

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch

Wednesday

October 15, 2025

Budget and Finance Committee meeting —2:00 pm

Board of Trustees Meeting—3:00 pm

Budget & Finance Committee *will* meet:

Chair, Pam Lease, Kathy Lippard, Karen Richardson,
Margie McClenny



**Blackwater Regional Library
Franklin Branch**

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



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

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

Board Packet Contents

October 15, 2025

- Agenda – September 2025
- Minutes – September 2025
- Library Director's Report
- Library Bills
- Monthly Statistics Report – September 2025
- Staffing and Workshop Report

**Blackwater Regional Library
Board Meeting
October 15, 2025**

Agenda

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – October 2025

Approval of Minutes – September 2025

Public Comment

Correspondence

Director's Report

Committee Reports

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

Review of Approval of Accounts Payable and File for Annual Audit

Unfinished Business

New Business

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Announcement of Next Meeting

- November 19, 2025

Adjournment

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES BOARD RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2025**

Present

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County
Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County
Margie McClenny – Southampton County
Karen Richardson – Sussex County
Kisha Watford – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County
Ben Neal – Library Director

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees Board Retreat to order at 1:07 p.m. at the Franklin Branch following the Board Retreat. She turned the meeting over to Mr. Neal, who talked about strategic planning and answered questions from the Board.

The board retreat adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2025**

Present

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County
Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County
Margie McClenny – Southampton County
Karen Richardson – Sussex County
Kisha Watford – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County
Ben Neal – Library Director
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 2:13 p.m. at the Franklin Branch following the Board Retreat.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

None

Agenda

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

Minutes

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

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

None

Library Director's Report

Summer Reading Program 2025 was a success with over 1,000 children participating and over 22,000 children's books checked out system-wide. Over 100 programs were held with over 5,000 people attending.

Fully staffed as of 9.10.2025

BRL participated in multiple National Night Out events throughout the service area.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Lease – will have formal meeting the day of October Board meeting. Ms. Lease will confirm time via email.

Personnel & Policy – Mr. Neal – The committee did not have quorum at its meeting, but came to a broad consensus on an updated Travel Policy. The policy will fall under New Business.

Long Range Planning – Ms. Dawson – Committee will meet October 8th, Ms. Dawson will email details.

Accounts Payable

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

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Travel Policy – Personnel and Policy discussed details of this policy at length. The draft includes travel expense updates based on local governments and schools, and the Department of Human Resource Management. Ms. Herrala moved, and Ms. McClenny seconded that the policy be approved as presented, effective November 1, 2025. The vote was unanimous.

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Ms. Dawson – happy to see everyone at Board Retreat earlier in the day. Nottoway Indian Pow Wow is this weekend in Surry. BRL will attend on Saturday.

Ms. Watford – Delta Sigma Theta will host a Wellness Rodeo on Saturday from 10:00a – 2:00p in the Paul D parking lot.

Ms. Lippard – The Smithfield Branch Manager transition from Terry Andrews to April Watkins is going very well.

Ms. Richardson – The Waverly Farmer's Market was held on Tuesday.

Ms. Lease – Franklin Fall Festival is October 4th in downtown Franklin.

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on October 15, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

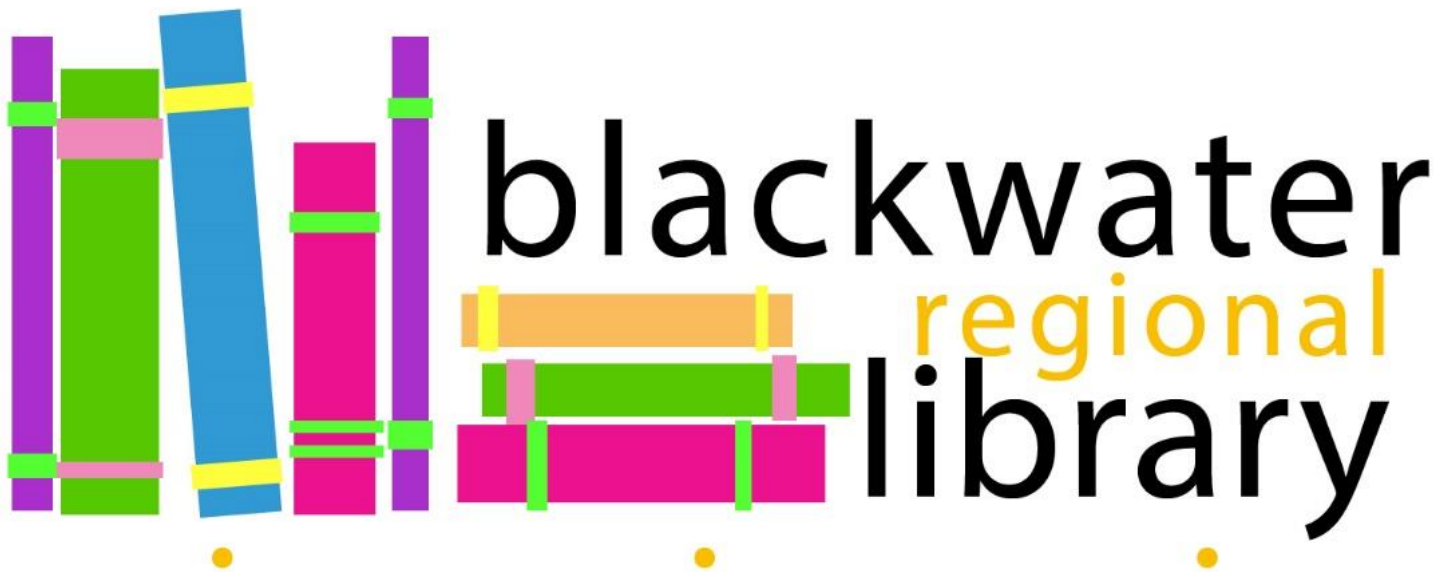
Adjournment

Ms. Lippard moved, and Ms. Watford seconded the meeting be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for
Ora Briggs, Secretary



Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex
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Director's Report

September 2025

Admin Updates

- One vacancy as of 10.7.25
- Several BRL staff attended 2025 Virginia Library Association Conference; learning and sharing with other library professionals throughout the state
- Circulation +8% through first quarter of FY compared to same period last year.



SENSORY KITS

Themes Include:

Now available in select branches and by request!

- Bugs
- Gardening
- Construction
- Manners
- Dance
- Music
- Dinosaurs
- Potty Time
- Farming
- Yoga

QR code linking to sensory kits information.

blackwater regional library
www.blackwaterlib.org

The graphic features a pink and light blue background. At the top, the text 'SENSORY KITS' is in large, bold, purple letters. Below it, there are illustrations of musical notes, a xylophone, and several colorful eggs. To the right, there are two book covers: 'WILD SYMPHONY' by Dan Brown and 'Let's Make Music' from the National Geographic Kids 'Look & Learn' series. Below the illustrations, the text 'Themes Include:' is followed by a list of ten themes arranged in two columns. A QR code is located on the right side of the graphic. At the bottom right, the Blackwater Regional Library logo and website are displayed.

New Sensory Kits
Available for Check
Out

City of Franklin

- Programming started back up at the Franklin branch with good turnout, especially for youth programs
- Franklin Community very excited for return of Saturday hours
- Franklin Branch hosted local author Dr. Crystal Jacobs-Beatty to discuss her new book and shared her inspirations for writing
- Staff participated in outreach events throughout community, including Health Rodeo Fair, sponsored by local Delta Sigma Theta chapter



Isle of Wight County

- Carrollton Branch had a busy month including the kids crafting program that made Galaxy Coasters!
- Smithfield Branch had another busy month with several well-attended programs--- notably several young readers reached milestones in our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- Windsor branch featured a lot of fun programs, including Family Game Day which had a great turnout

33 Programs in Isle of Wight County in September reaching nearly 400 people



Southampton County

- Regularly scheduled children's and adult program continue to thrive, often at full capacity
- Courtland hosted their new Pokemon club, which saw good turnout and lots of fun with Pokemon-adjacent activities
- Courtland branch hosted a special visit from local Memory Care unit where staff helped spark memories via activities and pictures with our guests



Surry County

- Branch participated in the Parents as Teachers program at Surry Recreation Center; giving away free books, activities and more!
- Both branches continued to be a busy hub for programs, books, and other activities
- Library staff also represented the library at the Nottoway Pow Wow



Sussex County

- A wide array of adult programs at both branches, including a fun retro craft program at Waverly Branch Library
- Wakefield branch hosted special storytimes for a couple local Pre-K's; and one young reader graduated from the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Program and received her Savings Account certificate from Bronco Federal Credit Union!
- Waverly Branches Farmers Market was fantastic in September, with new vendors, the Friends flower sale and great traffic.



Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills September 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
AFLAC				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		606009 9.30.2025	-961.61
09/30/2025	Bill		606009	961.61
Amazon Capital Services				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11717	-3,940.05
09/30/2025	Bill		1LRF-R3P7-MJW1	599.23
09/30/2025	Bill		1LLH-Y4QK-KQPT	3,340.82
Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		12703086	-9,280.00
09/17/2025	Bill		000893268F	9,280.00
Baker & Taylor				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11718	-947.05
09/30/2025	Bill		5019664912	947.05
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3105008077172203940	-818.27
09/17/2025	Bill		5019656910	818.27
Baker & Taylor - Laminate				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3102005977173704250	-57.30
09/17/2025	Bill		5019656764	57.30
Cengage Learning, Inc./Gale				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11719	-182.14
09/30/2025	Bill		999101377322	18.19
09/30/2025	Bill		999101377321	65.58
09/30/2025	Bill		999101493737	32.79
09/30/2025	Bill		999101493738	32.79
09/30/2025	Bill		999101484104	32.79
Center Point Large Print				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11720	-33.95
09/30/2025	Bill		2202616	33.95
Document Systems, Inc.				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11721	-2,950.92
09/30/2025	Bill		148300	2,950.92
Dominion Energy Virginia				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		4538671500	-2,034.18
09/30/2025	Bill		3233130008 9.30.2025	2,034.18

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills September 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
MidAmerica Books				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11722	-574.80
09/30/2025	Bill		0074080	574.80
Midwest Tape				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11723	-1,734.32
09/30/2025	Bill		507757824	1,734.32
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		9104008777175605130	-503.97
09/17/2025	Bill		507696835	503.97
Overdrive, Inc				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		30sgf1gr	-4,216.33
09/17/2025	Bill		03100CO25274230	1,546.90
09/17/2025	Bill		03100DA25277657	891.73
09/17/2025	Bill		03100CO25277142	1,661.15
09/17/2025	Bill		03100DA25280866	116.55
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		9vrymwys	-2,984.37
09/30/2025	Bill		03100DA25286086	643.53
09/30/2025	Bill		03100DA25292879	798.53
09/30/2025	Bill		03100DA25295558	84.99
09/30/2025	Bill		03100DA25306418	1,457.32
PEAC Solutions				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		200316692902	-1,598.72
09/17/2025	Bill		40923115	1,598.72
Petersburg Alarm Company				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11724	-435.00
09/30/2025	Bill		215696	435.00
Petty Cash				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11725	-613.86
09/30/2025	Bill		Sept 2025 Petty Cash	613.86
Quadient Postage				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		BH3802621337	-250.00
09/30/2025	Bill		8140 0461 9.22.2025	250.00
Queen B's Cleaning Service				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11726	-1,096.50
09/30/2025	Bill		1902	1,096.50

Selective Insurance Company

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills September 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11727	-697.00
09/30/2025	Bill		0000101941 9.16.2025	697.00
Sentara Health Plans				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		WAD2527632086	-16,574.00
09/30/2025	Bill		10315177	16,574.00
Southampton County				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		36368	-65.00
09/30/2025	Bill		Acct 46 9.16.2025	65.00
Southampton County (1)				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11713	-450.37
09/17/2025	Bill		2025-08 (August gas)	450.37
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11728	-402.33
09/30/2025	Bill		2025-09 (Sept gas)	402.33
Spectrum Enterprise				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		O915909330	-71.97
09/17/2025	Bill		089740301090125	71.97
T & A Repairs, LLC.				
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11729	-20.00
09/30/2025	Bill		39322	20.00
The Library Corporation				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11714	-32,836.86
09/17/2025	Bill		INV11004308	32,836.86
TowneBank/Card Services				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		C4FE877CB6	-10,159.26
09/17/2025	Bill		6457 0001 9.17.2025	10,159.26
Unique Management Services, Inc.				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3107008777171302860	-174.75
09/17/2025	Bill		6143169	174.75
Verizon (1)				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3177188/3177189	-163.78
09/17/2025	Bill		935119692 9.9.2025	81.89
09/17/2025	Bill		961660704 9.9.2025	81.89
09/30/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3184191	-63.05
09/30/2025	Bill		624106825 9.22.2025	63.05

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

September 2025

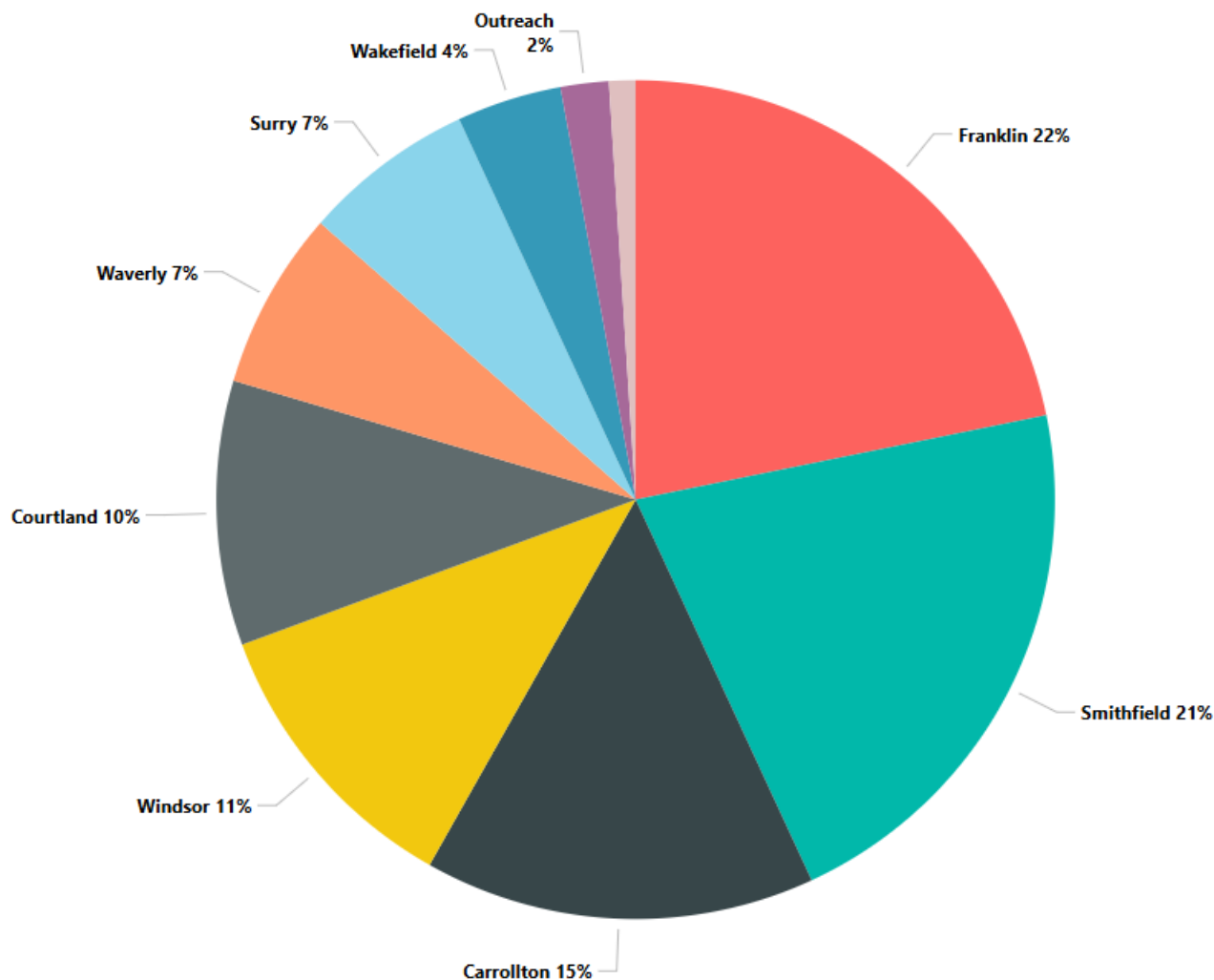
DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
Verizon Wireless				
09/17/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		3689531941	-2,840.71
09/17/2025	Bill		6123063770	2,840.71



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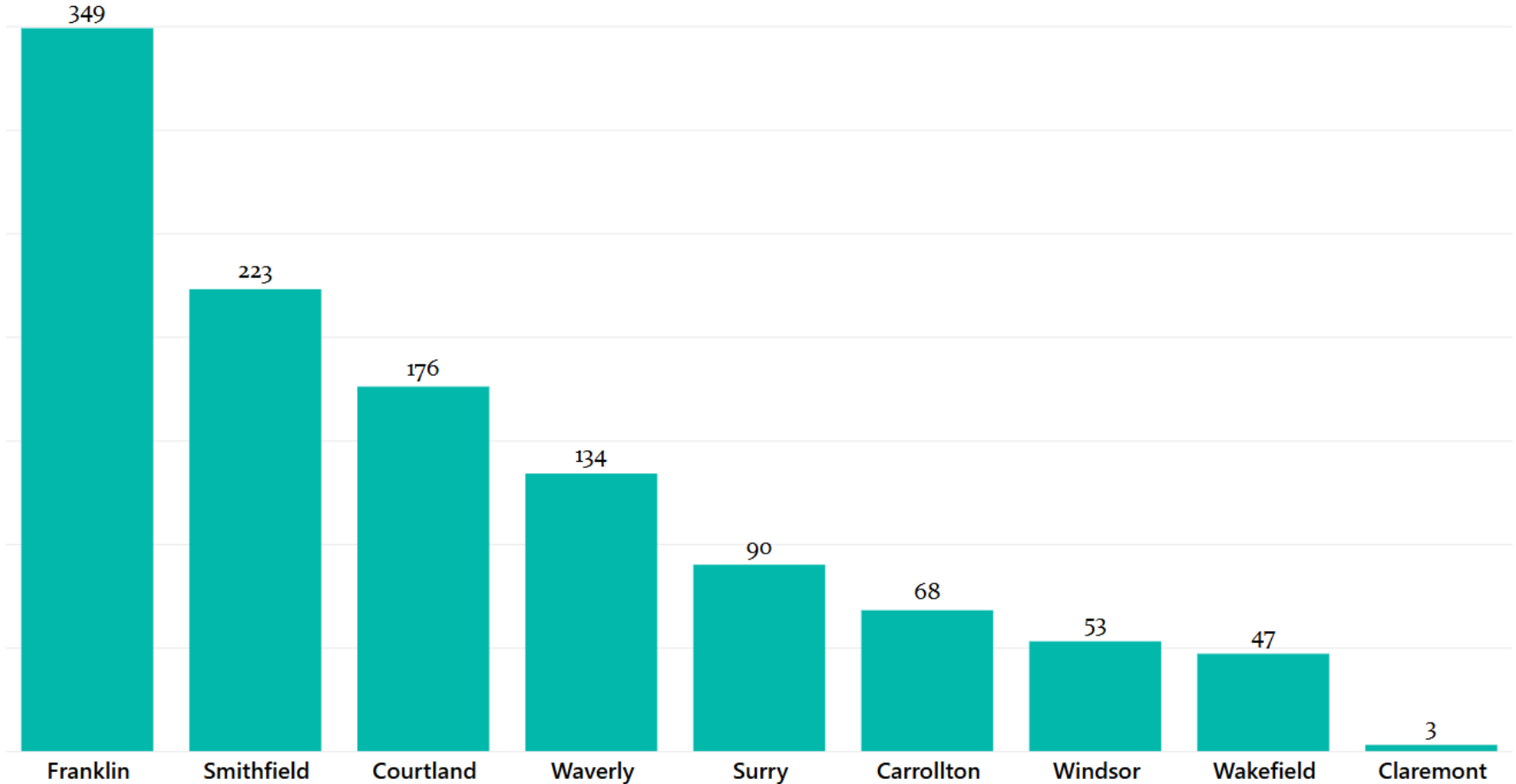
September 2025
Statistics

Monthly Report: Patron Count

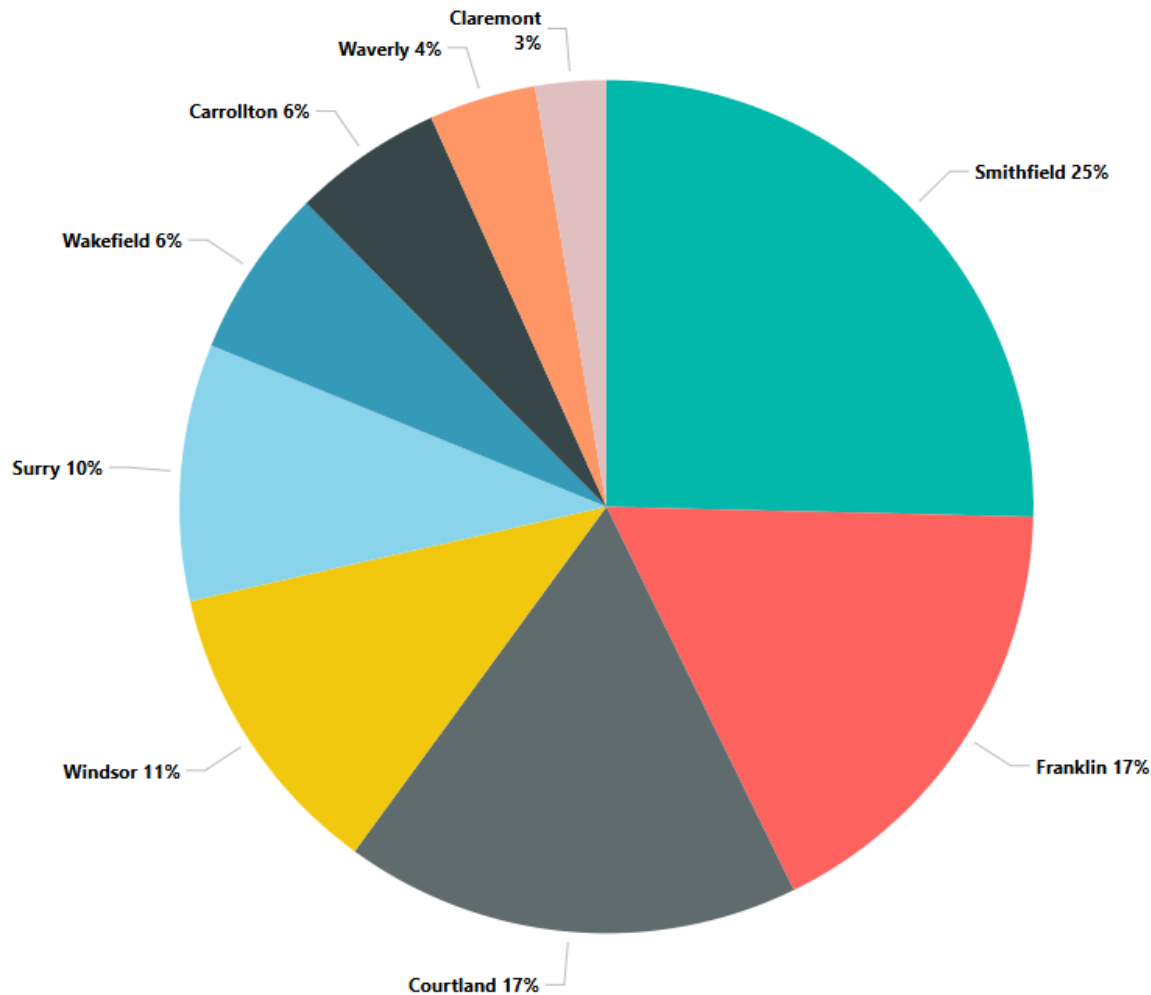


Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	2099
Claremont	142
Courtland	1420
Franklin	3032
Outreach	258
Smithfield	2971
Surry	922
Wakefield	563
Waverly	959
Windsor	1561
Total	13927

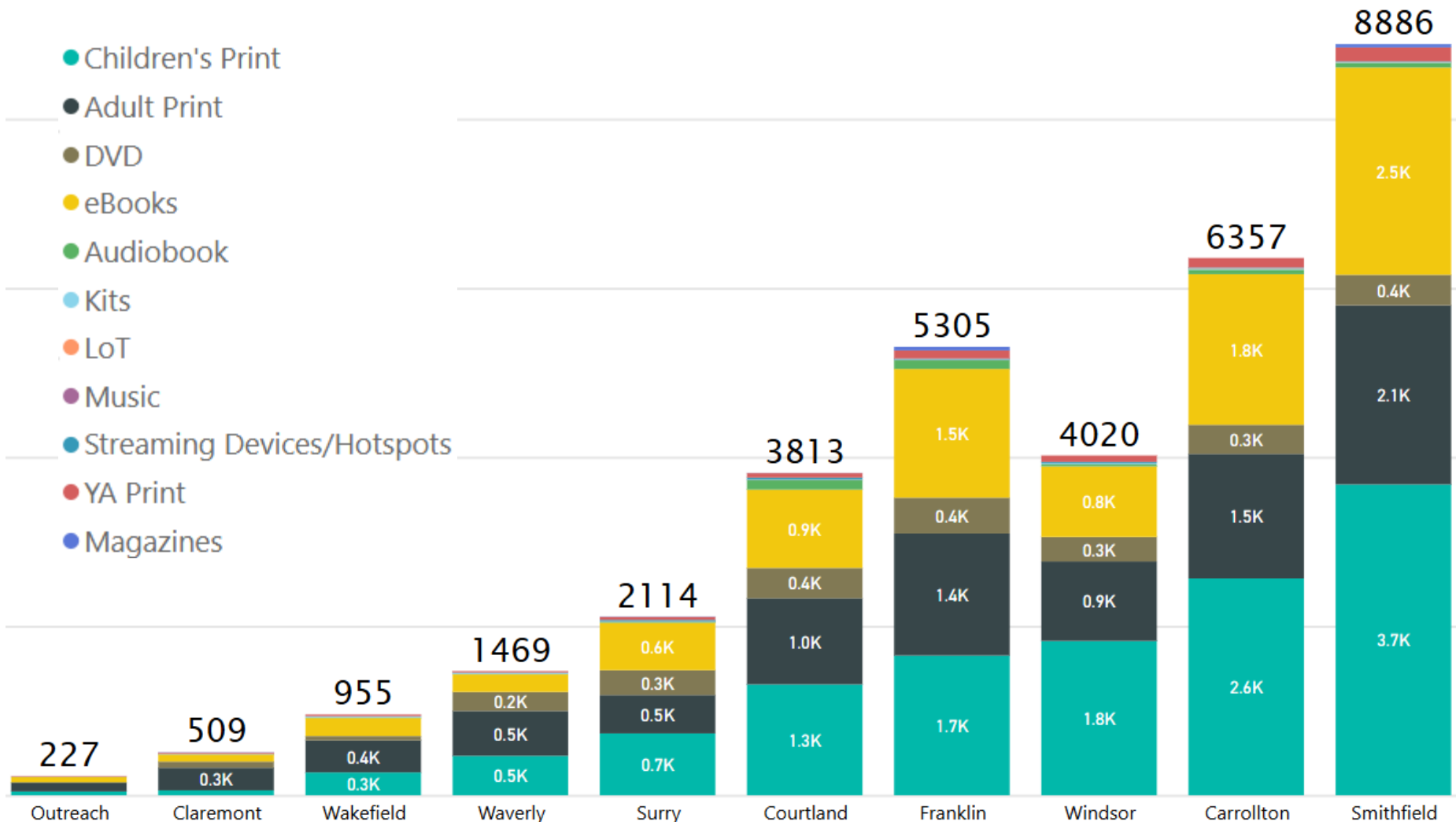
Monthly Report: In-House Internet



Monthly Report: WiFi Use

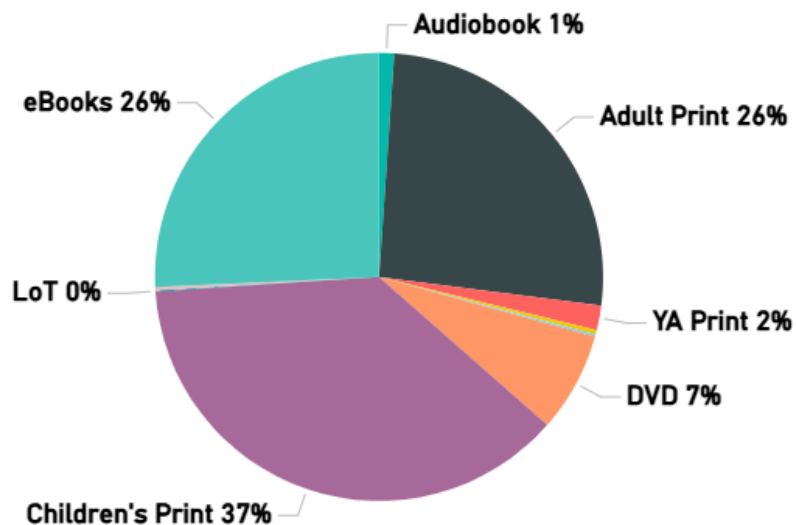


Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	91
Claremont	43
Courtland	277
Franklin	279
Smithfield	407
Surry	156
Wakefield	103
Waverly	65
Windsor	183
Total	1604

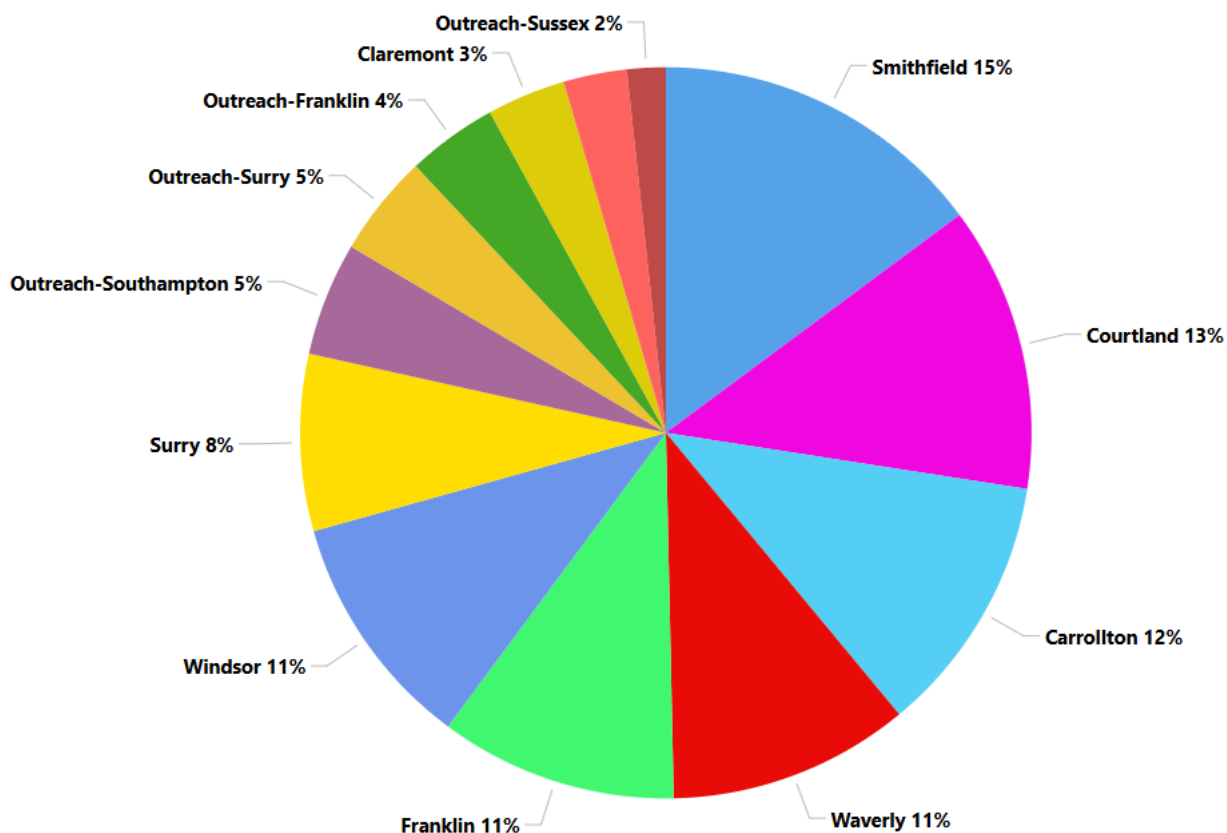


Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	Music	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1473	2566	344	52	9	113	0	6	0	1783	11
Claremont	268	58	72	5	0	14	0	4	4	83	1
Courtland	1019	1312	359	111	3	52	0	3	2	927	25
Franklin	1443	1654	424	103	2	96	0	4	42	1523	14
Outreach	108	45	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	63	3
Smithfield	2119	3678	361	55	5	165	0	3	38	2453	9
Surry	454	732	294	10	1	35	0	3	4	562	19
Wakefield	379	270	51	6	14	20	0	0	0	214	1
Waverly	531	467	225	2	9	17	0	1	0	209	8
Windsor	940	1826	291	22	14	76	0	2	0	835	14
Total	8734	12608	2421	366	57	596	0	26	90	8652	105

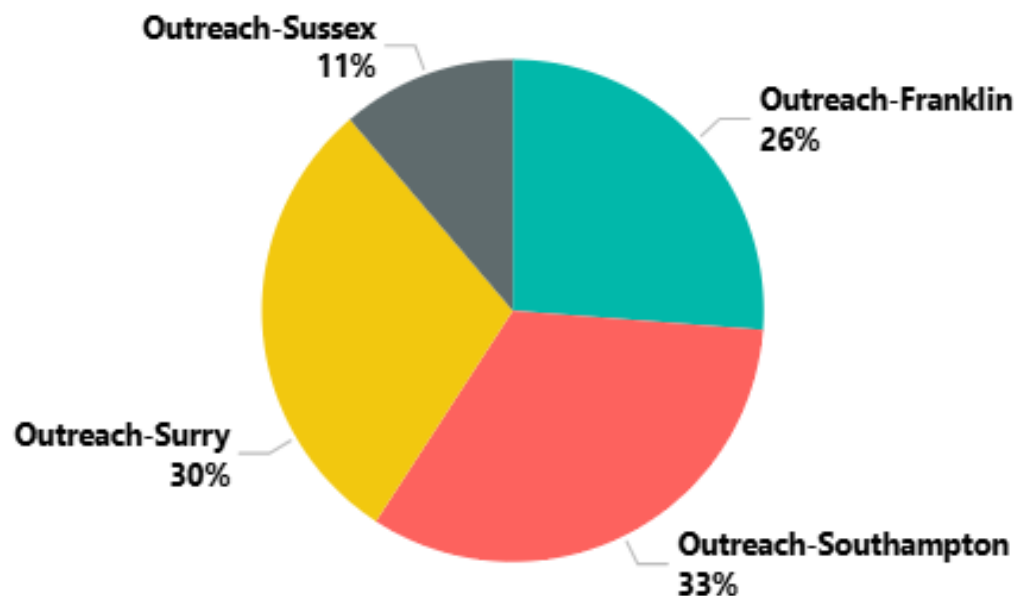


Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	202
Claremont	61
Courtland	221
Franklin	184
Outreach-Franklin	70
Outreach-Southampton	88
Outreach-Surry	79
Outreach-Sussex	30
Smithfield	260
Surry	137
Wakefield	49
Waverly	187
Windsor	184
Total	1752

Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach-Franklin	3	70
Outreach-Southampton	2	88
Outreach-Surry	1	79
Outreach-Sussex	1	30
Total	7	267

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Staffing Update September 2025 Blackwater Regional Library

New Hires

Promotions

Transfers

- Laurie Ross – Library Assistant, Wakefield and Waverly branches

Separations

Vacancies

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Training Sessions – September 2025

City of Franklin staff completed a total of 2 trainings

Isle of Wight County staff completed a total of 5 trainings

Southampton County staff completed a total of 1 training

Sussex County staff completed a total of 1 training

Central Office staff completed a total of 2 trainings

9/2/2025 – All Aboard Kindergarten! - Children should not have to play “catch up” when they enter Kindergarten. All Aboard for Kindergarten will allow you to:

- Develop a ready for school program that you can incorporate into early learning programs using input from early learning partners
- Focus on the 60% of children who are cared for by Family, Friends, and Neighbors

The resources in this pathway, which include kindergarten readiness information, activities, and research are designed for library staff to share with parents, caregivers and early learning providers. As their child's first and most important teacher, parents and caregivers are critical in the kindergarten readiness effort. For families who do not have access to high-quality early learning programs and supports, libraries can help close the kindergarten readiness gap.

9/9/2025 – Beyond the Basics: Unlocking the Magic of Libby - Focused on how to use the features of Libby to equip patrons better.

Benefits for staff:

Easily support users with Libby

Saves time answering patron questions if you are very familiar with Libby

You become a digital reading advocate for our library

Several questions patrons will ask:

1. How can I easily find the titles I’m most interested in?
 - Search screen, sort and filter options, pin choices, guides, dismiss lists
 - This will help curate their own library page
2. How can I use Libby across multiple libraries & devices?
 - Add additional libraries
 - See title availability across libraries to find the quickest library for a borrow
 - Switch libraries while searching
 - Deep search – searches all library cards for the title, tag titles not yet available to be notified
 - Back up data with recovery passkey! Especially on your primary device to keep everything in sync
3. What are tags and how should I use them?
 - Regular tags - flexible way to organize titles in Libby
 - Smart tags – have actions attached to it, borrowed, sampled, notify me
4. How can I best manage my loans and holds?
 - Adjust your checkout period (7, 14, or 21 days)
 - Send to Kindle (manage through Amazon)

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

- Return early
 - Deliver later
 - Suspend hold
 - Cancel other holds
 - Configure notifications
5. How can I adjust app settings to best meet my needs?
- Ebook appearance settings – font size, lighting,
 - Audiobook playback speed
 - Magazine article view
 - Download settings

9/17/2025 – 10 Strategies to Strengthen Family Engagement -

1. Check setting is welcoming, accessible, inclusive
2. Active listening
3. Elements of a positive interaction
4. System clarity: Make sure caregivers can navigate the system
5. Scaffolding: build new skills on old skills, build agency
6. Strength-based communications: short, concise, no jargon, active voice
7. Partner with caregivers: what can reasonable be done at home, consider developmental level, give facts and tips
8. Create ongoing opportunities for feedback, know how to use it, and know if it's working
9. Build community
10. Connect beyond school (library): partner with organizations, expand community support systems, transform role of school (library) in the community

9/20/2025 – Shelving with Dewey - This was a helpful and useful look into shelving best practices. The objectives covered: accurately reading the shelves and properly filing materials according to Dewey. As we all have experienced, looking for missing/mis-shelved items is frustrating.

The hour long training was broken down into three sections. Section one covered background information on DDC, including the types of libraries that use Dewey and the materials Dewey organizes.

Dewey breaks down the ten divisions and each division into ten sections. Each section is further broken down within each topic. Example: 600 Technology, 610 Medicine and Health, 611 Human Anatomy, 611.1 Circulatory Systems and 611.12 Heart. This explanation opens the road map for assisting patrons looking for specific information. At the same time it expands the understanding of the how and why things are shelved where they are.

Section two gets into how shelving works. Starting with the call number, a combination of numbers and letters assigned to a library book. This information directs the user to the specific place on the shelf the book can be found in relation to other books. Assigning call numbers to books is a way of classifying books in a collection. This information allows us to know what we have in our collection and where it is located.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

There are a few simple rules and tricks covered that can clear up placement questions. They break down adding zeros and adding zeros to complex numbers. Also, reinforcing two rules to look at. Only adding zeros to the right side of the decimal ie. 531.2 making it 531.200, you would never add zeros to the left side of the decimal ie. 531.2 making it 531.002 changing the value of the number.

They also cover not only the numerical classification; they also cover the additional information of the first two to three letters of the last name of the author. They provide interactive shelving exercises for this section, touching on each area of the collection (Non Fiction, Biography, Reference, and Fiction).

Section Three covers special situations. They begin with the call number arrangement for reference and dated materials including additional copies of materials.

Biographies and the different call numbers you may see, including the idea that some libraries shelve these with like subjects.

They touch on ideas and classification of fiction materials. Some libraries do as we do, author and title. While others have areas for genre then author and title. Juvenile and easy readers. (picture books) were also covered. The only categories not touched on were graphic novels for juveniles, young adults, and adults.

This would be a useful tool when training volunteers new to the library landscape.

9/25/2025 – Staying Compliant: Navigating Evolving Screening Requirements - Hiring today isn't what it used to be. New state laws are reshaping the rules for background checks, and employers must keep pace to stay compliant. What does this mean for you? If your hiring team isn't up to speed, your company could be taking unnecessary risks every time you extend an offer.

In this webinar, Vu Do, CCEP, VP of Compliance, breaks down what's changed in 2025 and how to keep your hiring process compliant and candidate-friendly, without slowing down your team.

Key Takeaways:

- The most common mistakes in background screening, and how to avoid them.
- Key updates to state screening laws that could impact your screening processes.
- What the latest background screening litigations mean for your organization.

9/30/2025 – How to Manage Yourself - Learn how to better manage yourself-time management to self-care. To do your job well without stress or burnout.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Processing Stress:

Acknowledge & express stress.

Mindfulness & Meditation promotes calm awareness.

Physical Activity & regular exercise releases endorphins that improve movement, increase resilience & aids in managing stress.

Building a support network:

Support from friends, Colleagues or a mental health professional offers emotional relief & advise.

Warning signs that show you are nearing

burnout:.. Natural response to perceived challenges.

High workloads, public scrutiny, fatigue, irritability & difficulty concentrating impacts productivity.

Self- reflections help pin point sources & triggers. Other stressors can be dealing with a sick family member or sick animal or your own personal expectations.

Recognizing behavioral patterns such as clinched hands, tapping fingers etc.

Helpful stress busters: knitting, painting, reading, holding your dog or cat in your lap as well as dinner out with friends.

Maintaining career momentum:

Set clear goals & celebrating small achievements sustains motivation. Limit exposure to negativity & Focus on tasks that support a positive mindset.

Continue to learn. Engage with others, be flexible to change, be in the moment. Can't change the past or

control the future. PUT DOWN YOUR CELL PHONE!

Recognizing personal value & passion drives meaningful worker fulfillment. Connect daily tasks to long term goals= a bigger purpose. Purpose provides clarity & helps maintain motivation & positivity during challenging & stressful times.

FIND YOUR PURPOSE...FIND YOUR PASSION.