

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch

Wednesday

July 15, 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**



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

Board Packet Contents

July 15, 2026

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

**Blackwater Regional Library
Board Meeting
July 15, 2026**

Agenda

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – July 2026

Approval of Minutes – June 2026

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

- September 16, 2026

Adjournment

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

Present

Jacqueline Carr – 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
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin
Karen Richardson – Sussex County
Kisha Watford – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County
Bonnie Lauver – Interim Library Director
Amy Fisk – Administrative Services Coordinator

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:06 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Agenda

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

Presentation by Scott Carr, Wells Fargo Advisor

Wells Fargo advisor, Scott Carr gave a presentation on the status of the Rawls trust, which experienced a 12.5% gain in 2025 and is currently up 6.2% to date in 2026.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

None

Minutes

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

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

None

Library Director's Report

The Seed Library has been added to all locations whereas before it was only in a select few. The Seed Library consist of a verity of herbs, flowers, and vegetables. Patrons may harvest the seeds from the plants grown or bring their own seeds to replenish the seeds in the Seed Library.

Summer Reading Challenge kicks off this week at all locations. The challenge includes 8-week reading challenges for all ages, along with weekly activities for the youth and special events and performances.

Blackwater Regional Library will be hosting events celebrating America's 250th birthday during the first week of July.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Lauver – Sussex County voted on their FY27 Operating Budget with a reduction in funding for Blackwater Regional Library. Adjustments to staffing and branch hours will be made accordingly. We are considering options that would have the least amount of impact on staff and the community.

Personnel & Policy – Ms. Briggs – no report

Director's Search – Ms. Dawson – The committee met Wednesday, June 10 to review applications received to date. After careful consideration, the committee felt it necessary to extend the posting to accept additional applicants; the second posting is scheduled to close July 15. The committee meets again Wednesday, July 1 to review additional applicants.

Accounts Payable

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

Unfinished Business

Election of Officers for FY2026 – Ms. Dawson – The proposed partial slate of officers for fiscal year 2027 is Karen Richardson, Chair and Pam Lease, Vice-Chair. Ms. Dawson asked for nominations from the floor – there were none. Ms. McClenny moved, and Ms. Herrala seconded that nominations be closed and the slate of officers be accepted as proposed. The vote was unanimous.

Ms. Dawson asked for nominations from the floor for the position of Secretary. Ms. Lippard nominated Ms. Herrala. Ms. Watford moved, and Judge Harris seconded, to accept and close nominations with Ms. Herrala being accepted as nominated. The vote was unanimous.

New Business

Acknowledgement of Outgoing Board Members – Ms. Lauver expressed gratitude for years of service to outgoing Trustees Deborah Dawson, Sylvia Claggett, and Ora Briggs.

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Appreciation was had by all for Ms. Dawson.

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned 4:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Fisk for
Ora Briggs, Secretary

Director's Report

July 2026

Submitted by Bonnie L. Lauver
Interim Library Director



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



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



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

America 250/VA250 Events:



**Franklin:
VA250 Wreaths**



**Southampton:
VA250
Barn Quilts**



Outreach in the Community:

June Events/Attendance:

- June 6th: Armory Pool Opening (FR): 65
- June 12: RISE Book Club (IW): 12
- June 13th: VA250 Farmer's Market (IW): 153
- June 18th: FR Juneteenth Celebration (FR): 91
- June 20th: Surry Juneteenth Festival (SU): 45
- June 24th: James L. Camp YMCA Summer Camp (FR): 34
- June 27th: Storytime at Storehouse (FR): 21
- June 27th: Windsor Salute to Freedom (IW): 84
- June 30th: Bookworm Discoveries (IW): 28



Storehouse Storytime (Franklin)

New Program Alert!

Looking Ahead: Beginning in July, we will be participating in a new program called “Cool Connections” with Western Tidewater Community Services Board, Early Childhood Western Tidewater, The Girl Scouts, and Franklin Parks and Rec for the Franklin locations. Monthly, outdoor community stops focused on connecting with kids through activities and games.

The current schedule:

- July 23rd: Dorchester (FR)
- July 30th: Clyde's Dale Community (IW)
- August 20th: Charlie's Mobile Home Park (SO)
- August 27th: Forest Pines Apartments (FR)
- September 17th: FR Location
- September 24th: Courtland Apartments (SO)
- October 8th: FR Location
- October 22nd: IW Location



Franklin Highlights:

A full month of fun activities for summer readers to enjoy!



Nottoway Indian Tribe
quilt inspired by VA250



Mad Science of
Hampton Roads



Franklin's favorite bestselling author Nancy Naigle
visited to share the latest in her Shell Collector series!



Happy Birthday America Celebration!

Isle of Wight Highlights:

Smithfield -

Summer Reading with JB Rattles Reptiles



Craftsy

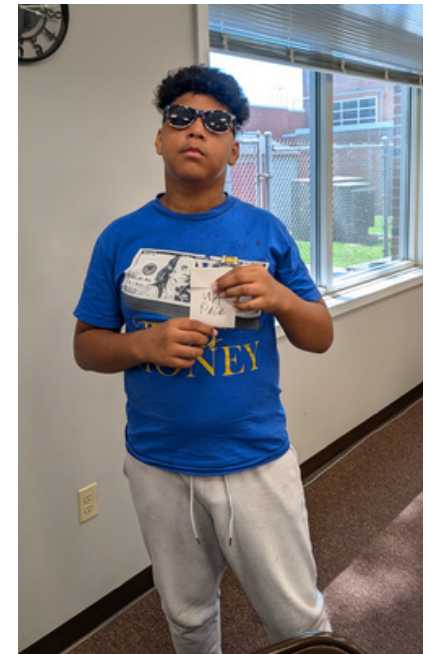


DIY Homesteading



Chess Club

Juneteenth: Minty to Harriet



Teen Tuesday with
IOW Museum



Isle of Wight Highlights Continued:

Carrollton -



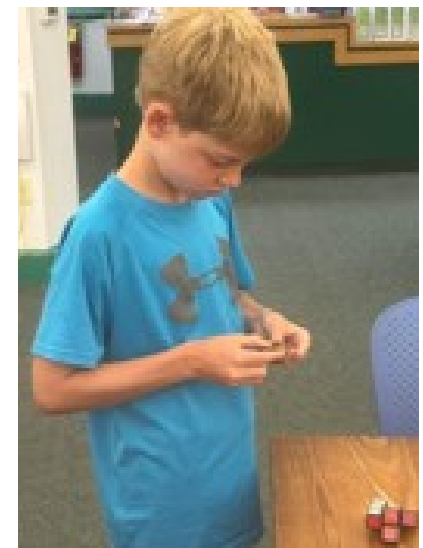
Craftsy



Summer Readers enjoyed a visit with Teeny Tiny Farm, Puzzle Palooza, and Craftsy Kids!



VA250 with IOW Museum



Isle of Wight Highlights Continued:

Windsor -



June held a variety of summer activities for all ages.
Family movie days, crafts, magic and teen trivia!!

Career Day at Carrsville ES



Southampton Highlights:



BRL Threads

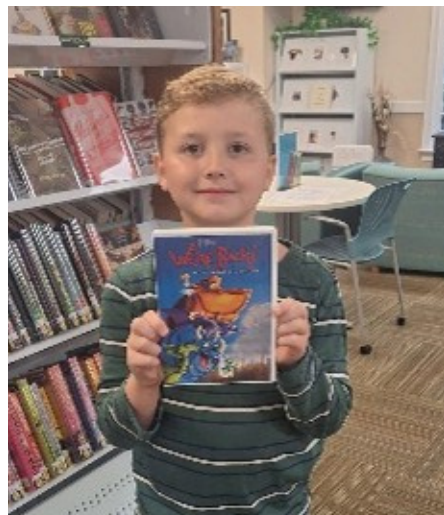


Summer Readers enjoyed storytime, a Bubble Parade and Rainbow Puppets



Surry Highlights:

Summer in Surry and Claremont brought storytime, magic, dinosaurs and bubbles!



Sussex Highlights:



Summer Reading



NEW Puzzle Table!



Adult Craftsy



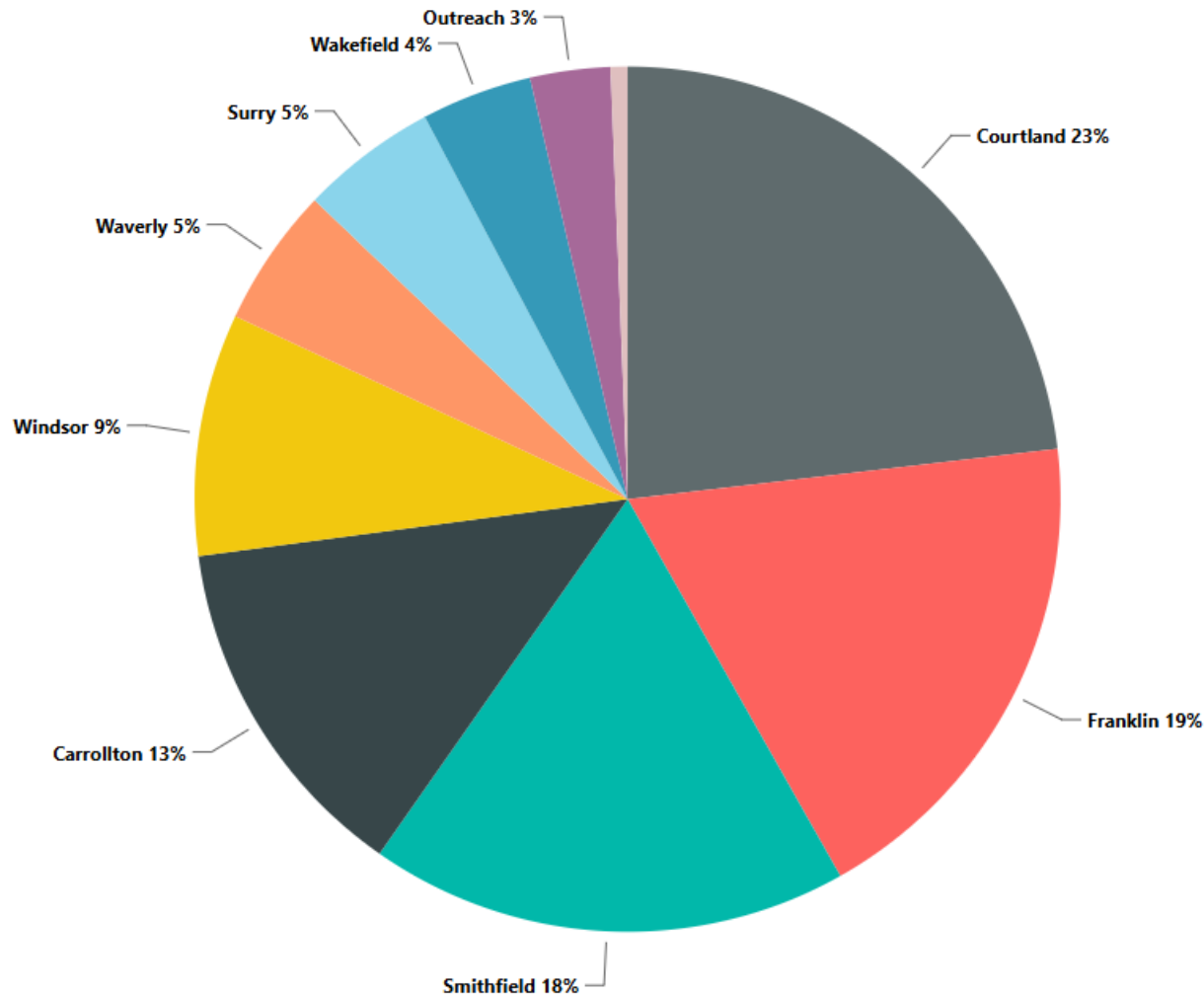


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June 2026

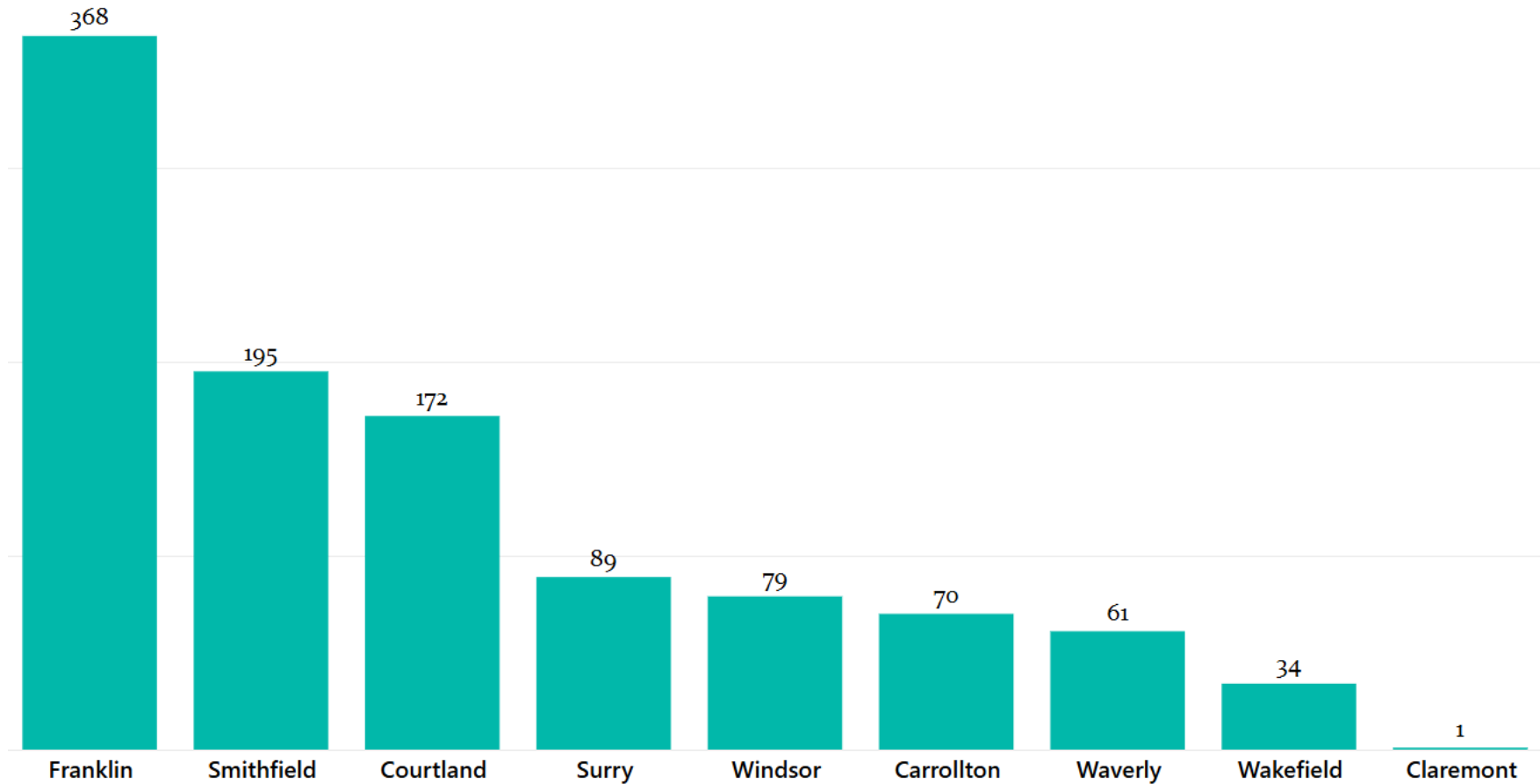
Statistics

Monthly Report: Patron Count

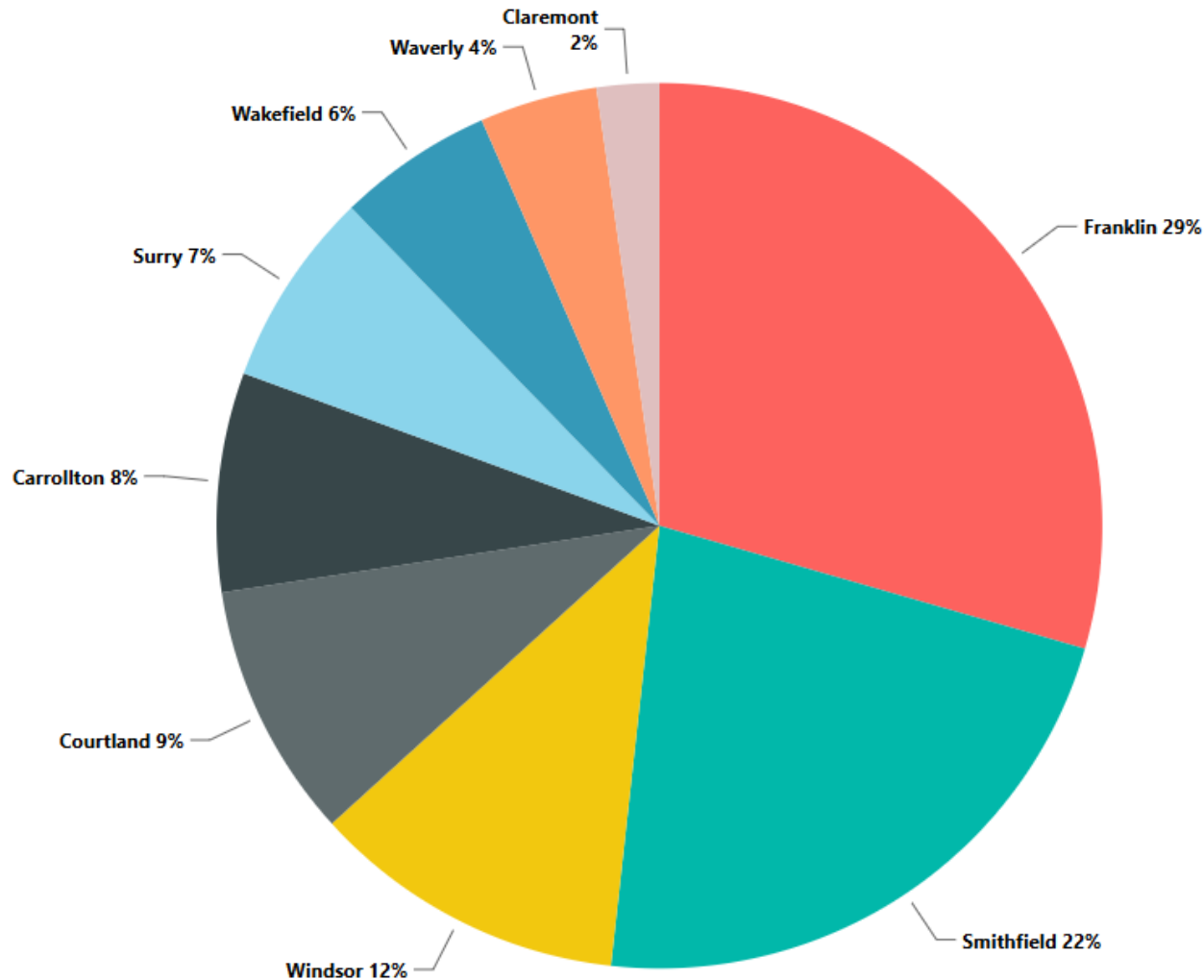


Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	2647
Claremont	127
Courtland	4647
Franklin	3752
Outreach	601
Smithfield	3593
Surry	1024
Wakefield	830
Waverly	1043
Windsor	1818
Total	20082

Monthly Report: In-House Internet

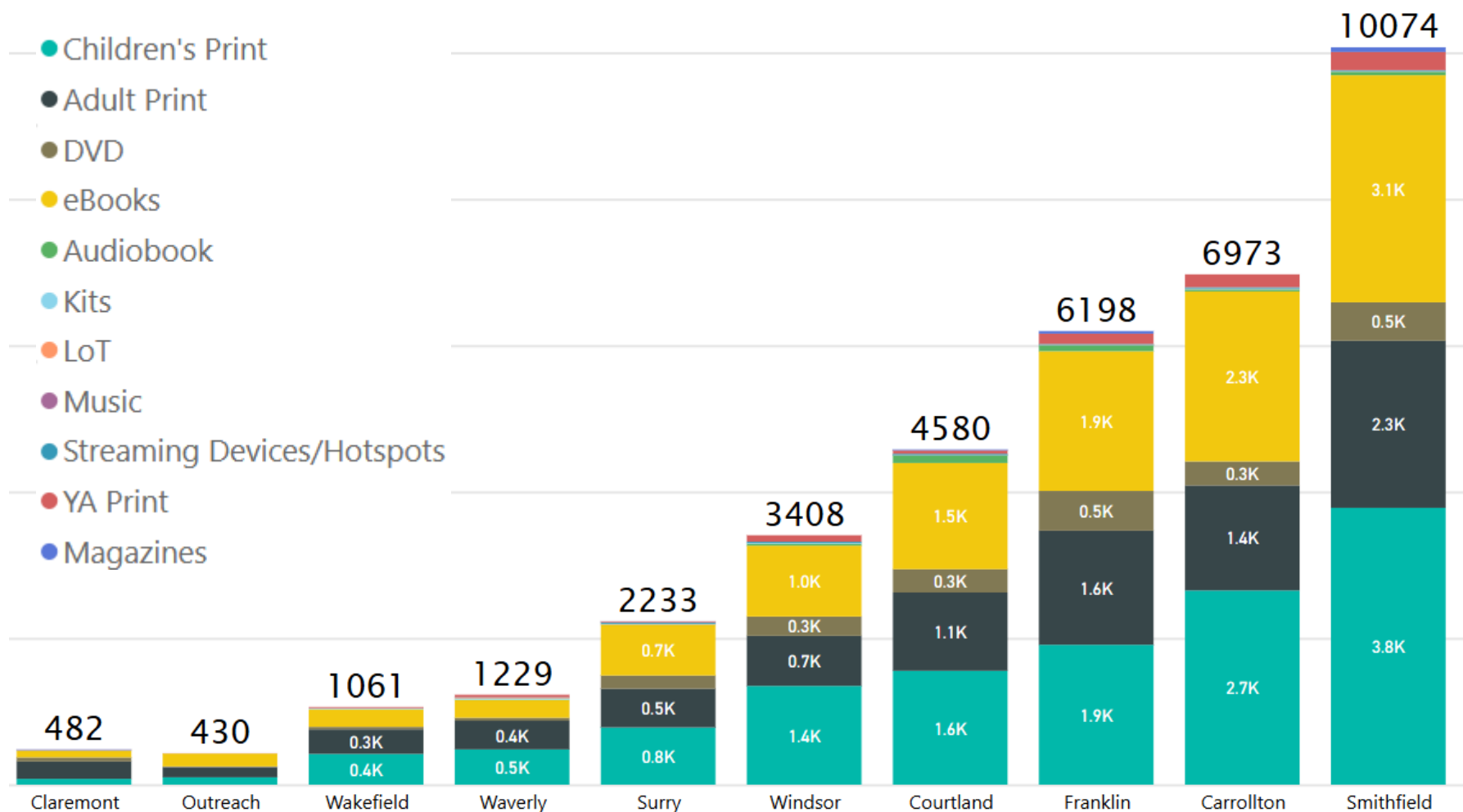


Monthly Report: WiFi Use



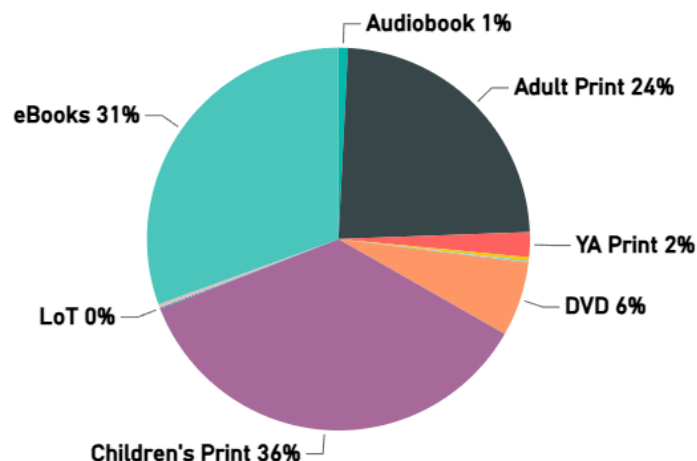
Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	151
Claremont	43
Courtland	176
Franklin	556
Smithfield	420
Surry	135
Wakefield	107
Waverly	81
Windsor	217
Total	1886

Circulation Report: By Branch

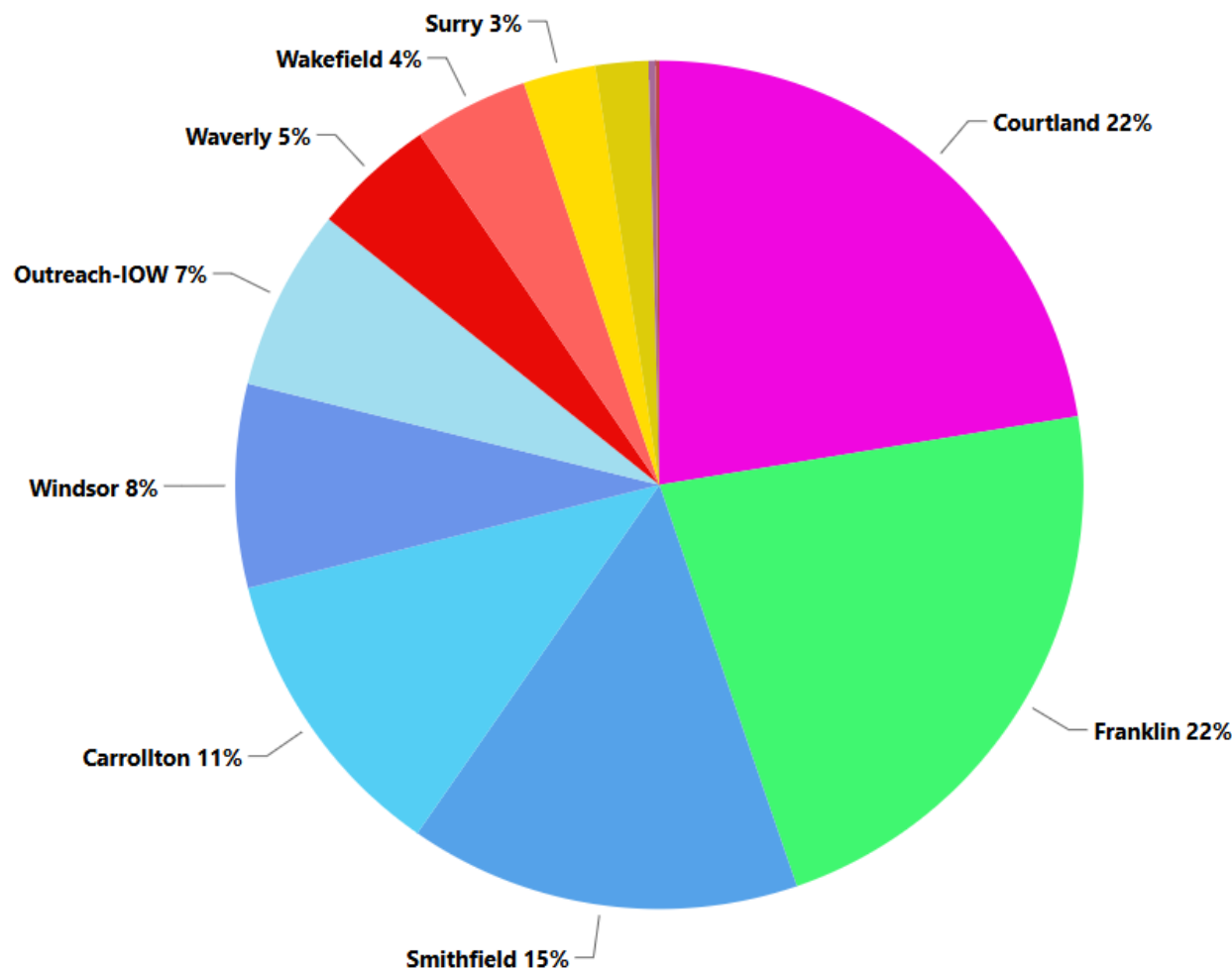


Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	Music	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1435	2654	329	26	6	176	0	6	0	2322	19
Claremont	235	81	57	0	1	5	0	1	6	92	4
Courtland	1070	1556	318	104	0	46	0	2	12	1451	21
Franklin	1558	1912	543	80	1	141	0	3	36	1910	14
Outreach	138	101	11	0	1	3	0	0	0	176	0
Smithfield	2282	3783	526	48	4	248	0	5	63	3102	13
Surry	529	783	180	7	2	14	0	7	2	691	18
Wakefield	335	421	34	0	12	16	0	0	0	241	2
Waverly	393	482	40	5	14	34	0	11	0	243	7
Windsor	684	1350	264	23	12	89	0	0	0	969	17
Total	8659	13123	2302	293	53	772	0	35	119	11197	115

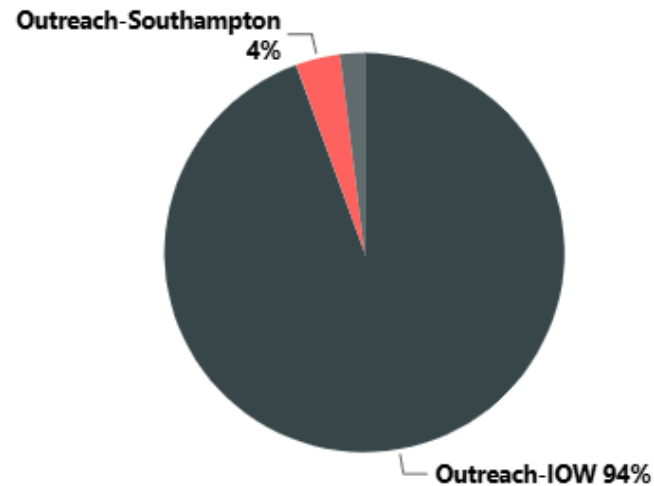


Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	476
Claremont	84
Courtland	934
Franklin	931
Outreach-IOW	289
Outreach-Southampton	11
Outreach-Sussex	6
Smithfield	622
Surry	115
Wakefield	182
Waverly	195
Windsor	323
Total	4168

Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach-IOW	6	289
Outreach-Southampton	1	11
Outreach-Sussex	1	6
Total	8	306

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Staffing Update July 2026 Blackwater Regional Library

New Hires

Promotions

Transfers

Separations

- Susie Johnson – Library Assistant, Wakefield and Waverly
- Amiah Beale – Library Page, Smithfield

Vacancies

- Library Director

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Training Sessions – June 2026

City of Franklin staff completed a total of 2 trainings

Isle of Wight County staff completed a total of 4 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

Central staff completed a total of 3 trainings

6/2/2026 – Library of Virginia Academy NovelList Plus – Students learn how to navigate NovelList. Information is provided to better help patrons discover new books and to help library workers assist patrons.

6/4/2026 – Explore and Discover: Nature-Based Spaces and Activities at your Library – When children have regular contact with nature, they learn and grow better. Children who play, build, climb, grow, splash and read are developing their observation, visual-spatial, social, and literacy skills. Nature Explorium, a nature-based program at Middle Country Public Library (NY), encourages children to explore, discover and connect with nature. Learn about best practices and resources that you can use at your library to create outdoor spaces, along with indoor and outdoor nature activities. It's a unique way to connect literacy, learning and appreciation for nature as a regular part of the library visit.

6/4/2026 – The Importance of Graphic Novels & Comic Collections in the Library – Graphic Novels & Comics Collections are important to our library system. They encourage reading activities and enhance visual literacy.

It is a way to reach out to a diverse age group that we may not be seeing regularly.

Modern Graphic Novels span all imaginable genres from historical, biographies as well as today's social issues. They combine visual art and storytelling.

Our young patrons maybe overwhelmed by some of our traditional books.

Displaying the graphic materials can attract a new patron, especially teens and young adults who do not regularly visit the library. It gives these ages a chance to look around and see what else we offer that could peak their interest.

Graphic Novels and Comics boost comprehension, increase their vocabulary and the understanding of complex storylines.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

The addition of the Graphic Collection enables a patron to have free access to read these books, which can be costly to purchase, letting the community know that the Collection is available.

Graphic Novels and Comics support the curriculum in school libraries, giving the teens and young adults an opportunity for critical thinking and exploring complex issues.

6/9/2026 – Design for Everyone! Teaching Canva in the Public Library - The title, because it included the word “Canva,” fascinated me, but the course itself was more about how the Richland Library (I am assuming of Columbia, SC) set up programs to teach Canva. I was hoping for something more specific about how to use more than just poster making.

Nevertheless, if Blackwater Regional Library were to develop technology class, I would say that the experience of the Richland Library would be good to read.

6/22/2026 – Orange Boy/Savannah Knowledge Base - Amanda Hayes from Suffolk Public Library presented in how their library system transitioned to using Savannah reporting to create and maintain a partner database. The goal was to keep important information and a detailed interaction history in an easily accessible format for staff to access.

6/22/2026 – Library Marketing Made Simple, Scalable, and Data-Driven - Maro Twal from Jersey City Free Library presented key points on managing their marketing. While the information was useful, the presenter kept repeating the same points without offering any demonstration or examples of how those points are actionable. There are better webinars out there on this topic.

6/22/2026 – Navigating Misinformation in One-on-One Interactions - The webinar was done by speakers Stacey Wedlake and Kristen Calvert at the University of Washington. This webinar provides an overview of factors that influence why people trust certain information.

The main focus was how everyday life context influences how people perceive information. Patrons share information they hear from news, posts, memes, and rumors every day. How librarians respond to this information and gain or lose trust amongst patrons. One on one conversations can offer thoughtful conversations. Everyone is vulnerable to misinformation and it can shape beliefs and decisions. Being able to address why the patron thinks their information is reliable through the reference desk, programs, displays, and staff training are ways to create connections with them.

6/22/2026 – Weed ‘Em and Reap: Getting Your Collection From Aeful to Awesome - This informational video focused on making your collection count: a holistic approach to

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

library collection management. The information was presented by Mary Kelly, a digital services and emerging technologies librarian. And Holly Hibner an adult services coordinator at Plymouth District Library.

Three questions right off the bat, does your collection meet your mission, are you proud of your collection, and who does your collection serve?

Let us consider the life cycle of a collection:

Acquisitions
Processing/Cataloging
Shelving
Check outs
Re-shelving
Repair/Maintenance
Weeding/Replacing

Taking these things into consideration, the weeding plan should be ongoing. Be familiar with what is on the shelves; what is most circulated and the condition of these items. Are these books part of a series? They offer ways to weed a series. Taking into account the popularity and space allowed. Weeding the oldest part of the series and offering ILLs to patrons still interested in enjoying the parts of the series that are not part of the collection. Weeding reports from your ILS based on the guidelines set forth provide direction for continued weeding. Also, just because a book is pulled from the collection does not mean it will be weeded. That is determined by differing guidelines:

Duplicates
Condition
Necessary information
Relevant/current information
Circulation numbers
Books out of print

To reflect the questions raised: Yes, our collection strives to meet our mission. I am very proud of the offerings at Smithfield! Our patrons come in and head to the new bookshelves looking for their next great read.

Our collection serves all walks of life in Isle of Wight County. From popular materials to local history and genealogy both digitally and in print.

6/22/2026 – Avoid Highway Hypnosis with This Simple Tip - The video explains a great tip as to how to avoid highway hypnosis. Making sure to keep my eyes moving while driving, checking mirrors frequently, and using these techniques to stay alert.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

6/23/2026 – Getting Started with Libby - For Beginners- Libby serves Beginners -Advanced Users

Product Trainer is Emma Dwyer and Lisa Braun; presentation found on Overdrive

As for me, I am somewhat comfortable on Libby and Kanapy. Today's agenda is an overview of Libby, a demonstrations, and frequently asked questions, plus next steps and resources.

It takes just a few minutes to download the app. for Libby- go to libbyapp.com; you will need a library card.

Search for your library, put in your pin and sign in.

You can view curated and automated lists of book titles. Search- building icon- your libraries home collection

Menu-Libby icon-main menu; Stack of books- is where you can view and manage your loans.

Tags- list of titles that you want to save till later

Begin a search type title or author: catalog filters include books, audiobooks, magazines...

You can access other libraries where you have a Libby card by tapping right corner in search bar!

Example: search for Broken Country by Leslie Hall- you can place a hold and play or read a sample. Libby will show you which library- of the ones you hold a membership- and give you the best wait time.

Specific title or author complete a quick search! They can notify you when it is available. You can sort by newest, popular, random, and availability.

Try the Popular Filter- you can Pin a category and it will pop up with all your searches ex: popular

To remove the Pins simply tap on that again.

There are Kids and Juv filters. Extras include Kanapy, Classica, and Crafts!

Explore the Library Home Screen to explore titles.

Explore the Example Libby Book Awards Nominees. Gather info and see what you may like.

There are Shelftalkers, just like some physical libraries may have. They are an opportunity to share more information about a book; things like staff picks, trivia, awards, and info.

You can read samples, borrow a book, tag and organize books in the library. When you borrow a book you can have an opportunity to select your lending days 7, 14, or 21 days.

Other details include:

You can tap your library card on a book you want to borrow to find first available and many things.

You can read with Kindle or with Libby. You can adjust the loan period if your library allows.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

6/25/2026 – Data Literacy for Libraries and Nonprofit Organizations - This webinar discusses the different meanings of Data Literacy. Data Literacy is defined as the ability to explore, understand, and communicate with data in a meaningful way. A certain level of data literacy is needed to understand why it is important to collect the information and why is it important to do the job well and accurately. Collecting this information is important to libraries to secure funding, demonstrating relevance to stakeholders, understanding community demographics, and serving the community more effectively and efficiently. By collecting this data, it allows us to better understand who is in the community that we serve and how we can better serve them.

6/26/2026 – Impact Cloud+ Full Tutorial - This webinar was a tutorial on how to use our new LED Sign. During the session, we reviewed the basic functions and day-to-day operation of the new LED sign, including how to access the system, create content, and manage displays.

1. Logging In
 - Entering user credentials
 - Navigating the dashboard and main menu
2. Creating and Managing Content
 - Understanding content layouts and display zones
 - Creating new messages and playlists
 - Saving and organizing content
3. Adding Text
 - Creating text-based announcements
 - Selecting fonts, colors, and sizing options
 - Adjusting timing and display duration
4. Uploading and Displaying Images
 - Uploading images to the media library
 - Placing images within sign layouts
 - Previewing content before publishing
5. Scheduling Content
 - Setting start and end dates
 - Scheduling content for specific times/events
 - Managing scheduled content
6. Publishing Updates
 - Sending content to the LED sign
 - Verifying successful uploads
 - Reviewing live displays and making edits as needed

6/30/2026 – Best Book Club Picks - Each presenter gave a list of new books and why they would be good selections for book clubs. From romance to suspense to non-fiction, there was something for everyone. Shadow Mountain even had clean books, with titles from historical to non-fiction. And Barbara Kinsolver has a new book coming out-Patita. I thought it was very informative, and have kept a list for the upcoming year.