Introducing Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends

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SPEAKERS

Melanie Huggins
Linda Hofschire
Tommy Hamby
Katina Jones
Sara Goek
LIBRARY METRICS AND TRENDS

The newest tool for data-driven planning and advocacy in libraries

librarybenchmark.org

Email: plabenchmark@ala.org
INTRODUCING BENCHMARK

Melanie Huggins
The PLA Strategic Plan

Transformation  Leadership  Advocacy  EDISJ  Organizational Excellence
ALA Strategic Initiatives

- Data, Research & Design
- Core values
  - Access
  - Diversity
  - Democracy
  - Service
  - The Public Good
  - Social Responsibility
SC PUBLIC LIBRARIES RESPOND:
Supporting Students and Families

“It’s been such a welcome feeling of support to get those videos from you and the CCPL staff with read-a-louds and tutorials on the library apps. It was a little something for the students and some help for parents also, which is exactly what we all need right now.”

Sarah Young,
Media Specialist
Charleston County School District

Sophia Shaffer enjoys Wando Library, Charleston County

SC PUBLIC LIBRARIES RESPOND:
Access to Essential Services

Breadth
Access to the Internet is not an amenity; it is a necessity, critical to education and the economy.

Florence Library has two “SmartFiber” hotspots that can park in public spots and provide Internet access that complies with social-distancing recommendations.

Marlboro, Colleton, Chester, Berkeley and Dillon libraries use their bookmobiles as roving hotspots, visiting housing and rural areas.

Many libraries, including Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Chesterfield, Colleton, Dillon, Edgefield, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Orangeburg and Saluda, enhanced Wi-Fi reach and made it available for use 24/7.

Berkley, Charleston, Chester, Charleston, Clarendon, Darlington, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper, Lexington, Marion, Marlboro and Sumter libraries, among others, are checking out hotspots to help bridge the Digital Divide.

Union Library is partnering with the Union-County Detention Center to expand Wi-Fi reach and Richland Library has placed Wi-Fi devices in all of the Columbia Housing Authorities residences.

Food Insecurity
Limited incomes and food deserts intensified residents’ needs and created new partnerships.

Charleston, Lexington and Marion libraries used their parking lots and facilities as packing sites, passing out books and library information with summer lunches.

Marlboro Library worked with local community groups to pass out boxes of fresh produce to families in need. They have distributed over 500 boxes to date.

Richland and Union libraries each partnered to help seniors gain access to the Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers, fresh produce and weekly meals distributed at library locations with partners like Senior Resource and AmeriCorps.

Calhoun Library worked with schools, social services, churches, and community volunteers to identify households that experienced hardship as a result of COVID-19. This collaboration provided groceries, fresh produce, and utility assistance as needed. Over 350 individuals are currently receiving needed nutrition and help with electric and water bills.

Census Participation
As trusted institutions, public libraries are leading and collaborating on Census 2020 efforts.

Richland Library has a Census Hotline, used to educate customers on the value and importance of the census, speak to them about privacy concerns, and assist with the completion of the census online via toll-free phones.

Marion County Library staff is going door to door in need to count areas, encouraging Census participation. The bookmobile’s Wi-Fi-Fi and computers are used in the field to count citizens.

Florence Library developed a website to support its local Complete Count Committee.

Orangeburg Library assisted its Complete Count Committee by purchasing advertising on radio stations to encourage participation in the Census.

Aiken, Barnwell, Berkeley and Edgefield libraries made Census participation a feature article in their July 2020 library newsletter. The digital newsletter that was emailed to library patrons provided links and information promoting Census participation.

Small Business and Unemployment Assistance
Libraries utilized their expertise and trained, compassionate staff to make a difference.

Charleston and Richland libraries launched websites designed to help small business and the unemployed navigate assistance and find up-to-date resources.

Calhoun Library created video tutorials that helped business owners apply for Economic Injury and Paycheck Protection Program loans.

Berkeley and Richland library staff are personally assisting customers with unemployment over the phone and in person to help alleviate wait times.

Lexicon Library initiated a Phone-a-Resume service and will take information over the phone and email or mail a completed professional resume to the patron.

*All SC libraries are working towards ensuring customers safety into our facilities again. Please contact your library Director if you have questions about your library’s status.

Brought to you by
The South Carolina Public Library Administrators
Make up of administrators and directors of all county public library systems in South Carolina, SCPLA is the collective voice to ensure exceptional public library services across South Carolina.
ABOUT BENCHMARK

Linda Hofschire
Benchmark Origins

Public Library Data Service (PLDS)/PLAmetrics
Benchmark Origins

Feedback from the field (PLAmetrics subscribers and virtual and in-person town halls):

• Less redundancy
• Better peer comparison data
• Improved data training related to community indicators
• User-friendly interface for analysis and reporting
Benchmark Development

IMLS Public Libraries Survey
(aka Annual Report, State Report, etc.)
Benchmark Development

IMLS Public Libraries Survey (aka Annual Report, State Report, etc.)

Peer Groups = groups of libraries that share similar characteristics
American Institutes of Research analyzed a variety of characteristics to determine which were most predictive of library outputs:

- Region
- Hours open
- Total operating revenue
- Square footage
- Collection size
- Number of branches

And more!
Benchmark Development – Peer Group Characteristics

- Region
- Legal basis
- Locale
- Percent non-Hispanic white
- Percent with a college degree
Value to Public Libraries

- Decision-making
- Planning
- Improvement
- Advocacy
- Efficiency
NAVIGATING BENCHMARK

Tommy Hamby
Access

All public libraries have **free access** to:

• View select data visualizations that compare your library to its primary peer group and all libraries nationwide
• Complete surveys from PLA
• See your library’s responses submitted to past PLA and PLDS surveys
• Manage contact information and preferences
• Access data-related resources

**Subscribers** also get access to:

• A robust set of interactive data dashboards with visualizations and filters
• A custom report builder that includes all historic metrics
• The ability to create custom peer groups for benchmarking
Visualize

**Topics**
- Summary Data (selected charts from other topic areas)
- Programs and Services
- Collections and Circulation
- Technology
- Staff
- Facilities
- Funding
- Community

**Data sources**
- New PLA topical surveys
- Historic PLDS data
- IMLS Public Libraries Survey
- Census Bureau’s American Community Survey

View any chart as a table or export the data
Compare

Programs & Services: Number of Library Programs
- Your Library
- Peer Group Median
- All Median

Laptops & Tablets
- Peer Group
- All

*Data Source: IMLS Public Libraries Survey (2019)
Explore

Data Filters

• Survey Year
• Peer Group
• Library characteristics
  • Locale
  • Region
  • Population of service area
  • Legal basis
• Community characteristics
  • Percent persons of color
  • Percent college-educated
# Create Custom Reports

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Survey Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Survey Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>PLA Public Library Data Service</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Peer Group</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Survey Sections</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Peer Group</td>
<td>Great Lakes</td>
<td>Interlibrary Loan</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Basis</th>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Question Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Multiple selections</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Your Library</th>
<th>Peer Group Median</th>
<th>Peer Group Average</th>
<th>All Median</th>
<th>All Average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual number of loans provided to other libraries</td>
<td>22,131</td>
<td>13,948</td>
<td>17,540</td>
<td>5,193</td>
<td>22,487</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual number of loans received from other libraries</td>
<td>27,104</td>
<td>13,356</td>
<td>17,710</td>
<td>4,882</td>
<td>23,282</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILL from other Libraries per capita</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILL Lending Per 1,000 Served</td>
<td>1,268.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>540.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>959.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILL to other Libraries per capita</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILLs Received Per 1,000 Served</td>
<td>1,553.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>469.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>926.9</td>
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## Tutorials

**Getting Started**
Navigating your Benchmark account and subscription information.

**The Survey Metrics Dashboard**
How to navigate the dashboards, interpret the visualizations, apply filters, and see tooltips.

**Creating a Custom Peer Group**
How to create a custom peer group for benchmarking.

**Viewing Tables and Exporting Data**
How to view tables and export data for any charts in the dashboard.

**Creating a Custom Report**
How to use the Custom Report builder to view and export data

## Interpreting the Data

**About Benchmark**
Background on the tool and its development.

**Benchmarking**
Making effective peer comparisons for planning and advocacy.

**Peer Groups**
An outline of the primary peer groups in Benchmark and the methodology used to create them.

**IMLS Public Libraries Survey Data**
The Benchmark dashboards include IMLS PLS data from 2006 to the most recent available.

**PLA Survey Data**
The Benchmark dashboards include data from PLA’s new topical surveys and historic Public Library Data Service (PLDS) surveys.

**Census Data**
The Benchmark dashboards include data drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

## Surveys

**2021 Survey Instructions**
Instructions and glossary

**2021 Public Library Staff & Diversity Survey**
Survey worksheet (fillable PDF)

**PLA Technology Survey (2020)**
Reference copy (PDF) of the 2020 Technology Survey.

**PLDS Surveys 2011-2019**
Reference copies of all PLDS surveys, 2011-2019 (PDF).

## Other Resources

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Free webinar: Introducing Benchmark**
Join PLA member leaders and staff for an introduction to Benchmark on Monday, Nov. 8 at 1pm CT. Click the link to register.

**ALA Privacy Policy**
Link to ALA website

**PLA Data Initiatives**
Link to PLA website
Subscribe

Public Libraries

Subscriptions and surveys are handled at the administrative entity (system) level and may include branch libraries.

Cost per year:
$400

10% discounts available for PLA organizational members and for survey participants (for a combined 20% off!)

Consortium / State Library Agency / Group

Access for up to 10 libraries. Additional libraries can be added at a discounted rate.

Cost per year:
$3,000 for up to 10 libraries, and $200 for each additional library.

10% discount available for PLA organizational members.

Corporate

Companies, vendors, or other organizations.

Cost per year:
$1,800

10% discount available for PLA organizational members.
How do you answer... ?

• What is the average salary for a beginning librarian for libraries like ours?

• How does our full- and part-time staff size compare to libraries with similar legal service areas, physical circulation, or program offerings?

• What type of community is best served by a Community Resources Coordinator?

• Have any of our peers started similar EDI efforts?
Why this survey?

- Library leaders need data about staffing and diversity.
- Produce powerful, actionable, and inspirational results for your library and library staff across the country.
- Provide nationally representative data to inform and engage elected officials, the media, and funders.
- Opportunity for PLA to develop tools for peer comparison and to plan relevant professional development initiatives.
- These 2021 data will be a baseline to see how the field has evolved when this survey is next administered in 2024.
Sections within Survey

- Salaries and Hours
- Library Roles
- Staff Representation
- Hiring and Retention Strategies
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Goals and Activities

Response Options

- Counts of full- and part-time staff
- Yes/No for strategies, goals, and activities
- Open fields to clarify or share near-term goals
All public libraries are invited to complete the survey.

Sampling or weighting adjustments will be made to ensure results are representative of libraries nationwide and within peer groups and locales.

A survey summary report will be shared publicly by PLA.

All data will be available to Benchmark subscribers.
Survey Instructions

Login to your library’s Benchmark account and click on **Surveys**.

Under “Open Surveys” click on 2021 Staff Survey.

The **survey worksheet** is a fillable PDF that may help you compile your answers.

The nature of the staffing questions means you may need to work with colleagues in HR or other areas to find the necessary information.
Online Form

Your responses need to be added to the **online form**.

You can **save responses** and return to complete and **submit** them later.

Deadline: **December 10th**

Survey participants receive discounted Benchmark subscriptions!
Next steps for Benchmark

• Add new data as it becomes available
• Continued improvements to the resources, dashboards, and interface
• Development of 2022 Programs & Services survey
QUESTIONS?

Type your questions in the chat...

Send questions to plabenchmark@ala.org
THANK YOU!

librarybenchmark.org