

OBSERVATION & ANALYSIS

Peer group: population served 3,600-5,200 | 31 Iowa libraries

Peer-Leading Use Across Borrowing, Visits, and Programs

Dyersville leads this 3,600-5,200 peer group in total documented use, circulation, library visits, visits per resident, program attendance, and offsite attendance. Its FY25 pattern is broad rather than dependent on a single service category.

POPULATION SERVED 4,477 Rank 15 of 31	TOTAL DOCUMENTED USES 191,091 Rank 1 of 31	TOTAL CIRCULATION 92,662 Rank 1 of 31	LIBRARY VISITS 60,620 Rank 1 of 31
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Peer snapshot

Uses per resident 42.68 Rank 1 of 31 Peer median 18.34	Visits per open hour 20.0 Rank 2 of 31 Peer median 9.6
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How Dyersville's 191,091 documented uses are distributed

Circulation 92,662 48.5%	Library visits 60,620 31.7%	Programs 15,355 8.0%
Website 14,898 7.8%	Public computers 2,408 1.3%	Reference 5,148 2.7%

OBSERVATION / ANALYSIS Dyersville ranks 1st of 31 in total documented uses, circulation, and library visits. Circulation and visits together account for 80.2% of documented activity, while programs and digital/technology services add substantial additional reach.	RECOMMENDED FOCUS Protect the broad service mix that is already working. Document the practices behind high borrowing, visits, programs, and outreach; then use peer comparisons to identify incremental gains in digital discovery, reference visibility, patron conversion, and service quality.
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Dyersville Performs at or Near the Top Across Core Service Measures

The peer comparison shows unusually broad strength. Dyersville ranks 1st in total use, circulation, visits, visits per resident, program attendance, and offsite attendance; visits per open hour rank 2nd. The analysis therefore focuses on sustaining and understanding high performance rather than diagnosing a major service gap.

Measure	Dyersville	Peer 25th	Peer median	Dyersville rank
Population served	4,477	3,964	4,337	15 of 31
Total uses	191,091	42,879	79,501	1 of 31
Total circulation	92,662	21,242	32,401	1 of 31
Library visits	60,620	12,929	22,776	1 of 31
Visits per resident	13.54	3.26	5.45	1 of 31
Visits per open hour	20.0	5.7	9.6	2 of 31
Program attendance	15,355	3,091	4,971	1 of 31
Offsite attendance	7,891	453	1,158	1 of 31
Registered borrowers (% pop.)	98.1%	49.3%	72.2%	6 of 31

What stands out

Peer-leading volume 191,091 documented uses rank 1st, about 2.4 times the peer median of 79,501.	Borrowing + place Circulation and visits both rank 1st. Visits per resident also rank 1st, while visits per open hour rank 2nd.	Programs + outreach 15,355 program attendance experiences and 7,891 offsite attendance experiences both rank 1st of 31.
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Interpretation notes

ANALYSIS Dyersville shows a balanced high-engagement pattern. Borrowing, visits, programs, outreach, website use, and reference activity all contribute meaningful volume. Registered borrowers equal 98.1% of population served, so card registrations should be interpreted as active registrations rather than a count of unique residents.	RECOMMENDED NEXT STEP Document the operational practices behind the results: collection development, holds, displays, readers advisory, program design, outreach partnerships, hours, staffing patterns, digital promotion, and reference visibility. Track repeat use and patron outcomes so high volume is paired with service quality.
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OBSERVATION & ANALYSIS

Capacity, funding context, and productivity

High Capacity and Funding Effort Accompany Exceptional Service Output

Dyersville is above the peer median on all six major capacity measures below. Total operating income, income per resident, and physical collection rank 1st; staff FTE ranks 2nd. Dubuque County's income-based ability to fund ranks 9th, while both total and local-government library funding effort rank 2nd.

Measure	Dyersville	Peer 25th	Peer median	Dyersville rank
Total operating income	\$575,499	\$216,501	\$285,022	1 of 31
Income per resident	\$128.55	\$50.73	\$68.00	1 of 31
Total staff FTE	6.48	3.01	3.88	2 of 31
Annual hours open	3,027	2,237	2,444	3 of 31
Building square feet	11,660	6,305	8,400	7 of 31
Physical collection items	51,192	19,825	27,470	1 of 31

Funding context and productivity

Ability to fund Dubuque County per-capita income is \$41,404, rank 9 of 31; peer median \$38,034. Ranks are highest to lowest, so a rank nearer 31 indicates lower income-based fiscal capacity.	Funding effort Total library funding equals \$3.10 per \$1,000 of county per-capita income, rank 2 of 31. Local-government effort is \$2.71, rank 2.	Resource productivity 29,489 uses per staff FTE rank 2 of 31; peer median 19,791. Cost per documented use is \$3.01 vs. peer median \$3.98. Physical collection turnover is 1.62, rank 5.
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HOW FUNDING EFFORT IS CALCULATED

Total funding effort: (\$575,499 total income / 4,477 population) / \$41,404 Dubuque County per-capita income x 1,000 = \$3.10.

Local-government effort: ((\$503,184 city + \$0 county) / 4,477) / \$41,404 x 1,000 = \$2.71.

Interpretation: Higher values indicate greater library funding relative to the local income base. This is a comparative fiscal-effort measure, not a property-tax-capacity measure.

Observation, analysis, recommendation

OBSERVATION / ANALYSIS

Dyersville combines an above-median county income base with very strong library funding effort. Total operating income per resident ranks 1st. City income supplies \$503,184 (87.4% of total income), while non-government income contributes \$53,343 (9.3%) and state income \$11,578 (2.0%). The statistics show a high-investment, high-output pattern but do not by themselves establish causation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL REVIEW

Use the ability-to-fund and funding-effort measures as context, not as grades. Track uses per FTE, cost per use, collection turnover, wait times, program fill rates, active borrowers, reference demand, and patron satisfaction. Document practices that may explain the results and preserve capacity that supports high public use.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 1

Options for cooperative capacity; not findings from FY25 performance data

Shared Policy and Professional Support

Dyersville can benefit from shared professional tools even while retaining local decision-making. Materials challenges, public-records requests, public meetings, communications issues, and staff-safety concerns can consume specialized time that neighboring libraries do not need to recreate independently.

1. Common policy toolkit Develop shared templates for collection development, reconsideration, patron conduct, meeting-room use, displays, records, and public communications. Each library can adapt and adopt documents locally.	2. Intellectual freedom support Provide reliable procedures for materials challenges, clear timelines, trustee and staff guidance, and training on First Amendment principles and intellectual freedom.
3. Open records and meeting practices Create practical checklists for request intake, deadlines, preservation, fee estimates, response tracking, public comment, and meeting management.	4. Training for staff and trustees Offer coordinated sessions on policy application, staff safety, difficult conversations, public meetings, records responsibilities, and crisis communications.
5. Incident and challenge tracking Use a common tracking method to identify patterns, staff workload, response time, recurring questions, and community impacts without duplicating systems.	6. On-call professional help Jointly secure access to policy, records, communications, and legal review so a single library is not forced to improvise under pressure.

Potential value

POTENTIAL VALUE Less duplicated work, faster response, more consistent procedures, and stronger support for staff and trustees. Dyersville's service scale and staff capacity could make it a useful partner in developing and testing shared tools.	WHAT STAYS LOCAL Each library continues to make and apply its own adopted decisions. Shared support supplies tools, training, and expertise rather than replacing local judgment.
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Suggested first step

Select one policy toolkit to update with neighboring libraries and schedule one joint training session. Record staff time saved, questions resolved, and follow-up needs.

Policy and records procedures should be reviewed by local counsel before adoption or public use.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 2

Options for coordinated community support; not a substitute for emergency services

Community Resilience and Public Safety Support

Libraries do not replace police, fire, EMS, emergency management, public health, schools, or social services. They can strengthen the broader public-safety ecosystem by providing trusted space, information, digital access, connection, and referral before a situation becomes an emergency.

1. Safe and welcoming public space Accessible, non-commercial space supports youth, seniors, families, job seekers, and residents who need reliable internet, quiet space, or a trusted place to connect.	2. Weather and emergency information Libraries can help distribute heat, cold, storm, air-quality, and disaster information in coordination with emergency management and other partners.
3. Digital access and navigation Public computers, Wi-Fi, printing, online forms, benefits access, job applications, telehealth support, and trusted information reduce barriers to essential services.	4. Resource referral Staff can maintain reliable referral information for housing, food assistance, mental health, veterans services, disability services, public health, and crisis support.
5. Youth, seniors, and families Programs, supervised space, reading support, technology help, and outreach strengthen protective factors and social connection across age groups.	6. Staff preparation and partnerships Joint training can support de-escalation, incident reporting, first aid where locally appropriate, trauma-informed service, and coordination with responders and service partners.

Observed basis

OBSERVED BASIS Dyersville recorded 60,620 visits and 15,355 program attendance experiences - 75,975 visit-plus-program interactions. It also recorded 7,891 offsite attendance experiences, 2,408 public-computer uses, and 5,148 reference transactions, giving the library substantial reach for coordinated information, navigation, and referral.	RECOMMENDED SHARED SUPPORT Maintain a current referral directory, emergency-information templates, partner contacts, staff training, and consistent incident reporting. Use Dyersville's strong traffic and outreach network to improve awareness without turning library staff into substitute social-service or emergency responders.
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Boundary and purpose

The library role is prevention, resilience, information access, and referral. Clear protocols should direct emergencies to qualified responders and protect staff from being asked to perform services outside their role.

Partnership tools can be developed with emergency management, public health, schools, nonprofit providers, and local responders.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 3

Savings and service improvements through measurable shared efforts

Shared Efforts: Savings and Service Improvements

Dyersville already operates at peer-leading service volume. Shared-effort opportunities are therefore most useful when they reduce duplicated back-office work, improve purchasing power, or add specialist capacity while protecting the borrowing, visits, programming, outreach, and information services residents use heavily.

1. Joint purchasing and vendor review Combine bids and compare unit costs for materials, supplies, furniture, equipment, processing, shipping, and selected professional services.	2. Shared technology and contracts Review catalog, e-resource, website, cybersecurity, records-retention, discovery, and software agreements for duplication and shared pricing.
3. Collections and delivery Coordinate selected collection development, processing, digital-resource strategy, holds movement, courier routes, and delivery where it improves service or lowers unit cost.	4. Administrative and specialist capacity Share or jointly procure selected finance, payroll, HR, audit, insurance, policy, records, communications, legal-review, and grant expertise.
5. Programs, promotion, training, and grants Share calendars, marketing, graphic design, staff training, grant preparation, program resources, and outreach partnerships while tracking local results.	6. Facilities and capital planning Coordinate vendor bids, preventive maintenance, equipment replacement, accessibility work, and long-range capital planning to avoid crisis costs.

Observation / analysis and recommendation

OBSERVATION / ANALYSIS Dyersville ranks 1st in total documented uses and library income per resident, while Dubuque County ranks 9th on the income-based ability-to-fund proxy. Total and local funding effort both rank 2nd. The pattern supports a stewardship focus: protect high-performing public service while testing ways to reduce back-office duplication.	RECOMMENDATION Begin with two or three pilots: joint vendor review, a shared policy/training toolkit, and one cooperative technology, collection, or professional-service purchase. Measure dollars saved, staff time released, service quality, patron response, and whether verified savings can be reinvested in public-facing service.
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A simple starting sequence

1. Inventory List recurring contracts, unit costs, staff time, vendors, and renewal dates.	2. Select pilots Choose two or three projects with clear participants and a limited timeline.	3. Measure Compare actual savings, service quality, staff time, and patron effects.	4. Reinvest Direct verified savings toward collections, programs, technology, access, and public-facing service.
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Conclusion

FY25 data show Dyersville as the strongest overall volume performer in its 3,600-5,200 peer group: 1st in total documented uses, circulation, library visits, visits per resident, program attendance, and offsite attendance, with visits per open hour 2nd. The ability-to-fund lens adds context: Dubuque County has an above-median income base, while Dyersville also ranks 2nd in both total and local-government funding effort. Shared-effort recommendations are intended to protect this service level, reduce avoidable duplication, and add professional capacity without weakening public-facing service.

Methodology: Total uses include circulation, visits, onsite/offsite/virtual program attendance, website visits, public computer use, and reference transactions; wireless sessions and interlibrary loan are excluded. Peer group: FY25 Iowa public-library reporting entities serving 3,600-5,200 people (n=31); 25th percentile uses the inclusive method; ranks are highest to lowest. "Ability to fund" is an income-based fiscal-capacity proxy using U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts 2020-2024 county per-capita income. Funding effort expresses library revenue per resident as dollars per \$1,000 of county per-capita income; local-government effort uses city plus county library income. Reference transactions use the supplied PLS reference file. Sources: FY25 Iowa Public Library Statistics workbook, supplied reference file, U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, and cooperative-service concepts adapted from the July 2026 proposal. Verify local figures before public release.