Whitewater
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Administration Analysis and Budget Recommendations 2027-2028

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Agenda

- Where we are
- How we compare: Annual Report Statistics
- Initial Needs Assessment & Progress Made
- 2026 Accomplishments
- Response to McMahon Study
- 2026 Priorities in Progress
- 2027 Budget Recommendations
- 2028 Budget Recommendations

Vision Moving Forward

Keep the momentum going!

The community is excited about the **6-million-dollar investment** into the newly expanded and remodeled library! We have seen an increase in visitors, program attendance, card registrations, circulation, and room reservations since the library reopened.

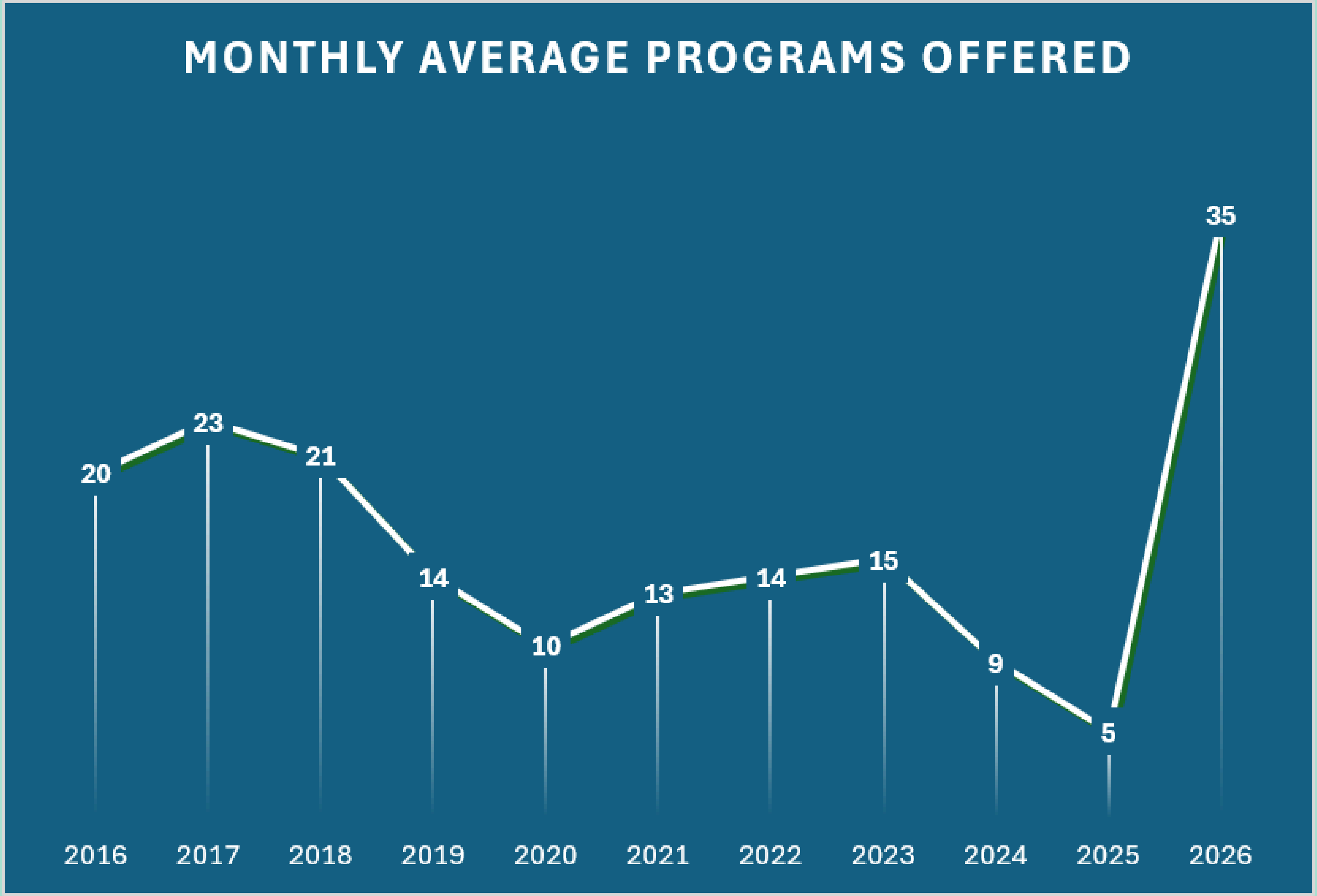
It is crucial that we keep this momentum going. We are doing fine. **But we can do even better.** How do we get more people using the library? The key is **PROGRAMS, PARTNERS, & OUTREACH.**

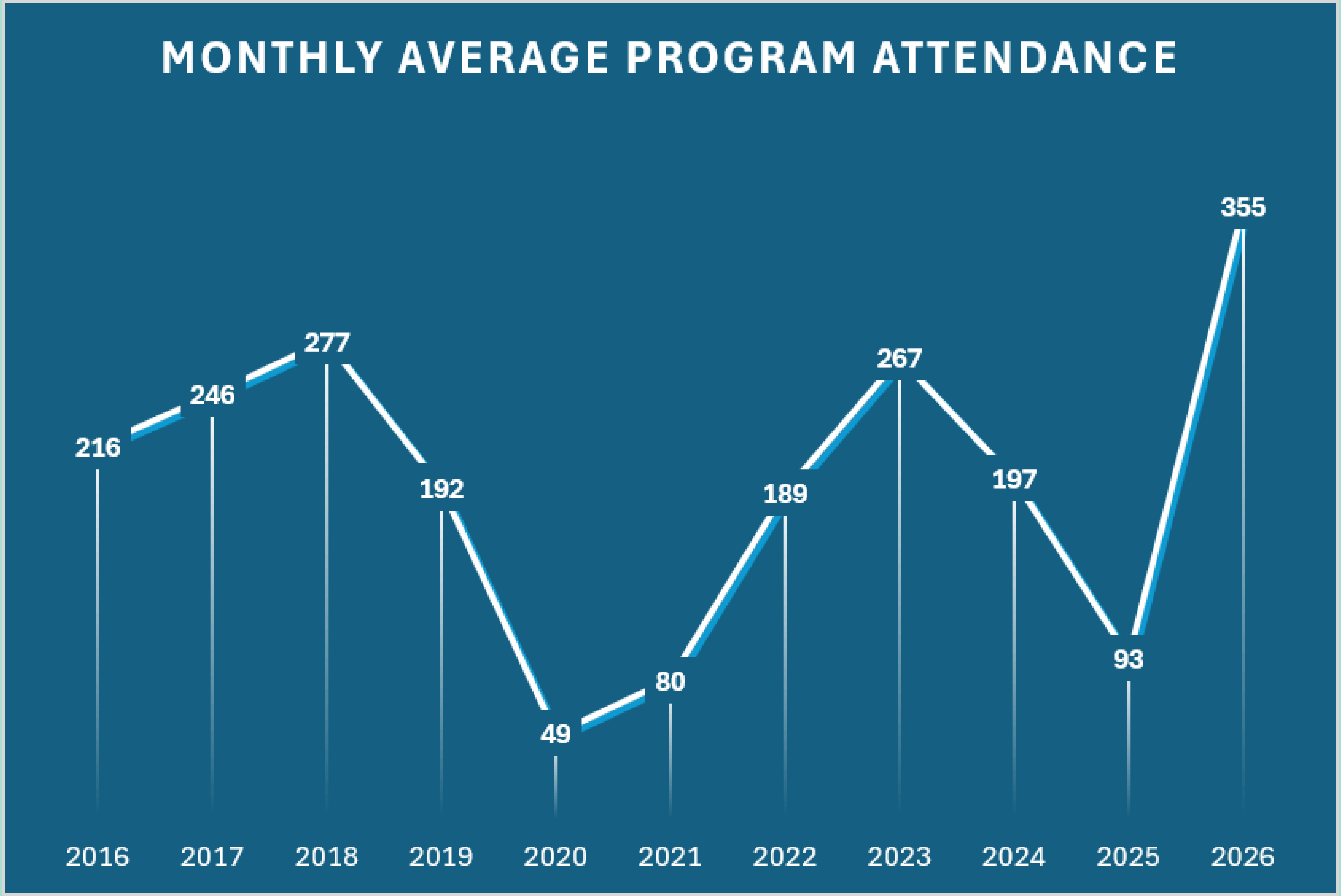
Using the staff that we currently have, **we were able to increase programming by 20%** in 2026 (based off 2023 data). That is a HUGE accomplishment, but it also means that we have reached the limit of what is possible with our current staffing level.

Key issues moving forward:

- Analyzing McMahon study and library data
- Staffing needs and compensation
- Strategic plan
- 2027-2028 Budget

Annual Report Data 2016-Current



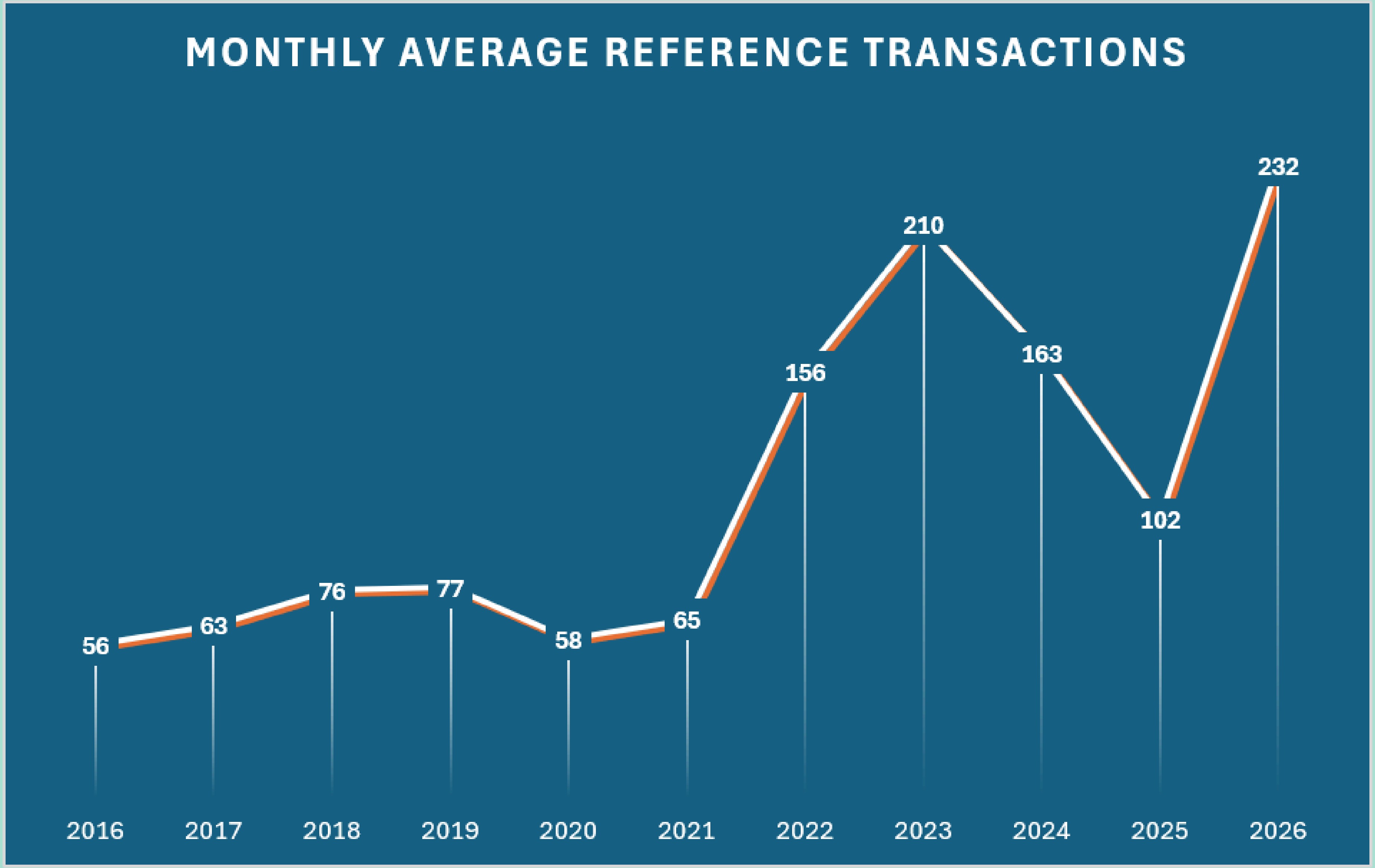


Why offer programs?

Libraries play a crucial role in strengthening communities by serving as a hub of social activity that supports connection, lifelong learning, and literacy – fostering a love for reading (especially with young people) which increases circulation of library materials. Library events are integral to the mission of libraries as community centers for learning, enrichment, resource-sharing, and inclusivity. By offering a diverse range of programs that cater to various interests and needs, libraries play a vital role in fostering civic engagement, promoting literacy, supporting lifelong learning, and creating inclusive spaces where all individuals can thrive.

Example: Storytime brings in families who check out books with their children each week. The result is an increase in circulation on Wednesdays.

Annual Report Data 2016-Current



Library Operations Evolve Quickly

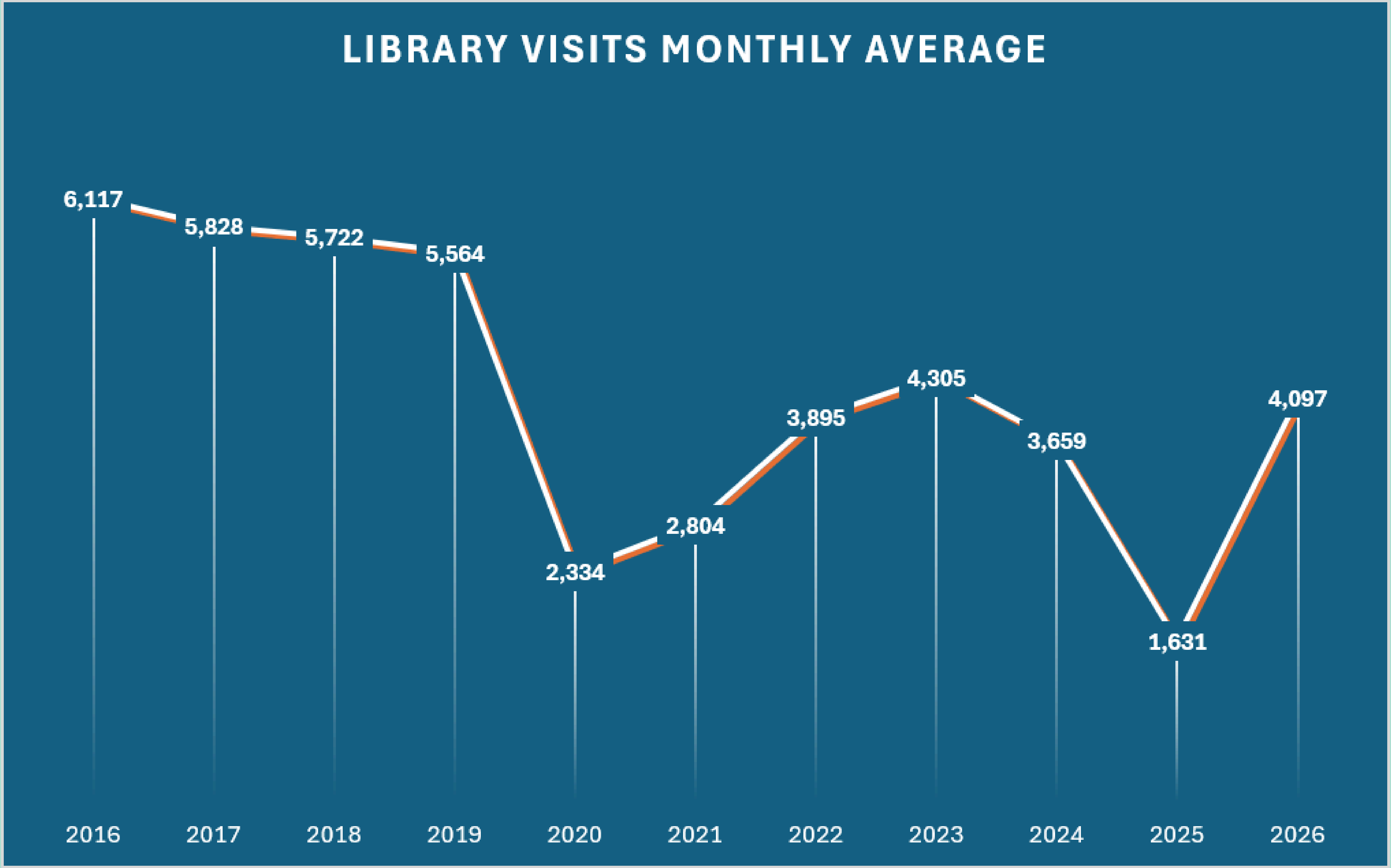
- Libraries fill voids in the community and offer services based upon relevant needs.
- Needs are constantly evolving.
- Libraries pivot and support these needs, often without allocated funding to do so.
- Examples of services libraries currently provide:
  - o Social services work
  - o Job Center services
  - o Digital resources and learning
  - o Community meeting and work space
  - o In addition to "traditional" library services: access to information, early literacy programming, resources for lifelong learning, etc.

Source: Teresa Schmidt, Public Library Administration Consultant, Department of Public Instruction

Note: as these statistics indicate, our staff is much busier answering questions at the service desk. Most of this burden falls on the public services clerks. It is important to note that reference transactions DO NOT include help with printing and copying, which is at least one-third of what staff help patrons with every day. These transactions can also take longer when there is a language barrier, which is also a large portion of our customer service transactions. In addition, these statistics DO NOT include assistance with meeting and study room reservations, including help with the A/V equipment, which also takes a significant amount of staff time.

Monthly average meeting and study room uses per month in 2026: 108 (starting in 2027, room use will be included in DPI's annual report)

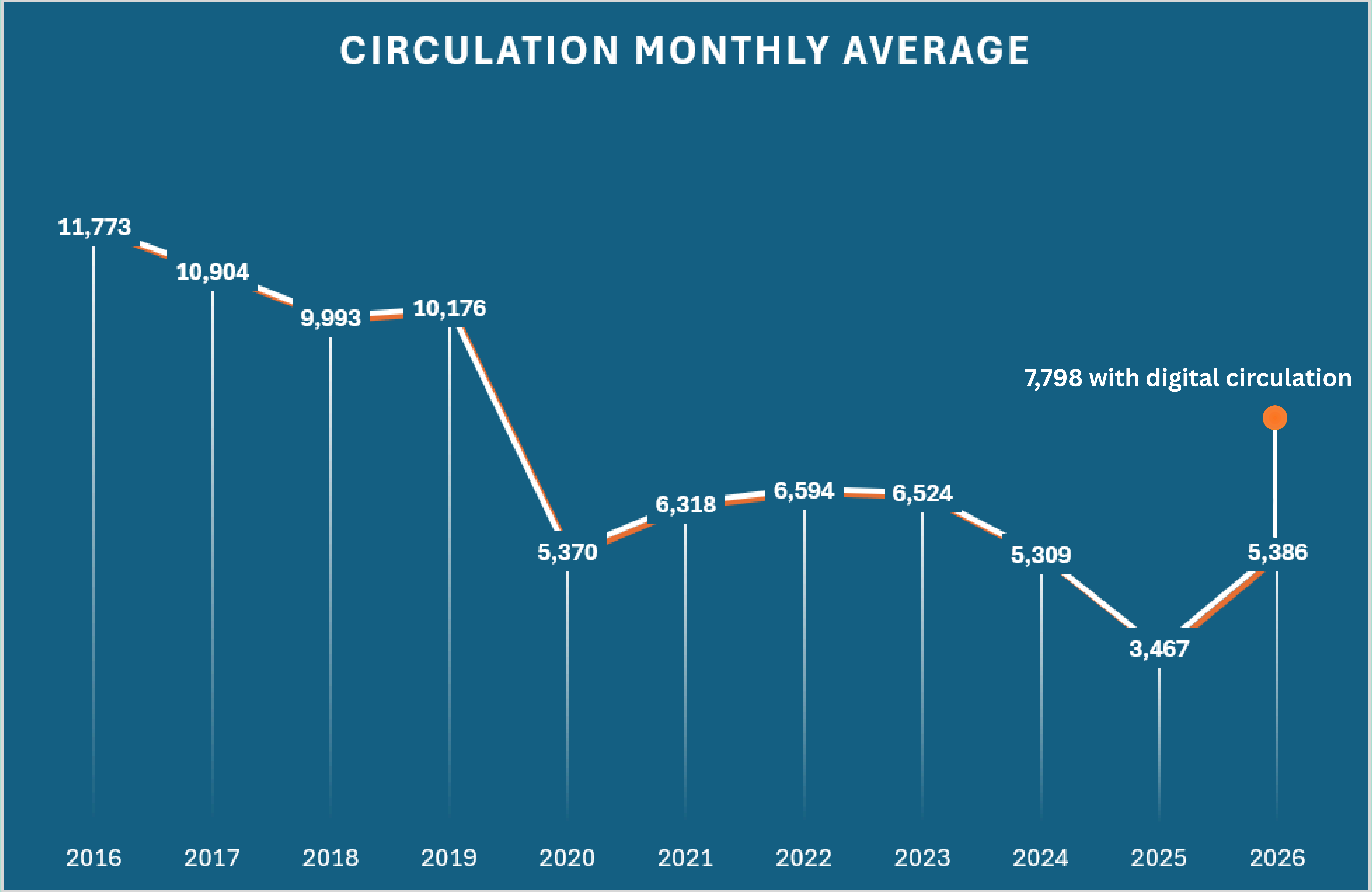
Annual Report Data 2016-Current



Note: the new library building has a new door counter. The previous counter was not located at the door, it was located near the front desk. If people went out to the lobby to use the bathroom, water fountain, go into the community room, etc. and then they came back into the library proper, it would count them again. The older counts may be inflated because of this. Our new door counter is much more accurate. In addition, we are now able to keep track of hourly door counts, which is very helpful.

Annual Report Data 2016-Current

2020-2021: Covid
2024-2025 Building Project

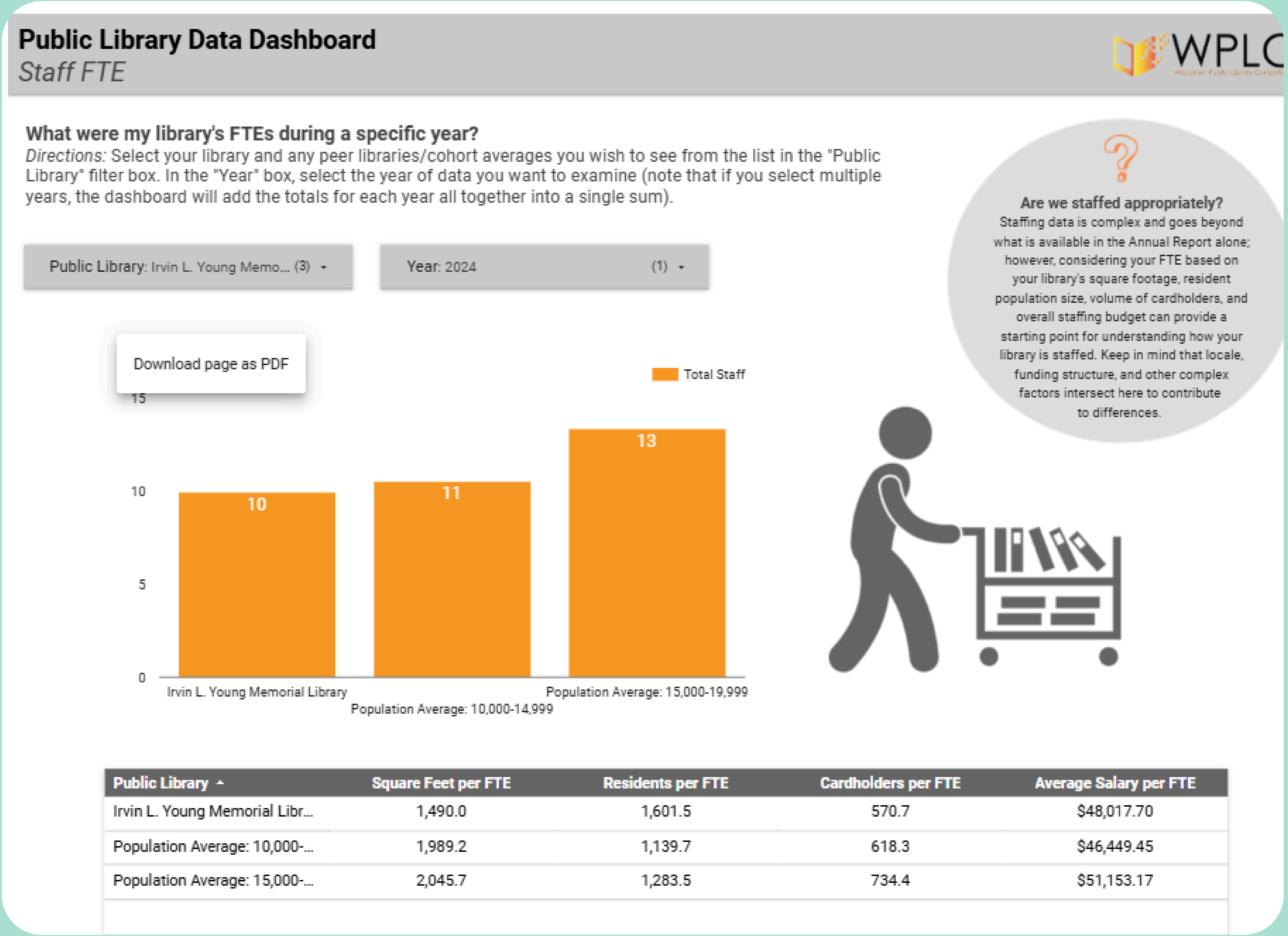


Note: Circulation of physical items are trending down everywhere. During and after Covid, people are using more digital materials (e.g. Libby).

Digital circulation DOES NOT count toward DPI circulation statistics. We do not receive any county reimbursements for digital circulation. This is a known issue that is currently being worked on with DPI and libraries throughout the state (and country). In addition, libraries struggle with the cost of digital materials, as they are very expensive compared to traditional print materials, but it's what many people want.

Digital Circulation Monthly Average for 2026: 2,412

WI Public Library Data Dashboard



FTE (Full Time Equivalent Staff) Data

Compared to other libraries our size, we have fewer FTE staff. The population of Whitewater is about 16,000 and the library's service population is about 18,000.

Wisconsin libraries with a population average of 15,000-19,999 have an average FTE staff of 13. We have 10.4.

Adding a .70 position would still only bring us to 11 about FTE, which is well under the average. Yet this would accomplish all of our current goals for the library's operations.

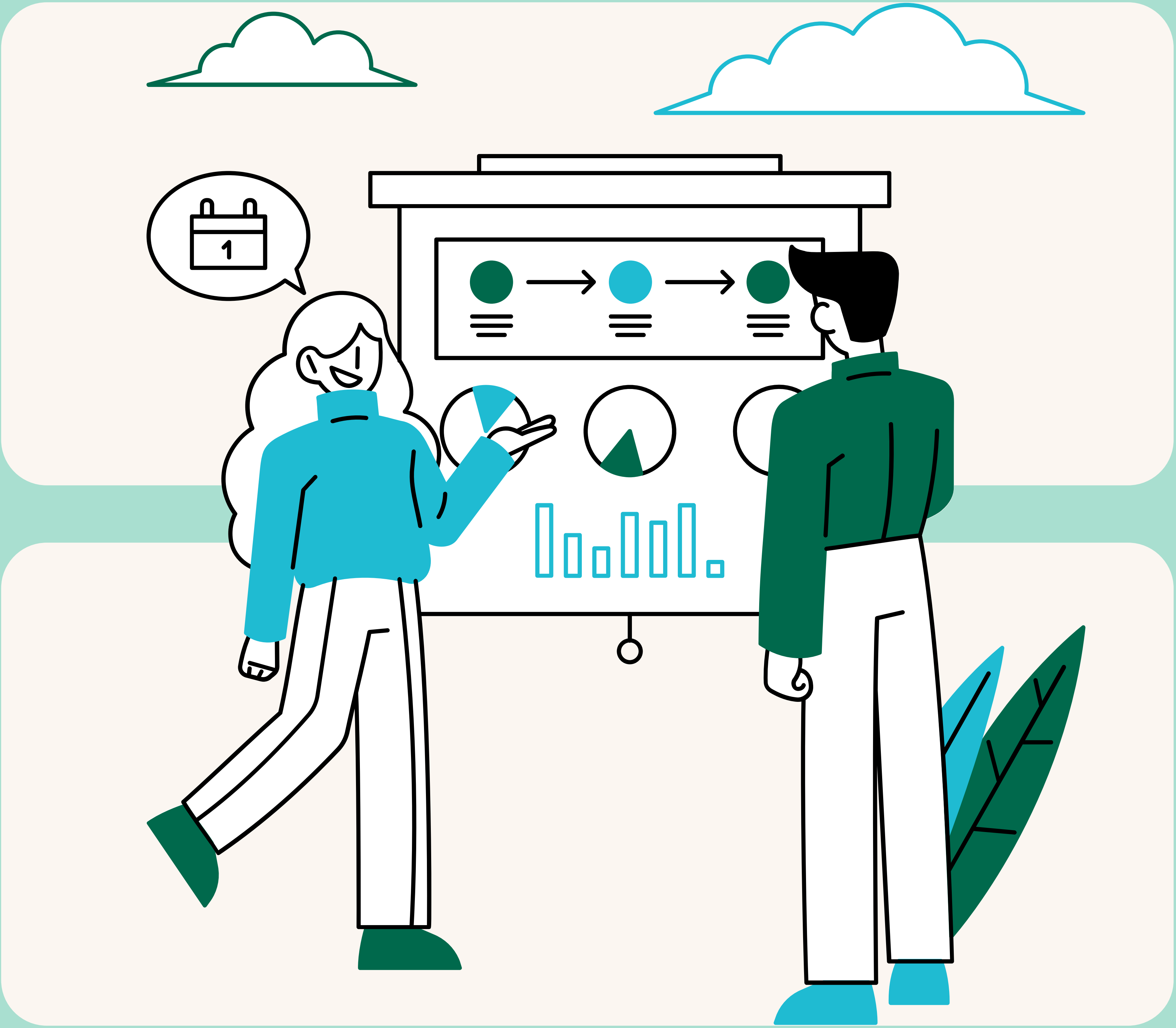
Access the Data Dashboard here

Note: all annual report data can be accessed via this dashboard and compared to other WI libraries.

Initial Needs Assessment

In October 2025, the following needs were identified by library administration:

- Public Services coverage is lacking – especially during the lunch hour, Saturdays, summer, and when people are sick or on vacation.
- Increase library programming and outreach.
- Time off-desk for part-time staff to complete trainings; time for all-staff meetings and trainings.
- Staff time and training to monitor the new, larger building. Behavior incidents increase with more visitors.



Read the full document here:
[2026/2027 Budget and Staffing Goals Document]

Initial Recommendations

· **Increase the hours and provide benefits to a staff member who is meeting/exceeding expectations** from 17 hours to 23 (per week). She is also one of only two people on staff who is a Spanish speaker, which is a skill that is much needed at the library.

DONE
We were able to work with the city to get this approved starting Jan. 2026

· **Add one additional part-time Library Associate position** that would split their time between public service and programming duties. This would provide additional staff for core public services and front desk coverage as well as provide additional programming (including outreach) which is a main objective.

INCOMPLETE
This continues to be a recommendation, with some changes based on feedback from the McMahon study

· **Allocate staff time to ensure security** in the larger library and monitor the expanded areas especially high-risk areas including the teen area and atrium.

IN PROGRESS
Staff assignments have been shifted to allow for monitoring the building and training has been completed. Waiting on city for cameras

· **Allocate at least 1 hour per week per part-time employee for focused work, special projects, trainings, and development.** This will ensure that our front-line staff continues to stay current with best practices, trends, and technology in order to continue providing excellent library services to the community.

DONE
We analyzed and adjusted the Library Associate hours/assignments when Jess was promoted to make this happen

2026 Workflow Accomplishments

Working within our current budget, we were able to make adjustments that increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the public services team.

A high-performing public services clerk had extra hours approved by the city and those were applied to Fridays, which were previously very short staffed.

A staff member requested for her hours to be reduced by one hour per week and we were able to use those hours to schedule an all-staff meeting every other month starting in June 2026.

A public services clerk requested to reduce her hours and not work Wednesday nights anymore (she still works Tuesday nights). When we hired a new public services clerk, we were able to adjust the hours for that position in order to accommodate the other staff member.

Our longest-serving employee was approved for a raise by the city in order to align her compensation for where she should be on the pay scale (she has worked for the city for 25+ years).

In addition, the hours for the new public services clerk were adjusted to help cover lunches and other busy times at the desk, resulting in a better coverage for the front desk.

2026 Workflow Accomplishments, cont.

The city manager requested that the library work with McMahon Consultants to complete an operations analysis. The overall impact of the study is that we are implementing several changes and will continue to evaluate recommendations in order to shift the staff hours that we currently have to most efficiently meet the requirements of the new library space and the ever-changing demands of today's public library environment. **Library administration upholds that maintaining the library's current staffing level is essential to library operations.**

Based on the McMahon analysis, the following recommendations have been implemented:

Recommendation: Evaluate Library Associate (Home Delivery) Position – COMPLETE
Implementation: When a public services clerk was promoted, we adjusted the Library Associate duties and hours, including removing duties such as collection development and managing the food pantry and focusing this position on programming and public service. We adjusted her hours to enable more coverage for the front desk. In addition, she was assigned an additional monthly program (adult take/makes).

Recommendation: Self-Checkout Station – COMPLETE
Implementation: We received a Bridges grant and City of Whitewater funding to purchase a self-checkout station. This will help with efficiency at the front desk and is also good for patron privacy.

Additional Recommendations

From the McMahon study:

Recommendation: Evaluate Library's Hours – IN PROGRESS
Considerations include hourly door counts, Wisconsin Public Library Standards, and overall impact. We are currently open 61 hours a week, which is the minimum hours open per week for public libraries with our municipal population size. However, the standards are being revised. We recommend waiting until the new standards come out in the fall of 2026 and then reevaluate the library's hours based on the new standards. Shifting hours to be open longer during busier times, such as Friday evenings, is also a consideration.

Library visits significantly decrease at about 7:30 p.m., with the exception of evenings when programs are scheduled. However, **simply closing the library earlier won't significantly reduce the number of staffing hours needed** because much of the work that is being done in the evenings would have to be reabsorbed during the day. For example, public services staff does shelving primarily in the evenings when the library is slower, along with other small assignments such as preparing take & make bags. The lead worker typically works at their desk doing their other assigned tasks and only assists patrons when needed and helps with closing. Only 1 worker is typically at the service desk, so the most we could save if we closed one hour early Mon-Thu would be around $3,744 ($18/hour x 4 hours/week x 52 weeks/year). The McMahon study recommended using these staff hours to schedule regular staff meetings.

Public Library Standards

New Standards are being implemented in Fall 2026

In Wisconsin Statute § 43.05(6), the Wisconsin State Legislature requires the Division for Libraries and Technology (DLT) to recommend and distribute standards for public libraries to public library governing bodies. The Division uses these standards when evaluating proposals for new public libraries and joint library agreements.

Public library staff and library boards utilize the standards when evaluating their services and planning for the future. The standards are aligned with Chapter 43 and are intentionally designed to support legal requirements.

Read the full Public Library Standards, 6th Edition document here.

Additional Recommendations

From the McMahon study:

Recommendation: Re-evaluate the need for 2 Public Services Clerks at the front desk at all times – IN PROGRESS.
Implementation: Now that we have hourly door counts and a self-checkout station, we are currently collecting data in order to evaluate staffing at the front desk and adjust schedules to accommodate busier times while also considering the need for covering breaks. Efficiencies with staff time at the front desk opens up the possibility for staff to focus on other essential areas including programming, marketing, and outreach. Library administration recommends that the Public Services Clerks job description is updated to include these expanded tasks so that they are able to be cross-trained in these areas. This will create a more knowledgeable, flexible, and responsive staff.

Additional recommendations include expanding community partnerships, developing additional promotional materials, increasing staff training, expanding evening/weekend programs, and continuing outreach and community services. All of these recommendations are being implemented in various ways and will continue to be evaluated in order to best utilize staff hours and serve the needs of the community.

2026 Priorities in Progress

Summer Reading Program

Concern is that we do not have any extra staff to cover the children's desk. Deana is away from the desk more often as she does more programming during the summer. Public services staff are busier than usual and are not always available to assist at the children's desk.

Plan for 2026 is to mobilize volunteers, both teen and from the Friends of the Library, in order to help cover the children's desk. They will help children with Summer Reading reporting, spinning the prize wheel, help with the scavenger hunt, cleaning up the toys, and so on. **This has been going well so far. We have about 14 teen volunteers who have helped immensely.**

Cons to relying on volunteers: they are not reliable and have to be trained, scheduled, and supervised.

Future recommendation:

- Paid Teen summer intern (see what other libraries are doing HERE and HERE and HERE). The intern would be the one training and managing the teen volunteers, along with taking shifts at the children's desk and helping to maintain the children's department. This would allow Deana to get more done and take pressure off the public services clerks as well.

2026 Priorities in Progress

Compensation for Current Staff

Concern is we have staff members who have worked for 14-20 years and are not where they should be in the salary range for their position. The city manager identified this issue in late 2025 and asked staff to follow up with HR about it. Several staff members did so but only one received a raise. One other staff member who was among those most affected received a promotion, and so was able to negotiate for a wage based on her experience. She is currently happy with her compensation. This leaves us with two Technical Services Clerks whose compensation should be adjusted based on their longevity and performance.

2027 Budget Recommendations

1. Analyze Technical Services Clerks wages and compensate them based on experience and history of exceptional work and positive annual reviews.

2. Choose a direction for the Strategic Plan

   A) Complete Rework of Plan - either with WiLS ($20K) or UW-Extension ($17K)

   B) WiLS Revision ($13K)

   C) Rachel Ardnt Consulting Revision ($2K)

3. Stipend for a Teen Intern

Cost of 2027 Recommendations

Technical Services Clerk
2026 Salary Resolution pay range: $19.43 - $26.24 per hour

Technical Services Clerk (1 FTE)
20+ years of experience
Current wage: $22.81 per hour ($47,445 annually)
Recommended wage: $26.24 per hour ($54,579 annually)
Cost increase: $7,134

Technical Services Clerk (.72 FTE)
14+ years of experience
Current wage: $21.29 ($31,935 annually)
Recommended wage: $23.76 per hour ($35,640 annually)
Cost increase: $3,705

Teen intern stipend: $500

Strategic Plan (lowest cost option): $2,000

Total: $13,339

2028 Budget Recommendations

Hire an additional .70 FTE Library Associate

The need for help with marketing was identified in the McMahon study. This would save the professional librarians a lot of time to focus on higher-level tasks.

While we do not think that the exact solution they suggested would be feasible, we do agree that having one person in charge of marketing would be immensely helpful and allow the professional librarians to focus on core duties, such as programming. In addition, it would create consistency and cohesion for the library brand.

The goal is to increase library visits, circulation, and attendance at programs. We are currently offering a lot of programs, but attendance numbers could be improved by strategic and dynamic marketing efforts.

Cost
Salary Range: $19.43-$26.24 per hour
Annual Income at $21.25 per hour: $30,048
Benefits with Family Insurance, Retirement, etc: approx $25,000
Total max cost of position: approx. $55,048

Recommended duties:

- Marketing and Graphic Design
  - flyers, social media, newsletter, online calendar, website, press releases, etc.
  - Attend Bridges Marketing Meetups
- Outreach
  - tabling at community events
  - partnering with local organizations
- Public Services
  - workstation at the Information Desk would provide reference and circulation services
  - Saturday coverage
  - coverage for sick/vacation
- Programming
  - 1-2 programs per month
  - Summer Reading Program assistance

2028 Budget Recommendations

- **City appropriation increase**
- **Less reliance on the library's fund balance**

Goals

- Library fund balance maintained at 20% of the library's operational budget.
- Operational goals aligned with recommended implementations from the McMahon study, administrative analysis, public library standards, and the library's strategic plan.
- Continue to provide fair wages and benefits to all staff members, which decreases turnover and increases quality service.
- Add a Library Associate who will be cross-trained across multiple departments in order to flexibly meet the demand of today's public library environment while focusing specifically on Strategic Goals 3 and 4.

Whitewater PUBLIC LIBRARY

"The budget is the monetary expression of the strategic plan."

Source: "Library and Information Center Management, Seventh Edition" by Robert D. Stueart and Barbara B. Moran (Libraries Unlimited, 2007).

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Building Toward the Future

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Center for Learning and Connecting

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Engaging and Effective Communication

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Strengthening Partnerships

Discussion and Questions

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Thank you