



Library Activities Overview

2022

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY
SARAH PARTRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY



“What goes on at the library, anyways?”

If you’ve ever wondered who uses the library, and how, you’re not alone! Many people use the library for a specific purpose, and want to know more about how other community members engage with the library. Library functions tend to fall into four distinct categories: programs, services, resources, and facilities. While it would be impossible to enumerate every single way community members use the library, this overview is reasonably comprehensive.

PROGRAMS

A **library program** is an intentional event in a group setting developed proactively to meet the needs or interests of a target audience. At Ilsley Public Library, programs are designed to achieve one of five outcomes: increasing knowledge or awareness of a subject; teaching a new skill; building social or community connections; fostering literacy and a joy of reading; and providing cultural enrichment, recreation, or inspiration. In 2019 the library offered 900 programs, which were enjoyed by 18,232 attendees. Below are a few illustrative examples of library programs.

Examples of programs that increase knowledge or awareness of a subject:

- **First Wednesdays.** This lecture series brings a diverse array of engaging speakers to the library to present on a range of topics in the humanities field.
- **Yoga Philosophy.** This ongoing program offers exploration and discussion on topics such as: yoga texts, guided meditation, pranayama, chakras and more.

Examples of programs that teach a new skill:

- **Youth Media Lab.** Library Technology Coordinator Kurt Broderson leads a 7-week session of introductory video and animation workshops for students in grades 3+.
- **Bridge.** A six week workshop series on how to play bridge.

Examples of programs that build social or community connections:

- **Community Classic Film Club.** This club meets monthly during the fall and spring to view and discuss a film. Cookies are often provided, and regular attendees will attest that the discussion is the best part.
- **Teen Advisory Group.** This group meets monthly to engage in book discussions, crafts, and other activities, while connecting with other teens.

Examples of programs that foster literacy and a joy of reading:

- **Storytimes.** Library staff lead children and families in a series of stories, songs, and games designed to promote early childhood literacy and numeracy.
- **Book Clubs.** The library offers three ongoing book clubs (two for adults and one for teens) that ensure equitable access (everyone is provided a copy of the book), inclusion (everyone gets to participate) and engagement through a guided book discussion.

Examples of programs that provide cultural enrichment, recreation, or inspiration:

- **Cooking.** The library partnered with *Middlingo* to host a program on the traditions and meaning of the Chinese Lunar New Year; attendees learned to cook dumplings.
- **Concerts.** The library hosted a free outdoor concert on October 16th with Hungrytown, a folk music duo.

A **passive library program** is an activity designed such that patrons may participate individually and without the physical presence of library staff.

- **Take-and-Make Craft Bags.** Community members (both youth and adults) pick up a bag at the library to take home. The bag contains instructions and materials to complete a craft.
- **Books-on-Sticks.** Library staff place a children's story (in the form of a book unbound, laminated, and attached to stakes) along a walking route. Children and their caretakers read the story one page at a time as they walk along.

An off-site program is a library or library-sponsored program held in a location other than Ilsley Public Library or Sarah Partridge Library. Programs might be held off-site for many reasons, including: the goal of the program is to reach populations who might not otherwise have access to the library; the program requires equipment or amenities not available in library facilities; the program attendance is expected to exceed library space.

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- **Book Bike.** Youth Librarian Tricia Allen rides her bike to the free summer lunch program and reads aloud while children eat lunch. After the story, she distributes free books.
 - **Charter House Visits.** Adult Librarian Renee Ursitti visits the Charter House regularly to deliver books, Take-and-Make Craft Bags, and help residents access library resources.

SERVICES

Library staff provide several intangible services to community members. These services teach a new skill, help navigate unfamiliar resources, or connect people with other partner organizations that can meet their needs. Services are usually provided in a one-on-one meeting, which can either be scheduled ahead of time or requested on the spur of the moment. Some examples of library services include:

- **Reference Help** involves a library staff member helping a community member find the answer to a question. These questions can include “ready reference” (answering questions that start with ‘who, what, where, when’); “specific searches” (searching for multiple answers, or presenting a range of information); or “research” (conducting a reference interview, formulating a search strategy, and selecting appropriate, trusted resources.)
- **Tech Help** involves a library staff member teaching a patron information technology skills. Examples include computer or device tutorials, assistance with creating an email or social media account, instruction on how to make video calls, help navigating websites or online applications, instruction on using specific software, or instruction on equipment in the Digital Media Lab.
- **Genealogy Research Support** involves a library staff member helping a community member navigate historical and government records and archives to trace their heritage.
- Students that are taking classes remotely often require **exam proctoring**. Library staff members will verify a student’s identification by checking a photo ID and then ensure academic integrity guidelines during the exam.
- **Interlibrary Loan** involves a patron of one library borrowing materials that are owned by another library. A library staff member may search for and request the materials on the patron’s behalf.
- **Readers Advisory** involves a library staff member suggesting titles to a community member upon request. Requests range from specific (“I’m looking for a book about super heroes for a

child with a third-grade reading level, but it can't be too scary") to broad ("Do you have anything new in historical fiction you would recommend?").

- **Resource Connection** is an impromptu service that is not typically requested, but arises from a library staff/community member interaction. Library staff members are deeply familiar with local and state social services and community resources and can connect community members with organizations that can meet their needs, for example referring community members to the South Royalton Legal Clinic, Charter House, or Women Safe.
- **Paging on Demand** allows community members to request library materials online and then pick them up at the library. This saves people time, and confirms for them that the book they want will be available.
- **Lucky Day Book Bags**. Parents and children can request a Lucky Day Bag online or over the phone, and a librarian will pull together a mystery bag of 5 - 10 books to be picked up at the library.
- During the pandemic, the library began offering several specific services, including **Unemployment Application Support** (library staff trained with the Department of Labor on how to help patrons navigate the online unemployment portal, and walked community members through the application process over the phone); **Vaccine Appointment Support** (library staff provided tech help to community members on the phone or in person as they navigated the vaccine signup portal); and **Patron Wellness Checks** (library staff called patrons on the phone directly during the shut-down to check in. In some instances, patrons just wanted someone to talk to. In others, library staff were able to provide more traditional reference, readers' advisory, or resource connection support).

RESOURCES

The library purchases and maintains many shared resources for the community. The library's collection of resources is constantly evolving to meet community needs and is often directly responsive to requests. Shared resources increase access and reduce community consumption, creating a more equitable and sustainable community.

- The library has an extensive traditional **circulating collection**, including 50,000 print books, 6,500 DVDs, and 3,500 physical audiobooks.
- The library has a growing **digital collection**, including 46,000 e-books and 10,000 audiobooks. These materials can be accessed from any place with an internet connection, expanding access to library materials.

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- The library has a growing “**library of things**” collection, which includes items like ukuleles, a telescope, and moisture meters to check firewood. This collection grows in direct response to our community’s needs; in spring 2022, the library will add an e-bike to our library of things.
 - The library has 85 **serials subscriptions**. Many patrons come to the library to read newspapers and magazines.
 - The library provides access to Kanopy, a popular **on-demand film streaming** service with over 30,000 films. As with the other digital collections, these library resources can be accessed anytime, from anywhere with an internet connection.
 - One of the most important resources the library provides is access to the internet through **free Wi-Fi** and **public access computers**. Many Vermonters do not have access to reliable internet at home; anyone can use the library’s Wi-Fi twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, free of charge.
 - The library offers **passes** conferring free or reduced admission to museums, state parks, and ski resorts.
 - The library provides access to **printing, scanning, and faxing**. This is an important community resource; people need to fax and scan documents for medical or legal purposes, and most do not have the ability to do so at home.
 - The library provides **chargers** (and access to electricity) to power small electronics such as phones and iPads. Many people don’t realize this is a resource of value until their phone dies in downtown Middlebury, at which point it becomes their “favorite library thing ever.”
 - The **Digital Media Lab** is a sound baffled room, featuring an iMac workstation with full Adobe Creative Cloud suite, studio grade audio recording capability, and turntable, cassette player, VCR/DVD deck. Equipment and software in the Digital Media Lab allows for video conferencing, podcasting, recording voice overs, video editing, and screen-casting, as well as the conversion of numerous types of analog media, such as LPs, cassettes, and VHS tapes.
 - The library provides access to **the Vermont Online Library (VOL)**, which offers a wide array of electronic databases including full-text articles on a variety of topics geared to both generalists and specialists.
 - The library provides access to **LearningExpress**, a platform that contains a range of resources, including tools to prepare for the Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) exam, nursing and medical test prep, job interview and resume writing, computer skills, SAT, LSAT, and GRE test prep, as well as interactive tools to help someone choose a career.
 - The library maintains an archive of **historic newspapers** on microfilm, and provides a **microfilm reader** to access them. Patrons conduct research with historic Vermont newspapers for a number of personal and professional reasons, and the archive plays an important role in preserving Vermont history and our cultural heritage.
 - Parent Resource Packets. Parents can check out a Resource Pack with literature and materials to add to their parenting toolkit. These packs are often designed around a specific theme, for example how to discuss puberty with a child.

FACILITIES

The library plays an important role as a physical space that is free and welcoming to everyone in the community. Maintaining certain facilities and offering them free of charge to the community supports a range of functions, including:

- **Large community gatherings** (events, programs, classes) take place in the library's Community Meeting Room.
- **Tutoring sessions**, small personal and professional **meetings**, and **telehealth appointments** take place in our small meeting rooms.
- **Distance learning** and **remote working** take place in our quiet study areas.
- **Supervised visits** take place in the youth room, where there are spaces for parents and children to play, eat, and visit with one another.
- Local artists use the library to stage **exhibitions**, contributing to the vibrancy of Middlebury.
- Local government representatives meet hold regular hours at the library to **meet with constituents**.
- The library is a place where you can be **warm, safe, and comfortable** all day long, for free. This is especially important during the winter for people who may have a hard time keeping their home warm, or may be experiencing homelessness. During the summer, people without air conditioning use the library as a **cooling center** on exceptionally hot days.
- Many people visit the library just to use the **restrooms**. This is an important public resource in a busy downtown area.
- The library is an important **social space**. The library is the site of many planned gatherings and impromptu conversations; people see their friends or neighbors and stick around to have a conversation. For some people, talking with the library at the public service desk is the only social interaction they will have all day.
- The library is a crucial "**third space**" for children. Children come to the library for the time between when school gets out and their parents' workday ends; they play, socialize, do homework, and attend programs while they wait for their parents to pick them up.