

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch

Wednesday

June 17, 2026

Board of Trustees Meeting—3:00 pm

Budget & Finance Committee *will not* meet



**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

June 17, 2026

- Agenda – June 2026
- Minutes – May 2026
- Library Director's Report
- Monthly Statistics Report – May 2026
- Staffing Report

**Blackwater Regional Library
Board Meeting
June 17, 2026**

Agenda

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – June 2026

Presentation by Scott Carr, Wells Fargo Advisors

Approval of Minutes – May 2026

Public Comment

Correspondence

Director's Report

Committee Reports

- Budget and Finance
- Personnel and Policy
- Search Committee

Review of Approval of Accounts Payable and File for Annual Audit

Unfinished Business

- Election of Officers for FY26-27

New Business

- Acknowledgement for Outgoing Board Members

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Announcement of Next Meeting

- July 15, 2026

Adjournment

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
May 20, 2026**

Present

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Jacqueline Carr – Isle of Wight County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County
Margie McClenny – Southampton County
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin
Kisha Watford – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County
Bonnie Lauver – Interim Library Director
Amy Fisk – Administrative Services Coordinator

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Karen Richardson – Sussex County

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:07 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Agenda

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

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

None

Minutes

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

Public Comment

Charlene Herrala spoke as a citizen of the Town of Windsor regarding the placement of the proposed Windsor Library. The Friends of Windsor Library are assisting in circulating a petition to have the new library built on a vacant lot near the Old Point National Bank building, recently purchased by the Town of Windsor to be the future town office. Ms. Herrala, and the Friends of Windsor Library, feel this would be a better location, as opposed to, the proposed location near Windsor Town Center. Currently, the Windsor Wildcats football organization rents the proposed site at Windsor Town Center. Ms. Herrala stated the Wildcats have spent their own funds on the field and many feel it is just as important to keep the football program as it is to have a new library. Also, the parking lot at the proposed site is very congested when school lets out. She feels the other location, beside the future town office, will be a much better place due to easy access and room for playground equipment.

Correspondence

None

Library Director's Report

BRL Summer Reading Challenge will be available at all locations June 15 through August 8, 2026. The program is open to all ages; registration is available through the Beanstack app or website. Information on all challenges is available on the BRL website.

Library staff attended the Dolly Parton Imagination Library kick-off event hosted by Early Childhood Western Tidewater, the City of Franklin and Southampton County. We are pleased all localities are now participating in this amazing literacy initiative.

The Surry branch has an upcoming Virginia 250 program, presented by the Library of Virginia, on May 27th at 4:00 pm. This program will provide local history of events that happened during, and shortly after, the Revolutionary war.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Dawson – No report

Personnel & Policy – Ms. Briggs – no report

Search – Ms. Dawson – The job announcement was posted to various job boards. The committee has received 8 applications as of May 15th. The committee reviewed all applications at the first meeting held earlier today (May 20). The committee will continue to review any applications that come in between now and when the job posting closes May 31st. The next Search Committee meeting is scheduled for June 10th at 1:30 pm in the Franklin Branch meeting room.

Accounts Payable

Ms. Blunt moved, and Ms. Watford seconded, the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

Unfinished Business

Locality budgets should be finalized in June.

City of Franklin reappointed Pam Lease to serve on the Board for her second 4-year term.

New Business

Nominating Committee – Ms. Lease – the committee recommends Ms. Richardson to be the Board Chair and Ms. Lease to remain the Vice Chair. There is no current recommendation for the Secretary position. Nominations can be taken from the floor when the Board votes at the next meeting.

Schedule of meetings FY 26-27 – Ms. Herrala moved, and Ms. Blunt seconded to approve the FY 26-27 Schedule of Meetings with the amendment to remove Board Orientation from the schedule. The vote was unanimous.

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Ms. Herrala – Met the new Branch Manager, Oliver Kish. He is very excited to be in his new position and would like to be included in the planning of the new library.

Judge Harris – The search for a new Library Director is a lot less discouraging as she originally thought it would be. Very happy to have a pool of candidates to select from.

Ms. Dawson – Very excited about the upcoming Virginia 250 program coming up in Surry.

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on June 17, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Adjournment

Ms. Watford moved, and Judge Harris seconded the meeting to be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Fisk for
Ora Briggs, Secretary

Director's Report

June 2026

Submitted by Bonnie L. Lauver
Interim Library Director



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

What's New?

**All BRL locations now offer a seed library!
Vegetable, herb and flower seeds are
available for pick-up. Have seeds to share?
We'll gladly accept your donation!**





ROAR-ing
THROUGH THE STACKS

Kids Summer
Reading
Challenge

Blackwater Regional Library
**Summer Reading
Challenge 2026!**

June 15th - August 8th



TEEN & ADULT
SUMMER
CHALLENGE

timeless
TALES



**Hello
Summer**

Highlights:

- Weekly Activities for Youth
- Special Events and Performances
- VA250 Celebrations/Film Series
- 8-Week Reading Challenges for all ages

Events Calendar: blackwaterlib.org/kids

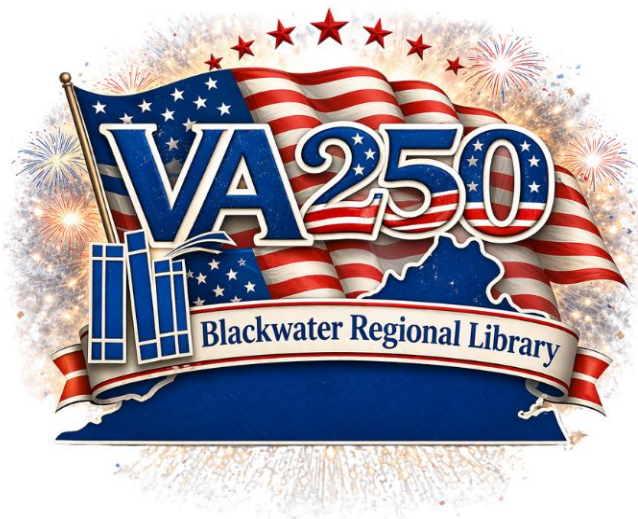


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America 250/VA250 Upcoming Events:

Watch our calendar for youth and family events celebrating America's 250th Birthday! <https://blackwaterlib.org/events/>

- Youth and Family Events
- Films and Film Series celebrating American history and culture!



Outreach in the Community:



**BRL Outreach @ Bark in the Park
Carrollton, IOW**



**BRL Outreach @ the Lumberjack Festival
City of Franklin**

May Events/Attendance:

- **May 2: Lumberjack Fest (FR) - 101**
- **May 8: Clay Street Book Fair (FR) - 78**
- **May 16: IOWC Parks and Rec Field Day (IW) - 91**
- **May 30: Storytime at Storehouse (FR) - 25**
- **May 30: IOWC Parks and Rec Bark in the Park (IW) – 68**

Franklin Highlights:

Children enjoyed observing the butterfly house through the month of May as the tiny caterpillars changed and grew into beautiful Painted Lady butterflies!



**Pokemon Club continues to be such a big hit!
We are grateful for the parents who stick close
by at program time to participate as well.**

**Multigenerational program
initiatives are a goal for libraries.**

Isle of Wight Highlights:

Smithfield -

Hosted a virtual author visit with bestselling author Olivia Dade! Ms. Dade lives in Sweden and was kind enough to meet virtually with book club participants for an hour long book talk.



Carrollton -

Local author R.M. Armbruster, P.I. met with Carrollton readers in May to discuss her true crime book based on an Eastern Shore arsenic and murder case.

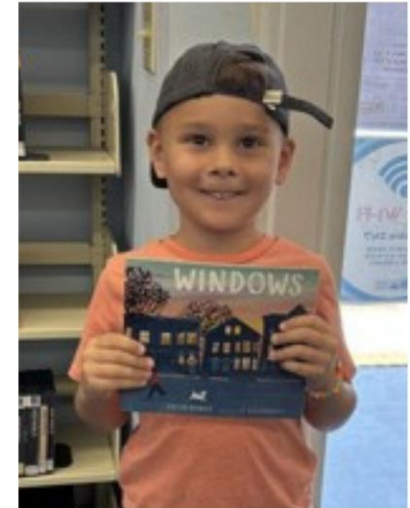
And, our younger readers swarmed the library to participate and in a rockin' K-Pop Party!



Isle of Wight Highlights Continued:

Windsor -

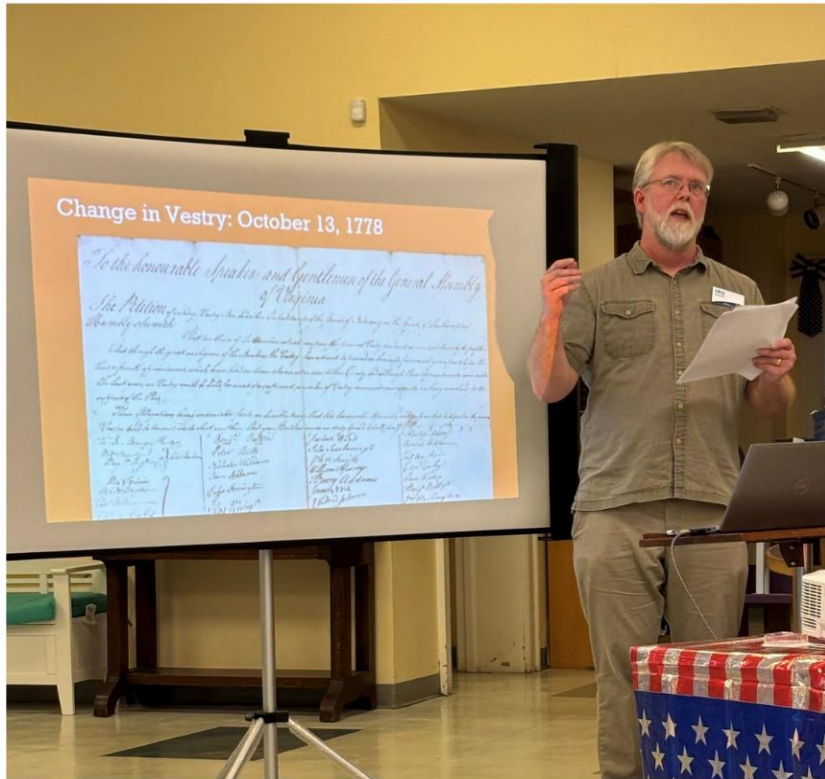
The Windsor Branch welcomed, and celebrated, young readers during the month of May!



1000 Books Before Kindergarten
Pictured are readers:
Bentley and Ophelia



Southampton Highlights:



Presented by Eric D. M. Johnson, MA, MSIS, Coordinator VA250 “Ideas in Action”, the program featured firsthand accounts of the Revolutionary era from Southampton, and the surrounding area, based on documents found at the Library of Virginia.



The library hosted Officer Harville of the Courtland Police Department during Police Appreciation Week. Officer Harville was kind enough to take time out of his busy day to visit with families, read a fun book and share refreshments!

Surry Highlights:

Presented by Eric D. M. Johnson, MA, MSIS, Coordinator VA250 “Ideas in Action”, the program featured firsthand accounts of the Revolutionary era from Surry, and the surrounding area, based on documents found at the Library of Virginia.



Sussex Highlights:

The month of May brought patrons out for fun programs such as Crafts and the return of the monthly Farmer's Market!



Upcoming Closures:

2026		JUNE					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30					

Juneteenth Observance

- Friday, June 19, 2026

2026		JULY					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
			1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

Independence Day

- Friday, July 3, 2026
- Saturday, July 4, 2026

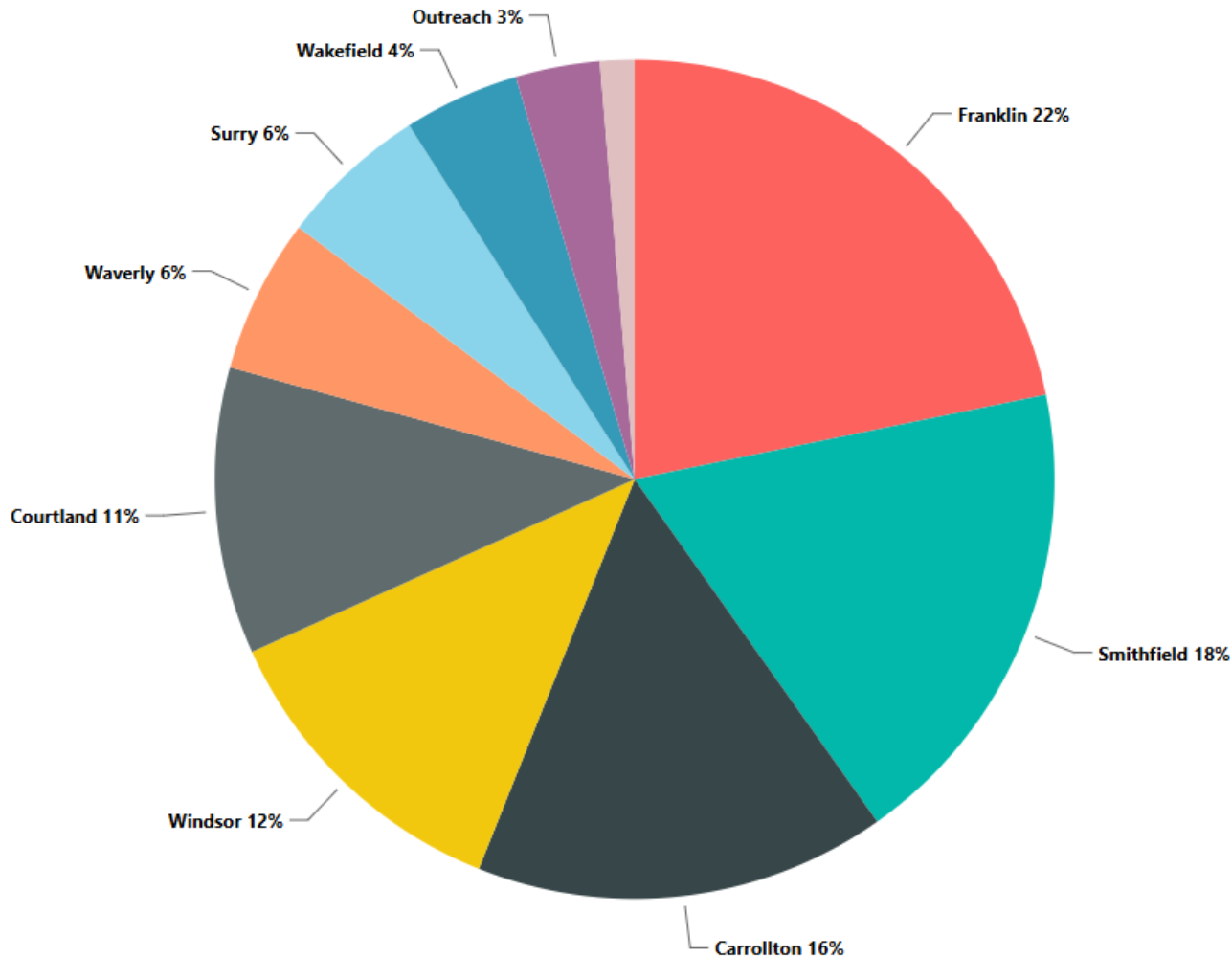


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May 2026

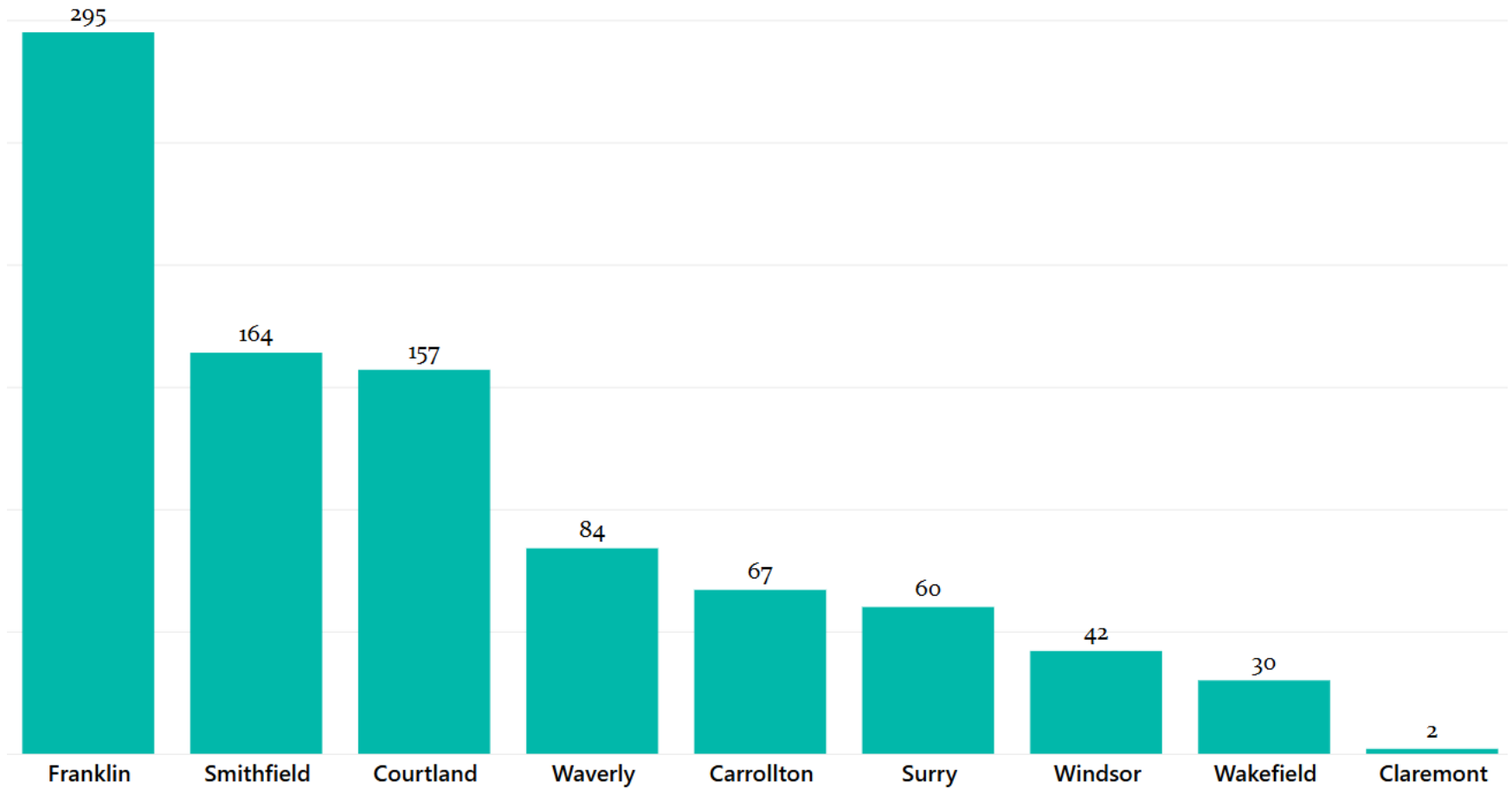
Statistics

Monthly Report: Patron Count

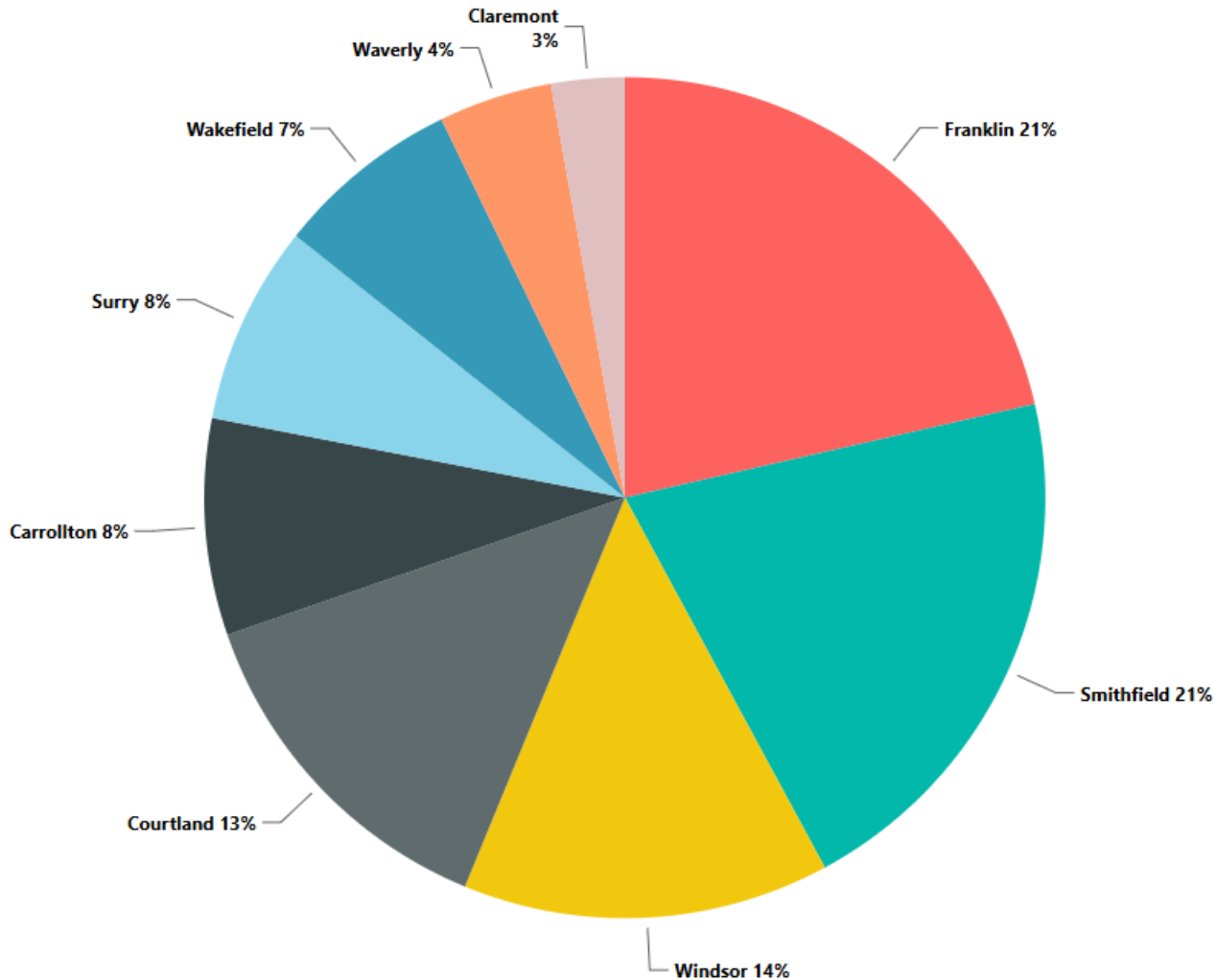


Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	2118
Claremont	177
Courtland	1475
Franklin	2907
Outreach	433
Smithfield	2460
Surry	765
Wakefield	595
Waverly	794
Windsor	1629
Total	13353

Monthly Report: In-House Internet

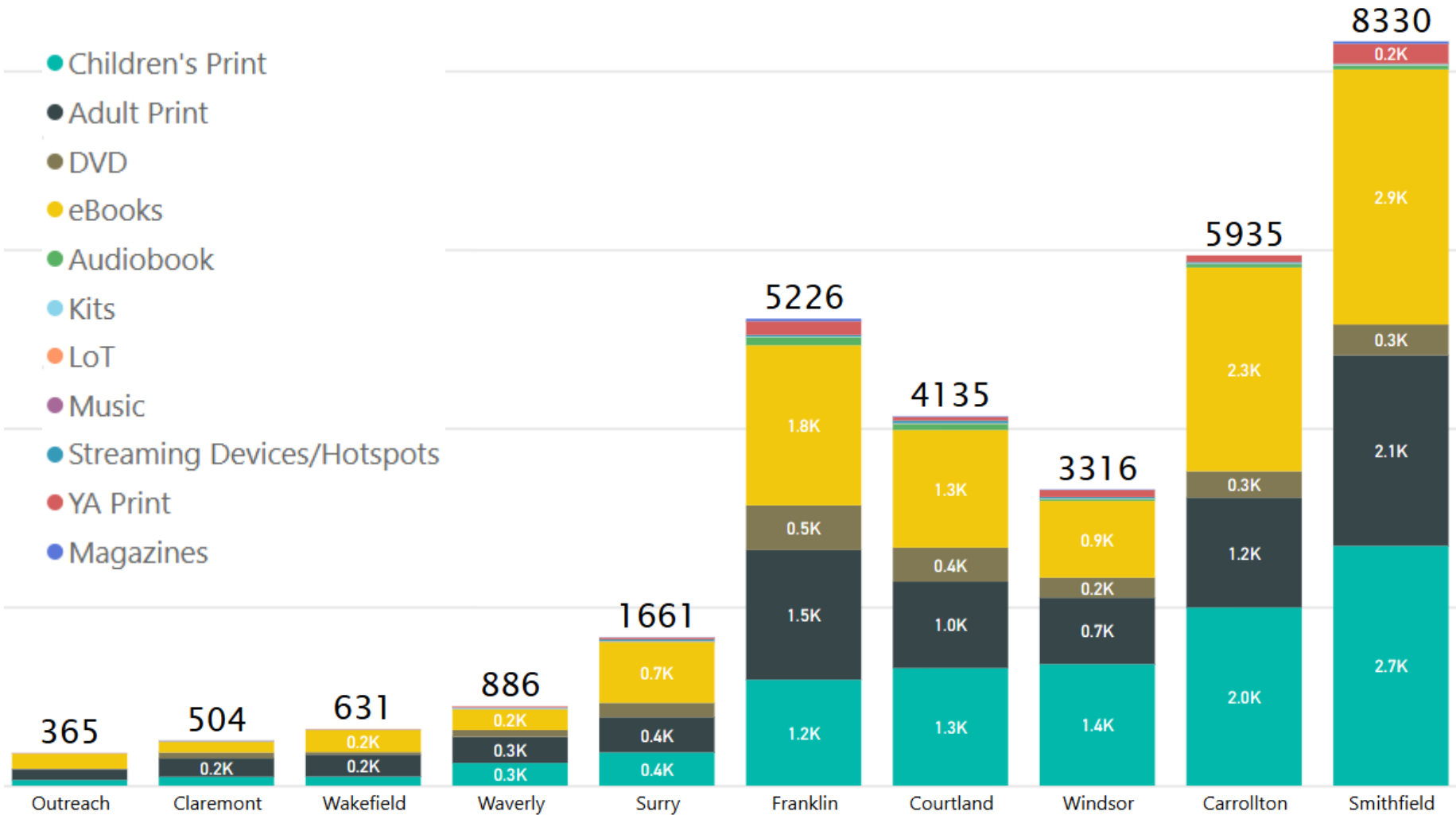


Monthly Report: WiFi Use



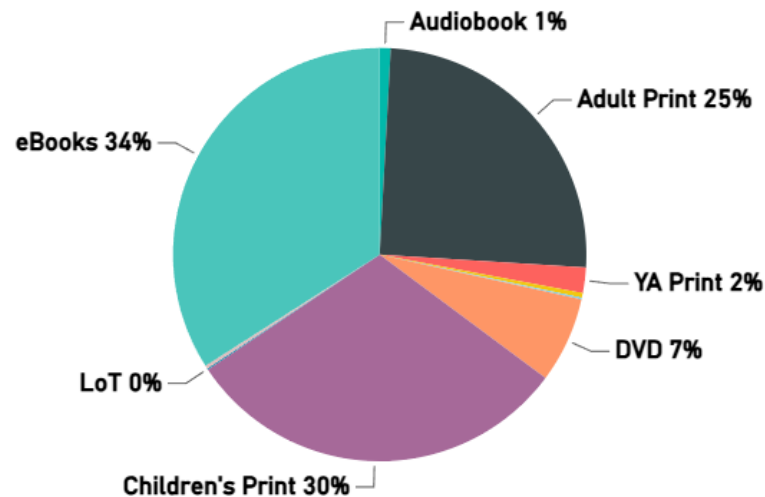
Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	124
Claremont	42
Courtland	201
Franklin	319
Smithfield	308
Surry	114
Wakefield	106
Waverly	65
Windsor	210
Total	1489

Circulation Report: By Branch

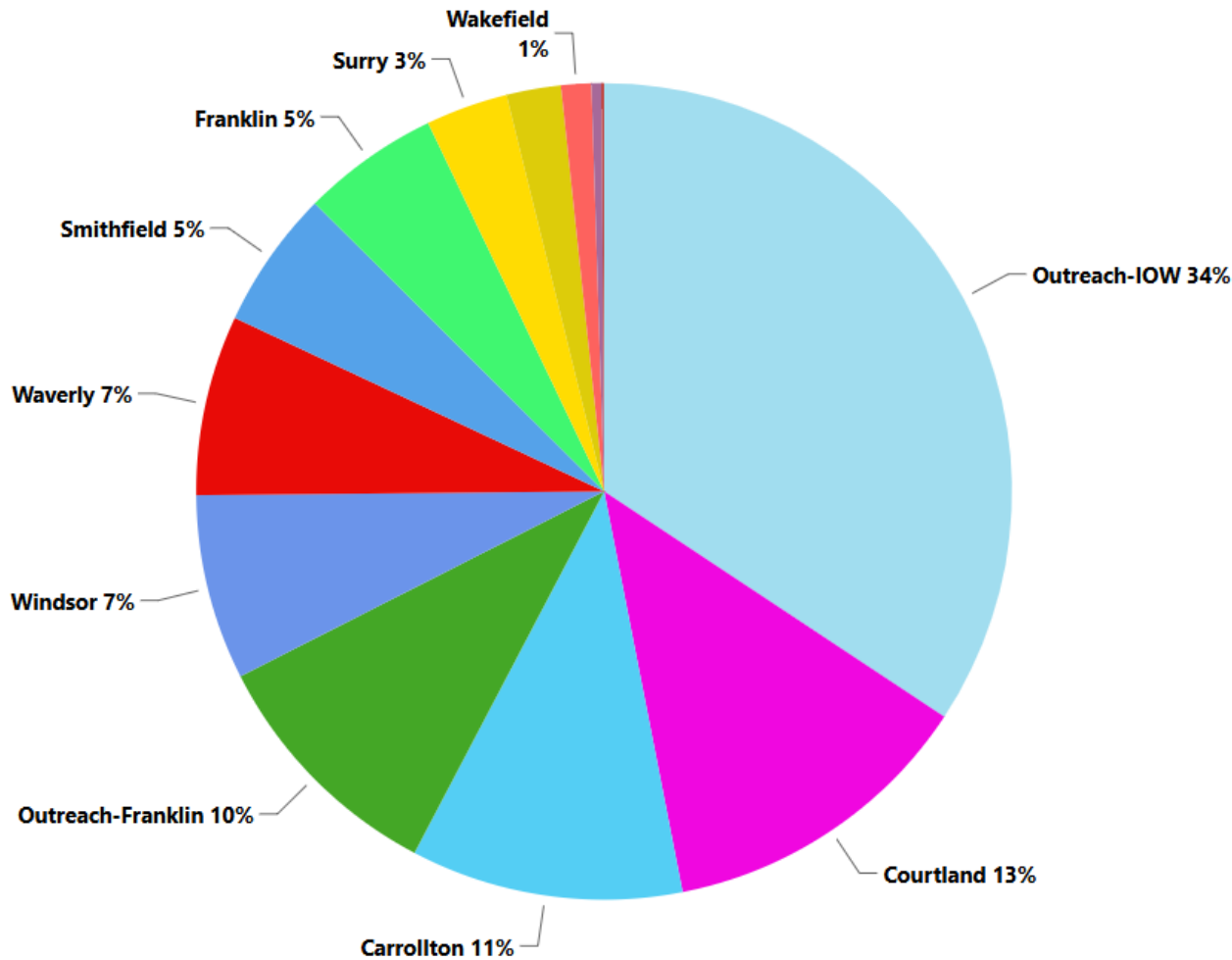


Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	Music	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1231	1994	294	37	5	75	0	3	0	2281	15
Claremont	209	99	63	0	1	4	0	0	5	121	2
Courtland	967	1316	381	68	3	41	0	5	8	1317	29
Franklin	1452	1185	500	90	6	154	0	2	28	1792	17
Outreach	120	63	7	0	1	5	0	0	0	168	1
Smithfield	2133	2684	344	44	7	221	0	7	26	2856	8
Surry	394	372	161	3	2	20	0	7	4	679	19
Wakefield	246	101	28	3	1	5	0	0	0	247	0
Waverly	292	254	76	1	10	13	0	4	0	230	6
Windsor	745	1360	223	20	5	79	0	3	6	859	16
Total	7789	9428	2077	266	41	617	0	31	77	10550	113

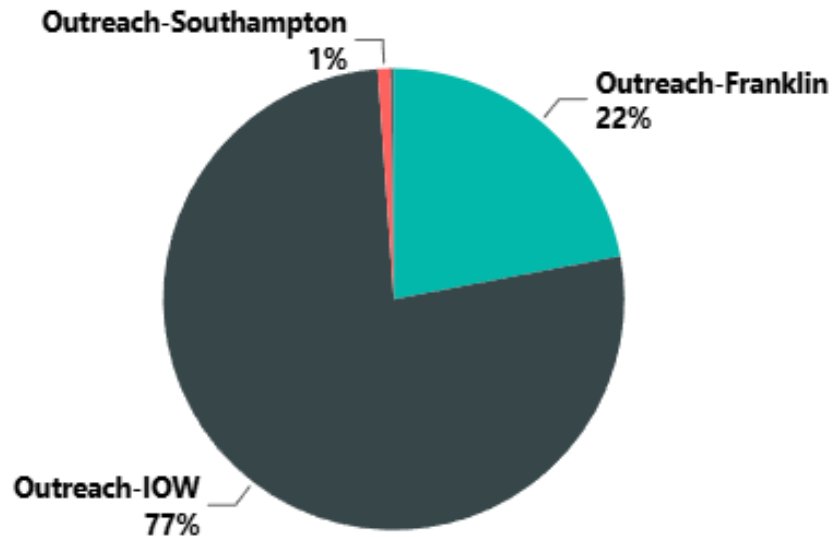


Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	325
Claremont	65
Courtland	380
Franklin	164
Outreach-Franklin	296
Outreach-IOW	1034
Outreach-Southampton	12
Outreach-Sussex	3
Smithfield	165
Surry	98
Wakefield	36
Waverly	215
Windsor	221
Total	3014

Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach-Franklin	6	296
Outreach-IOW	11	1034
Outreach-Southampton	2	12
Outreach-Sussex	2	3
Total	21	1345

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Staffing Update June 2026 Blackwater Regional Library

New Hires

Promotions

Transfers

Separations

- Susie Johnson, Library Assistant – Wakefield and Waverly branches

Vacancies

- Library Director

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Training Sessions – May 2026

City of Franklin 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 training

5/1/2026 – Active Shooter - Always have a plan of escape. Determine if you should hide or run. If you cannot conceal, cover, or run, then try to protect yourself with whatever may be there to protect you. When law enforcement arrives, raise your hands and follow commands.

5/1/2026 – Extreme Customer Service - I watched a video recording of this webinar. The presenter is Gretchen Caserotti. She is the director of the Meridian Library District in Idaho. Customer service is a mindset. Some truths about library services are that all of us WANT to provide good service, and patrons expect us to provide that. All customer service should have these different factors; Convenience, comfort, hospitality, quality, trust, and WOW.

- Convenience
 - Drive thru cultures
 - Save the time of the reader
 - Time is valuable
- Comfort
 - Places in community to meet neighbors or see friends, to relax and/or converse.
 - Can become that ‘third place’ that's a cultural institution that's not work, school, or home.
- Hospitality
 - Service happens TO you; Hospitality happens FOR you.
 - Hospitality makes the patrons feel good and wants them to come back.
- Quality
 - 3 steps of service;
 - A warm and sincere greeting
 - Anticipation and fulfilment of each guest needs
 - A fond farewell, giving a warm goodbye to the patrons, sometimes using their name. Personalize the service.
- Trust
 - Trust your patrons and each other
 - Trusting environments
 - Trusting fosters innovations and creativity
 - Trust is earned when a person feels valued.
- WOW

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

- Core values include: deliver wow through service
- To WOW, you must differentiate yourself, go above and beyond what's expected, and have an emotional impact on the receiver.

5/7/2026 – Artificial Intelligence 101 - The webinar presented AI as a powerful and rapidly evolving technology that can improve productivity and creativity when used responsibly.

However, it also stressed the importance of:

- Critical thinking
- Media literacy
- Privacy awareness
- Careful prompt writing

The central lesson was that AI should be used as a helpful tool—not blindly trusted—and users must remain thoughtful and informed when interacting with AI systems.

5/22/2026 – Summer Scares Middle-Grade Panel - Blood still chilled from the winter? Keep the feeling going with our upcoming Summer Scares webinar series, which will see discussions of the horror genre with this year's selected authors for middle-grade, YA, and adult audiences. Booklist is proud to continue its partnership with the Horror Writers Association's Summer Scares Reading Program—alongside Book Riot, iREAD, and NoveList—to bring free library programming and a broad range of horror recommendations to readers of all ages. Invite us into your library, won't you?

5/30/2026 – Navigating Misinformation in one-on-one Patron Interactions –

- People have a desire to be heard.
- Listen and do not be confrontational.
- Make the library a trustworthy place.
- Talk about sources.