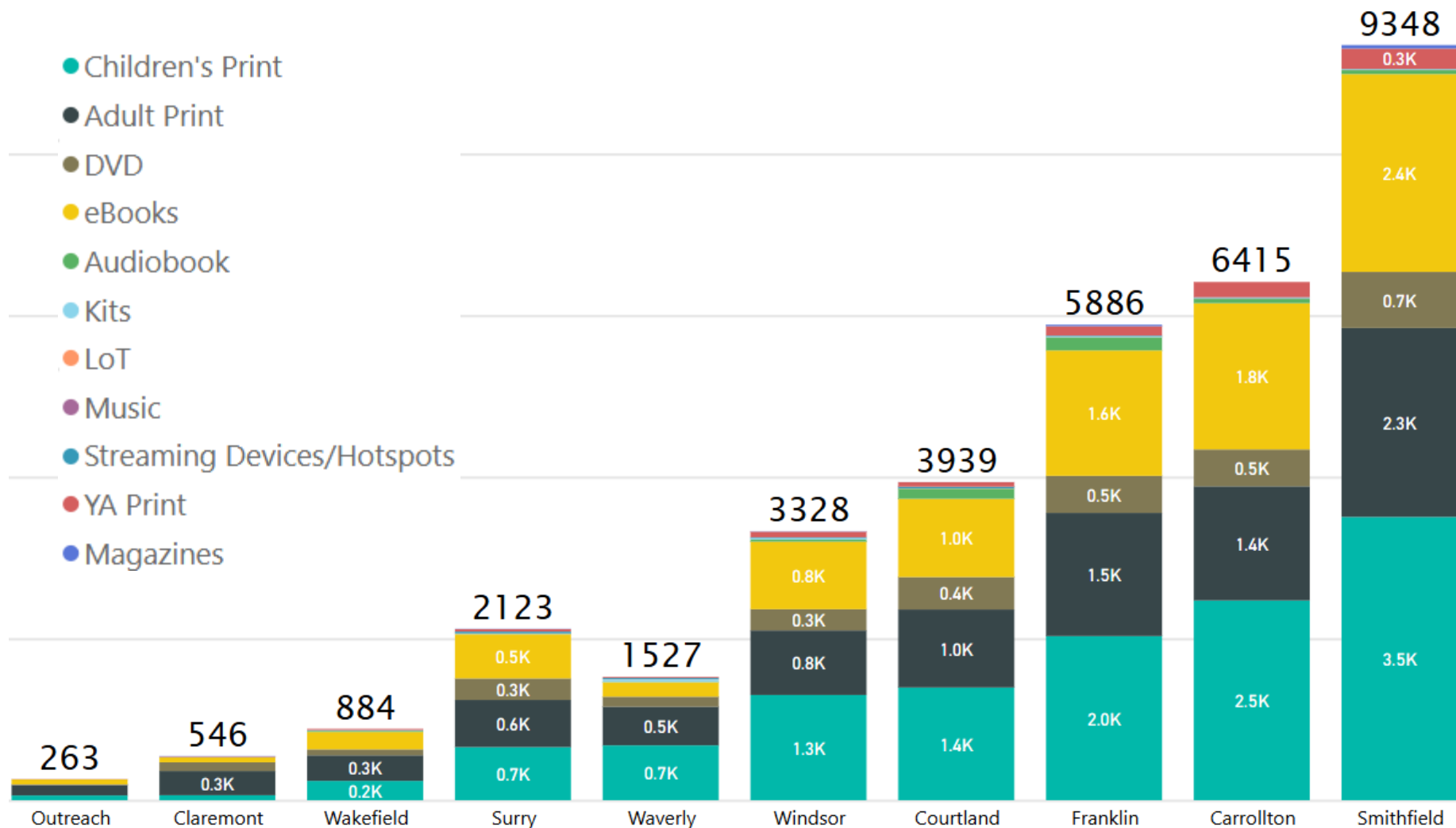


Monthly Report: WiFi Use



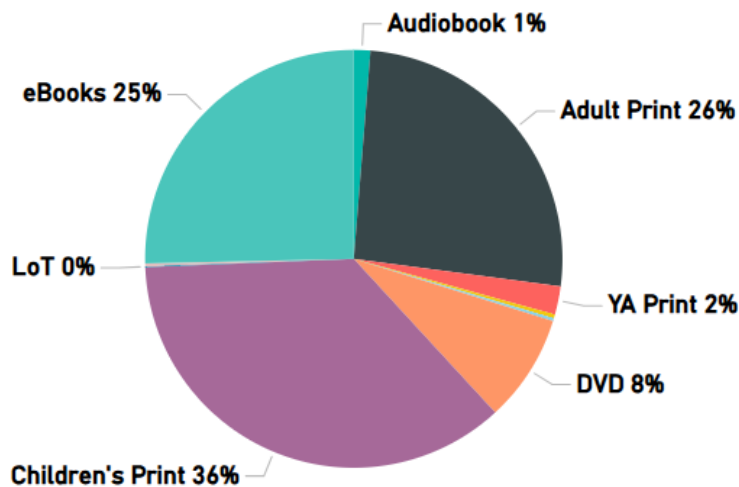
Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	124
Claremont	50
Courtland	251
Franklin	296
Smithfield	430
Surry	136
Wakefield	98
Waverly	63
Windsor	181
Total	1629

Circulation Report: By Branch

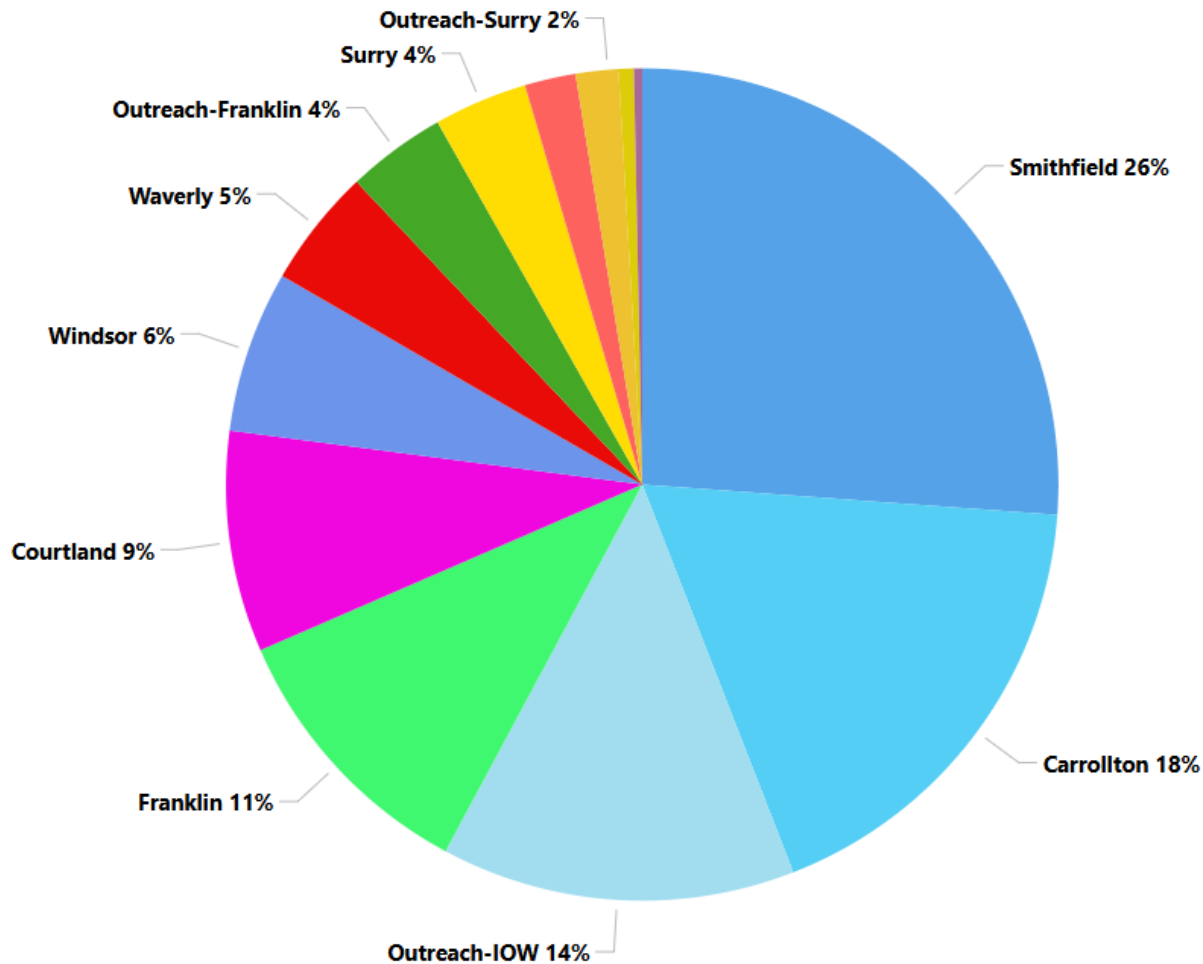


Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	Music	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1413	2473	456	54	3	188	0	6	0	1811	11
Claremont	300	62	108	1	0	7	0	1	5	61	1
Courtland	965	1396	402	125	0	57	0	4	1	968	21
Franklin	1525	2032	458	163	9	116	0	2	18	1553	10
Outreach	128	59	9	0	0	3	0	1	0	62	1
Smithfield	2339	3507	694	49	2	251	0	5	43	2449	9
Surry	583	658	267	1	5	31	0	3	4	547	24
Wakefield	316	240	74	15	9	15	0	0	0	215	0
Waverly	479	679	124	3	32	13	0	3	0	179	15
Windsor	799	1303	262	27	16	70	0	0	4	837	10
Total	8847	12409	2854	438	76	751	0	25	75	8682	102

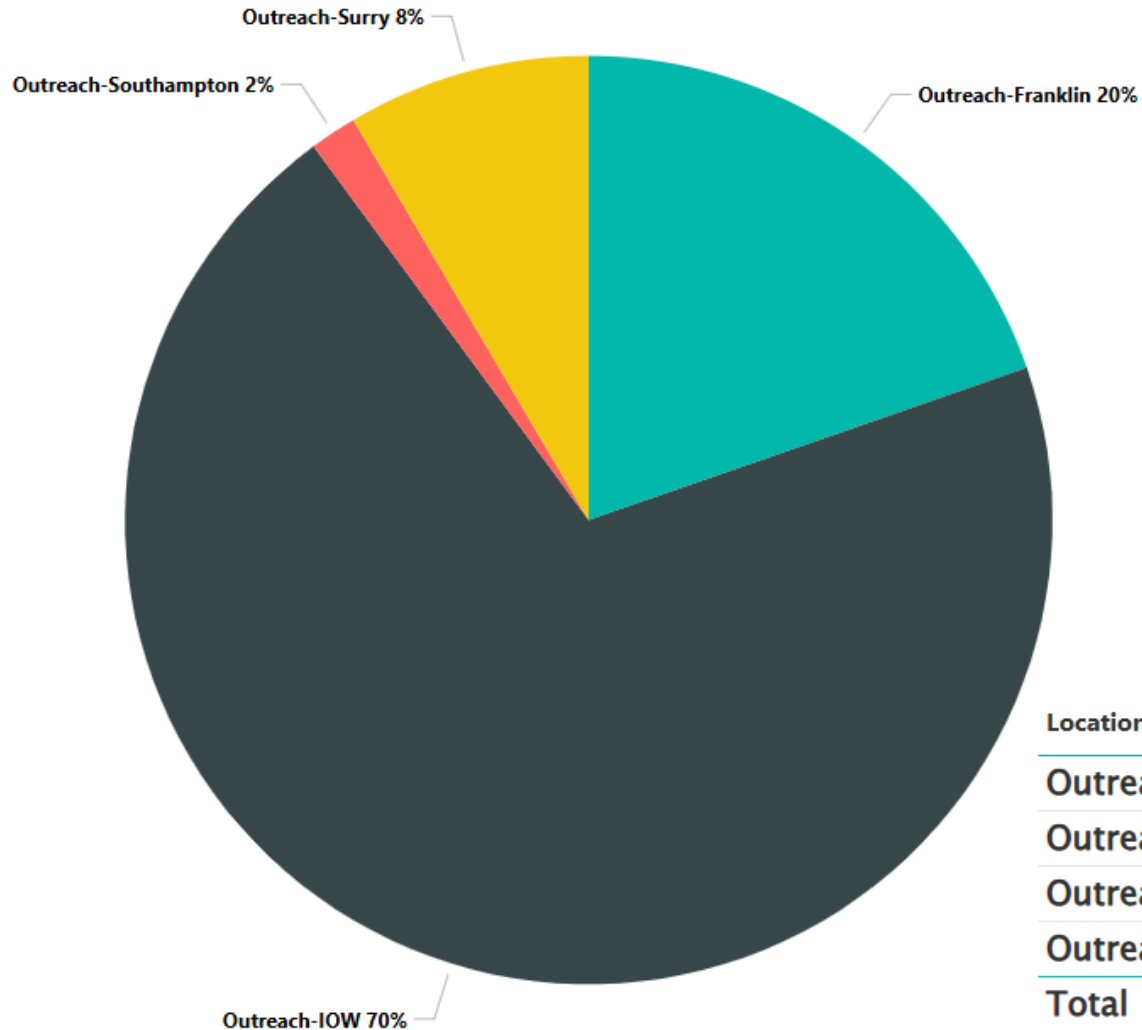


Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	670
Claremont	22
Courtland	321
Franklin	398
Outreach-Franklin	144
Outreach-IOW	514
Outreach-Southampton	12
Outreach-Surry	62
Smithfield	978
Surry	136
Wakefield	74
Waverly	172
Windsor	235
Total	3738

Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach-Franklin	2	144
Outreach-IOW	10	514
Outreach-Southampton	1	12
Outreach-Surry	1	62
Total	14	732

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Staffing Update July 2025 Blackwater Regional Library

New Hires

Promotions

Transfers

Separations

- Ashley Tillman - Youth Services Programmer, Carrollton and Smithfield

Vacancies

- Senior Library Assistant – Outreach Services
- Youth Services Programmer – Carrollton and Smithfield

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Training Sessions – June 2025

City of Franklin staff completed a total of 2 trainings

Isle of Wight County staff completed a total of 2 trainings

Southampton County staff completed a total of 1 training

Surry County staff completed a total of 1 training

Sussex County staff completed a total of 2 trainings

Central Office staff completed a total of 1 training

6/4/2025 – Empowering Teens: Enhancing Information Literacy Through Gemas and Interactive Programming - You can help your teen patrons to become better navigators of the information that they find online. Come learn about how you can offer fun and engaging experiences that bring teens to the library and build their information literacy skills. Researchers at the University of Washington's Center for an Informed Public will walk you through programs developed with public libraries, including an escape room game and youth video program. You'll also discover activities adapted from school libraries that help teens reflect on their interaction with social media and give them the tools to verify questionable posts.

6/4/2025 – Resources and Strategies to Protect Older Adult from Fraud and Scams - This was a very interesting webinar. It provided a lot of information on resources for information and programs targeted to older adults. Awareness of scams and frauds can help prevent people from becoming victims and losing their life savings. I was amazed at how many agencies provide free information and I plan to take advantage of these resources and hopefully have a program in the fall.

6/5/2025 – How Important is Politeness? - This presentation emphasized the importance of using calm, reasonable and polite language to control most any narrative. It contained helpful tips on how to respond to and/or diffuse difficult situations.

6/6/2025 – Building a Strong Library Ecosystem: One Voice for Library Instruction, Advocacy, and Resilience - This workshop was about the partnerships and community building that the library can participate and benefit from. Not only does a library have immediate community members that come to mind such as the patrons and local businesses, but a library can look to other institutions such as other types of libraries for partnering in different ways. This is the Ecosystem that is described at length in the book, Strengthening Library Ecosystems, recommended by the presenter and referenced in conjunction with the American Library Association's Ecosystem Toolkit.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

The ecosystem is defined as “the interconnected network of all types of libraries, library workers, volunteers, and associations that provide and facilitate services for community members.”

6/19/2025 – Better Responses for Patrons Dealing with Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Understanding

- This webinar addressed the rising number of people experiencing homelessness in our communities and how library staff can better understand their situation. The presenter, Dr. Steve Albrecht, said that there’s many questions that arise about homelessness and how society can better serve the homeless population. However, homelessness is a complex issue and the answers are not straight forward. The presenter recommended “daily tools” for library staff to use when interacting with homeless patrons:

- Dignity awareness: eye contact; non-judgmental body language
- Patience: with a population that can be impatient, rude, confrontational; not skilled listeners, and who are frustrated with their place in “The System.”
- Calming tones and empathic approach: with people who are angry, depressed, fearful, trauma-exposed, stuck in a dire life situation.
- Boundary-setting: Always striving for the “Negotiated Behavioral Agreement.” Assertive responses, without being aggressive or passive.
- Firm, fair, consistent, reasonable treatment, and safety and security awareness.
Disengage and/or get help, as necessary

Overall, I thought this webinar was a good overview of the issue of homelessness in the library. However, I had hoped for more detailed tips and resources for serving patrons in need.

6/16/2025 – Customer Service Training: Never Argue - This training was a refresher on Customer Service techniques. This one reinforces the rule of never arguing with the customer.

6/20/2025 – How to Improve Your Leadership Skills and Influence Anyone! - This webinar provides the listener with information on leadership skills and how to influence people. When you think of the word influence, it is known as the power you have to affect the actions, behaviors and opinions of other people. There are two types of influence, internal and external. Internal is the power to control yourself, and external is your ability to impact others.

When you think about leadership, you need to think about what kind of leader do you want to be. Try asking yourself these two questions: 1. When you leave a room what do you want people to say about you? 2. How do you want people to feel when they are around you? The way that you answer these questions can help you build a road map on how you would like to be perceived by others. Leadership is knowing how to be flexible, being open to change, and how to grow as a person. Leadership is simply how you show up, and how you treat others. In other words, it is how to influence yourself.

Influencing yourself starts at home, in your personal life. Find a routine that works specifically for you, such as a morning routine which starts the night before. For example, not eating three

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hours before bed, not working two hours before bed, and no screen time one hour before bed. This shows that you are prioritizing your rest and being intentional about the next day. Sleep affects your overall well-being. If you want to be successful, you should prioritize sleep. Three days in a row of less than six hours of sleep affects your ability to focus. Which in turn is not setting you up for success and is not helping you on the road to being able to positively influence others.

6/27/2025 – Best Book Club Picks - This was a very good webinar for anyone working with book clubs. They discussed upcoming books to be published, that would all make very good book club selections. The best in fiction, non-fiction and books based on true stories, I found several selections that would be good choices for our book clubs.