



Enosburgh Public Library
Photo – Kevin Unrath

Vermont Department of Libraries

Vermont Public Library FY2023 Annual Report Summary

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Introduction

The Public Library Annual Report is a broad statistical summary of a year in the life of Vermont's public libraries. The Vermont Department of Libraries gathers this data annually as part of a national survey coordinated by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) known as the Public Library Survey (PLS). The PLS covers a variety of information, from visitation and programming, to finances and staffing, to circulation and holdings (both physical and digital).

The resulting data is used by a wide range of organizations to better understand and support the current library environment: IMLS, state (and territorial) libraries throughout the nation, federal and state government policymakers and officials, and national library leadership. At the local level, it's also heavily used by individual library staff, trustees, and local officials to see trends and compare themselves with similar institutions.

In the 2023 report, 148 of Vermont's 187 public libraries submitted data. These libraries range from one-room libraries run by volunteers and open five hours a week, to large libraries with multiple staff and open 50+ hours a week. Reporting is a significant undertaking, with nearly 200 questions, some of which require digging into stats or coordinating with municipal partners. We present this summary report with thanks to our library community.



2023 Report Statewide Totals

(Percentage changes are from 2022 to 2023)

Hours, Visits, and Borrowers

- Library Hours Open - 230,442 (up 3%)
- Annual Visits - 2,136,870 (up 23%)
- Registered Borrowers - 273,291 (down 1%)

Circulation and Usage

- Physical Circulation - 3,046,054 (up 6%)
- eBook/eAudiobook Circulation - 724,580 (up 8%)
- Database Usage - 287,738 (not comparable with 2022)

Interlibrary Loan

- Provided - 83,867 (up 7%)
- Received - 94,426 (up 7%)

Programming

- Programs (In-Person and Virtual) - 26,174 (up 51%)
- Program Attendance - 338,888 (up 64%)
- Non-Library Sponsored Programs - 9,427 (up 30%)

Items in the Collection

- Print - 2,466,905 (down 7%)
- Physical Video - 217,335 (down 3%)
- Physical Audio - 102,823 (down 12%)
- Non-Traditional Physical Items - 10,213 (down 4%)

Computer Use and Reference Questions

- Public Computer Sessions - 155,008 (up 30%)
- WiFi Sessions - 905,664 (up 21%)
- Reference Questions - 229,947 (up 7%)



Fun Statistical Facts



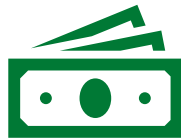
Annual Visits:
2,136,870

This averages out to every single Vermonter visiting libraries more than 3.3 times in a year.



Physical Item Circulation: 3,046,054

That's the equivalent of every single book in Fletcher Free's collection (in Burlington) being checked out more than 26 times.



Interlibrary Loans:
Provided - 83,867
Received - 94,426

At \$12.00 per item, it would have cost Vermont libraries over \$1.1 million to purchase them independently.



Library Programs:
(In-Person & Virtual)
26,174

If you ran fast enough, you could attend an average of 71 library programs in Vermont every day of the year.



WiFi Sessions: 905,664

If Vermont patrons had to buy a \$3.00 cup of coffee to use the public WiFi, this would have cost them over \$2.7 million in total.



Vermont Library Metrics: Insights Through Median Statistics

Median Numbers and Ranges by Question



Celebrate Vermont's Libraries



Eight photos of the interior and exteriors of Vermont libraries and library activity with child and adult patrons

A note on median numbers – there are a number of ways to describe the middle or average of a group of numbers, such as mean and mode. We most often use median; to find the median, you line up the numbers lowest to highest and find the one in the middle. Medians are especially useful where outliers (either high or low) would make the mean a poor description of a set. In Vermont, we have many small libraries, but the few (much) larger libraries would tend to skew the mean, making the “middle” library look bigger than it is.



2023 Median Statistics

(Percentage changes are from 2022 to 2023)

General (Hours, Visits, and Borrowers):

- **Population:** 1,853
Ranges from 278 to 44,646 residents
- **Hours Open:** 1,612 per year / 31 per week (+19%)
Ranges from 255 to 3,016 hours
- **Registered Borrowers:** 1,055 (+2%)
Ranges from 141 to 17,288 patrons
- **Annual Visits:** 5,845 (+28%)
Ranges from 75 to 193,772 visits
- **Reference Questions:** 427 (+6%)
Ranges from 0 to 27,493 questions

Facilities:

- **Year Building was Built:** 1912
Ranges from 1781 to 2021
- **Square Footage:** 2,713
Ranges from 527 to 48,348 sq. ft.

Staffing:

- **Total Paid Staff Hours per Week:** 57 (+14%)
Ranges from 0 (volunteer run) to 940 staff hours
- **Volunteer Hours per Week:** 8 (+30%)
Ranges from 0 to 108 volunteer hours

Income:

- **Local Tax Support:** \$78,002 (+18%)
Ranges from \$0 to \$2.4 million



- **Other Income:** \$11,384 (-12%)
Ranges from \$0 to \$714,330

Expenses:

- **Material Expenses:** \$9,307 (+2%)
Ranges from \$155 to \$231,879
- **Staff Expenses:** \$64,674 (+5%)
Ranges from \$0 to \$2,017,794
- **Other Expenses:** \$20,720 (-4%)
Ranges from \$0 to \$308,594

Collection:

- **Physical Circ:** 8,544 (+18%)
Ranges from 202 to 351,251 circs
- **Electronic Circ:** 1,842 (+14%)
Ranges from 0 to 87,308 circs
- **Physical Books in Collection:** 12,887 (+3%)
Ranges from 2,078 to 112,984 books

Interlibrary Loan:

- **ILL Provided:** 300 (+23%)
Ranges from 0 to 5,545 items
- **ILL Received:** 331 (+22%)
Ranges from 0 to 7,594 items

Computers:

- **Public Computer Sessions:** 423 (+35%)
Ranges from 0 to 22,299 sessions
- **WiFi Sessions:** 2,400 (+60%)
Ranges from 5 to 105,840 sessions



Programming:

- **Programs:** 110 (+52%)
Ranges from 0 to 1,070 programs
- **Program Attendance:** 1,337 (+64%)
Ranges from 0 to 18,956 attendance Ranges from 202 to 351,251 circs



Median Comparison Year-by-Year

Survey Year	Pop.	Weeks Open	Hours Open	Square Footage	Librarian Hours	Total Staff Hours	Local Tax Support*	Per Capita Tax Support	Other Local Income	Total Grants	Total Revenue
2018	1,849	52	1,560	2,700	33	48	\$48,949	\$27.02	\$9,907	\$1,015	\$80,020
2019	1,907	52	1,550	2,700	35	49	\$48,991	\$27.78	\$9,496	\$743	\$83,104
2020	1,918	39	1,281	2,713	35	51	\$65,790	\$29.62	\$9,446	\$590	\$89,422
2021	1,867	33	600	2,713	38	50	\$74,944	\$30.55	\$10,111	\$2,020	\$93,843
2022	1,880	52	1,352	2,720	40	50	\$66,000	\$30.15	\$13,066	\$8,366	\$108,463
2023	1,853	52	1,612	2,713	40	57	\$78,002	\$31.25	\$11,384	\$3,623	\$110,563

Survey Year	Collection Expenses	Staff Expenses	Other Expenses	Registered Patrons	Visits	Per Capita Visits	Physical Circ	eCirc
2018	\$9,123	\$47,414	\$19,700	978	7,991	3.99	9,075	921
2019	\$8,323	\$49,046	\$18,991	1,010	8,625	3.83	8,526	1,189
2020	\$8,653	\$52,765	\$18,616	1,102	6,046	2.76	7,881	1,202
2021	\$8,823	\$57,409	\$19,596	1,095	1,571	0.72	6,121	1,528
2022	\$9,064	\$61,120	\$21,627	1,025	4,543	1.94	7,181	1,605
2023	\$9,307	\$64,674	\$20,270	1,055	5,845	2.59	8,544	1,842



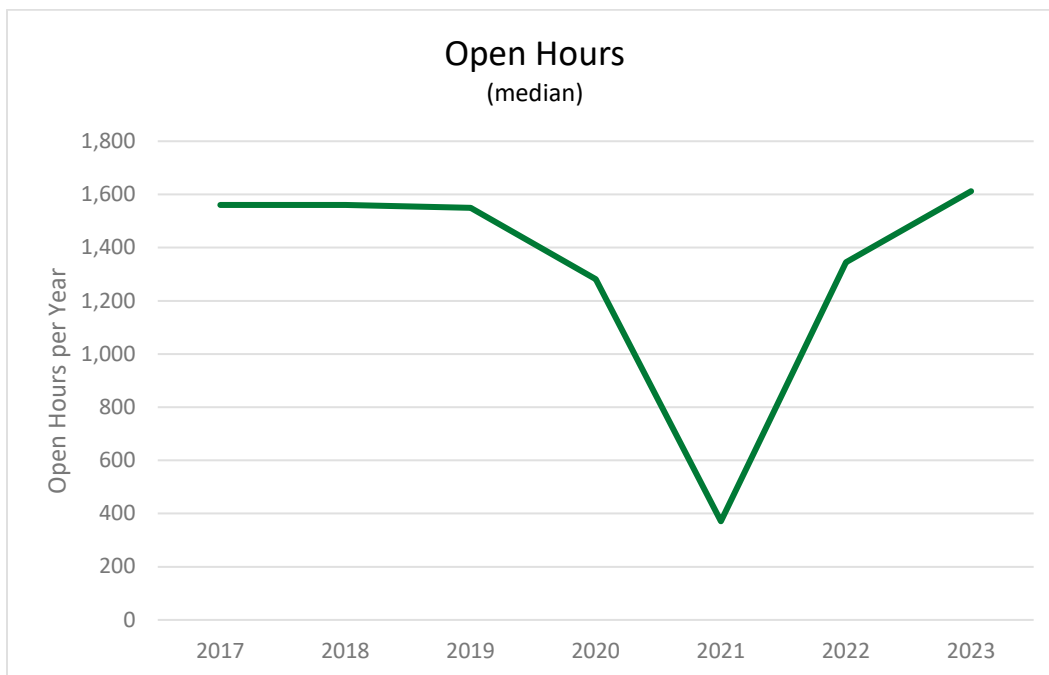
Survey Year	Programs	Program Attendance	Program Attendance Per Capita	Public Comp Uses	WiFi Sessions
2018	138	1,516	0.64	1,055	689
2019	133	1,574	0.68	949	1,200
2020	107	1,193	0.62	604	1,500
2021	37	400	0.13	100	1,400
2022	72	815	0.30	313	1,500
2023	110	1,337	0.48	423	2,400

* Though medians are typically a good fit for our data, they can shift up or down depending on exactly which and how many libraries respond. For example, anomalies in Local Tax Support from 2021-2023 seem to be due to these year-to-year variations.



Broad Trends Using Medians

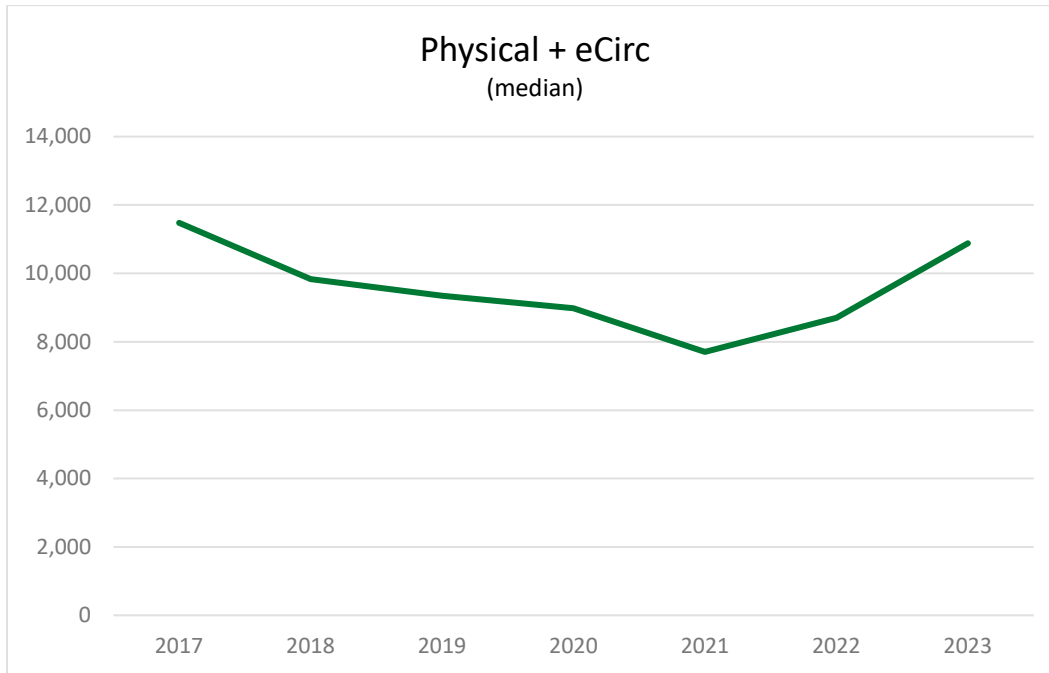
Data from the 2023 report appears to show the same trends as 2022. Many service categories continue to recover from pandemic lows, although in some cases they haven't returned to pre-pandemic highs.



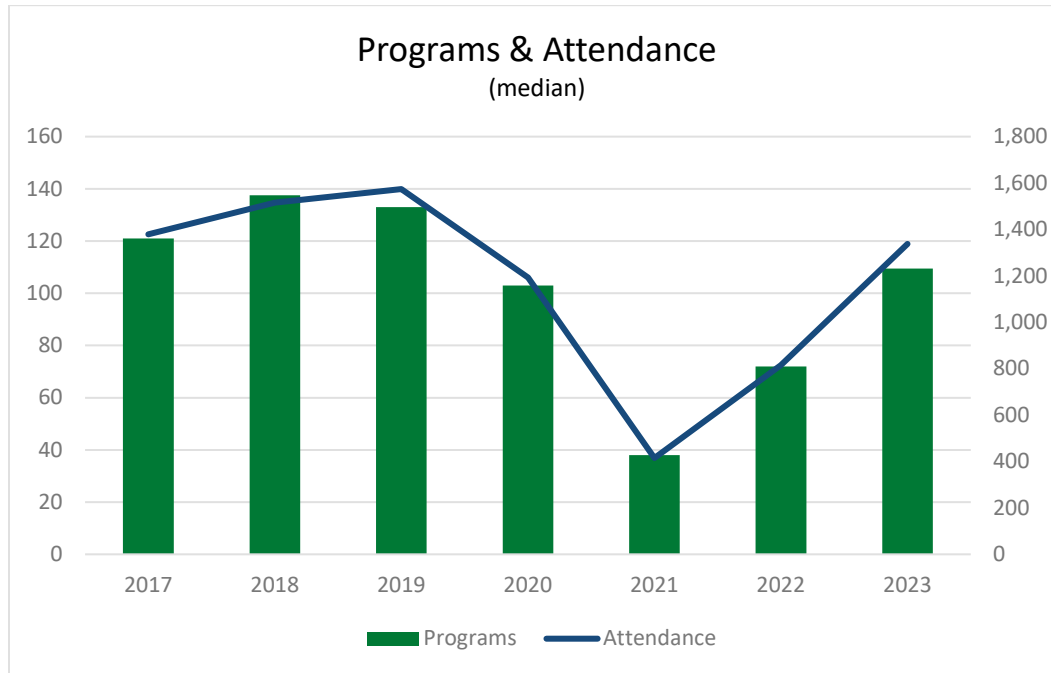
Open hours have regained pre-pandemic levels.



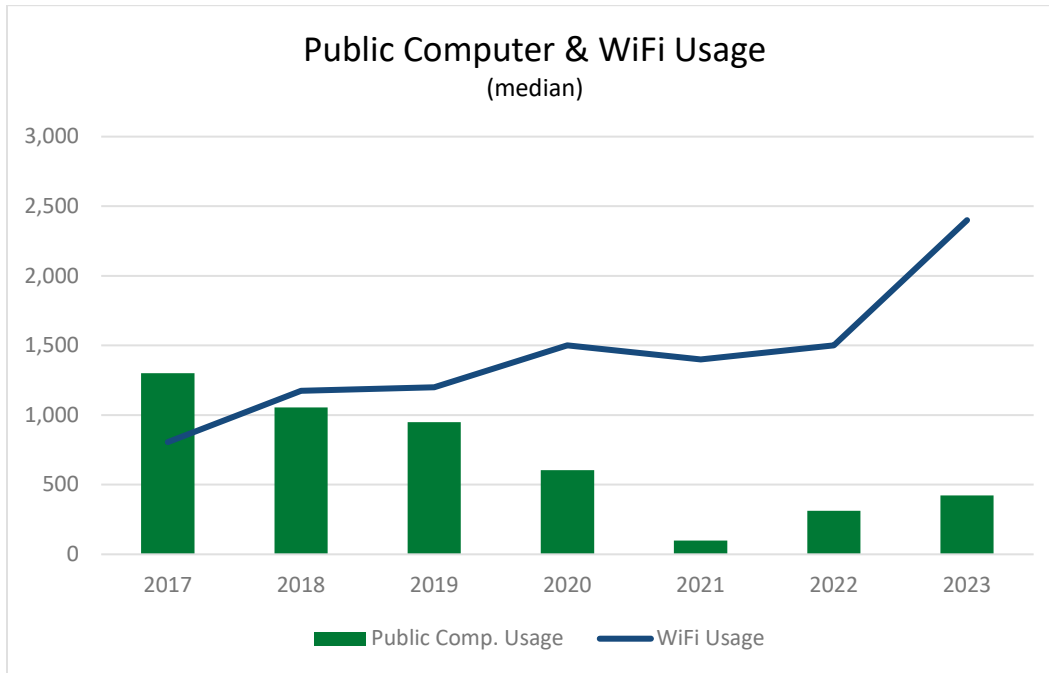
Annual visits are still catching up to pre-pandemic numbers.



Physical and e-circulation numbers combined are close to reaching recent pre-pandemic levels.



Programs and attendance are significantly up from 2022 but have not yet returned to pre-pandemic heights.



Public computer usage has continued to increase from pandemic lows, though it's probably also showing a long-term decline that began before the pandemic (as personal-owned devices became more common). Conversely, WiFi usage in public libraries continues to climb.