

Bay City Public Library Strategic Plan



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PLAN
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From the Library Director:

On behalf of the Bay City Public Library, I would like to extend our thanks for all of the input given by community leaders, library staff, organizations, and Matagorda County residents as we put together our FY 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

A good strategic plan reflects and incorporates the values and ideas of the community. This plan was developed with wide input from across the entire Bay City and Sargent communities, through two focus group sessions, staff interviews, a community leaders meeting, and a comprehensive community survey. It was important to us to capture the feedback that is specific to individual branches.

This plan is in part a continuation of the previous plan disrupted by the impacts of COVID-19, as well as an incorporation of the new goals identified throughout the process. As libraries change, the Bay City Public Library will strive to meet these changes and to continue to provide superior library services.

Samantha Denbow, CPLA

Executive Summary:

Introduction:

[Partners Library Action Network \(PLAN\)](#) created Bay City's Strategic Plan in partnership with the City of Bay City, and Matagorda County leaders and administration, Bay City Public Library Association, Friends of the Library Board, Library staff, and members of the Bay City and Sargent communities. A key goal of this strategic plan is to build upon the work that has been completed as part of the Library's 2020 long-range plan and establish updated goals with a focus on library facilities, staffing, and services. This new plan is flexible to support any future city and county long-range planning, especially in the areas of quality of life and economic development. It is also a living document that is actionable and forward-thinking with a level of flexibility to adapt as community needs change. This strategic plan presents a vision of attainable goals and actionable steps designed to allow the public library to continue to meet the needs of the citizens of Bay City and Sargent as these communities grow and change.

History:

From 1912 until 2012 the Bay City Library was an independent foundation and did not become a department of the city until 2013. The Sargent Branch serves an unincorporated community with political representation from a single Matagorda County commissioner and is a branch of the Bay City Library. It was established in 1991. All library employees are city of Bay City employees, and the county provides some funding for the Bay City library and all financial support for the Sargent

Branch. Due to the nonprofit status of the library for many years until 2013, it is not mentioned in any of the Bay City long-range plans, a concern that hopefully will be rectified as new city and county plans are developed.

Library Mission:

The Bay City Public Library connects residents of Matagorda County with information, technology, ideas, and experiences to provide enjoyment, enrich lives, and strengthen our community.

Vision:

The Bay City Public Library will foster a spirit of community and self-discovery by improving the quality of life in Bay City and surrounding areas.

Overview and Benchmarks:

Bay City Public Library’s legal service area as determined by the Texas State Library and Archives is 26,315 persons, which includes the population of Bay City and a percentage of the Matagorda County population. This legal service population was used to identify peer libraries in Texas as benchmarks to compare services, budgets, facilities, and staffing. Additional criteria in identifying comparable libraries included a focus on libraries that serve rural populations and identification by Bay City library staff as a library that they are striving to emulate.

The following libraries were used in this report as benchmarks for Bay City Public Library:

Library	Legal Service Population
Paris Public Library, Paris, Texas	24,407
Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, Kerrville, Texas	24,477
Dickinson Public Library, Dickinson, Texas	24,726
Hewitt Public Library, Hewitt, Texas	25,414
Bay City Public Library, Bay City, Texas	26,315
W Walworth Harrison Public Library, Greenville, Texas	29,578
Cleburne Public Library, Cleburne, Texas	31,999
Judy B McDonald Public Library, Nacogdoches, Texas	32,118

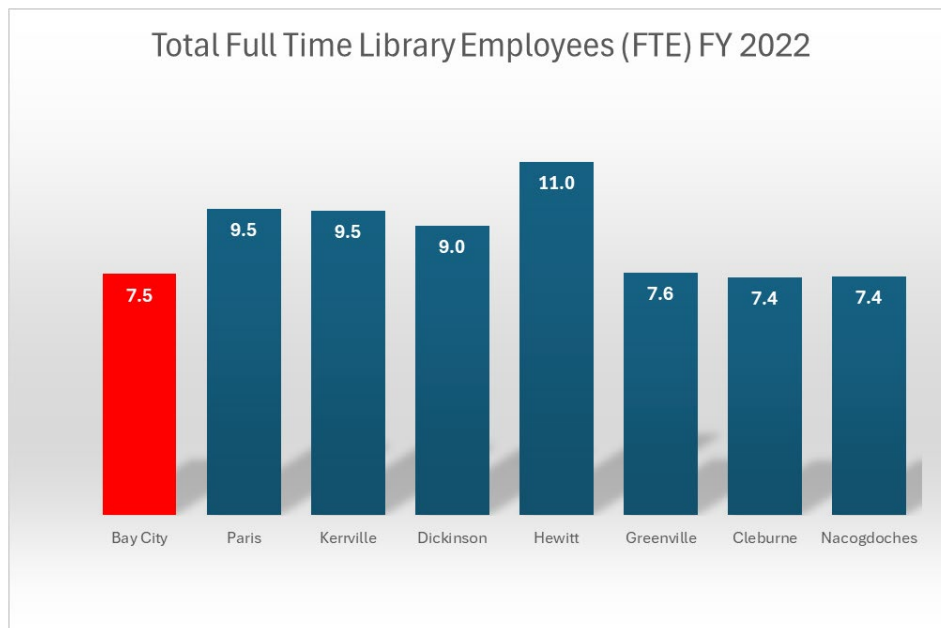
One of the most important comparisons in benchmarking these libraries is the per capita use, or how frequently the population uses services. Per capita use allows cities to compare their

services without considering the population of the communities because it is based on services per person and not the size or budget of the library. Some of the libraries in this set do serve larger populations or have larger budgets, but the per capita numbers and statewide averages, when available, do give a general picture of how Bay City aligns with its peers.

Staffing/Admin/Governance:



Bay City Public Library currently has 7.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) staff which includes 1 master's degree accredited librarian. One staff member works part-time at the main library and part-time at the Sargent Branch. According to the [Texas Library Standards](#), it is recommended that a library serving a population between 25,000 and 49,999 have 1 FTE employee per 4,100 population and 1 MLS-accredited librarian per 17,100 population to be considered an enhanced level library. To be an exemplary level library there should be one FTE employee per 2,850 population and 1 MLS-accredited librarian per 9,850 population.



Bay City Public Library falls in the bottom half with the number of staff when compared with its peers. Paris Public Library and Kerrville serve smaller populations in this group at 24,407 and 24,447 respectively and have 2.0 FTE more staff.

Recommendation:

- Add .5 FTE library employees within the next year to move closer to the exemplary service standard for library staffing of 9.23 FTE for Bay City’s service population of 26,315 and make long term plans to either support additional training for current staff to obtain an MLS degree or hire an additional half-time degreed librarian to move towards the exemplary service standard of 2.67 FTE MLS accredited librarians.
- Provide training to staff to improve services to the Spanish-speaking community.
- Consider designating, training, and bonding a library staff member as a notary.

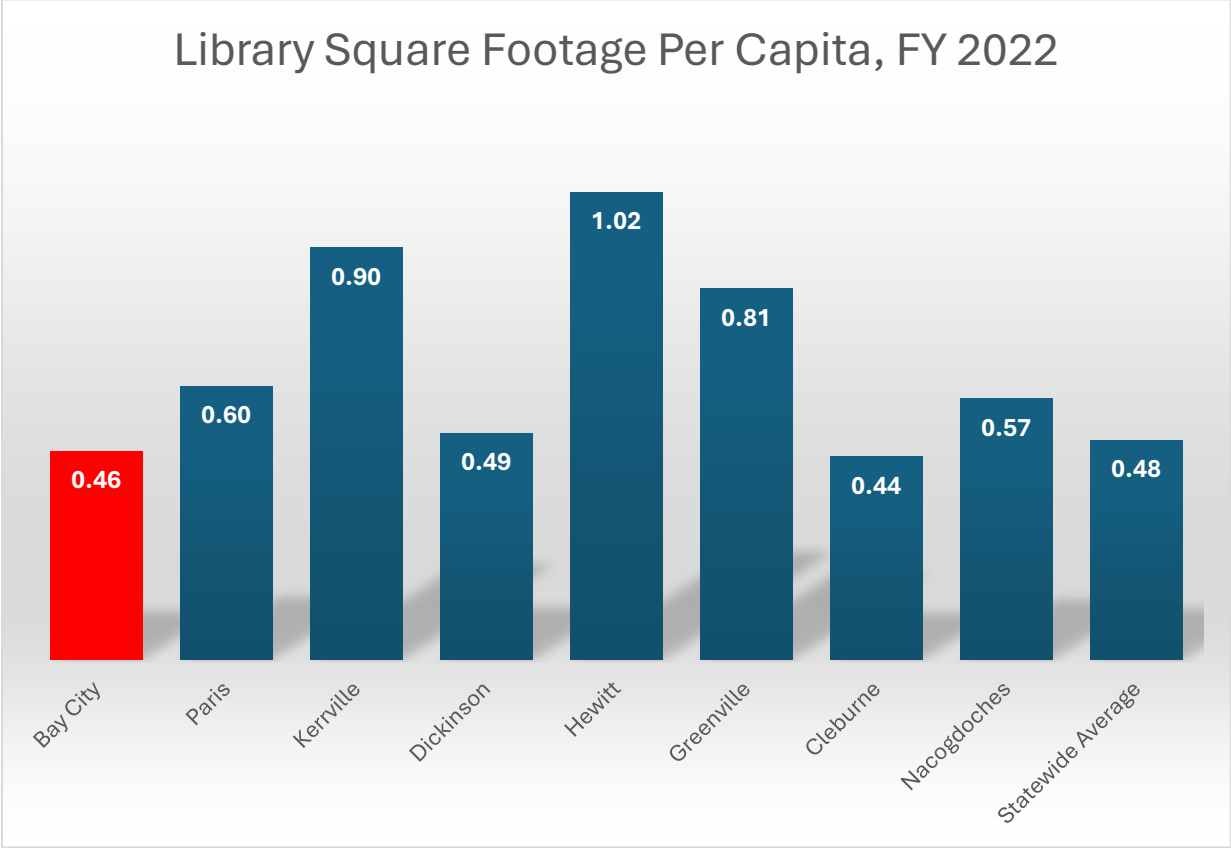
Facilities:



The main branch of the Bay City Public Library is a former bank built in the 1960s with the original vaults inside, a large parking lot, and a bank drive-through at the back of the building. The library moved into this building in 1991. The library sits on a major road into town and is visible and accessible by a sidewalk and not far from the high school. One part of the building is occupied by offices of the Bay City Community Development, Matagorda County Economic Development, Mainstreet Program, and Gateway Mortgage.



The Sargent Branch of the Bay City Public Library is in the unincorporated community of Sargent and is a former VFW building purchased by the county, with space allocated to the library. There are plans to replace this building with a combined library and community center on the same lot. The library is on the highway entering into town making it easy to access by automobile.

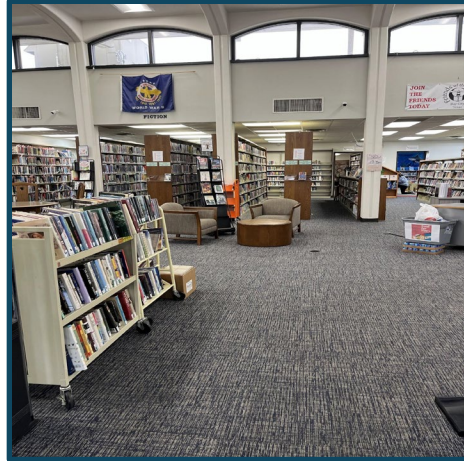


Bay City’s total square footage per capita is slightly below the statewide average and is in the bottom third of peer libraries.

Library	Population	Current Square Footage	.51 SF Per Capita (Texas Overall Average)	0.6 SF Per Capita (ALA "Standard")	0.8 SF Per Capita (ALA "Enhanced")	1 SF Per Capita (ALA "Exemplary")
Bay City	26,315	12,000	13,421	15,789	21,052	26,315
Paris	24,407	14,585	12,448	14,644	19,526	24,407
Kerrville	24,477	22,064	12,483	14,686	19,582	24,477
Dickinson	24,726	12,226	12,610	14,836	19,781	24,726
Hewitt	25,414	26,000	12,961	15,248	20,331	25,414
Greenville	29,578	24,000	15,085	17,747	23,662	29,578
Cleburne	31,999	14,204	16,319	19,199	25,599	31,999
Nacogdoches	32,118	18,322	16,380	19,271	25,694	32,118

Meets standard	Not meeting standard
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The main branch at Bay City does not meet the square footage per capita as compared to the Texas overall average nor does it fall within square footage guideline standards established by the American Library Association. The exterior and main area of the library needs updating to make it more visually appealing and interesting which has the potential to increase foot traffic. A concern about the feel of the main library as you enter the building was brought up in the leadership meeting conversation. When entering the building, the most visible object is a prominent wall of books. There is a desire from community leaders to emphasize that the library offers more than just books. It was suggested that there be more visual elements that spark interest and motivate patrons to delve deeper into the library. Feedback from a community-wide survey also highlighted challenges with browsing books in the main library due to shelf height. This supports the need for shorter shelving, which is currently a library best practice, and should increase usage of library materials once they are more visible and accessible.



The Sargent branch also falls within square footage guidelines for the size of community it serves. The primary topics discussed at the Sargent community meeting were the desire for a shared community and library facility, as well as the need for expanded meeting areas. The community members voiced their strong support for maintaining the library not only as a traditional resource, but also as a preferred location for community gatherings.

Recommendations:

- Hire an architect/interior designer to propose visual elements for the library façade to improve curb appeal and exterior lighting. They can also address needed visual improvements at the entrances/lobby, and the adult shelving/reading area of Bay City's Main Library to make it more visually interesting and encourage movement further into and throughout the library.
- Work towards the goal of the library as the community living room and away from an initial focus on shelving and books by creating other visual elements in the main entrance space of the library. One method of doing this and creating more flexible space is to purchase shorter mobile shelves, introduce color, signage, and dynamic displays. This will require additional square footage in the current building because mobile shelving will be shorter, and it will not house as many materials as current shelving and in addition there is a desire from the community for more physical materials. Mobile shelving will allow the staff to create more open spaces on the main floor of the library during large events that cannot be held in the meeting room.
- Survey comments suggested a desire for more space for the children's area in both libraries, a larger meeting room at the Main Library, and greater distinction or separation between quiet reading/study spaces and the children/programming spaces. The small study rooms at the main library may need more visibility, color, and updates.
- If the main library will be housed in the current building for the long term, then assessments and long-range plans for improvements will need to be made in the following areas: roof, HVAC system, interior and exterior lighting, automatic sliding doors at entrance, updates to all restrooms, fire panel, and parking lot improvements.

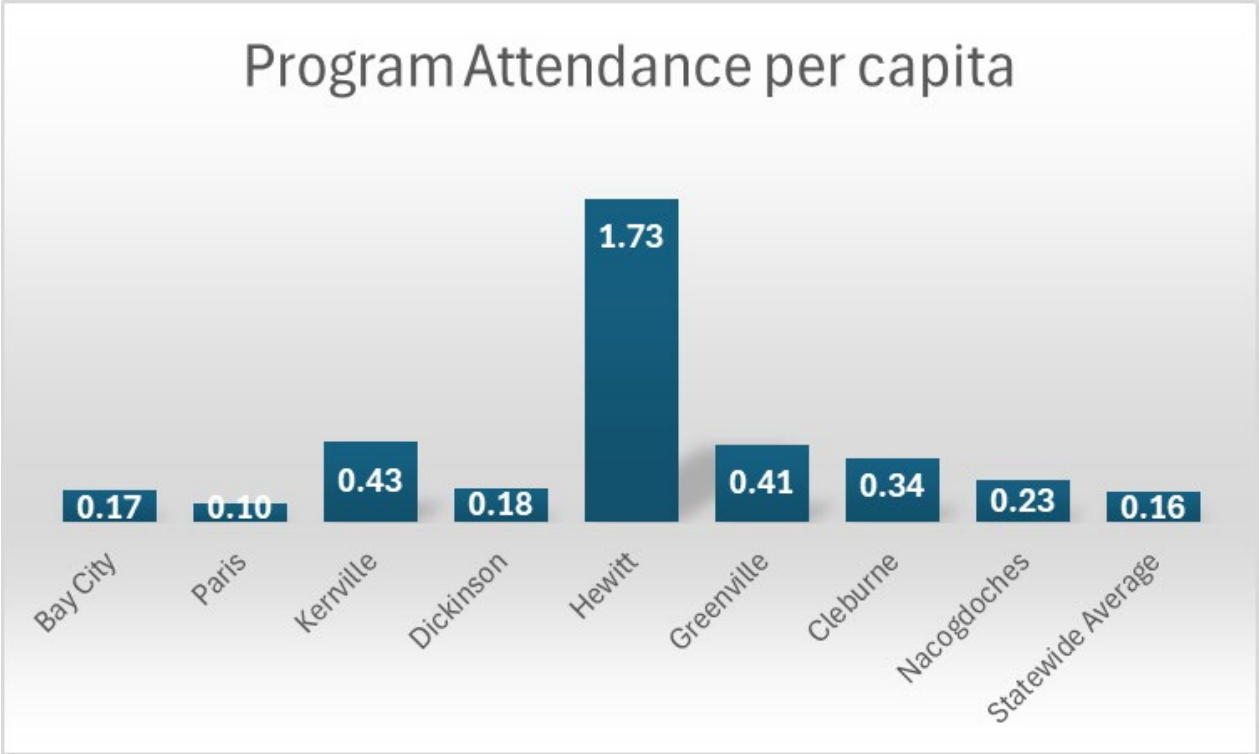
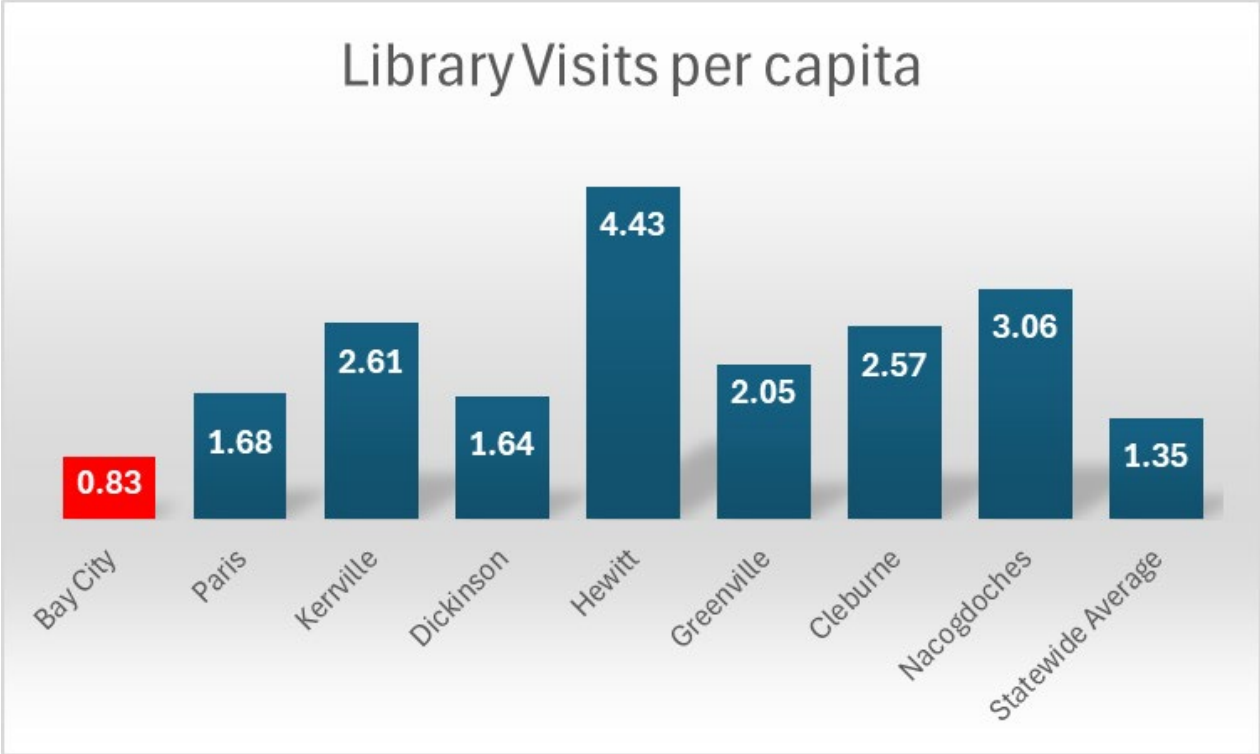


- Improve outdoor spaces by adding shade features to allow programs to move onto the spacious lawn/parking lot at both the main and branch libraries.
- Improve signage, and parking lot, and add a sidewalk and overhang to the building at the Sargent branch to protect entrance during rain.
- Consider external digital signage at both library locations that can be used to advertise community events/announcements in addition to library information.

Programs/Services/Technology:



The results of library staff interviews, community and leadership discussions, and a community-wide survey all confirmed the necessity and significance of library programs in the Bay City community. The majority (70%) of survey participants expressed great satisfaction with the current library programs. In response to the community survey, there was a strong desire for art and cultural programming featuring local experts and talent. Furthermore, there were numerous requests for additional programming geared towards adults and families.



Bay City Public Library has challenges to address in lower-than-expected library use, circulation, and program attendance when compared to peer libraries. When considering the rationale for why this may be happening, the top reasons identified by the community in public meetings and through the survey are not having a large enough collection of physical and electronic materials, needing larger spaces for children and families to read and play, wanting more programs for adults, and not knowing what the library offers or when library events are held. 90% of survey respondents said that they received excellent customer service with many compliments about the staff at both libraries. Business services such as copiers, printers, scanner, and microfilm machines were the second highest used service after borrowing materials according to the survey. There were some concerns about printers and updating this technology to make it more user-friendly for public use. Art and culture were discussed as an important focus for the Bay City community in the leadership meeting. 40% of survey respondents asked the library to focus more on art and cultural events as well.

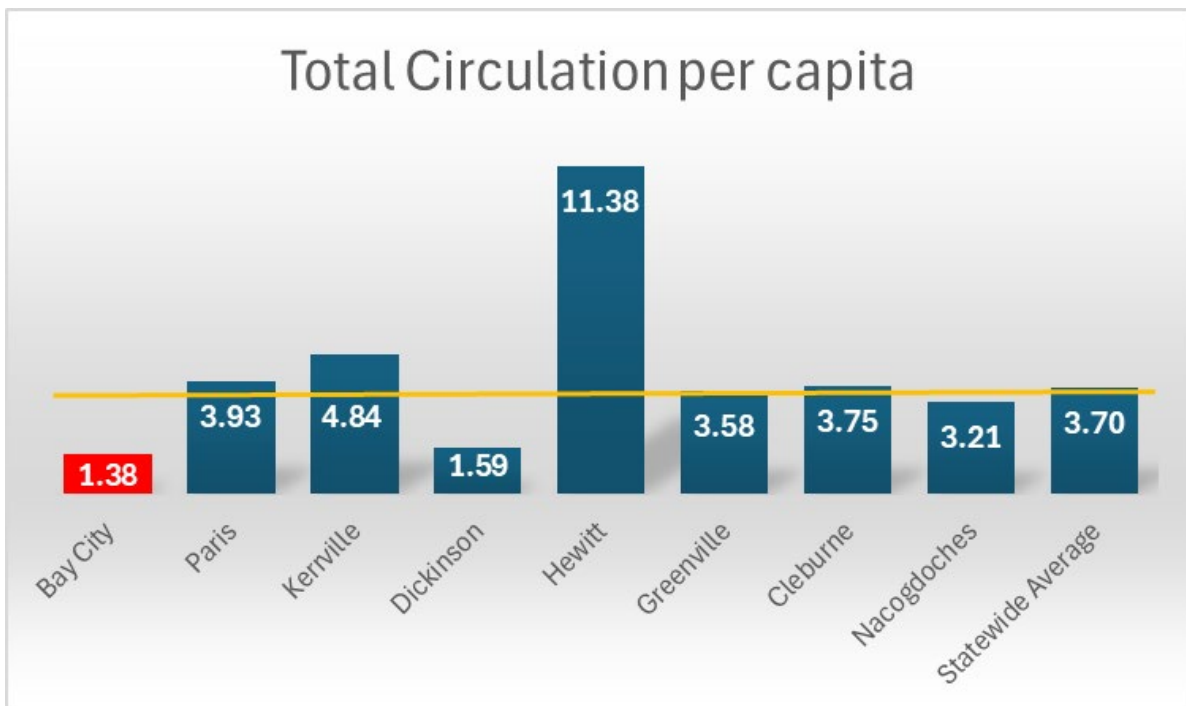
Recommendations:

- Update the printer to make it Wi-Fi-friendly.
- Track usage of electronic resources and databases and annually review the return on investment of these products.
- Offer additional programs for adults taking into consideration staffing needs to manage these events.
- Continue to focus on culture and art in library events.
- Develop methods and partnerships to get the message out about library services.
- Keep the Sargent community well informed of plans and timelines for the new library/community center. Consider posting updates on the library's social media page/website.

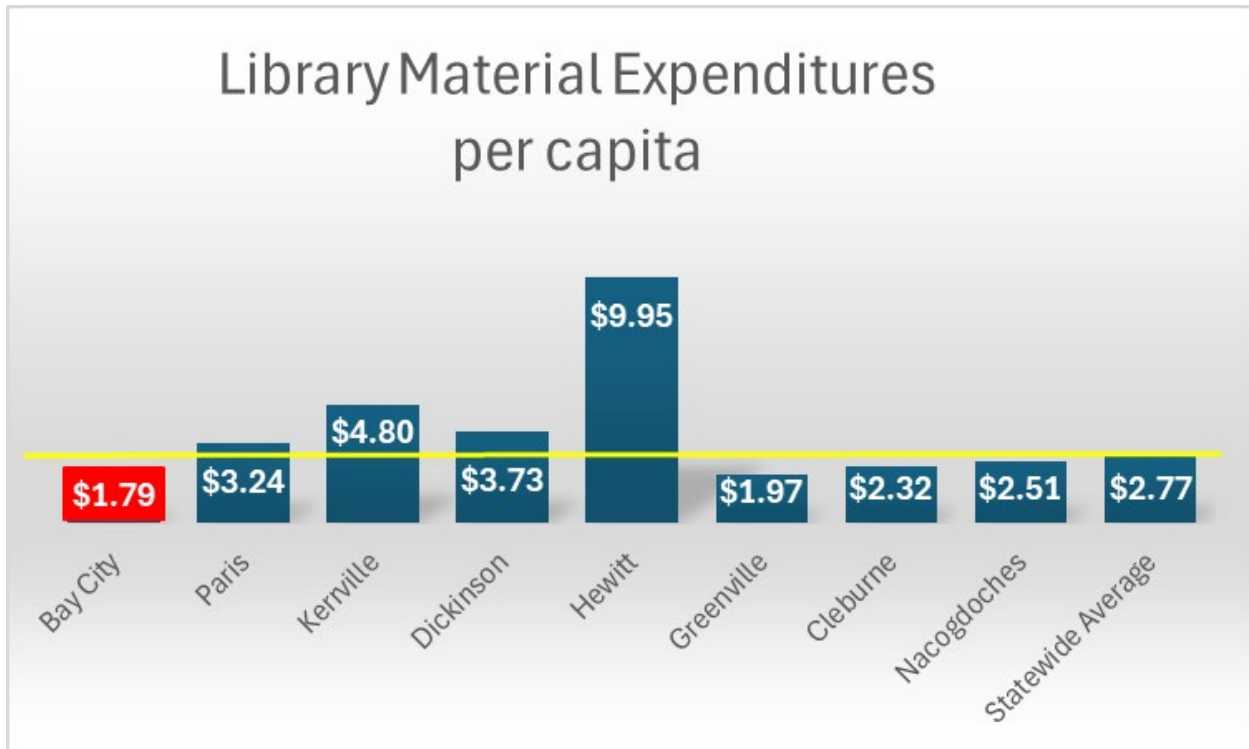
Collections:



Focusing specifically on the collection of physical and electronic materials, Bay City Public Library has the lowest circulation (checkouts/usage) and expenditure per capita on library materials of comparable libraries.



Circulation per capita indicates the number of books checked out per person annually in the city and reflects on the size and usefulness of the collection.



Expenditure per capita indicates how much money is spent on library items annually in both physical and electronic format per person in the city.

Both circulation and expenditure benchmarks may indicate that the library's collection of materials is not as relevant or current as what is needed by the community. Concerns about the diversity, currency, and availability of desired materials were commented upon in both the library survey and at community meetings. Citizens are requesting more up-to-date materials, more classics, and a wider diversity of choices. The minimum [Standards for Accreditation of Public Libraries in the Texas State Library System](#) indicates a library should spend at least 15% of its budget on collections in Texas. Bay City Public Library's total budget in 2022 was \$532,073 and 15% of this amount is \$79,810.

Recommendations:

- Increase the library's materials budget to 15% of the total budget.
- Add RFID tagging to all library collections for increased tracking and security.
- Add security gates at all public entrances.
- Develop a marketing plan to make the community more aware of the library's electronic resources and databases.
- Track usage of electronic resources and databases and annually review the return on investment of these products.

Reports/Appendix:

Demographics of Bay City:

Bay City racial composition as of 2020: (NH = Non-Hispanic)		
Race	Number	Percentage
White (NH)	5,811	32.17%
Black or African American (NH)	2,810	15.56%
Native American or Alaska Native (NH)	56	0.31%
Asian (NH)	169	0.94%
Pacific Islander (NH)	4	0.02%
Some Other Race (NH)	43	0.24%
Mixed/Multi-Racial (NH)	366	2.03%
Hispanic or Latino	8,802	48.73%
Total	18,061	

As of the [2020 United States census](#), there were 18,061 people, 6,602 households, and 4,086 families residing in the city.

Demographics of Sargent:

Approximately 501 permanent residents live in the Sargent area, while on holiday weekends the population may increase to as high as 5,000. It is an unincorporated community with a major focus on fishing and boating with lots of snowbirds coming from northern states in the winter months, retirees, and weekenders coming from larger cities such as Houston, Austin, and San Antonio.

Summary of Staff Interviews:

Staff interviews were conducted on January 2, 2024. Overall, staff enjoyed working at the library, interacting with library users, and spending time with coworkers. They appreciate the diversity of cultures living in Bay City and see a need to provide more programming and services that support the community. According to staff feedback, the children and family programs have been consistently high quality and well-attended. The attendance for teen programs has been on the rise, indicating improvement. The staff is committed to providing exceptional customer service and strive to assist individuals as much as possible. However, they may face limitations in certain situations due to a user's technical proficiency or the availability of staff members. Technology, especially printers, need to be updated or fixed to meet user's needs.

Other suggestions for improvements that staff discussed include additional programs for special groups in the community such as individuals with sensory issues, supporting the arts community, providing bookmobile services to low-income neighborhoods, helping the elderly or homeless populations with a social worker available at certain times in the library, and getting the word out that the library is more than just books. Facility improvements included a need for a new roof, more and/or larger meeting space for programs, RFID (tags and a security system) for library materials, a notary on staff and more recognition of the library and library staff by elected officials. Below is a summary of staff answers to specific interview questions.

What do you like about working at the library?

Overall, the staff enjoy working with the community and their coworkers. They like connecting with the repeat users/familiar faces, the hard core readers who love books, and the energy that families and children bring to their programs. They understand the benefit of working together with all the staff to pull off the big events the library sponsors.

What are the best things about this library?

The staff are proud of the service they provide to the community and feel that they have high customer service skills. They provide quite a bit of technology, lots of programs for all ages and want the community to know that the library is more than just books and internet, even though there are lots of readers and interest in books in Bay City.

What programs do you think would be most important to library users?

All the programs are important. Toddler events introduce literacy, libraries and the arts are very compatible and the teen programs are growing. Computers and the internet are key for people applying for jobs and make an immediate impact.

What makes Bay City a special place?

There are a variety of cultures that live here and lots of amazing artists. There is so much potential. The city tries hard to help people come together. There is some division between various economic levels and a need to better serve the lower income communities.

If you were given \$1 million to improve the library, how would you use that money?

The staff sees a need for more physical space for art, programs, and a computer lab or a new building. There is a desire for a more modern and cozy looking library space. The children and teen rooms were mentioned as needing to be larger and the meeting room. A bookmobile was mentioned as a way to reach more of the community, especially those who are low income. RFID (radio frequency id) tags were seen as being helpful in improving security of items and to keep them from leaving the library without being checked out. Staffing also needs to be increased so that the library could provide more programs and assistance with technology. The roof was also mentioned as needing to be replaced or repaired.

How can the library improve the quality of life of its residents?

Staff mentioned a need to be aware of which groups within the community they are not reaching, for example individuals with autism or sensory issues. Ideas were shared about potential services the library could provide for this group. More staffing was mentioned as a way to provide more one-on-one time with those people needing extra assistance such as the elderly or people needing help with technology.

What is the library missing and/or what do the users ask for that you don't have?

Staff mentioned: Notary services. Expanded learning materials – life skills – driver's education, nursing programs, etc. More quiet rooms. Improvements to the public printer. A library of things that can be checked out like unusual cake pans or appliances.

Share a situation or story you have observed in the Bay City Public Library that would illustrate the importance of the library in this community?

A lady with a mentally challenged older daughter said that everywhere she goes she doesn't get the help she needs because of her daughter and that she was so happy when a library staff member sat with her at the computer while another library staff member helped her daughter find books to look at. This lady was able to complete her work and she was impressed with the understanding and support provided by the library staff.

An older gentleman said he needed to renew his driver's license and he had no computer experience. He desperately needed help. He finished the task with staff assistance, got his certificate, and was so happy with his library because there was no one else in his life to help him with this.

When this employee first started at the library there were still many COVID restrictions and there were lots of people getting laid off, so they helped lots of people set up ID me and applications for unemployment benefits. One lady broke down crying once she got approved for her benefits due to the stress and brought cookies to the staff because they helped her.

Leadership Meeting Summary:



On February 15, 2024, 15 city, county, and community leaders met at Bay City Public Library to discuss opportunities and issues facing the city, county, and the library.

When the group was asked what they love or enjoy about their city they stated that Bay City had a small community feel and was very giving. The city, county, schools, and community organizations collaborate to enhance the quality of life and organize community events. The local square presents ample opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Additionally, the youth have numerous avenues for growth and development, as the community places great emphasis on supporting them. The coastal location allows for easy access to birding and beaches, while being just an hour's drive from Houston provides access to urban amenities. The thriving arts scene in our community is highly valued, encompassing visual arts, theater, and dance.

During the discussion on the challenges confronting Bay City, a significant portion of the dialogue revolved around the issues of deteriorating infrastructure and inaccessible housing for the workforce. There was agreement that money was not available to meet all infrastructure needs and that new development puts stress on existing infrastructure. There is a potential growth spurt for Bay City in the future and it is seen as both good and bad. A stronger identity and possible marketing for Bay City are needed as it is often confused with Baytown. There are concerns about the lack of services for homeless individuals, and those struggling with mental health issues, and that there is no public transportation for people in the city/county. Some of the organizations that help individuals in distress duplicate services instead of banding together to improve and make stronger services such as food pantries. There is a perception that these organizations operate in silos, and that religious, cultural, and racial differences have contributed to an environment of competition and lack of cooperation.

Lastly, even though there are a lot of community events and activities there is a decline in participation of service organizations and clubs to help with events and the membership is growing older.

Organizations that are seen as effective or making things happen in Bay City include the Lions Club, the Bay City ISD Foundation to support teachers, new industry partners in the county such as Lyondell, OQ, STP and Tenaris, nonprofits including MEHOP/Vibrance, and United Way, WorkSource, Economic Action Committee, and for some transportation needs there is R-transit.

The ideal Bay City is seen as having unity, collaboration, and growth. There is a strong desire for sustainable longevity in programs designed to aid and assist all individuals within the county, as well as an acknowledgment of county leaders who foster meaningful connections. It is also desired that the youth of the community will have increased connectivity and access to positive role models, parental figures, and beneficial programs. Moreover, there is a widespread desire for a dynamic and well-educated community with an emphasis on promoting artistic expression.

When asked how the library fits into helping with community challenges there was a discussion of the library as a resource center with organizations offering assistance and resources at the library at set times and that a community resource list can be maintained and available through the library. In addition, the library can help with getting communication out about emergency and city-wide situations or events. It was brought up that 40% of the population in Bay City is Spanish speaking and more resources/services need to be developed for this population. There was an understanding amongst the group that providing these programs would require additional staffing at the library.

The group suggested several programs and services that they would like the library to offer, such as a Lego Club, increased programming focused on Spanish-speaking individuals, functioning as a community resource center, providing access to technology, offering legal assistance, facilitating community discussions, promoting healthy eating habits, and conducting financial literacy classes. They also stressed the importance of coordinating with the schools to create buy-in and increase attendance at certain events.

The library needs to improve communication with community leaders to ensure they are aware of the services offered. Additionally, the library should advertise programs to individuals who do not use social media. Furthermore, there must be an increase in efforts to change the perception of the library as being solely about books, as this is often the first thing noticed when entering the building. The main entrance space requires digital displays, vibrant colors, eye-catching art, inviting seating options, and communal areas to enhance the community living room atmosphere. There was a suggestion such as using artwork from school students to entice parents and families to visit the library to see the display.

Major takeaways from this meeting include the library as a resource center for the community and providing programs and services that are more than books. Create more events that encourage people to come into the building and realize that the library is the community living

room with a colorful and inviting space as you enter the main doors. Perception and communication about the library and its services need to be a focus.

Community Meeting Summary:

Bay City:

On the evening of Tuesday, February 20th a small group of 4 met in the Bay City Public Library meeting room. Since we were such a small group, we were able to move quickly through the questions and spend more time on the questions that seemed most important.

Our group said that they loved that people in Bay City were interested in being involved by putting time and effort back into their community. It was mentioned that Bay City is the fundraising capital of Matagorda County.

The biggest challenges in Bay City included transportation, especially south of the library, and communication. There was a feeling like there were overlapping events in the community and sometimes people were unaware of these events or there were so many at the same time that it was hard to attend them. Fundraisers sometimes became competitions and nonprofits or services such as food pantries did not work well together or share resources.

The library was seen as providing access to technology and in particular hotspots to address community challenges. It was also stated that in order to attract new businesses the community needed a good library so the library can help in economic development.

The top services that this group wanted the library to provide include technology, a bookmobile with the internet, more Spanish and some Vietnamese materials, and flyers/communication.

The list of improvements needed at the library includes automatic doors at the main entrance, improved HVAC and ventilation throughout the building, a fire panel with direct notification of fire alarms to the fire department, a new roof, updates to the restrooms, and improvements to the parking lot.

Other concerns brought up at this meeting include an additional staff person to do outreach in the schools and advertising library services, more conversation with the school board, attend school open houses or be on the board agenda to provide information on what the library provides and a partnership with the Crisis Center.

The major takeaways from this meeting include: 1. Samantha, the library director is leading the library in a good direction. She needs more support and acknowledgement from community leaders of her work and the importance of the library. 2. A recognition by the city and county that quality of life issues are improved by the library and that the library needs to be included in future city 2040 plans. 3. Increase in library communication, outreach, and partnerships.

Sargent:



On Tuesday, February 20th a group of 16 people participated in a community conversation at the Sargent Branch of the Bay City Public Library. We started off the meeting with introductions, an explanation of the planning process, laying the ground rules for our conversation and then introducing each question and gathering feedback.

The first question was “What do you love or enjoy about the community of Sargent?” Several people mentioned and provided examples of how people support each other and offer help. Since Sargent is about 30 miles away from a grocery store and other amenities, community members have to depend on neighbors for assistance or to borrow food or tools. They also mentioned that they are used to strangers and new people since there is a community of weekenders who own homes in Sargent and come in mainly from Houston or rent their homes to vacationers. This is a beach community with a lot of weekend fishing and leisure activities. The outdoor lifestyle and the peacefulness and quiet also received positive feedback. In contrast, there are many social activities for everyone such as book clubs, supper clubs, the Lion’s club to name just a few. The library was mentioned as a good place to get involved as well.

The second question was “What are the biggest challenges facing Sargent besides infrastructure and housing?” There was a lot of conversation about infrastructure and housing at the Leadership conversation a week early and we were hoping to gather more specifics about the community of Sargent. Immediately the difficulty of being geographically isolated was brought up especially for elderly individuals who cannot age in place since all medical care is at least 30 miles away. There was also concern about the lack of fresh produce even though the Dollar General store has started stocking some of this. A lack of consistent mosquito control was brought up and the need for a community center and storm shelter. Last of all there is a desire for another restaurant that would stay open consistently, but an understanding by the group of the difficulty that restaurants and small businesses have in retaining employees.

The next question was “What role can the library play in addressing challenges in Sargent?” The ideas for challenges that were discussed in the previous question include: having a traveling medical service that parks in the library lot once a week or month or a visiting physician that would have appointments available onsite. The option of a private space for virtual or Teladoc visits via computer at the library was not brought up by the group but might be another option that the library could provide. There was also interest in a seed exchange or check out system so that people could grow their own fresh produce or the library offering space for community members to set up a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) or other way to exchange or buy fresh produce. Another idea was to invite the extension agent from Bay City to the Sargent branch to lead a program about gardening or use some of the green space around the library for community gardens. An idea to address the lack of restaurants and possibly encourage more businesses for food establishments was to have one evening per month at the library where food trucks could come, show a movie and/or have a dance with live music. There was a question about how to improve transportation to bring in employees from other communities, but no clear answer. It was also stated what an important role the library plays as a safe place for teens.

When asked “What 1 – 3 services would you like the library to provide” the group mentioned: arts and crafts programs and adulting/life skills classes for all ages. They said that since seniors or retirees are a large portion of the population there should be some focused programs for them, children’s services are important, and computer literacy assistance or programs.

The next question was “What would you improve at the library?” The first concern was a sidewalk, improved drainage, and an awning for the building. If there is a new building then all of these concerns should be taken into consideration. They also mentioned a desire for outdoor seating especially covered like a gazebo. A request for more classic books and a question about if books were rotated between the Bay City and Sargent libraries.

The last question was an open forum for other questions or concerns. A need for tutoring was mentioned and that there were a lot of academics in the community who could provide this as volunteers. Transportation came up again as a problem in the community and for getting people to the library to attend programs and events and support the library as a neutral space for meetings and programs. There was also interest from the group in hearing what works well for other small libraries. We discussed examples from Marathon, Sundown, and Yorktown, Texas, and how they provided special services that meet the needs of their particular community. It was also mentioned that many of the ideas brought forth in today’s conversation were very community-focused and certainly worth consideration.

The conversation concluded with our major takeaways. They included:

1. The Sargent Library is awesome, but it could be even better especially if they continued to harness community support.

2. Lots of new ideas were brought forth during the conversation. It is difficult to choose and maybe the library should try some of them in the areas of serving teens or establishing a seed catalog. If they don't work, then try something else.
3. The library should try to reach all age groups and make it a hub. There is excitement for the new community center. There was also a suggestion that a mural be painted on one side of the building by a local artist so that people driving by could stop to take a picture. This also encourages a stop at the library and promotes local tourism. A local slogan and t-shirt were mentioned that says: Sargent, a drinking community with a fishing problem. Are these available to buy locally? Would the library be a location for purchasing these? The library could have some role in providing tourist or visitor information.

The meeting concluded with an overview of the next steps in the process of developing the strategic plan for the Bay City Library and Sargent Branch.

Library Survey Results:

A library survey was conducted between February 15th and March 15, 2024. The library received 197 responses with 65% of respondents living in Bay City, 13% in Sargent, approximately 18% in Matagorda County, and the remainder in other areas as listed in details below.

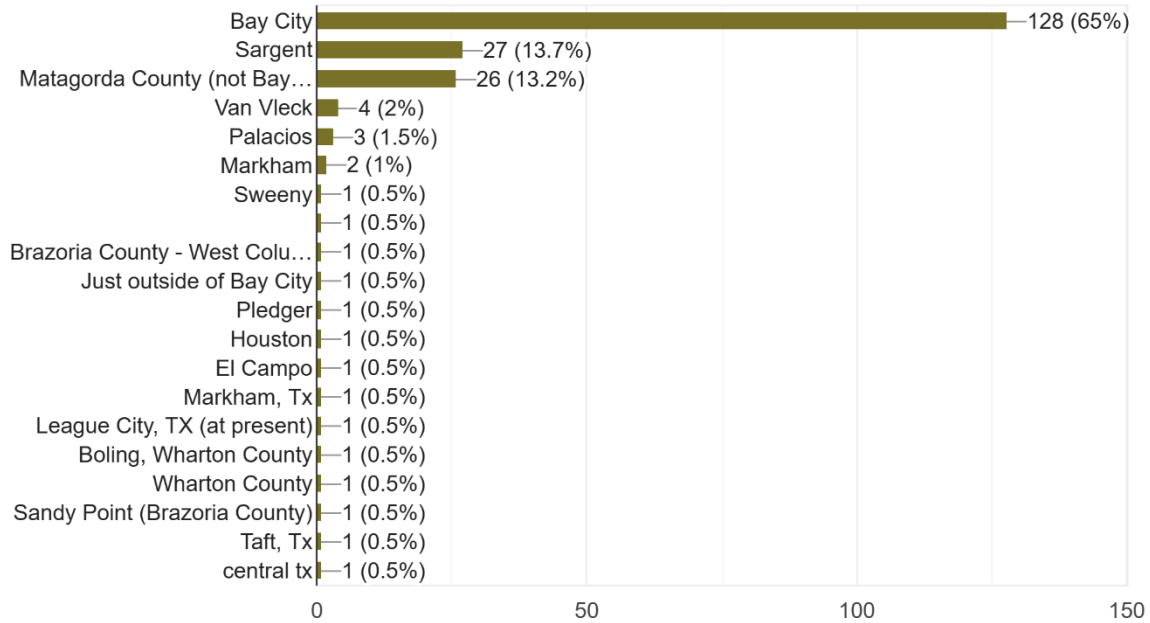
A majority of respondents used the Bay City Main Library. 75% had library cards and most used the library either weekly or monthly during the last year. The most used services were to check out materials, play/read in the children's space, and use the copier, printers, and public computers. The major suggestions for library improvements were requests for more art and cultural programming and more library materials in both physical and electronic formats. There was also a desire for more staff, meeting space, and open hours.

All library services listed on the survey received high satisfaction ratings with some suggested improvements listed in the final survey comments sections. There is a big disconnect around library databases and electronic/downloadable materials with 29% of respondents not knowing that these services were available and 75% of respondents not knowing or using specific databases or electronic book services such as Overdrive, language learning tools, or homework help resources. All of these services are available for free for library cardholders and need to be advertised as cost-saving with 24/7 access.

A majority of respondents want the library to offer more adult programs and family programs. The greatest facility needs requested were larger children's spaces, more/large meeting spaces, and outdoor shaded spaces at the libraries. When asked about new services many suggestions were for new programs on a variety of topics and additional new library materials. In the closing comments survey respondents were very complimentary of library staff. There is a strong desire from the Sargent community for the new community center and library, requests for updates to public printers, and a need for more quiet spaces.

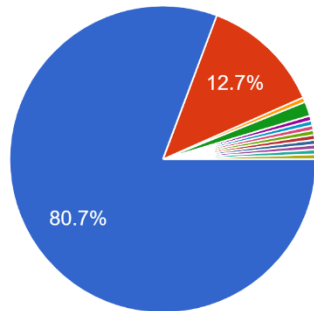
Where do you reside?

197 responses



Which library do you visit most often?

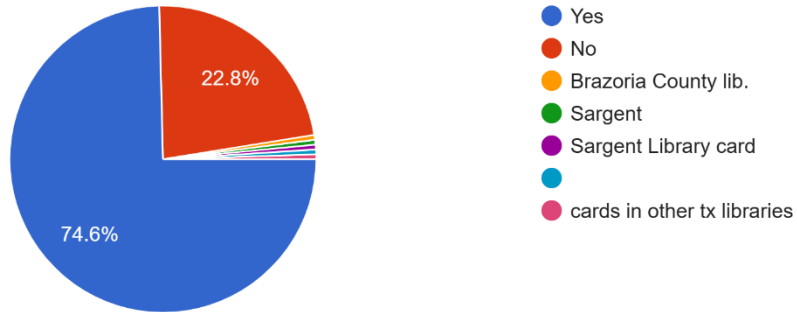
197 responses



- Bay City Public Library in Bay City
 - Sargent Branch
 - Both Sargent and Bay City equally
 - I do not go to either library location.
 - Biblioteca publica de salvatierray, mex...
 - League City Public Library
 - First time I just moved here
 - el Campo
- ▲ 1/2 ▼

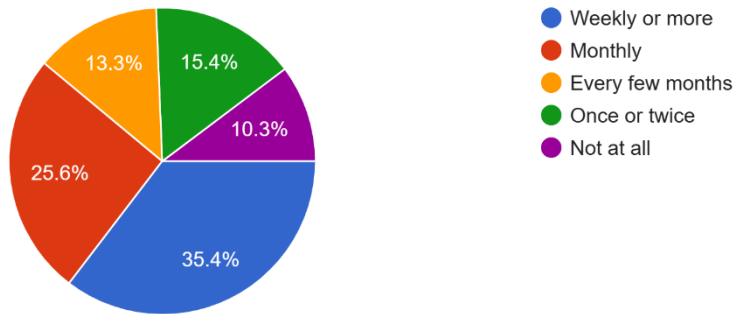
Do you currently have a Bay City Public Library Card?

197 responses



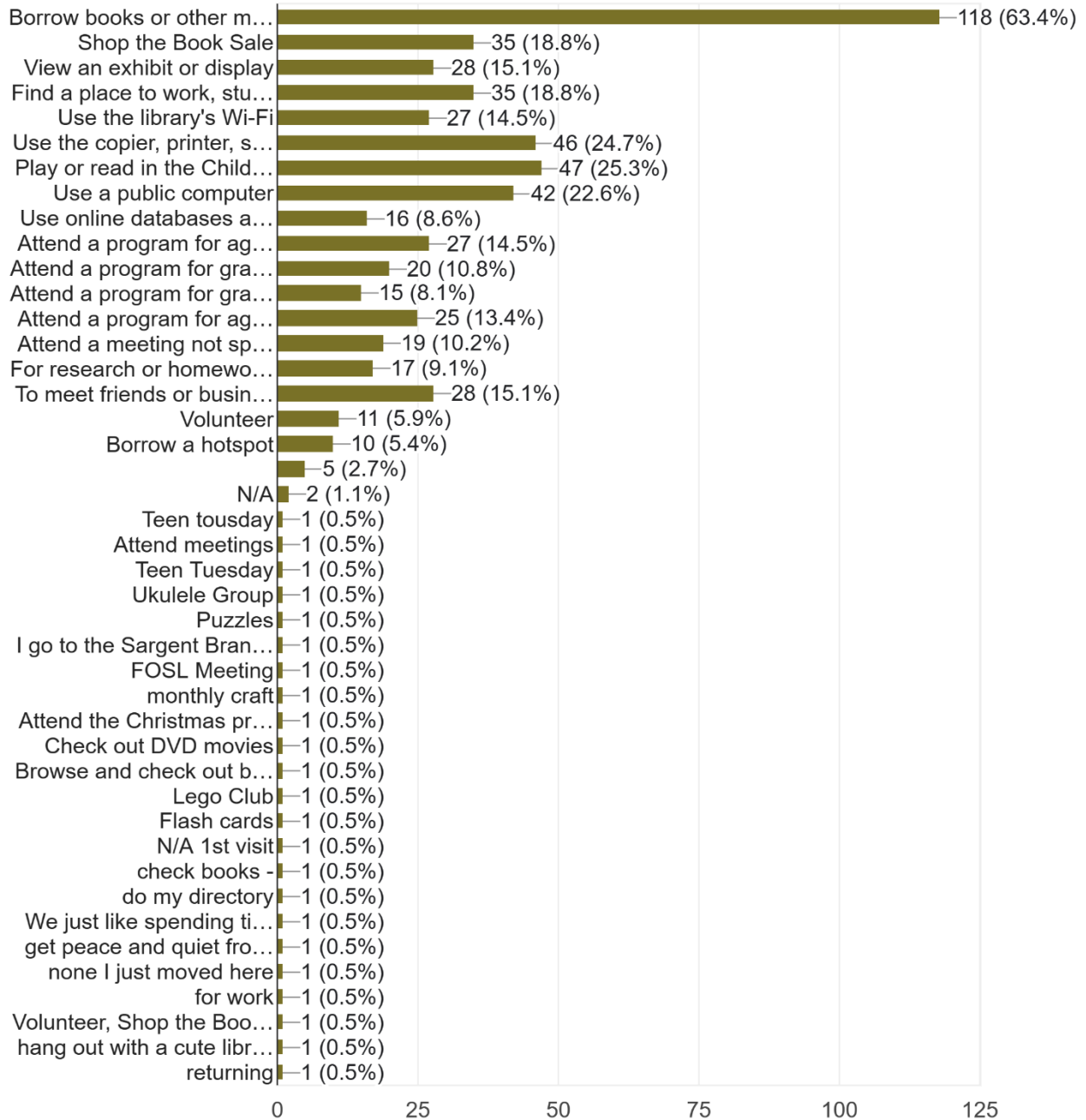
In the last 12 months, how often did you visit the Bay City Public Library or the Sargent Branch Library?

195 responses



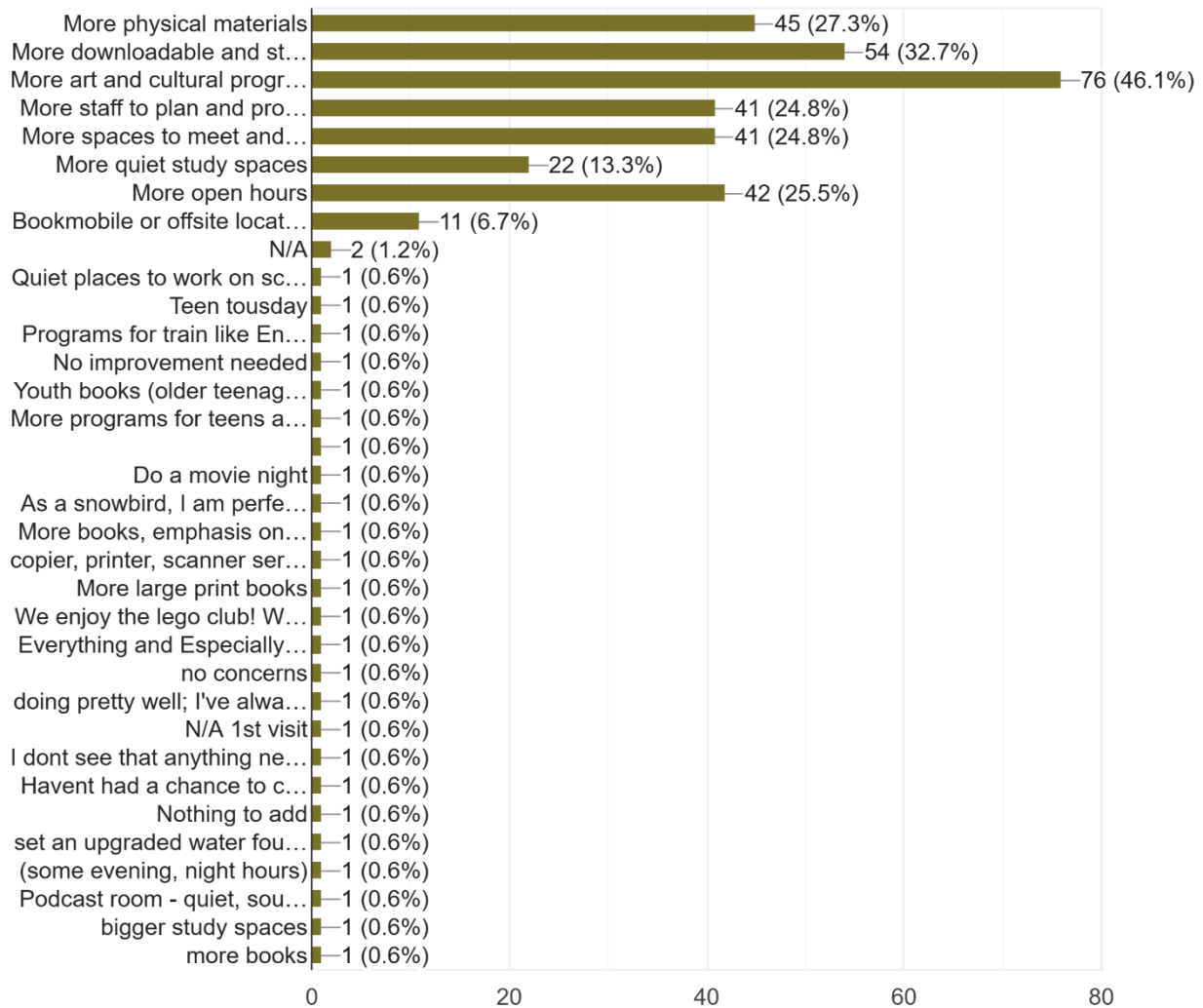
If you used the library in the past 12 months, what did you or your family do? (Choose as many as apply)

186 responses



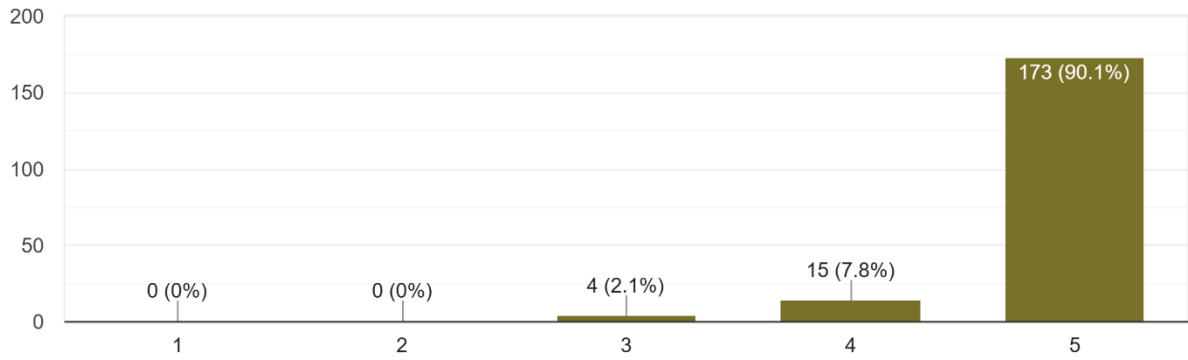
To improve your library experience, what would you like the library to focus on? (Choose your top 5)

165 responses



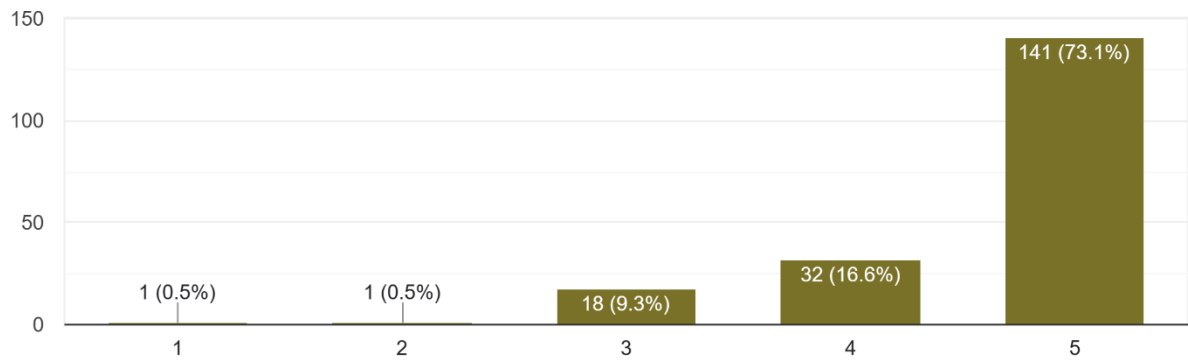
How would you rate the library's customer service?

192 responses



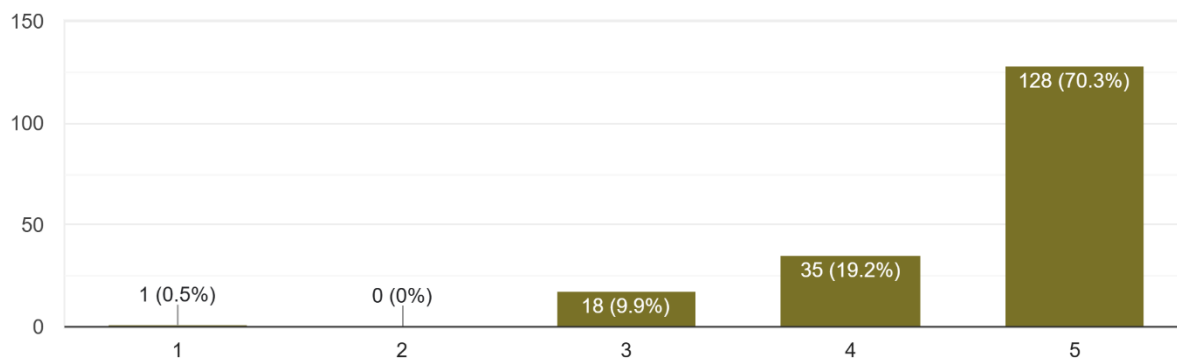
How would you rate the library facility/building?

193 responses



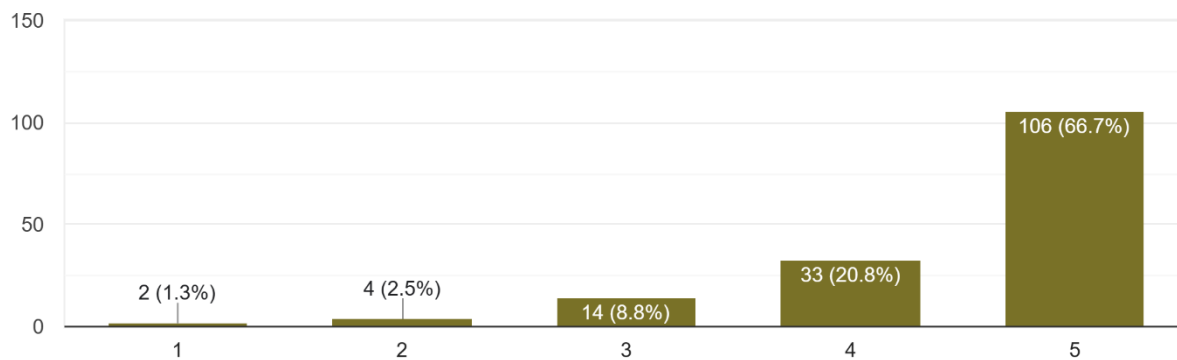
How would you rate library programs?

182 responses



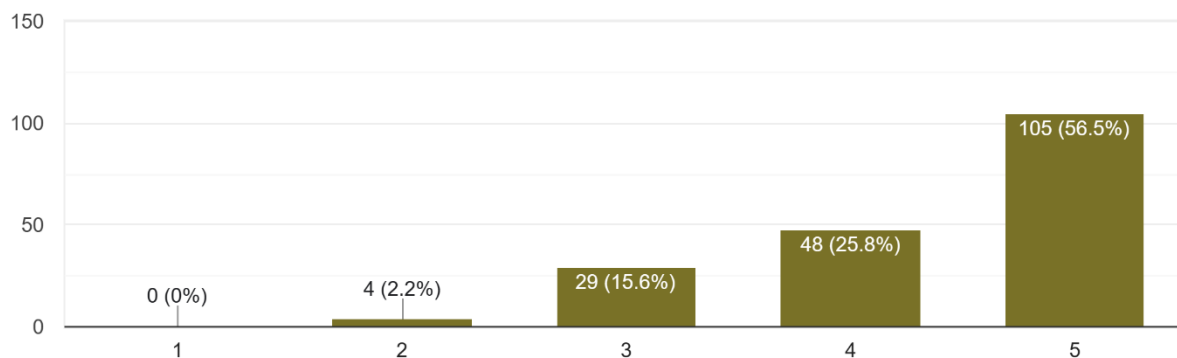
How would you rate copier, printer and scanner services?

159 responses



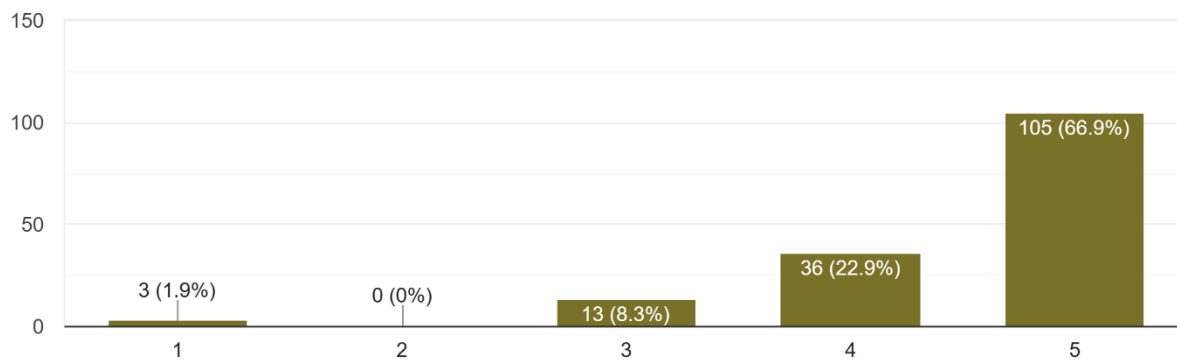
How would you rate the library's collection of materials?

186 responses



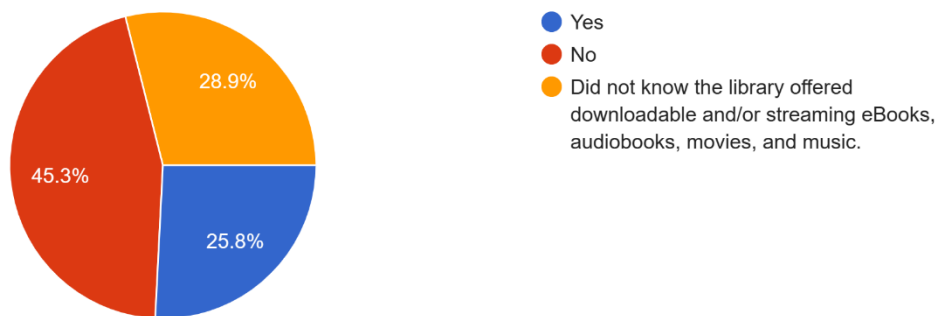
How would you rate WiFi and public computers?

157 responses



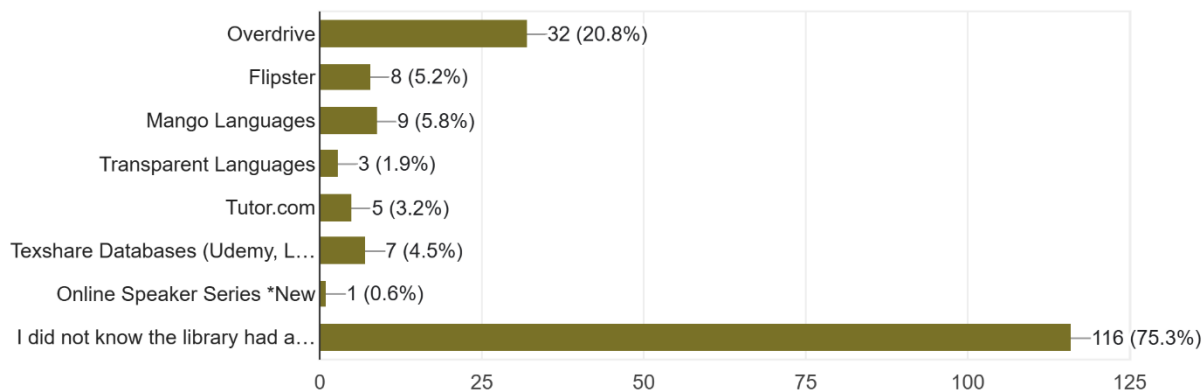
Do you use the library's downloadable and or streaming eBooks, audiobooks, movies, and music?

190 responses



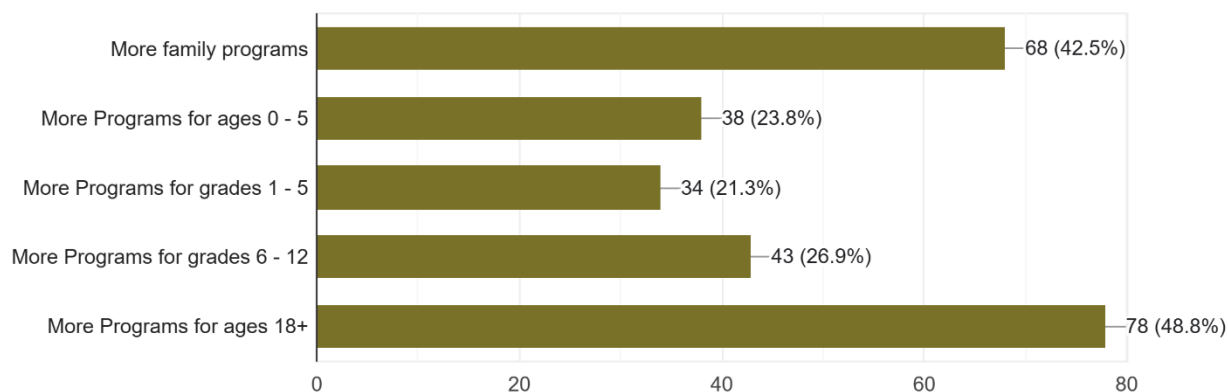
The following are online resources available at the library, some of which may be accessed from the library or your home computer/phone. Please check any you have used in the past.

154 responses



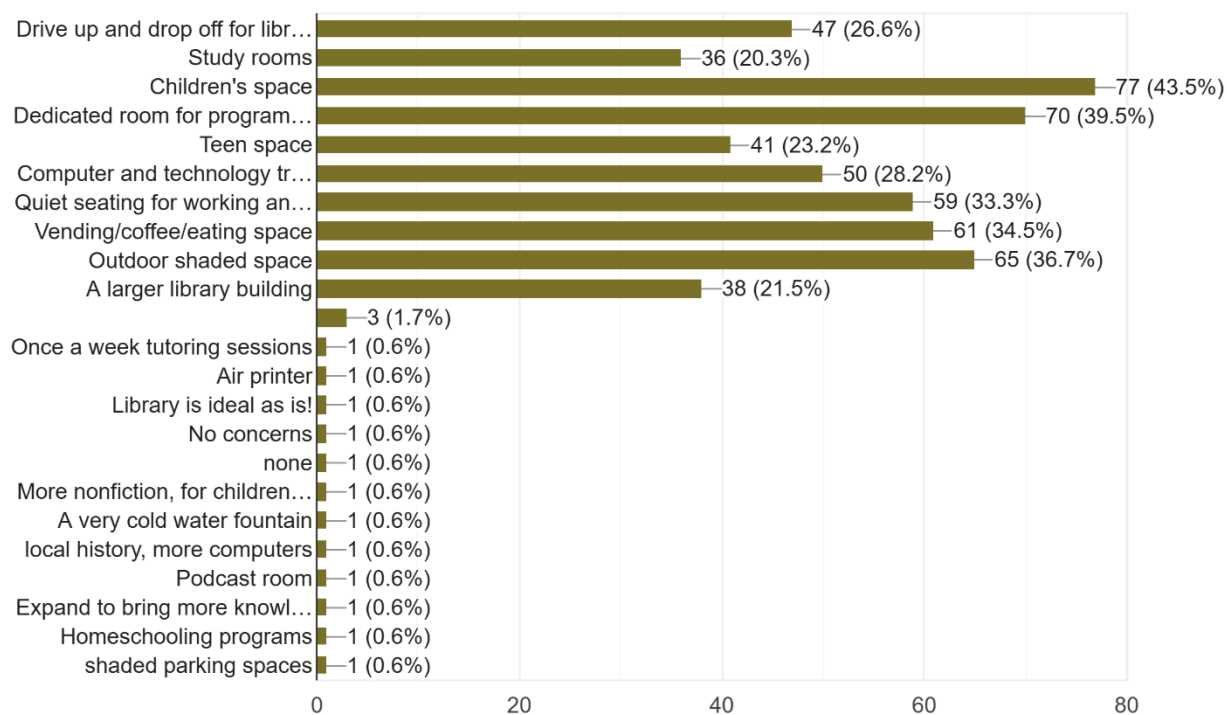
If the library offered more programs, which age group should the library focus on?

160 responses



Please choose the most important spaces to you in your ideal/new public library (Check your top 5)

177 responses



Libraries are taking on new roles. What would you like to be able to learn or do that the library could help you with?

College prep and school related work

Read for longer than 30 minutes

Art club; programs for kids to do board games, play, hang out,

Keep public updated as technology changes

Writing! Writing workshops/classes. NANOWRIMO support!

School Work

Computer science

Certificate programs, P&C Insurance classes, tax help

Genealogy

Yarn Work

I do wish the library had more physical books. This library generally doesn't have what I look for. As far as offerings, it would be neat to see more "learning" based classes- (ie-how to...bake, scrapbook, build a website, etc.)

Some types "Leisure Learning" classes for adults

Arts and crafts

Computer skills

How to get access to getting new books that come out.

Using a computer

Tax preparers' service, Medicare enrollment seminars, financial investing classes, mobile mammography

Sign language- especially for a baby

Languages

Love the idea of training classes where experts from the community could teach lessons (how to change a tire, how to can vegetables, how to sew, doing your taxes, etc). Our library would best serve our community as a hub- the central spot in the town, an all encompassing landing zone for learning, networking, meetings, etc. we could really use a large outdoor spaces where our community groups could host get-togethers and club meetings. A nice set up where we could play outdoor movies and/or host food trucks. Plots for CSA/community gardens. How about a giant "Welcome to Sargent, Tx" mural that would get people's attention and draw them in (for photos in front of mural even!).

Offer space for people to play games like cards or Mah Jong.

Google docs training, technology training.

Cultural and art events

Community events like movie night or art exhibit or community garden

Chess and more emphasis on reading

How to get a job with the bay city library

Veteran information

*Different languages *Getting your GED

Power Point

I would be willing to learn any new thing they provide because they are so wonderful and very helpful.

Personal Resources

Learn how to use social media and learn about safety, privacy when using them.

Learning new languages programs. & social media marketing & photography & videography

I would like to find mentor/tutor

Maybe a mystery book club

Some new movies and some new books

For toddlers, more activities or toys that sometimes it's hard to do at home but they need for their development. // Language learning space.

Thanks to all the staff for creating a wonderful children's program. And a great place for a family and children to socialize.

Learn new hobbies, learn more

Computer literacy classes for the new software and apps.

We came to Bay City in 2008; since that time I've been very pleased with my library visits.

Yes, studying

Computer usage.

How to pay taxes without my dad's help.

Create web pages?

Maybe learning to do things like canning or gardening. Something community where everyone could help grow food and preserve it. To help those who do not have the ability to learn elsewhere.

I have enjoyed the brown bag lunch book club.

Help become the first woman president. Help with knowledge of law.

Scholarship info

More family programs.

Learning how to use technology with my family; More homeschooling programs for the homeschooling community; More "creative arts" being offered; Offer meditation? For children?

Training/certification offerings with/partnered with WCJC or Technical Institutes

Nope, I'm good

Gardening

I grew up in a small town library reading up to 200 books a summer in the reading programs. I love that libraries are expanding what they offer. This is a good library!

I would like to see read-alouds in the afternoon

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

I think our library does an outstanding job offering a variety of programs

Bay City Library is doing an amazing job. We love the library!

Thank you for all you do!

Love Bay City Library! Sargent Branch is the best! Adelaide is a gem for the library! Fix the parking lot please! Blinds in the windows!

Please fix the parking lot. Really bad when it rains. Oh, and blinds in the windows!

I would like to see more diversity in the book collection materials.

Love coming to painting

1. Don't have 7ft bookshelves in the new library. It is impossible to browse the books on the top shelf and it is a safety hazard to use a stool to reach them. 2. A place to sit down while looking up books in the library catalog would be nice. 3. How about a bookstore room to sell the surplus of books you have.

I would love to see more children's classic novels!

Thanks for asking! The BCPL has done a great job over the past few years being open (better hours) & available! My kids love the children's space & Lego League.

Love the BC. Library! Love the BC. Library People!

Love the librarian <3

Love the new librarian Adelaide

Take ACTION on construction of new library/community center.

Please upgrade to an air/ WiFi/Bluetooth printer so we don't have to use your computer to log into our emails. We are retired seniors and still require many medical forms that our doctors email us to fill out and return.

Get more of the newly printed books especially the political non-fiction releases

We have been waiting years for the community center adjoining the Library to reopen. It is vital to the community to have a community center with a Library. Please help make this happen.

The children's area is so tight, but so many families enjoy utilizing it. I believe there needs to be an adjustment to either space it out around the entire room or make the overall play space larger. Also, ready time for mom and me/dad and me from 0-5 in the mornings would be so great! With a puppet show.

Keep up the good work you are doing in updating our library. You are appreciated!

Adelaide has been an important new employee/librarian. I have seen, heard and watched her in action. She is superb at/in this role. She is enthusiastic, resourceful, and a pure joy.

Our Sargent library has lots of "regulars" and foot traffic but much of the community doesn't even realize the library is there. Our signage is pathetic and our building is so boring. We definitely do not need anything smaller than what we have. There are no quiet zones due to the kids section being only large enough for 1-3 toddlers, who naturally don't sit still, and therefore spill out and end up totting around everywhere, which is cute and entertaining but not ideal for quiet work of, say, a studying student. Our local Sargent branch librarian is fantastic and has truly turned the small and cramped space into such a warm and encoring atmosphere- she truly wants to best meet the needs of our community, she just needs resources and direction and she will take off and execute with enthusiasm and energy! Our family is very hopeful that the county will use our tax money (aka "legal theft") for good use and deliver on a long overdue promise to show Sargent some love with SOMETHING that we can utilize to help connect our community! No better way than through books + learning + networking! Thank you for all the hard work on these efforts! Final thought- really appreciate Dana, the strategic planner contracted in- quite impressed and this tells me y'all are serious about this project! Thank you again! Sargent is hopeful and cautiously optimistic about what y'all can do for us!

Great library assistant!! Very knowledgeable and helpful.

I greatly appreciate the book clubs, I'd like one for fantasy or science fiction or mystery novels

Not enough reading programs at the library. Too much nonsense like "Legos" that have zero relevance in a library setting. We need to encourage more reading. Our county lacks critical thinking skills.

The staff at the Bay City library is amazing! They are always welcoming (I'm new to Texas), cheerful and helpful.

I think our library is very well set up. You have provided me with everything I have needed. It is a calm place and I enjoy going there. The staff has always been very helpful and they are always cheerful. We are very lucky to have such a nice place.

Awesome job to staff . ALWAYS MAKE TODAY BETTER THAN YESTERDAY 🙌🥰

I want to say the staff does a wonderful job! Always friendly and helpful!

Please have more LGBTQ+ material and more things for homeschoolers to do. Thanks! =)

I enjoy the Bay City Public Library and so does my family.

This survey was really good.

Patron noted on question #16 More programs for ages 0-5 (toddler stuff not arts & crafts)

Any programs that visit nursing homes?

The staff are all very sweet & helpful <3

We are lucky to have the Bay City public library

The librarians are fun and they help people with things that they need for all kinds of stuff

No, I love everyone - everyone so, so helpful.

Thank you for your help

Sometimes it's absolutely too loud. Ensure doors are closed during meeting times/gatherings.

No great staff and library

Daughter's have needed community service hours in the past and are unable to speak to head personnel and no services available for volunteering; does not make sense because the school had to find another location.

Sheri and Karma were so helpful with my document forward and prints. Karmen even showed me how to do this with my iphone. Thank you ladies, for going above and beyond!!

Everyone is wonderful, courteous, helpful caring BC Library Rocks =)

We have a great library and love everything about it and everyone is so polite and helpful.

Bay City is very fortunate to have Samantha Denbow as the Library Director!

The staff is so friendly and helpful, and my preschooler loves all of the programs! The play space can get crowded easily when a few families are here at the same time, so if a larger space is available that would be beneficial. And seating for adults to read with the littles would be appreciated.

I would love more social programs for people 20-30

Very kind people :)

I think everything is great. Possibly if they had a bigger space or the ability to buy more of the newer books (New Release) that would be nice.

The driveway into the parking lot is a little narrow. In my opinion, the restroom could use a little more light.

The fiction section is nearly twice as big as the nonfiction section.

They are doing an excellent job

I'm very glad to see you guys grow!

We are completely happy with our library and its wonderful staff. We love being here, and spending time.

Our library does a great job and we are lucky to have it!

You're doing great!!

None, today's event was great, can't wait for future events.

The Harry Potter event was amazing. Great Job!

Maybe sound bowl sessions.

If you ever have late night hours, I'll apply to work. Noted "nights" on question 7 for more hours option.

I don't currently live here but plan to move soon. I have been a weekly visitor to Angleton for years and will be switching to Bay City when I move - I use ebooks and audio streaming every day. Noted Bookmobile/offsite pickup locations "This is a great program!"

Outdoor spaces with community garden are very popular and pretty

As I travel I often have foods or perishables with me and wish often that all texas libraries had covered vehicle parking so I could stay longer.

I love the bilingual/Spanish collection. It has improved since I was a kid. Thank you for the collection.

Thank you for your support of our community & education.