

ANNUAL REPORT

West Branch Public Library Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2022

October 2022

Welcome

Welcome to the Annual Report of the West Branch Public Library for 2022 fiscal year. As we emerge from the pandemic, many businesses and services, like the library, are searching for where our community is, what their needs are, and how to best provide library services.

This is a work that is definitely still in progress. We're all aware that our community is growing and set to continue that growth. In the course of two years the middle school - a source significant library foot traffic - moved further away and our community shifted demographics and interests. We found that many in our community applaud that growth, but worry that may lose the feeling of a small, connected community.

This past year, the library created a new strategic plan which involved surveying the community about what they see, need, and want. We have created plans which use library resources and connections to build community among our residents, both old and new. In the past year we began efforts like the return of the community newsletter, a regular email update, a community calendar, work on ensuring that all members of our community feel welcome, and celebrating the heritages found here and nearby.

In the coming year, we'll continue these efforts. By the end of the year, we hope to add welcome baskets, programs to bring specific populations together, and further celebrations of our various heritages.



2022 - 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY / BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN

- Know more about what goes on in local groups, service groups, and activities.
- See a positive image of the community.
- Learn how to lead a happy and healthy life.

- Connect with local nonprofits and charities.
- Find support for your business or community group.
- Find support and community while working remotely.



BUILD SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISES



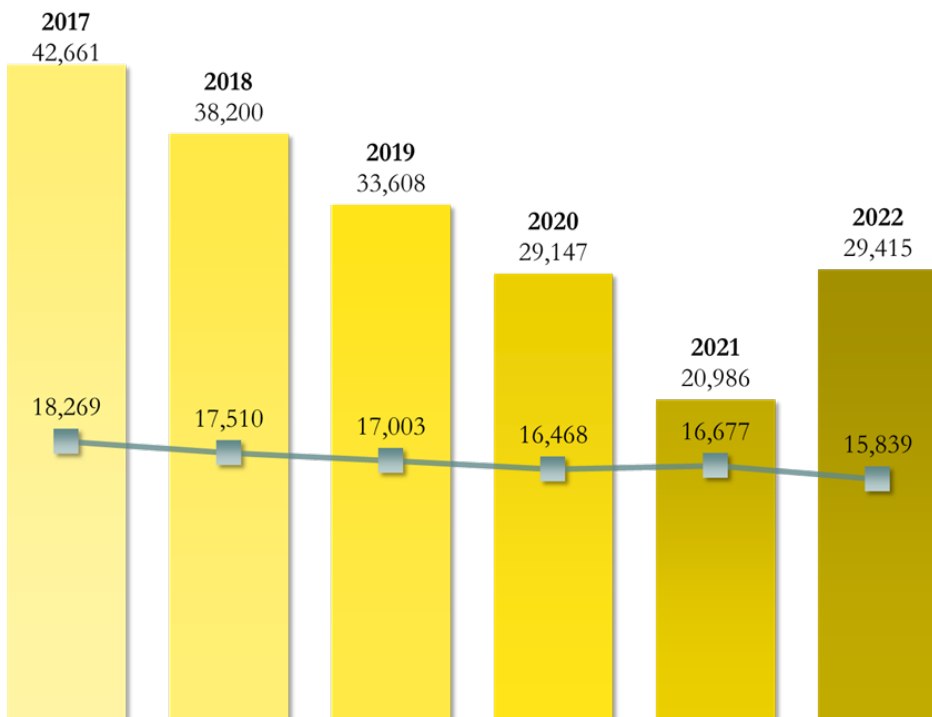
CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

- Celebrate the heritages, backgrounds, and experiences of our community members.
- Learn about others' viewpoints and experiences and welcome them to our community.



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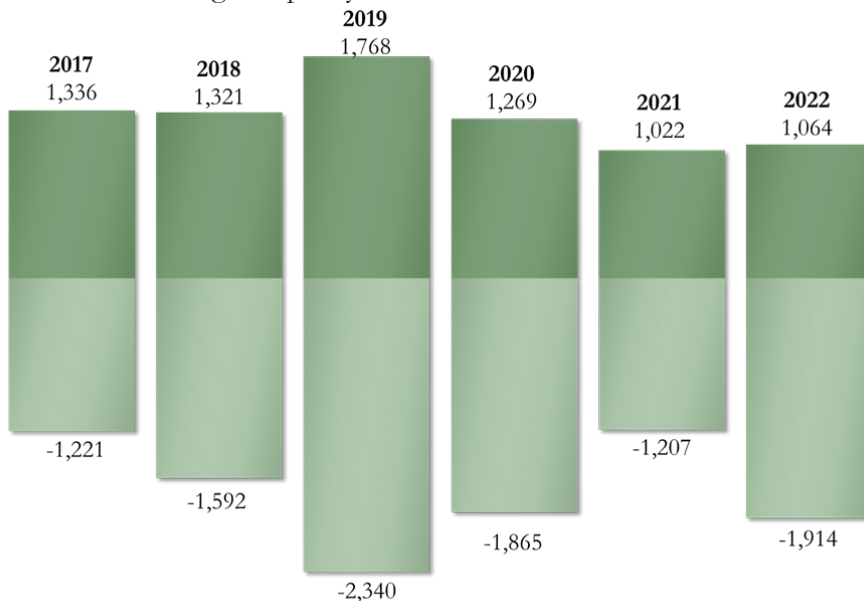
Total Circulation (bars) & Total Collection Size (line), 2017-2022

Circulation & Collection Size

As with other areas, the community's needs for the library collection have changed over the course of the two pandemic years. Circulation is rebounding, but trends in use continue to shift away from some items. The rise in streaming services and a change in movie theater distribution dropped library DVD use by 75% in a span of 5 years. Magazines also have little interest to our community now.

Yet, the draw of families coming to the library for a place to interact is strong. They come to the library for engagement and leave with a stack of books.

During the pandemic removal of unused books was less so you will note a rebound in weeding this past year.



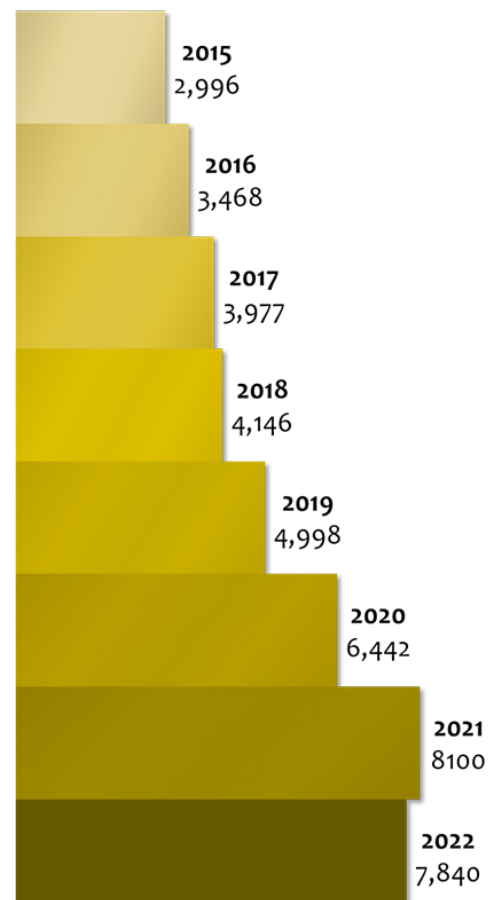
Numbers of items added and removed from the collection, 2017-2022

Electronic Items

One of the most interesting library-use trends of the pandemic has been in electronic use. When it began, people moved to electronic means of entertainment both for reading and visual entertainment.

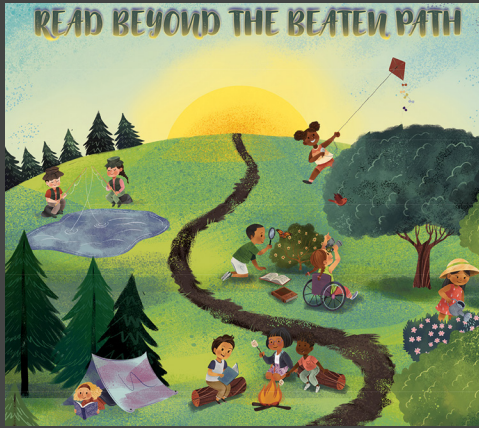
Ebooks and electronic audiobooks were not quite as popular in 2022 as during the height of quarantine, but many found the benefits of the format and have stuck with it. Electronic items are available at any time during the day and the breadth of the collection vastly exceeds that of any small library.

Electronic materials do remain very expensive for libraries and the demand easily outpaces the available funding. Electronic books for libraries cost five times the cost of a physical copy and local users alone are currently waiting for over 450 electronic titles.



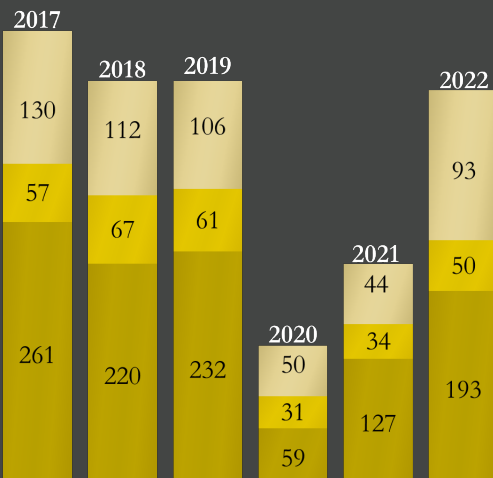
eBook & eAudiobook use, 2015 - 2022

Summer Library Program



Read Beyond the Beaten Path combined camp, adventure, and self discovery. With a focus on Summer Camp, we shared many different summer experiences from outdoor activities such as nature programs, arts and crafts, music, and more. We welcomed presenters that brought us butterfly experience tents, a hands-on reptile program, and even an African Drum Circle. We also went beyond the library to the Herbert Hoover National Park for Campfire Stories, to Cedar Valley Park for a family hike and picnic, and a Teen Campout at Becky's house.

Adults enjoyed a return to bingo cards, which challenged them to expand their reading horizons and explore their community. We gave away 3 exciting grand prize packs and more adults participated than ever before.



Youth(top), Teen(middle), & Adult (bottom) Summer Registrations



Kids gathered outside during summer to hear a story from ISU

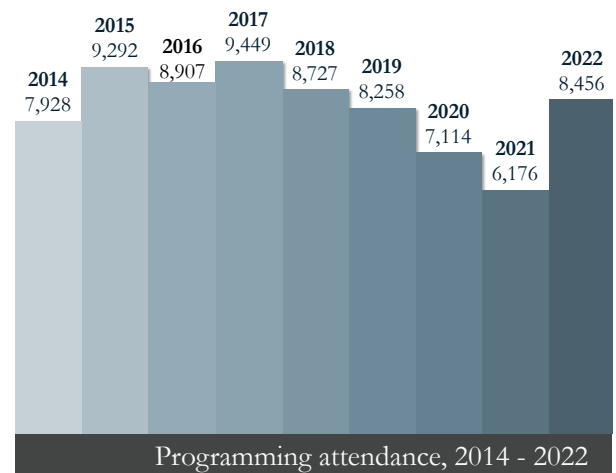
Programming

Events in 2022 saw the slow shift from outdoor programs towards returns to in-library programs. Storytimes again became a big draw and elementary-aged kids were able to visit the library once a month with their classes again.

The library staff left out some programming during the 2022 school year, primarily after-school programming and focused more on providing materials and craft supplies directly to homes. When in-person events did return, the library found a mixed reaction of either those extremely happy to get out of the house and those still a little tentative about gathering in a group.

Through 2022, many library programs, like the book discussion, were offered in a hybrid format with both in-person and online attendance available.

While not completely back to pre-pandemic levels, programming has begun to move back upwards and remains a focus of both library staff and library users alike.

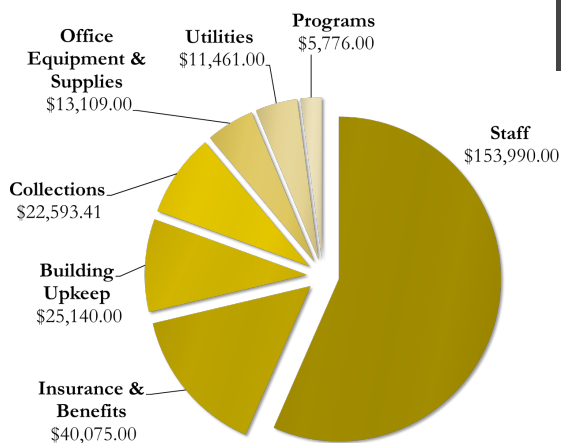


Programming attendance, 2014 - 2022

Financial Information

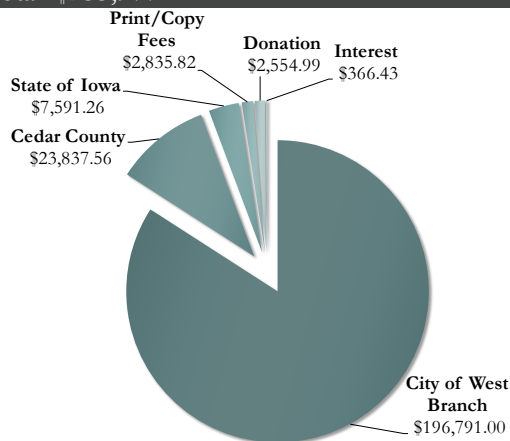
First, it is important to note that totals for expenditures in the library's records include benefits which are not reflected in the income as they come from a different city fund. Also, income is not fully expended so these totals will never be fully used.

The expenditures for Building Upkeep were this year with the replacement of an automatic door opener at roughly \$10,000. The library received an ARPA grant from the State Library for the book bike. This shows in the state income as well as the building upkeep due to a lack of a better category in which to place it. Regardless, building upkeep has grown regularly as the building ages.



Library Expenditures by Category
Total: \$274,144

Library Income by Category
Total: \$233,977



About this Report

The library's annual report has been prepared by
Nick Shimmin
Library Director
PO Box 460
West Branch, IA 52358

(319)643-2633

staff@wbpl.org

visit us on the web at
wbpl.org

The library would like to thank all of the people that make the West Branch Public Library possible in FY2022:

Library Board of Trustees

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Amber Klevin
Jim Farmer
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Liz Hernandez
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Library Visits

As expected, the number of visitors to visit the library decreased throughout the pandemic. Through the end of fiscal year 2020, through much of 2021, and into the beginning of 2022, the foot traffic has begun to return but has not regained itself.

The construction of the new Middle School to the western part of town has also had a significant effect on foot traffic. As was often known, the library was a hub for after-school hangout for pre-teen students and younger siblings in their care.

The library also held off on holding after-school activities which provided fewer incentives for this group of users to visit. With the reintroduction of these programs, we'll find out how this population uses the library in the future.

