

COLLEGEDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025

Prepared For

City of Collegedale, TN

November 2020



LIBRARY SYSTEMS & SERVICES, LLC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.....	3
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN.....	4
EARLY LITERACY.....	4
CURRENT CPL OPERATIONS.....	5
LIBRARIES OF THE FUTURE.....	5
STRATEGIC GOALS.....	6
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	11
APPENDIX.....	12

INTRODUCTION

The Collegedale Public Library (CPL) has strong roots and is a deeply valued resource. CPL enjoys excellent community support from dedicated Friends of the Library volunteers, patrons and the public and is a vibrant part of life in Collegedale.

The Collegedale Public Library began as a branch of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Library System, supported jointly by the City of Chattanooga and by Hamilton County. Dedicated on November 18, 1992, the library was built to extend library services into the northern part of Hamilton County. At 8000 sq. ft., it was one of the smaller library branches in the system with very high use of library services.

In July of 2011, a 50-year agreement between Chattanooga and Hamilton County came to an end, and all libraries reverted to their municipalities. The City of Collegedale rallied to save their library, and passed a special tax increase to keep it open. One month later the Collegedale Public Library reopened on August 15th, 2011 as an independent library serving the community of Collegedale.

Today the Collegedale Public Library circulates over 50,000 items including books, audiobooks, and DVDs. The collection has grown with the community and now includes eBooks and eAudiobooks as well as unique items such as ukuleles and STEM kits. Storytimes for children are held six times a week and the library offers a variety of programming for teens and adults.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: THE PROCESS

A solid plan for the future is a key part of quality library operation. When the strategic planning process began in August 2020, CPL leaders and Library Systems & Services (LS&S) set out to answer three key questions:

- 1. What does the community want?**
- 2. Where do we want to go and how do we get there?**
- 3. How can we innovate to best serve the community?**

Answers to these questions framed the project and informed strategic goals.

Comprehensive input from residents throughout Collegedale and neighboring areas was gathered through public surveys, focus groups and personal interviews. Business, education and nonprofit leaders, key stakeholders, Library staff, patrons and volunteers provided ideas and feedback. Public library best practices and CPL data analysis were combined with stakeholder input to form a complete picture.

Through this process, current and future needs emerged. Respondents agreed the Library is a valuable resource and consider family programs to be a key service. Collegedale residents love their Library and would like a larger overall space which would lead to an enhanced impact in the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

DEMOGRAPHICS



COLLEGEDALE, TN

- 3,957** HOUSEHOLDS
- 11,256** TOTAL POPULATION
- 33** MEDIAN AGE
- 13%** SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME
- 13%** LIVING IN POVERTY
- 77%** HAVE A DESKTOP OR LAPTOP

As of January 2020, the unemployment rate for the state of Tennessee was 3.3 percent and Hamilton county was 3.7 percent. The unexpected COVID19 pandemic and resulting economic impact pushed the unemployment rate to 9.7 percent in June of 2020 for the State and 9.2 percent for Hamilton County.

Source: <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/narrative-profiles/2018/report.php?geotype=place&state=47&place=16300>



EARLY LITERACY

The Tennessee Department of Education has set a priority for “Early Foundations and Literacy” which states:

- Of the almost 6,000 Tennessee students rated below basic in third grade English language arts, less than three percent reach proficiency by fifth grade. National data shows that children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times less likely than their peers to graduate from high school by age 19.
- Research has demonstrated that reading and vocabulary skills in kindergarten are predictive of reading outcomes in the primary grades and reading comprehension in middle and high school.



Early literacy skills are key to success throughout life. The Library provides critical learning opportunities for the youngest citizens, including storytimes based on the five early literacy practices and the six early literacy components. Children also benefit from the Library’s educational games, toys and puzzles as well as the robust children’s collection.

Source: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/documents/strategic_plan.pdf

CURRENT CPL OPERATIONS

The Library is located in a busy part of Collegedale, conveniently nestled among stores and services residents want and need.

The Library is connected to the Collegedale Greenway, a favorite spot for locals headed out for a walk or bike ride, and also Imagination Station, the city's train-themed playground. Families gather at the Library and are delighted by the programs, unique items available for check-out and the Library's mascot, Rex, the bearded dragon.

Patrons especially love the unique learning kits available for check-out. These kits range from ukuleles to genetics and DNA to an outdoor exploration backpack. The kits are in high demand and take learning to a different, hands-on, experiential level.

The City of Collegedale Library Board advises the Library Director, setting policy and direction for library services. The Friends of the Collegedale Public Library is an engaged group of valued volunteers providing strong support and consistent revenue to enhance service offerings at the Library.

LIBRARIES OF THE FUTURE

Achievement of the goals in this plan will ensure the Collegedale Public Library continues to offer excellent 21st century library services:

- Provide access for all
- Act as educational and cultural center
- Inspire and engage the entire community
- Build upon strengths by fostering and creating partnerships
- Lead in technology by providing information and access
- Connect with the community by providing engaging programs
- Reach out to the community to engage with users where they are
- Serve as a community hub where all are welcome

The Collegedale Public Library and Library Board are committed to changing lives in the Collegedale community for the better. This strategic plan will guide the way by focusing on literacy, young children and seniors, all while embracing and celebrating the unique resources of this growing city.

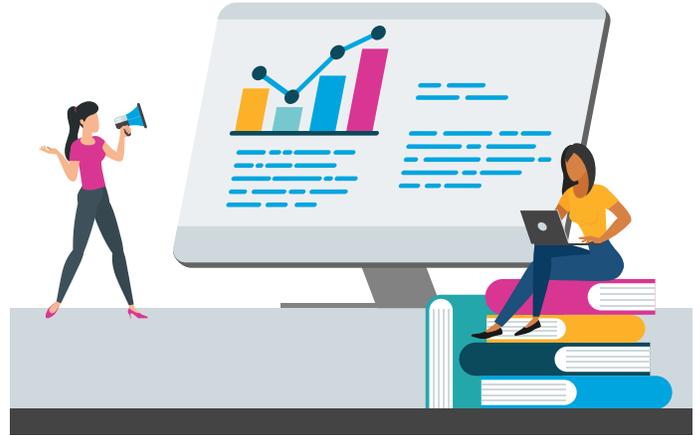


STRATEGIC GOALS



CONNECT

CPL is the partner of choice for service agencies and community leaders.



COMMUNICATE

CPL provides clear messaging surrounding Library services.



ENHANCE

CPL provides an experience that surprises and delights.



EDUCATE

CPL is the center for lifelong learning in Collegedale.

STRATEGIC GOALS

CONNECT | COMMUNICATE | ENHANCE | EDUCATE

1. Connect

CPL IS THE PARTNER OF CHOICE FOR SERVICE AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.

Connection will be achieved through implementing strategies such as:

- Partnering with local schools and community organizations to host programs and reading initiatives.
- Positioning Library as cornerstone for local connections.
- Supporting goals of local organizations while communicating needs of the Library.
- Connecting business leaders with potential employees.

Measurable objectives will include:

- Offer classes based on community needs beginning with a focus on senior population by June 3, 2021.
- Present at a minimum of four community events each year (county commission meeting, local community service organizations, etc.), and connect with one community group per month.
- Investigate opportunities to take reading focused programs out into the community in order to increase impact. Partner with one educational institution per year in order to promote reading in a meaningful and measurable way.
- Survey local businesses to determine needs for potential employees, design services to enhance new-to-the-workforce employees. Host or co-host one job fair per year, with programs leading up to the event. Launch these programs by January 2022.
- Develop deeper connection with two community organizations by the start of 2025. Host mutually beneficial events in order to increase impact of community services.



STRATEGIC GOALS

CONNECT | COMMUNICATE | ENHANCE | EDUCATE

2. Communicate

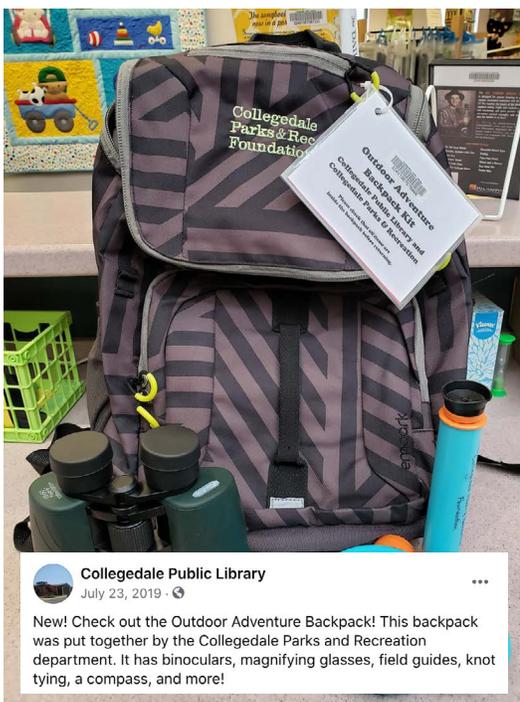
CPL PROVIDES CLEAR MESSAGING SURROUNDING LIBRARY SERVICES.

The goal to communicate will be achieved through implementing strategies such as:

- Focusing messaging to promote key services.
- Embedding Library into local community via regular contact in a variety of methods.
- Marketing services through various outlets in order to reach a broad audience.
- Providing a clear and concise website, newsletter and various handouts that have consistent messaging, graphic design and result in the reader taking action to engage with the Library.

Measurable objectives will include:

- Create branding standards for rollout by September of 2021. Redesign website, newsletter and brochure.
- Send welcome newsletter specifically to new cardholders with expectation of 5 percent increase in new cardholder activity from 2021 to 2022.
- Consistently interact with partner organizations, focusing messages on top three Library services.
- Investigate co-marketing with partner organizations (library messaging on partner websites, etc.). Develop consistent cross-marketing opportunities and maintain through 2025.
- Increase value of Facebook posts, leading to an increase in followers by 10 percent by January 2022.



STRATEGIC GOALS

CONNECT | COMMUNICATE | ENHANCE | EDUCATE

4. Educate

CPL IS THE CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN COLLEGEDALE.

The goal to educate will be achieved through implementing strategies such as:

- Celebrating reading for all ages throughout the year.
- Ensuring physical space and collections align with needs of the modern learner.
- Focusing programs on literacy-based practices for all ages with a special focus on early learning.
- Coordinating services with learning at all ages and with all styles, including homeschool and college students.

Measurable objectives will include:

- Summer reading participation (weekly participants) will increase by five percent each year.
- Focus Library programs on literacy in the following areas: early, adult, financial, technology, information, digital. From 2021 to 2025, 75 percent of Library programs will be focused on literacy elements.
- Form deep partnerships with educational institutions, supplementing and enhancing services.
- Develop STEM education experiences for youth focusing on coding, robotics or making. Host consistent programming for each age group (school aged and teen) by 2024.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all who offered ideas, suggestions and advice to ensure the Library continues to provide quality service to Collegedale. Focus group attendees including representatives from the City of Collegedale Administration and Parks & Recreation Department, as well as engaged citizens, provided valuable feedback; their time and caring for the community is much appreciated.

Collegedale residents completed 233 surveys, participated in one of five focus groups and provided additional comments and ideas. Special thanks to Library Director Natalie Wright and the dedicated Collegedale staff for their passion to serve the people of Collegedale every day.



APPENDIX

Library Use

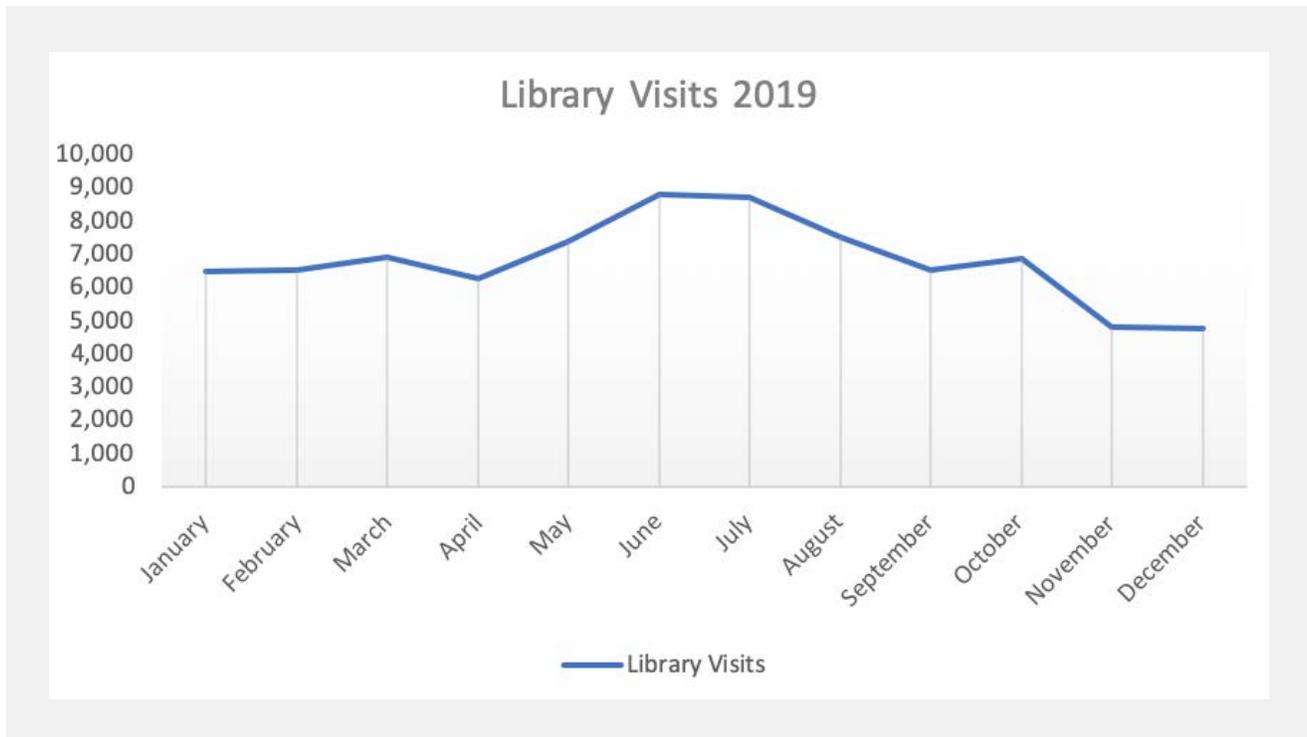
The information below was used to understand the Library's current state and identify strategic goals and objectives. As plan objectives are met, usage is expected to grow.

Patron Information

Collegedale has strong engagement with the Library; 48 percent of the population are registered library users, 28 percent of whom have used their card to check-out a physical item during the past 12 months (data as of October 1, 2020). Heavy Library users comprise 16 percent of the patron database, checking out 12 items or more during the past 12 months. Enhanced communication will help reach the 70 percent of the users who are inactive and have not checked out a physical item in more than three years.

Library Visits

The Library welcomed 81,607 visitors from January 2019 to December 2019, with heaviest use during the summer due to the Summer Reading Program.



Programs

Library programs are well attended, particularly by children and caregivers, with **379 programs** and **9,767 attendees in 2019**.

2019 Programs at Collegedale Public Library		
Age Group	Number of Programs	Attendance
Children	379	9,676
Young Adult	62	369
Adult	101	662

Program attendance is limited due to the meeting room size. Children’s programs are well attended, but staff do not have enough room for the physical activities that are a key part of early literacy practices.

Popular programs include the Minecraft club for kids and teens, the Mah Jongg club for seniors and storytimes. Library staff quickly pivoted at the onset of the pandemic to provide storytimes virtually on the Library’s Facebook page. Writing programs and author talks have not been well attended in the past.

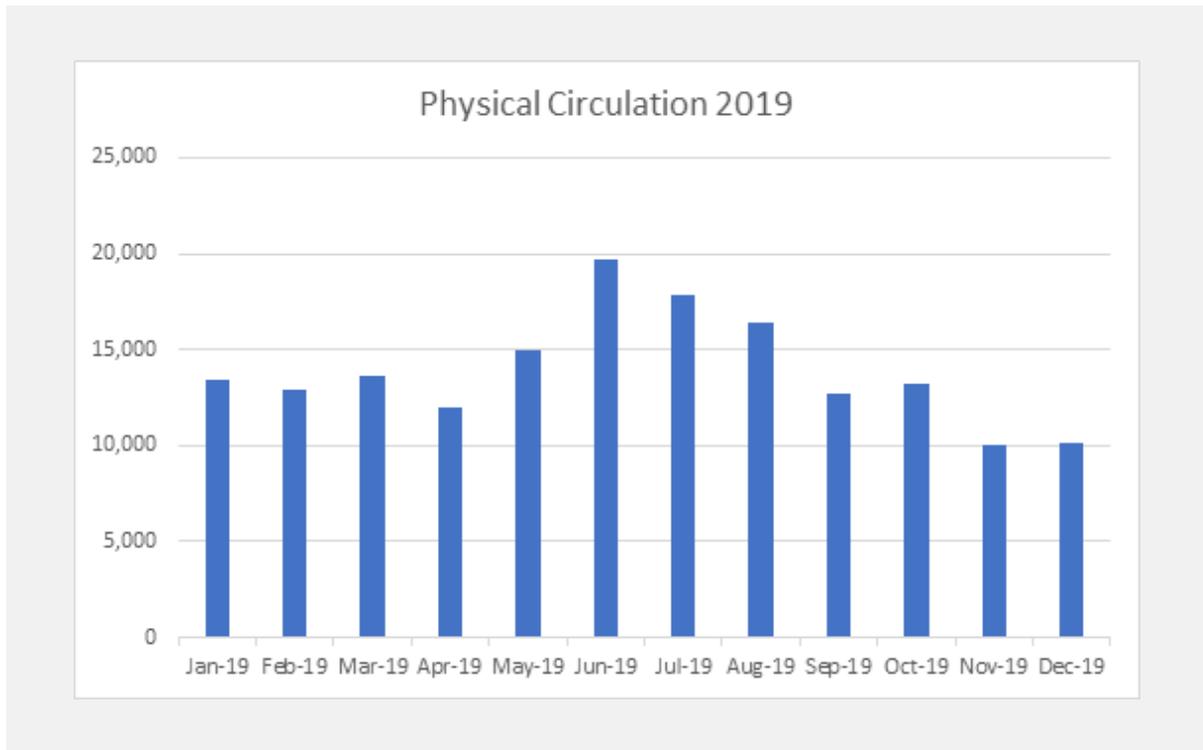
The community responds well to the summer reading programs and the Haunted Library program, both of which draw large crowds.

Staff have built and nurtured many partnerships over the years, from local schools to Boy and Girl Scout troops. The Library partners with the Samaritan Center for a supply drive twice a year. The Library Director often speaks at community meetings. All of these efforts contribute to the Library’s visibility in Collegedale.



Circulation

CPL is following national trends with decreased physical circulation. The pandemic has impacted circulation, but the Library is already seeing an increase since the height of the COVID in April 2020.



Staff maintain a strong and clean collection, which is reflected in collection use. Almost 64 percent of the collection circulated in the last year despite COVID. The Children’s print and audio collection is constantly in motion, circulating heavily at all times.

DVDs have had the biggest drop in circulation at 52 percent with new films driving the circulation. Many families set up streaming services during the quarantine which reduced the circulation of older, easily accessible DVD titles.

When comparing the ten largest collection categories to the ten top circulating areas (graph below), Children’s Easy Fiction/Picture Books leads the way in both. Nine of the ten categories match up in both measures. Christian Fiction is the 7th largest collection but not in the top ten circulating areas.

Category	Percent of Total Circulation	Percent of Collection
Children's Easy Fiction	18.09%	16.1%
DVD Fiction	16.22%	8.13%
Children's Easy Reader Fiction	10.1%	4.46%
Children's Nonfiction	9.07%	10.98%
Children's Series	7.58%	6.22%
Fiction	6.58%	7.8%
Nonfiction	4.65%	12.54%
Mystery	3.28%	3.85%
Young Adult Fiction	3.23%	3.74%
Children's Fiction	2.92%	3.66%

Key performance indicators would encourage emphasis on the following collection categories:

- Kits (add to these unique collections)
- Children's Easy Reader Fiction and Nonfiction
- Children's Board Books
- Adult Audiobook collection (as requested in public surveys)

Analysis of the collection indicates the following action items for the coming years:

- Continue to seek grant funding to replace the Young Adult items lost due to the tornado damage.
- Consider removing items from overflowing children's collection as well as the adult nonfiction collection.
- Explore kits to reach elderly community as well as young children.

Technology

The Library has 12 computers for the public. Many have been recently updated and the remaining machines will be installed soon in order to run Windows 10. The Library does not currently offer laptops or hotspots for checkout as this service is not needed in the community.

The Library should:

- Monitor Internet usage trends to determine the best possible solution for immediate and future needs and increase WIFI access points if needed.
- Re-examine makerspace technology to assess community demand, including robots, gaming systems and a 3D printer.
- Establish wireless printing to better serve the patrons.
- Continue improving the Library web space and expand outreach through social media.

Collegedale Resident Market Segmentation

The detailed information about resident demographics and consumer preferences is a powerful resource that enables and supports data-driven decision-making for the Collegedale Public Library.

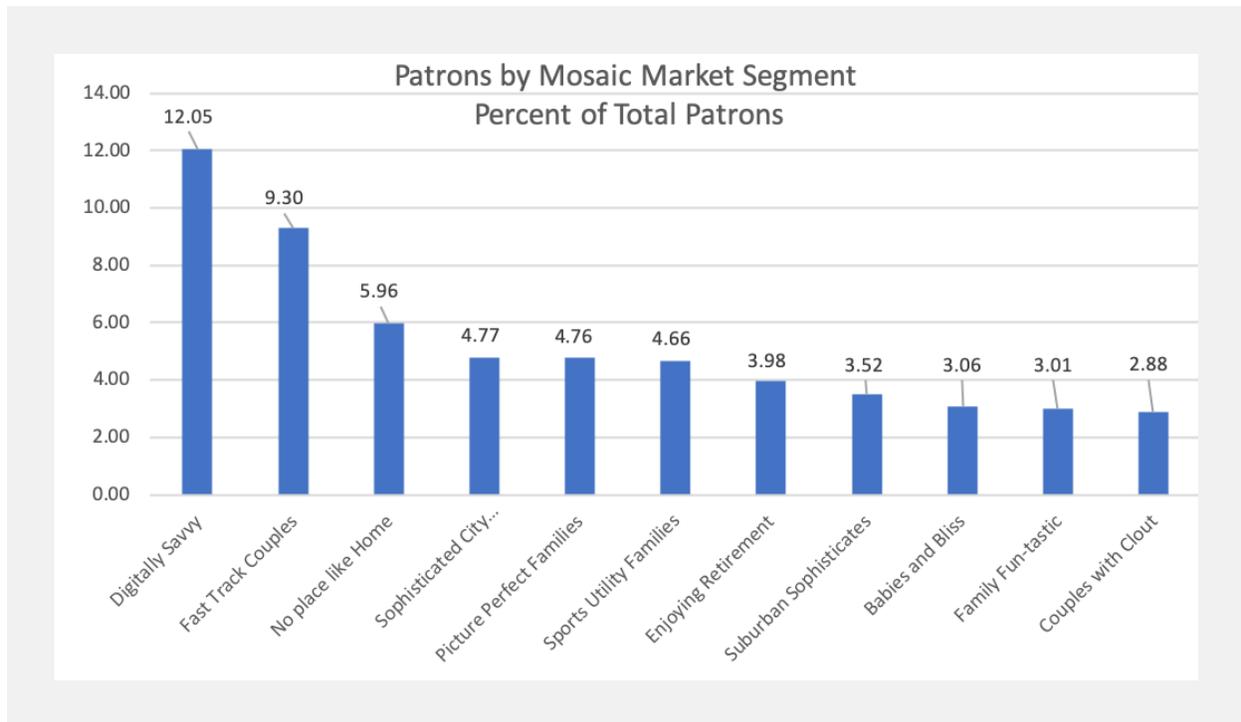
The patron data analysis below was an important part of the strategic planning process and provides key insights into current Library users and the greater community. The information below can also help target new populations, create new programs, advance value to the community, and allocate resources more efficiently.

The list of Library patron addresses (stripped of private reading history and patron names) was uploaded to the Experian marketing services tool.

Source: <https://www.experian.com/marketing-services/marketing-services.html>

Percentage of Patrons by Mosaic Market Segment

Experian identifies various groupings of citizens by Mosaic categories. These categories allow us to anticipate behaviors and understand the community the Library serves.



Top Mosaic Market Segments of Collegedale Public Library users are:

- Digitally Savvy, 12 percent
- Fast Track Couples, 9 percent
- No Place Like Home, 6 percent
- Sophisticated City Dwellers, 5 percent

Together these segments account for 32 percent of the total patron base. The remaining 68 percent of the patrons are divided among 67 different Mosaic segments, none of which account for more than 5 percent of the total. The top two categories are broken down in more detail below.

O51 Digitally Savvy

Young singles who live digital-driven smaller city lifestyles

4.30% | 2.67%



Who we are

Head of household age 25-30 437 50.6%	Type of property Single family 112 88.8%
Household income \$50,000-\$74,999 140 26.6%	Household size 1 person 157 73.8%
Home ownership Unknown 204 26.0%	Age of children 7-9 87 9.6%

Channel preference

TV 103	Envelope 82	Card 140
Messages 165	@ 20	Like 36

Key features

- Ambitious
- Video gamers
- Single adults
- Eager to spend
- Music lovers
- Digitally savvy

Technology adoption



Wizards



Mosaic USA

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F22 Fast Track Couples

Active, young, upper established suburban couples and families living upwardly-mobile lifestyles

3.20% | 2.35%



Who we are

Head of household age 31-35 445 50.3%	Type of property Single family 123 97.0%
Household income \$100,000-\$124,999 276 24.1%	Household size 1 person 114 53.6%
Home ownership Homeowner 126 80.6%	Age of children 7-9 146 16.1%

Channel preference

TV 208	Envelope 120	Card 121
Messages 338	@ 84	Like 42

Key features

- Credit-aware
- Comfortable spender
- Active lifestyles
- Tech-savvy
- Music lovers
- Football fans

Technology adoption



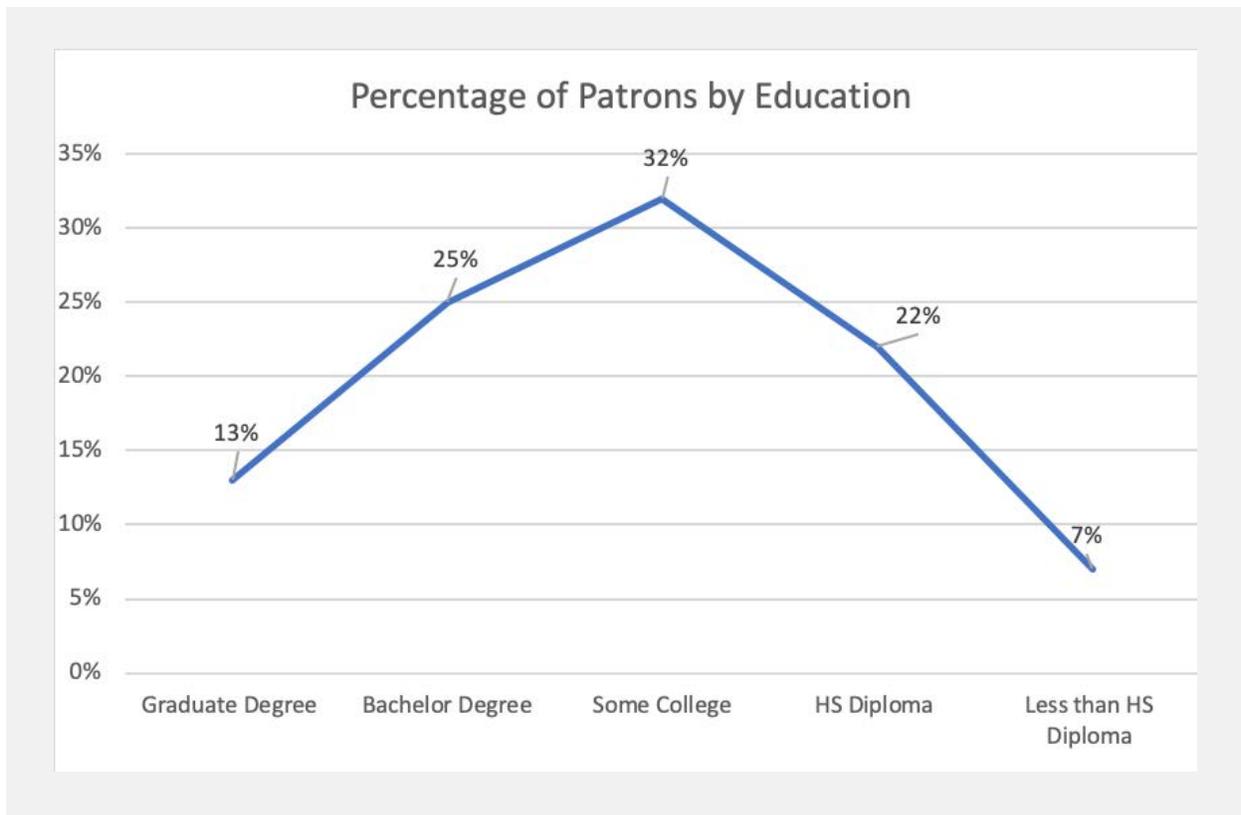
Journeymen



Mosaic USA

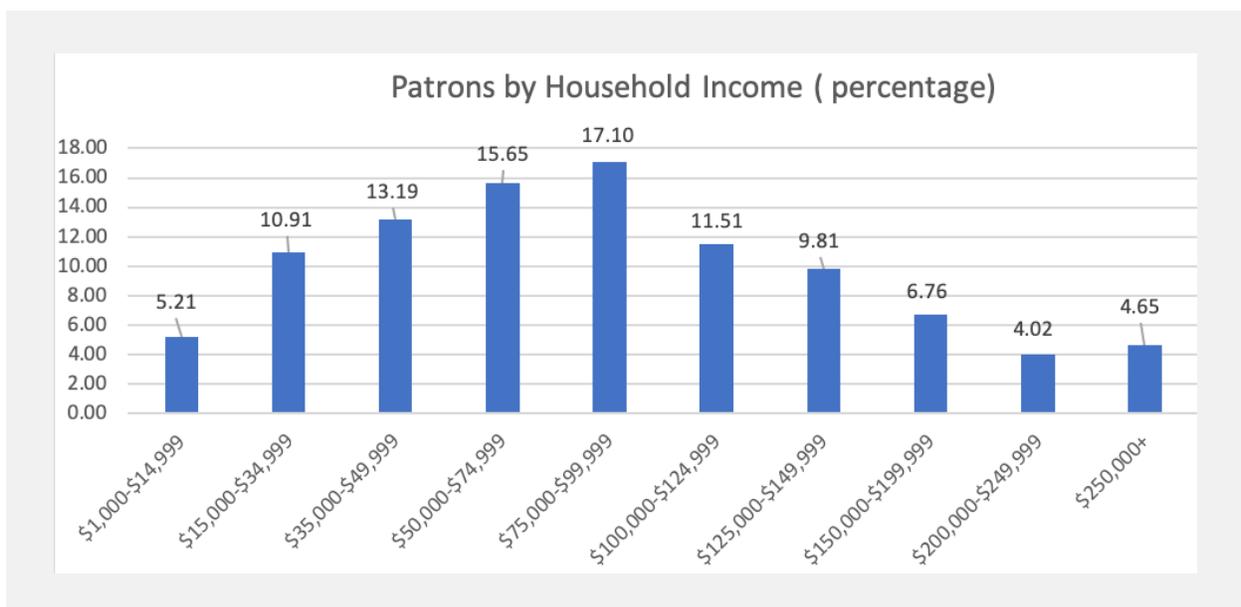
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Patrons by Education



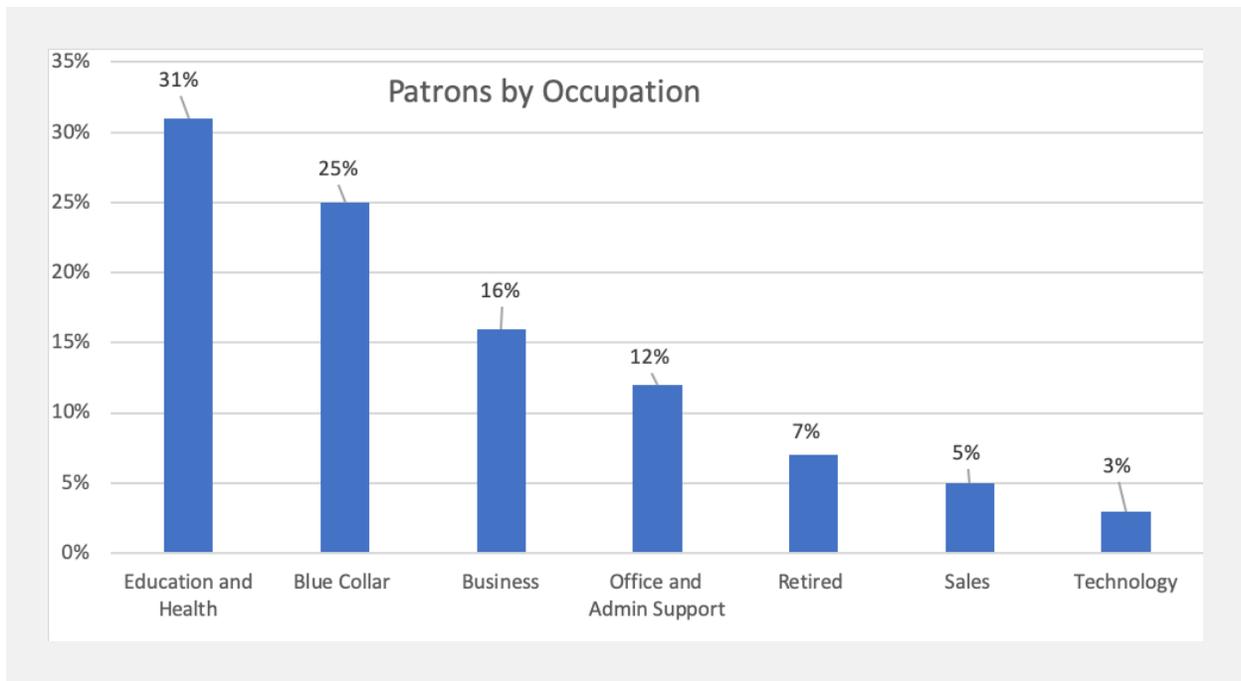
38 percent of Collegedale patrons are likely to have a graduate or bachelor's degree, while 32 percent had some college but did not graduate. 22 percent stopped their education with a high school diploma and the remainder have not started, or are currently in school.

Patrons by Household Income



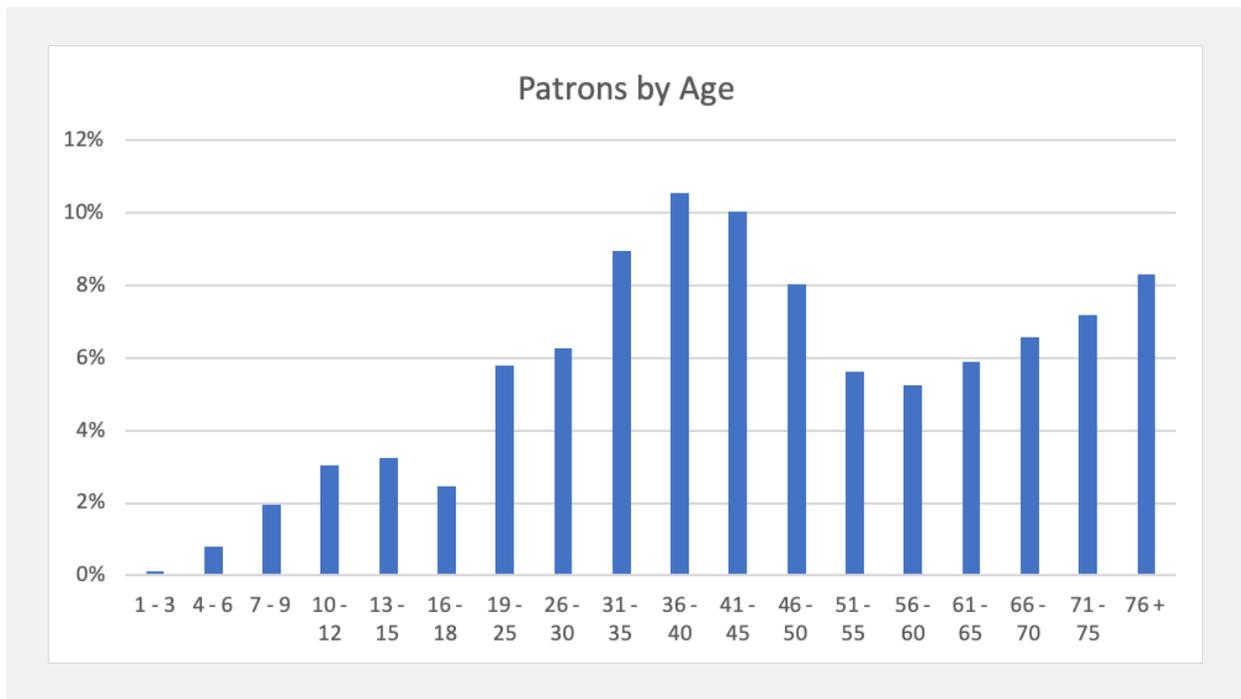
Of the community members using the library, the average falls in the \$75,000 to \$99,999 household income range.

Patrons by Occupation



The largest occupational group among Collegedale patrons is Education and Health encompassing over 30 percent of all patrons. Technology related occupations only accounts for 3 percent of all Library patrons.

All Patrons by Age



The 36-40 age group has the largest number of patrons at 11 percent. Adults between the ages of 41-45 are the second largest group at 10 percent.

Public Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Of the 233 responses, 219 (94 percent) had used the Library at least once in 2019. The remaining 6 (14 percent) had not used the Library in 2019. 68 percent of community members have a very positive impression of the Library.

FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY USAGE PRE-COVID

Many respondents (36 percent) use the Library at least once a week, the majority (45 percent) visit the Library once or twice a month, with the rest visiting 1-5 times per year (18 percent).

45 percent stated they had attended a program at the Library in 2019, while 55 percent had not.

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SERVICES

The top-ranking services were: Book collection, Summer Reading Program and the Storytime and Children's Programs. The lowest ranking services were: Music collection, Magazine collection, and Movie programs in the Library.

SATISFACTION WITH COLLECTIONS

24 percent of respondents were very satisfied with the Library's collection and 56 percent were satisfied. When asked which areas needed to be improved, the highest response was Adult Fiction, with Adult Non-Fiction as the second highest.

SATISFACTION WITH STAFF

96 percent of responses indicated that staff are kind and helpful when assisting customers. 3 percent said staff were not kind, and 8 percent weren't sure. Open-ended responses included comments that stated customer service was excellent.

Respondents believe staff to be knowledgeable when assisting customers.

AWARENESS OF ONLINE RESOURCES

Community members were aware of electronic offerings through Tennessee Reads, but the majority were not aware of Transparent Language Online and Gale Homework Help.

52 percent had used an electronic resource through the Library in the past year, 48 percent had not.

Many stated they were not interested in using electronic resources (31 percent), many did not know these sources could be used outside of the Library (29 percent) and some do not know how to use the resources (28 percent). 88 people requested the Library add access to online music and video streaming.

FINDING OUT ABOUT LIBRARY SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

99 percent of respondents were aware of Library programs, 1 percent were not aware. The majority of responses indicated that the Library's electronic newsletter was their primary resource for finding out about Library programs, with the Library's website and paper fliers following in second and third place.

The preferred method of communication regarding events was through the library's newsletter. The least preferred method was through a newspaper ad or a printed newsletter.

NON USERS

Reasons for Not Using the Library

Of the few respondents who stated they did not use the Library, the following reasons were given: no time for visiting or reading, the Library is too far away, or lack of transportation. Open-ended responses indicated potential patrons were not able to pay the annual fee.

78 percent of non-users were aware of Library programs and 77 percent were aware of electronic materials through Tennessee Reads.

Demographic profile of all responses

- Of those with children, the majority of responses indicated their children were between the ages of 7-11.
- 32 percent of respondents were over the age of 65.