



Monthly Activity Report

September 2021

Service Highlights

This month, the Mayor and City Council recognized September as Library Card Sign-Up Month during a proclamation reading at the City Council meeting on September 7.

The Library received ARPA funding from the FCC to add 250 internet bundles into the collection for check out. These internet bundles will include a hotspot with unlimited data and a Chromebook 3100. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) created the Emergency Connectivity Fund program (ECF) to provide funds for libraries and schools to purchase equipment and services to connect customers to the internet in areas 'other than the library.' ECF provides funding for tablets, hotspots, and data services. Providing both a device and a hotspot targets customers with the lowest level of internet and technology access, which is the intent of the ECF.

On September 8, the Library launched a pilot program to increase accessibility to e-collections to those that do not have library cards. Overdrive, the Library's e-book vendor, offers an Instant Digital Card (IDC) that allows community members to sign up to access e-books and audiobooks with a cell phone number. 326 customers sign up for the card by the end of the month. Customers who sign up for a digital card are able to check out a maximum of three items at a time. The IDC authenticates off of zip code, so in the process of signing up for this card, the Library is also receiving email addresses and mailing addresses, which will allow the Library to reach out to encourage these customers to get a regular card to have even more access to our collections.

Staff is working with the City of Wichita Management Fellows on two projects to help better engage and inform the community about Library services:

- A racial equity study to see how the Library can better serve underserved populations, with a focus on areas around the Angelou, Alford and Walters branches.
- A customer experience study to see if the current setup of libraries best serves customers. The focus will be on the Advanced Learning Library, Angelou and Rockwell branches.

Staff is underway with project plans for the State Library of Kansas' "Kansas Reads to Preschoolers" program. This year, the State Library asked the Wichita Public Library to film story times of the selected book, *Grumpy Bird* by Jason Tankard, in English, Spanish and American Sign Language. These videos will be available for libraries and early learning centers throughout the state.

The Library received more than 1,000 renewal and e-card creation requests in September. The success with schools last year continues as staff assist students in connecting to valuable Library resources.

Other News

On September 18, the Library held a ribbon cutting for the Dr. Ronald W. Walters Branch Library. Members of the Walters family joined City and Library staff and members of the Library Board for the dedication. [You can watch the event here.](#)

Communications and Digital Services staff participated in the Sonify conference at Envision. This year, the Library has been working with Sonify and members of the blind and visually impaired (BVI) community to create projects around data-driven storytelling. The purpose is to make data sets more accessible to the BVI community through auditory means, like podcasts and music. The group met with experts in data research and sonification and took a deep dive into this new trend of communication.

Work has begun on the exterior mural at the Maya Angelou Branch Library. The mural will feature a portrait of Maya Angelou and excerpts from her work. The mural was proposed by and is being painted by the youth mentorship program Real Men Real Heroes.

The Library eliminated hold fees for all customers on October 1 as part of this year's budget process to ensure more equitable access to the collection. Previously, materials placed on hold through the catalog were charged 25 cents. The Library still charges a \$1 per item fee if a customer doesn't pick up their holds within the reservation period. Initial response has shown a significant increase in hold volumes at several branches. We have received great feedback from this new policy:

This is great news for Wichita! - *Amy B. on Facebook*

Can the Library be any more amazing? - *Zatica on Reddit*

Woohoo! Just another reason to love the library! - *ArtemisCat33 on Reddit*

As I picked up my first hold request ever... yesterday. Welp. That quarter could have done SO MUCH GOOD for me sitting in a jar on top of my dresser. Seriously though, this is awesome and I wish I had spent more time taking advantage of the library sooner. I'd gladly give them an additional quarter a week if it meant we get more awesome things like this in the future. - *Pobeda_nad_Solnstem on Reddit*

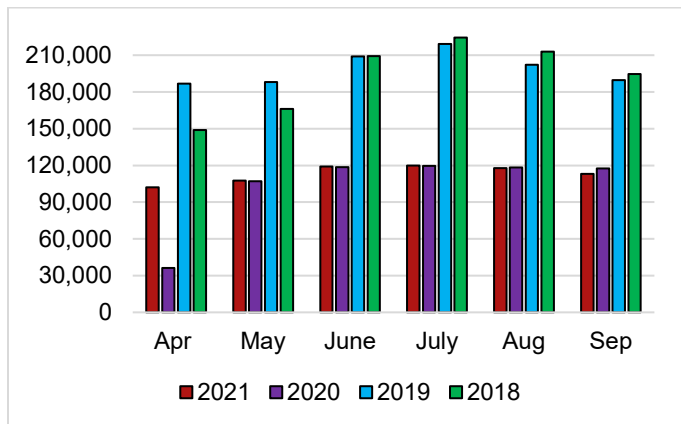
YAY!!!! Trying to pick out books with two toddlers and an infant is IMPOSSIBLE. Holds made getting good books possible, but it was always a little expensive, especially if each kid got a couple of books. This is so amazing for parents of young children who want to make sure their kids get good books without losing their minds chaing them while looking through stacks of books. This is SO SO SO amazing!! Thank you so much! - *Daniele on Instagram*

Technology Trainers completed 170 Book-A-Librarian appointments in September, with assistance provided for unemployment filing, resume posting and printing, passport applications, printing court documents, phone assistance, tax forms and online security issues. Technology Trainers also taught 10 classes on Zoom with more than 74 virtual students in attendance.

Service Dashboard

All Library buildings were closed to the public from March 17-May 25, 2020. From November 25, 2020-March 7, 2021, all locations were limited to curbside and drive-up services. Although service offerings have expanded, they are still reduced from pre-COVID levels. The Evergreen Branch closed on November 30, 2020 for renovations and a temporary outlet opened on December 21 at the Evergreen Recreation Center.

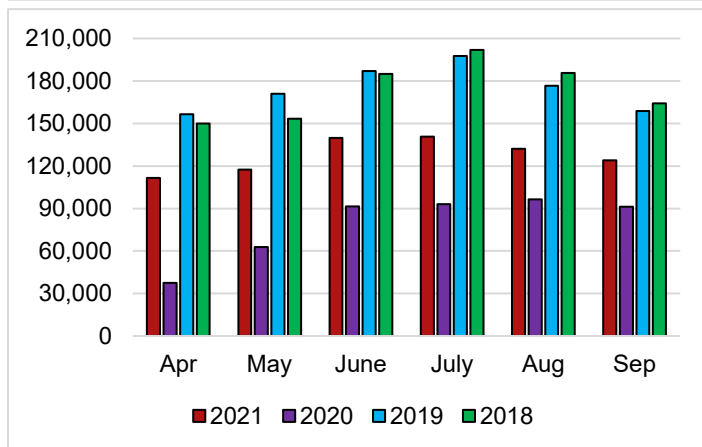
LIBRARY VISITS (door count, catalog sessions, and website visits)



SEPTEMBER

	2021	2020	% change
Door Counts	37,212	38,049	-2.20%
Catalog Log-ins	34,419	38,475	-10.54%
Website Visits	41,424	40,977	1.09%
Total	113,055	117,501	-3.78%

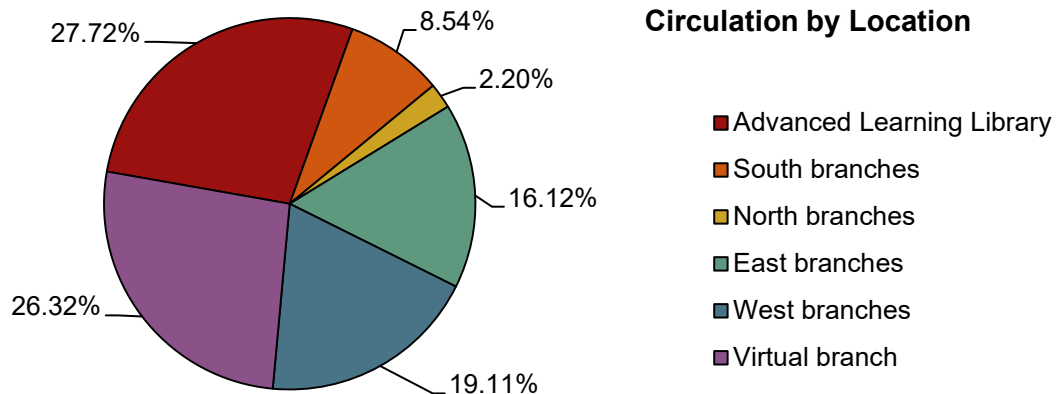
CHECKOUTS



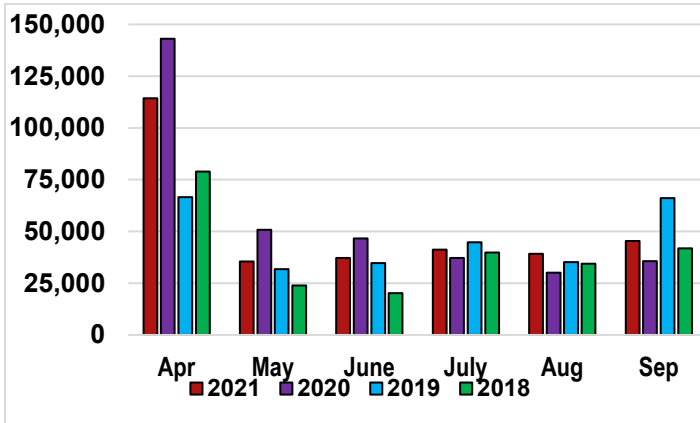
SEPTEMBER

	2021	2020	% change
Physical Circ	91,376	59,130	54.53%
Virtual Circ	32,638	32,031	1.90%
WPL	25,690	22,904	12.16%
State	6,948	9,127	-23.87%
Total	124,014	91,161	36.04%

Circulation by Location



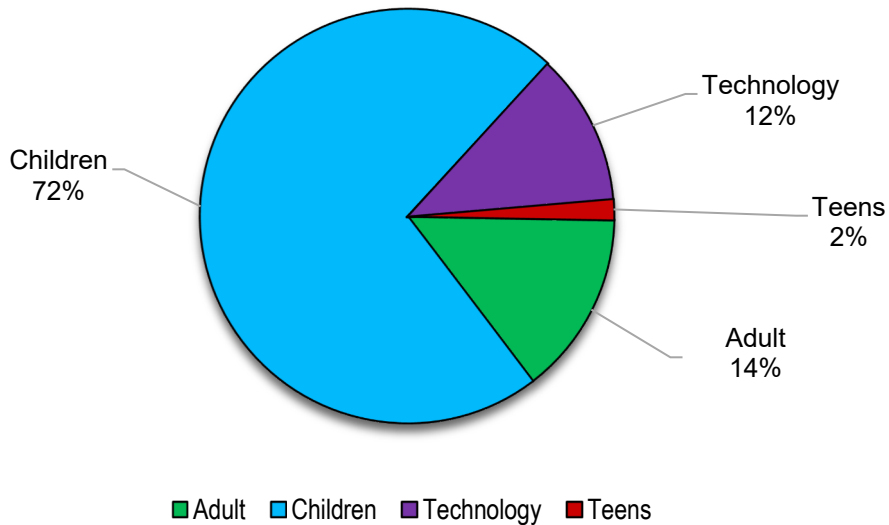
QUESTIONS ANSWERED (by staff in person/phone and through online services)



	SEPTEMBER		
	2021	2020	% change
Reference Questions	5,477	1,616	238.92%
Database Searches	37,725	32,884	14.72%
Technology Assistance	1,976	1,102	79.31%
Book-A-Librarian Appointments	170	72	136.11%
Total	45,348	35,674	27.12%

Some locations did not report the number of reference questions answered or technology assistance provided between June-December 2020.

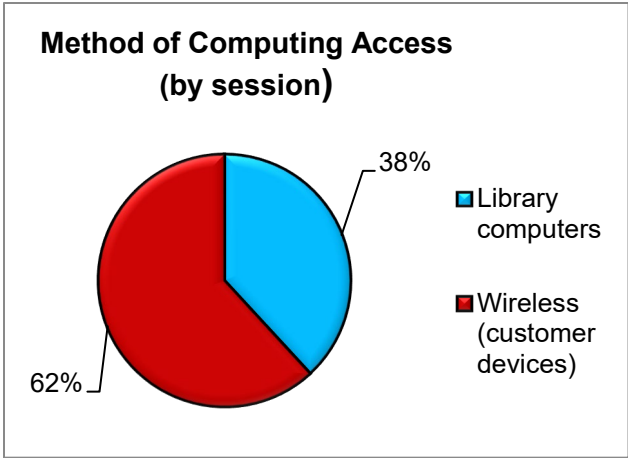
PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



SEPTEMBER ATTENDANCE

	2021	2020	% change
Adult events	90	317	-71.61%
Children's events	452	0	N/A
Technology training	74	0	N/A
Teen events	10	28	-64.29%
TOTAL	626	345	81.45%

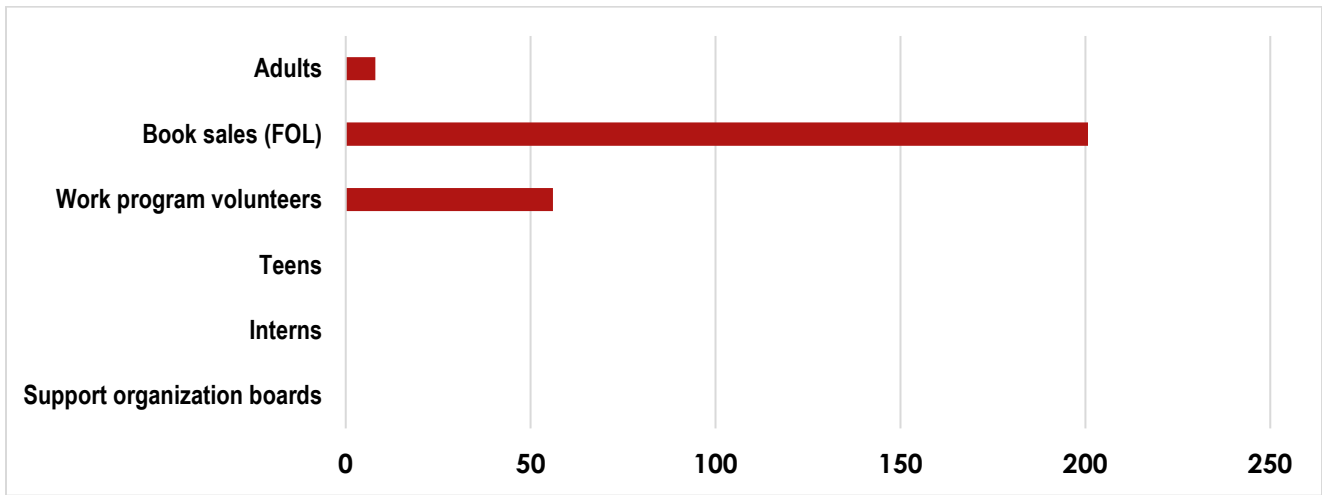
PUBLIC COMPUTING



SEPTEMBER

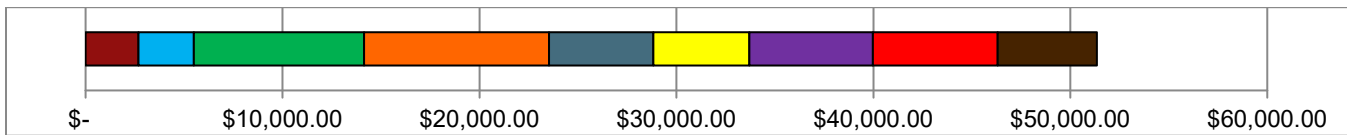
	2021	2020	% change
Workstation Sessions	4,302	4,660	-7.68%
Wi-Fi Sessions	6,971	4,731	47.35%
Number of Users	1,017	586	73.55%
Hours of Access	7,964	5,920	34.53%

VOLUNTEERS (hours of service)



Number of volunteers YTD = 54 Hours of service YTD = 1,909

MATERIALS DONATIONS (value if purchased)



Year to date total = \$51,354.34 Items added to Library collections YTD = 2,883

Service Snapshot: Recent Raving Fans Stories

After John Cleary (Advanced Learning Library) helped a Grant STEPS Consulting Group with research on Foundation Directory Online, he received a thank you note: *“If you ever need to make a case to the City of Wichita for why the Library should pay for a subscription to FDO, here’s your case. Most of this \$240,000 comes from outside [of] Wichita, and even outside [of] Kansas. So this is a net economic impact to our City.”* [Here’s an article detailing how the grant funds will be used.](#)

A customer recently visited the Advanced Learning Library looking for a book about printmaking. In conversation with Library staff, it was discovered that the customer is starting an art gallery. Library staff was able to tell the customer about physical and digital resources available for people who wish to start a small business. The customer was really impressed with the business section in the Learning Pavilion, and said they “didn’t have a clue” such resources existed.

An adult student visited the Alford Branch with her laptop to work on college coursework. She speaks English with a heavy Spanish accent. She was having trouble working in Microsoft Excel, and Robyn Belt and Anita Schoenecker (Alford Branch) both assisted the customer with her questions. The following day, the customer returned with a thank you note saying she received a great score on her assignment, and appreciated the Library’s help.

An elderly customer came to the Westlink Branch needing help setting up auto pay on a utility bill. Eileen Ball (Westlink Branch) helped her to login and navigate the online payment process. The customer was very grateful as she said she lacked the technology skills and a computer to complete this task herself.

A customer came in looking for a directory of Kansas manufacturers, but couldn’t find it on the shelf. Jennifer Durham (Library Assistant) used this as an opportunity to introduce the customer how to use the A to Z database, showing him how to locate specific businesses in a geographic area and by business type. The customer was happy to know there was a resource that would be able to help him and told Jennifer it was better than having to look through a heavy reference book.

Storytimes remain essential to many parents and early learners. After a recent storytime, a customer and her daughter told Bill Rohde (Advanced Learning Library) how glad they were that storytime had resumed. They hadn’t been to the Library since COVID began and were excited the Library found a way to have storytimes in a safe setting (outdoors) this fall.