South Dakota Public Libraries Survey FY2018
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About the Public Libraries Survey (PLS)

- This is the annual statistical report that is required by state statute for all designated public libraries in South Dakota.
- Some of the data elements are reported to the federal Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS).
- Some questions are used by SDSL for planning library development services.
- Compliance is tied to receiving federal dollars that support statewide databases, reference services, and continuing education (and more!) to SD residents and libraries.

👉 **You** may request data for all of the questions on the survey for any or all public libraries in the state. Use it for peer comparisons, demonstrating need, and library advocacy.
Use your data!

Knowing your library’s financial and service statistics and how they compare demonstrates professionalism and accountability.
Where to get library statistics

**IMLS**

**SDSL**
SDSL makes selected data elements for individual libraries. Find data files here: [libguides.library.sd.gov/services/pls](http://libguides.library.sd.gov/services/pls)
The Public Libraries Data Digest provides statewide summary data here: [library.sd.gov/SDSL/publications/index.aspx#Reports](http://library.sd.gov/SDSL/publications/index.aspx#Reports)

**Just ASK...**
We can help you compile, analyze, and “infograph-ify” library data.

Contact the SDSL Data Coordinator:
[Shawn.Behrends@state.sd.us](mailto:Shawn.Behrends@state.sd.us)
605.280.5834
Get started

Completing the online form
Survey portal: sd.countingopinions.com

Download support files
You will find several helpful files to download on the “Enter” page (after you log in).
Then proceed to the Data Input screen.

Find question definitions
Use the worksheet you downloaded, or find complete question definitions by clicking on the question number.

Leave a State Note
You can leave a note for us about an answer. You may have to leave a note to clear an edit check if your answer is out-of-range.

👉 It’s good to refer to a printed copy of last year’s annual report, but use the worksheet to fill in this year’s data! It’s got the information you need to complete your annual report correctly.
Survey portal FAQs

Will I lose my survey data if I get interrupted?
No. Data from a field is saved automatically when you move to the next field. The survey portal will time out after an hour of inactivity, but your data will still be there when you log in again.

I'm having trouble changing an answer.
Try refreshing your browser if you have trouble with a “sticky” answer. Don’t know how to refresh your browser? Google it!

How do I satisfy an edit check?
Edit checks will prevent you from submitting the survey. Go back and check your answer. If it’s correct, then leaving a State Note of explanation will allow you to bypass the edit check. Click on the notepad icon to the left of the data field to leave a State Note.

Still having trouble?
Shoot me an email at Shawn.Behrends@state.sd.us or pick up the phone and call my office at 605.280.5834.
Section A.
General Information

Most of this section is prefilled for your convenience.

Here are some FAQs...
What is a Legal Service Area [A14]?  

This is the number of people in the geographic area for which the library is contracted to serve and from which the library derives revenue.

How is it calculated?  

We use Census estimates for places (cities), counties, or school districts to update this field every year. Please contact us if you feel your legal service area is incorrect.

What can I do with this data?  

Legal Service Area (LSA) is used to calculate per capita statistics by IMLS and by us. Per capita statistics allow you to compare your library’s income, expenditures, and services to others of differing sizes.
Estimated pop. of the total service area [A15]

We are asking you to estimate the population you actually serve. Your city library may attract many patrons from the surrounding county or another local city.

How do I calculate this?

In addition to your LSA population, add the population of neighboring areas that use the library and/or the number of nonresident cardholders you have.

What can I do with this data?

The IMLs will use your library’s LSA population as a comparison measure, but if you are making an appeal to stakeholders, like commissioners and local residents, it is helpful to have a solid count of who the library really serves.
Library open hours [A24]

This is a record of the hours the main library is open to the public.

Instructions for school/public combo libraries

Fill in only the hours that the library is open to the public.

What can I do with this data?

We can provide comparison data to help you advocate for more public service hours. It is important to have evening and/or Saturday hours in your schedule so that the library is available to everyone.
Section B.
Outlet / Branch Information

Complete this section for your main library and any branches or bookmobiles you have.
Section C. Personnel

How many staff?
How many hours worked per week?
Salary survey
Reporting library staff

**Categories:** Head librarian, other librarians, other paid staff, staff paid from other sources, MLS librarians.

- Report the total number of staff in each category [C06] [C10] [C17] [C19]. Include unfilled positions.
- Report *total* hours worked per week by all staff in each category [C03] [C07] [C11] [C16] [C20].

The survey will convert these into Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. (See next slide.)

**School/public combo library instructions:** Include only staff who serve the public. If the school librarian also serves public patrons, then report him/her as staff.

**Volunteers:** Count of all unpaid persons who have given time during the year to the library [C17]. Add up the annual total number of hours given by volunteers, then divide by 52 [C18].
FTEs

FTE is a way to convert hours worked by several part-time employees into the hours worked by full-time employees (1 FTE = 40 hrs/wk). FTEs can be compared against open hours, population, staff expenditures and service statistics to help show need for more staff.
2019 Survey of Library Staff Pay

This a supplemental section [C22-24]. Please help us answer your questions about staff salaries.

Report the the lowest and highest hourly wage paid to staff in the following categories. Convert staff salaries into hourly wages.

- **Librarians** that are reported in C06
- **Other library staff** that are reported in C10--but exclude non-library workers such as janitorial staff.
- **ALA-MLS librarians** that are reported in C19

This data and the annual director salaries is available to you, your library board, and local governing agency upon request.
Section D.

Income

Where does the money come from?

Operating income

Capital income
What’s the difference?

**Operating income**
This is what the library uses for day-to-day operating expenses.

Any revenue used for repair or replacement of existing library furniture & equipment should be reported here, too.

**Capital income**
Report any revenue used for one-time major expenditures.

Include new buildings, additions, remodeling projects and the cost of new materials to fill them.
Operating income from government sources [D01-09]

Report all income received from government sources that is used for day-to-day operating expenses. Do not include carryover.

Other operating income [D10]

This is all miscellaneous operating income that does not come from local, state, or federal government sources. It includes income from fines, library card sales, grants, monetary gifts & endowments. Don’t include in-kind services.

What can I do with this data?

Operating income per capita is a way to gauge community support for the library. This is an important figure for librarians & their boards to know when submitting annual budgets. You should compare your per capita ratio to peer libraries.
Section E. Expenditures

How much does it cost to run the library?
3 kinds of operating expenditures

**Staff**
This category includes all salaries & wages paid to library staff [E01] and total employee benefits [E02] including social security, retirement, medical insurance, etc.

**Collection**
This is the total amount spent on library materials that are part of the library’s collections for users. The survey breaks these out into physical and digital categories [E04-06].

**Other**
These are all other day-to-day expenses that aren’t for staff or new materials. This includes utilities, equipment replacement, office supplies, travel.

This field [E08] cannot be “0”!
Good things to know...

**Expenditure ratios**
What % of budget is spent on staff / collection / other? Compare to our peers. Compare to state-level averages.

**New materials per capita**
How much does the library invest in new materials per resident every year? This figure shows that the library is fulfilling its role in providing services to the public.

**Income vs. expenditures**
Are you spending ALL of your library’s budget? Use it or risk losing it. If not, we need you to explain what happens to unspent funds. Leave a State Note in E09.
For school/public combo libraries...

- Be sure to include school income that goes into the library operating budget.
- Report **income** from the local government and money the library receives from the school district.
- Report **expenses** for all staff that serve the public and all operating expenses that keep the library open and running.
Section F. Holdings

How many collection items does the library have?

25
Reporting the size of library collections

Refer to the What Goes Where help sheet for detailed instructions on reporting your library’s holdings.

Some fields may be prefilled for you.

Call or email the SDSL Data Coordinator if you have collections or items you don’t know how to report.

School/public combo libraries: Any items that can be checked out to the public should be reported in holdings.

What can I do with this data?

One operation that is often done with holdings is calculating turnover. That is the circulation divided by volumes held—i.e., the number of materials checked out relative to the size of the collection. Calculating turnover can be especially useful if you are trying to determine which collections or genres need your attention.
Section G.

Services / Activities

Don’t forget to add amounts for all service locations.
“Guesstimates”

Actual counts of library services are best, but if you can’t keep a tally of some library services, it is permissible to report an estimate based on sampling.

- Pick two “typical” weeks to track the service. We recommend a week in April and a week in October.
- Multiply by 26.
How do I report total attendance (visits)? [G02]

Count everybody who comes in the door for whatever purpose during the year. Include people who come in for library programs, to use computers, etc.

How do I count library visits?

Some libraries have door counters. Some keep a tally. If you don’t do either, a guesstimate is acceptable. Did you know you can find instructions online for making your own people counter?

What can I do with this data?

Library visits is a powerful statistic for demonstrating demand for library services. Calculating library visits per capita is a good measure of public awareness about the library.
How do I report registered users? [G03]

A registered user is a library user who has applied for and received an ID number or card from the public library.

Your library’s files should be purged of inactive cardholders every three years.

How do I count registered users?

Count everybody who has a library card or an assigned ID number for using library services. If your library has household cards, you should multiply the number of cards by the average number of users on the cards.

What can I do with this data?

If your registered users count is up-to-date, then the % of registered borrowers per capita can be an indication of the library’s relevance to the community. E.g., if 50% of your population are registered users, then half of your community can be considered library supporters.
Is it a reference transaction? [G03]

Reference transactions are when library staff assist people with research; when you help them find, interpret, or evaluate information; when you refer them to helpful sources.

“Yes” examples:
Can you help me set up an email account?

How do I download ebooks on this Kindle?

Can you help me find more vampire romance novels like this one? (we call this reader’s advisory)

What is the phone number of the post office?

“No” examples:
Questions that don’t count as reference transactions are usually directional:
- Where is the reference librarian?
- Where are the 600s?
- Where is the restroom?

What are the library’s overdue fines?

Checking out library materials to a patron is not a reference transaction.
Collection use [G05-G19]

Directions for how to count each type of collection can be found in the *What Goes Where help sheet* on the survey portal.

**Children’s materials** [G14]: This is the portion of total circulation [G13] that is for ages under 18.

**Interlibrary Loan** [G39, G40]: Fewer categories this year. There is a [statistics form](#) on the SDSL website for tracking ILL transactions.

**School/public combo libraries**: Report only public library circulation, if you can.
Library programs \([G20-G21]\)

**Age categories:** Early Literacy (birth-PreK), K-11, YA (12-18), Adult

**Library programs**
Planned events hosted or co-hosted by the library.
They can be on-site or off-site.

**Series programs:** Count each event in series as a program
E.g., A book club that meets 8 times is 8 library programs.

**Family programs:** Pick one age category in which to count the program.

**Program Attendance**
This is a headcount at each library program.

**Series programs:** Count every attendee every time they attend an event.
E.g., Count adults who attend PreK programs in the Early Literacy attendance field.

**Family programs:** Count all attendees in whichever age category you are reporting the program.
Is it a library program?

Use this rubric:

- Did I plan and advertise the program?
- Did my patrons learn anything new about the library and/or its resources or services, cultural, recreational, or educational information?
- Was a library staff member or volunteer present to facilitate the program?
- Was the program delivered to a group of people?

If “yes” to all of the above, then count in library programs.

If “yes” to just the first three, then count in one-to-one programs.
...more about library programs...

**One-to-one programs** [G22]: Only count programs you plan and promote. Count each one-to-one session that your staff or volunteers do with a patron or student.

If you don’t have some kind of official program (dedicated time & staff), then count your assistance as a reference transaction [G03].

**Programs in school/public combo libraries:** Do not count class visits unless the librarian hosts some type or presentation or learning activity.

Healthy program attendance gets the attention of elected officials because it’s a people measure!
Public Computers & WiFi

Two measures for library computers & internet use

Public access computer sessions [G26]
How much the public library’s computers are used.
Measured in 30 minute sessions (1 hour = 2 sessions)
Report the total number of sessions for the year.
A “guesstimate” is acceptable.

Protect your patrons’ privacy. Shred computer sessions logs at the end of each day.

Wireless sessions [G27]
A wireless session is every time someone connects to the library’s WiFi network to use the internet.
Doesn’t matter how much time spent on WiFi, but how many times it’s used.
Tally sheet or “guesstimates” okay.

Don’t forget to count outside users--like people using WiFi in your parking lot.
Why track public computers, internet, Wifi?

These are important services to South Dakotans. These services level the playing field for people who don’t have access at home.

Why should the library provide these services?

Libraries provide the tools people need to set up email accounts, apply for jobs, look for health care information, and navigate government services. Librarians provide the assistance people need to succeed.

What can I do with this data?

At the national level, these elements are used for policy making and for creating funding opportunities like E-rate for schools & libraries and IMLS broadband initiatives.
New this year: Website visits

**Definition:** The annual number of sessions initiated by all users from inside or outside the library to the library website.

A website “visit” or “session” occurs when a user connects to the library's website for any length of time or purpose.

Find [instructions for reporting website visits](#) here.

Reporting is optional this year, but mandatory next year.

**Why track website visits?**

A growing number of people use library services via library websites without ever setting foot in the building. A subset of those who visit the building use the library website during their visit. If we don’t track website visits, then the story we can tell about library usage is incomplete.
Section H.

Trustees

This is the current record of your library’s trustees.
FAQs about library boards...

There are state statutes pertaining to the makeup of your library's board. For public libraries follow SD Statute 14-2-35.

- Trustees should be five citizens of the library's governing body and representative of the population.
- Trustees are appointed for three years and should be replaced or reappointed by local government when their terms expire.
- Trustee terms should be staggered across three years.
- The governing body may appoint an additional full voting member from its commissioners.

The librarian is not a board member, but may serve as secretary.

School/public combo libraries may follow a different library board statute. The library’s bylaws should indicate which one. See Chapter 14-2 Public Libraries.
Helpful resources for library trustees

Library trustees have an important role in guiding the missions and policies of public libraries.

Make sure your trustees have the tools and knowledge to be effective library leaders.

SDSL Trustee Wiki is a one-stop spot for everything your trustees need to know about:

- library board meetings
- policies & procedures
- friends & foundation groups
- school/public combo libraries.
Thank You!

Any questions?

You can contact me at Shawn.Behrends@state.sd.us
South Dakota State Library
605.280.5834 or 800.423.6665 option 6