



San Benito County Free Library Needs Assessment Response

February 17, 2017

Introduction

The staff of San Benito County Free Library would like to express its gratitude to the San Benito County Board of Supervisors for making this needs assessment possible and to Library Systems and Services for their time and effort in conducting the needs assessment. The library has found the needs assessment to be very informative and insightful and has already begun to implement several of the valuable recommendations put forth by Library Systems and Services. The San Benito County Free Library staff also has some concerns over specific areas in the needs assessment which merit further clarification. These clarification points are outlined below.

Environmental Scan / Trend Analysis

- Activity noted by 6,287 library card holders - actually 6,287 is the number of **unique address locations**. 10,383 is the correct number of individual library card holders (we often have multiple family members with individual library cards in the same household, or multiple households at the same address). Comparing 10,383 **individuals** to overall population is a more accurate statistic since population of 58,267 is given in **individuals** and not unique households or addresses.
- San Benito County Free Library has existing partnerships and programming in conjunction with Footsteps2Brilliance, First 5 San Benito, 1,000 Books Before First Grade, AWE Early Literacy & Digital Learning.
- Language diversity of population is reflected in collection by way of Spanish Language Collection (Children's and Adult), Japanese Language Collection, and Chinese Language Collection. This diversity is also reflected in languages spoken by staff including 5 fluent Spanish speakers, 1 fluent Japanese speaker, and additional staff members who are familiar with Italian, French, and Slavic languages. The library partners with Gavilan College in offering weekly ESL classes in the Barbara room as well as digital language courses in 71 languages via its Mango Languages database. Lastly, all library marketing materials, including website, are available in both English and Spanish as well as other languages.

Current Library Collection & Services Review

Industry Rating

- In the 2016 Library Journal Index, San Benito County Free Library rates 77 out of 1,415 libraries in the \$400-999k category in population size (largest to smallest), but only 227 out of 1,415 in expenditure amount (largest to smallest), meaning that our budget is relatively small considering the size of our population.
- Of 1,415 libraries, only 34 libraries in the \$400-999k category received any stars
- In comparison to many libraries with similar expenditures in the same budget category, we provide a higher level of service (more open hours, more programming, Passport services, etc) and also have significantly fewer FTE staff and FTE Librarians.
- There are several libraries with extremely wealthy but small populations (Sausalito, San Anselmo, Pacific Grove, for example), with whom it would be unreasonable to compare San Benito County Free Library.

Efficiency Rating

- Much of the library's programming takes place in the Barbara Room, which is outside the library gate and not counted in the gate count. Therefore, the library's popular programming is not always reflected in number of visits.
- Number of visits also does not reflect number of patrons helped via telephone and email and visitors to the library's website to use databases or check out electronic materials such as e-books.

Service Trends

- This chart only indicates number of checkouts - it does not reflect all library "core services"; it does not account for patrons who visit library for programming and/or to use a computer or WiFi but do not check out library materials. It also does not account for patrons who use our Passport Services, meet with a Literacy or Technology Tutor, attend programming such as Storytime, Movie Night, or Homework Club, or attend an ESL or other Gavilan College class in the Barbara Room.
- Patrons who use library services remotely, such as telephone or email reference services or utilize our databases or check out e-books via library website are also not accounted for in checkout statistics.

- Number of checkouts not account for the very large square mileage of the service area of San Benito County Free Library (1,396 square miles). Although we do the best we can to reach as many members of our population as possible, because we are a rural library with only 2 service points (main library and bookmobile), there are some residents who simply cannot make the trip to visit the library to check out library materials in person.
- Checkouts do not account for books that are used by patrons at the library, but not checked out or are not able to be checked out, such as reference books and books in our California Collection.

Hours & Operation Expenses

- The figures for Your Library Hours Open in the included graph are incorrect. Ready Reports from the California State Library Statistics Portal indicate that we were open an average of 38 hours per week in for FY 2010/11, 42 hours per week in FY 2011/12, 31 hours per week in FY 2012/13, 36 hours per week in FY 2013/14 and 34 hours per week in FY 2014/15.
- The increase in funding per operating hour from 2013 to 2014 is accounted for by the fact that prior to Fiscal Year 2013/2014, the San Benito County Free Library was **not** charged a cost plan by the County of San Benito. In 2014, the County began charging the library a cost plan, which increased the library's annual expenditures by \$157,218. Taking this fact, as well as the corrected hours per week of 34, into account, the library's actual operating expenditures for fiscal year 2013-2014 are approximately \$380.53 per hour.
- The figure of \$380.53 per hour also includes several **new grants** the library received in 2014 for technology and outreach. This funding, was **not** granted to the library for the purpose of hiring additional staff, which would have been necessary to keep the library open for additional hours, and was therefore not used as such. Taking these grant expenditures into account further decreases the library's operating expenditures per hour to \$327.51, which represents a **decrease** from operating expenditures per hour in 2013.
- In 2015, the library added a half day opening on Fridays. In 2016, the library added a full-day opening on Fridays (10 am - 6 pm). Already in 2017, the library has added a half day opening on Saturdays (1 pm - 5 pm). This adds up to a weekly average of 44 hours per week, not including bookmobile hours.
- In FY 2015/16, the bookmobile provided 277 service hours, not including travel time.

- The library also prides itself on providing reference and technology services for all hours the library is open - a service many other libraries do not provide but is essential to our community in San Benito County.

Library Collections / Resource Allocations

- Staff expenditures at San Benito County Free Library are only 5% above California average. San Benito County pays a portion of its full time employees' health insurance premiums, a pension, and OPEB at 80%. Other library systems in the state may not be paying this for their employees. The library is also responsible for paying a cost plan to the county (\$157,218 in fiscal year 2013/2014), which adds to staff expenditures. Additionally, non-monetary book and material donations from the Friends of the Library foundation and other community organizations are not accounted for in these figures. For example, the library received \$10,000 worth of books from Junior Giants in FY 2014/15.
- Prior to receiving an Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) grant in 2014, many day-to-day procedures, such as materials check-outs, library card sign-ups, computer sign-ups, renewals, and patron printing) at the San Benito County Free Library were completed manually, which required more staff members at the circulation desk at all times. However, we invested the LSTA grant funding in technology training for library staff, new software and hardware, and technology materials, which ultimately decreased the amount of time staff has to spend on these day-to-day procedures and has allowed staff to focus their time and resources in other areas of library operations, such as programming and outreach.
- Although staff time and resources have been able to be reallocated since receiving the LSTA grant, a minimum staffing level at the public service desks are still required at all times for safety and security purposes.
- The library orders the majority of its materials from Ingram, **not** Amazon. Ingram provides San Benito County Free Library with a 40% discount on materials and free shipping. This discount would be higher if the library had a larger budget. Because we have a full-time staff member whose duties include cataloging and processing library materials, in addition to customer service and other duties, this process cannot be outsourced as this becomes a union issue.
- San Benito County Free Library has adopted a patron-driven acquisition model, meaning that in addition to ordering library materials according to which collections circulate the most, the library responds to patron material requests either through interlibrary loan or with a material purchase.
- Although circulation statistics are extremely influential in our ordering process, our first priority is ordering materials that assist us in fulfilling our mission of

providing “the community lifelong learning opportunities” and delivering “responsive informational, educational, recreational, and cultural library services within a welcoming environment.” Another high priority is fulfilling the library’s strategic plan.

- The San Benito County Free Library is open to allocating the collection budget by collection code as opposed to format, age group, and language in order to better address understocked areas in the library collection, however, as shown by the Collection Turnover Report, all but 3 areas of the library collection are currently understocked. This is a funding issue and not an issue of collection development approach. Lack of space and shelving within the library is also a significant issue relative to collection development.
- Although small, we do maximize availability and use of our collection by ensuring library materials are reshelfed within 6 hours or less of being returned to the library, with priority given to new books and other high-circulating items.
- Magazine acquisitions have gone down significantly in response to declining magazine circulation. However, we need to keep as many online reference sources and databases as we can for use by our remote users, especially considering we are a rural library with an extremely large service area (1,396 square miles).
- Weeding is **not** done only based upon visual inspection. Just prior to the needs assessment, the library had completed a robust weeding of approximately 12,000 items based upon circulation and collection age. Weeding and replacement of physically damaged items upon return to the library is done simply as an easy means of collection management until more in-depth weeding of the collection can be conducted. Below are the exact figures for discards for fiscal years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Fiscal Year	Discards
2014-2015	3,029
2015-2016	8,829

Recommendation Guide - Current Library Services

Facilities & Hours

- In February, 2017 the library began opening Saturdays from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Additionally, the library is open weeknight evenings until 8 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- The San Benito County Free Library has reduced its number of catalog-dedicated computer terminals to 2 (including 1 ADA-accessible terminal).
- At this time, priority is given to keeping as many children's materials and shelving for children's materials as possible as these items have the highest circulation rates in the library.
- Because the library's budget is tight, priority for funding at this time is given to purchasing library materials such as books and media, rather than to new furniture.
- Eliminating circulation & reference desks is not an option as multiple staff members are necessary to provide adequate customer service to patrons, particularly during busy library times when lines can and do form for service.
- We do currently have a dedicated laptop bar where patrons can charge their computers and take advantage of our free WiFi.


Exterior

- Repair & maintenance of library exterior is subject to the San Benito County maintenance department's schedule, funding, and staffing.
- The San Benito County Free Library submitted an application for a \$450,000 Community Development Block Grant for library optimization in 2011, however, the library did not qualify for this funding due to the median income of San Benito County being too high.

People & Programming

- Children's / Teen Programming & Resources in place:
 - 1 Bilingual Storytime per week in partnership with First 5 San Benito
 - 2 additional Storytimes per week
 - 2 Homework Clubs per week
 - Robust summer reading program
 - 1,000 Books Before First Grade Program
 - Monthly special programming for children & teens (Santa visit, Ugly Sweater Contest, Push Poetry, Grow Strong San Benito, literacy tree, Harry Potter Trivia program, Friendship Month, etc)
 - Frequent visits to area schools via regularly scheduled Bookmobile visits, Back to School Night visits, Cat in the Hat programming, etc

- Provide all first graders in Hollister School District with library cards through GOAL program
 - Provide 4 AWE Early Literacy & Digital Learning computers in children's area
 - Provide access to 500+ educational games through ABC Mouse Early Learning Academy digital education program
 - Provide access to 600+ children's eBooks through Fable Learning collection
- Adult Programming & Resources in place:
 - Adult Literacy Program
 - Tech Tutoring Program
 - Passport processing
 - Free tax preparation for low-income families
 - Bookmobile service to hospital, National Park, residential areas, etc
 - GED, citizenship, and other test resources through Learning Express Library
 - ESL and other classes through Gavilan College
 - Adult Summer Reading program
 - Online tutoring through Brainfuse HelpNow
 - Proctoring services
 - Access to career resources, school, and test resources through Learning Express Library
 - Access to law reference books, articles, and legal forms through Legal Information Reference Center
 - 500 online continuing education courses through Universal Class
 - Patrons can learn 71 languages online via access to Mango Languages
- San Benito County Free Library marketing efforts in place:
 - BenitoLink
 - Hollister Freelance
 - Webpage
 - Friends of the San Benito County Free Library website & social media pages
 - Development of library blog
 - Book displays
 - Outreach at farmer's markets and other community events
 - Development of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) pending clarification of San Benito County official social media policy
- We will be increasing our digital materials offering pending Overdrive platform change. We currently offer some Overdrive materials in addition to Enki ebooks through the Pacific Library Partnership and additional ebooks via Project Gutenberg.
- San Benito County Free Library's bookmobile currently makes stops all day on Fridays and both Wednesdays and Fridays in summer time.

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- Many cultural and other special programming (music, dancing, poetry, art, cooking presentations, etc) have been offered at the library. We are currently working with Hollister Arts Council, Credo Studios, and local artists on developing art and “maker” programming for children, teens, and adults at library.
 - All staff currently participate in various webinars, in-person trainings, conferences, etc. Staff are responsible for bringing training materials and information back to library and training other staff to maximize funds spent on training as well as time spent away from library.
 - Library currently provided pop-up library services at farmer’s markets, the San Benito County Fair, and other community events.