Library Services Performance Audit: The Library Needs to Improve its Services to Equitably Meet Diverse Community Needs

LONG BEACH CITY AUDITOR

Independence you can rely on

February 2021

Laura L. Doud
City Auditor

James Lam
Assistant City Auditor

Hannah Gardener
Performance Audit Manager

Stephanie Harper
Performance Auditor

Jessica Tims
Performance Auditor

SPECIAL NOTE: This report was finalized during the COVID-19 pandemic. Libraries are an important resource for communities in recovering from a public health crisis and corresponding economic uncertainty because they provide a safe place for the public to access free resources and provide job assistance and economic inclusion services. We hope decision-makers recognize the value of these recommendations especially in a time when the City's public libraries are even more important to the Long Beach community.

Table of Contents

Library Services Performance Audit: The Library Needs to Improve its Services to Equitably Meet Diverse Community Needs

February 2021

Report Summary

Why This Audit Is Important

Public libraries have expanded beyond books to services and resources that address many community challenges. Long Beach is diverse in areas like race, ethnicity, language, income and access to resources. As a result, community members experience different needs and challenges. The Long Beach Public Library (Library) offers a variety of materials, services, programs, and resources at its twelve locations to help meet community needs and interests.

Audit Objective

Our audit assessed the equity and effectiveness of Library materials, services, programs and resources compared to the population served, industry standards and best practices.

Acknowledgement

We thank management and staff at the Library for their collaboration, assistance, and cooperation during this audit.

What We Found

We found that community members who speak languages other than English, low income households, people with disabilities, teens and adults have less opportunity to use and benefit from Library services than others in the community. In addition, although the Library currently has valuable offerings, community members identified key areas where the needs of the community are more than what is offered, such as digital and economic inclusion, access to community resources, and educational assistance for adults.

We found that the gaps in who the Library serves and the services they provide have several causes:

- Barriers to use of services, such as limited open hours, limited offerings in languages other than English, and overdue fines
- Not using data to inform what is offered
- Not aligning programs and services with strategic goals
- Reduction in staff and outdated staff responsibilities
- Not maximizing partnerships, and
- Limited outreach and promotion.

What We Recommend

We recommend the Library develop a better understanding of who is in the community and how they interact with the Library, and then use that understanding to define the Library's strategic goals and staffing. In addition, we recommend the Library eliminate barriers that prevent some community members from using and fully benefiting from the Library, and expand its reach through partnerships and promotion. While we understand that the Library must operate within its level of funding and with reduced staffing levels there are steps they can take to implement the audit recommendations with their existing resources.

I. Background

Beyond books, public library services address community challenges like digital divides and income inequality.

## What are the trends in public library best practices?

Public libraries have evolved significantly in recent decades. Beyond offering access to books, public libraries now serve as community anchors that help strengthen local economies, create healthier communities, and bridge digital divides. One prominent trend among public libraries is partnerships to offer services that address their communities' most pressing challenges, such as homelessness and income inequality. The American Library Association is committed to serving marginalized populations and offers libraries guidance to serve people experiencing poverty, people with limited English proficiency[1], immigrants, refugees, and people from protected classes, such as age and disability status.

Public libraries have also changed with the advance of technology. The circulation of electronic materials and use of self-service models, such as auto-checkout, continue to increase. Computer access and help to use electronic devices have become some of the primary reasons people visit libraries. These changes have redefined library customer service and require updated staffing roles and structures.

What services do Long Beach community members want?

With a population of over 470,000, Long Beach is ranked as one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the U.S. Over 70% of community members identify as people of color, including Latinx, Black/African American and Asian/Pacific Islander populations. Nearly half of residents speak a language other than English, and 26% of residents were born outside of the U.S. Figure 1 below shows the City's racial and ethnic diversity.

**Figure 1.
Long Beach is racially and ethnically diverse**

12% Black/African American
3% Other
14% Asian/Pacific Islander
43% Latinx
28% White

---
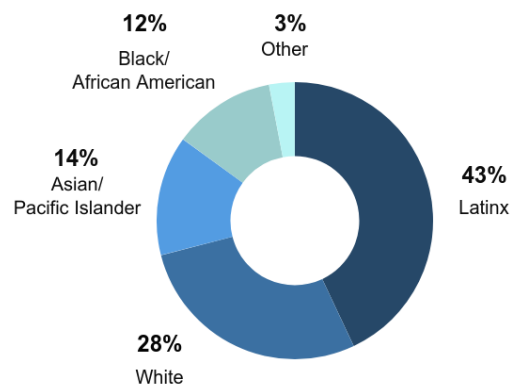
[1] The term Limited English Proficient refers to any person age 5 and older who reported speaking English less than "very well" as classified by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Long Beach is also socially and economically diverse. Data shows that racial and social inequities persist, and Long Beach communities vary significantly in areas such as income levels, educational attainment, access to affordable housing, and health outcomes.

To understand Long Beach community needs that relate to public library services, we conducted focus groups with 148 community members, interviewed community organization representatives, and reviewed 21 public engagements conducted by the Library, other City departments, and community organizations[2]. Figure 2 illustrates the primary community challenges and areas of need identified by these community members and organizations. The Library can help address these community needs and challenges by using the assistance of partnerships with other City departments and community organizations.

Figure 2.
Long Beach community needs and challenges related to Library services

Public libraries offer various programs, services and resources to improve the social and economic well-being of local residents. Long Beach community members and organizations identified the following needs and challenges that the Library can help address:

Economic Inclusion
- Job assistance
- Financial literacy programs
- Small business and entrepreneur assistance

Community Resources
- Referrals for social services
- Assistance accessing community resources

Housing & Homelessness
- Home-ownership assistance
- Affordable housing options
- Community education to reduce stigma of homelessness

Youth Development
- Teen leadership programs
- Life skills workshops
- Recreation and enrichment

Adult Learning
- Health and wellness classes
- Parent/caregiver supports
- Older adult workshops

Educational Achievement
- Higher education workshops for teens and adults
- Supports for students with special needs

What does the Library currently offer?

The Library system is made of twelve libraries: one main central library and 11 neighborhood branches spread across the City, each serving distinct communities. Figure 3 shows each library's expected service area, which are the neighborhoods surrounding each branch[3].

---

[2] See Appendix A for a complete list of focus groups, community organizations and public engagements.
[3] Service area was defined as the census tracts geographically closest to each branch. Patrons can go to all branches, but Library staff noted that most visit the branch closest to where they live.

Figure 3.
The Library's 12 locations serve distinct Long Beach neighborhoods

*Main Library serves the entire City.
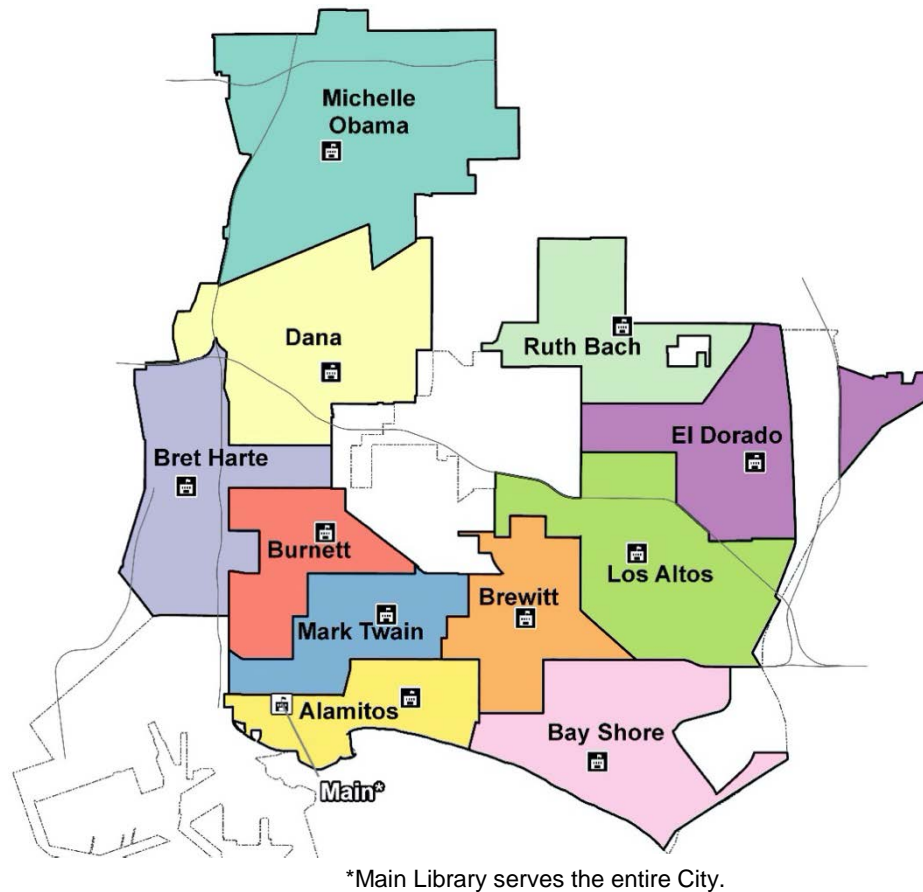
In 2018, the Library had over 1.1 million visitors and 61,304 active cardholders systemwide. The Library offers a variety of materials, services, and programs. Figure 4 highlights the resources available to the public. In 2017, the Library was awarded the National Medal for Museum and Library Service for their dynamic approach to community service.

Figure 4.
The Library offered multiple programs, materials and services in 2018

- 3,500+ Programs
- 700,000+ Physical Materials
- 78,000+ Electronic Materials
- 20 Mobile Studio Programs
- 9 Family Learning Centers

For fiscal year 2018, the Library's adopted budget was $14.5 million, primarily funded by the City of Long Beach's general fund. On average, the City allocates 2.6% of its general fund each year to the Library. A small percentage (an average of 5% or approximately $700,000 per year) of the Library's budget comes from grants and private donations, typically for specific programs or services. The Long Beach Public Library Foundation helps raise these funds to support key Library services not funded by the City's general fund. In particular, the Foundation funds the Library's nine Family Learning Centers. Learning Guides at these Centers provide one-on-one homework help for students, career assistance for job seekers and help using computers and electronic devices. The Foundation also funds the Library's two Studio MakerSpaces and the Mobile Studio, which provide technology and classes for youth and adults in areas such as robotics, graphic design, 3D printing, and coding. In addition, the Foundation supports literacy programs, such as the Library's summer reading programs for children, education services, such as scholarships for adults to complete their high school diplomas, and capital campaigns for new Library facilities (such as the recently opened Billie Jean King Main Library).

II. Findings & Recommendations

The six findings below outline a combination of causes that lead to inequity in Library services. We found that community members who speak languages other than English, low income households, people with disabilities, teens and adults do not have the same opportunities to use and benefit from Library programs and services as others in the community. We also found that community members identified key areas where the community's needs – such as digital and economic inclusion, access to community resources, and educational assistance for adults – are more than what the Library currently offers in services, programs and resources. To align with its strategic goals, the Library must address these root causes to improve equitable service for all community groups and to respond to the needs of the community.

Finding #1: *Community members view libraries as safe and welcoming places in the City; however, multiple barriers limit equitable opportunities for all to use library services.*

Community members and organizations identified the Library's 12 locations as some of the City's greatest assets. They frequently described these sites as "safe havens" in the City for people of all ages and backgrounds. Community members highlighted that libraries provide valuable resources and a welcoming environment for free – a crucial factor for many individuals with limited or no disposable income.

> "[The Library is] a vehicle for hope. It's a vehicle to another place."
>
> Community member at an audit focus group

However, not all community members have the same opportunity to fully benefit from the Library. Some community members face barriers to using the Library's valuable services. These barriers include: 1) limited materials and services offered in languages other than English; 2) limited open hours; 3) fines for overdue materials; 4) limited adaptive technology; and 5) fees for parking at Main Library.

A. Community members with limited English proficiency cannot use 95% of Library materials and programs.

The City's Language Access Policy, in line with the California Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, emphasizes that all residents, including those with limited proficiency in English, should have equal access to City programs and services. The American Library Association provides guidelines for public libraries to ensure language access, emphasizing that, "Providing library materials for ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups should not be seen as an 'additional' or 'extra' service, but as an integral part of every library's services."[4]

---

[4] American Library Association. *Guidelines for the Development and Promotion of Multilingual Collections and Services.* ed. 2007. http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidemultilingual

Nearly half of Long Beach residents speak a language other than English. The City's Language Access Policy recognizes Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog as the primary languages spoken in Long Beach other than English. More than 30% of people living near libraries in North, Central and West Long Beach have limited English proficiency, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5.
Libraries in North, Central and West Long Beach serve large populations with limited English proficiency
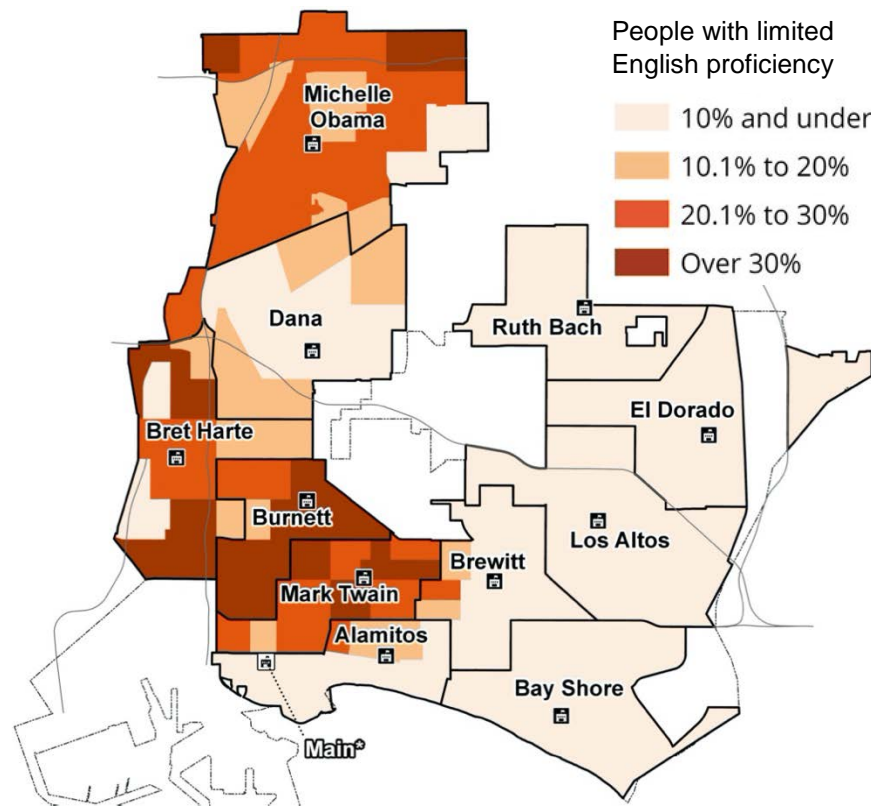

*Main Library serves the entire City.

While Long Beach is linguistically diverse, most Library offerings are in English only.

Despite the linguistic diversity in Long Beach and high levels of people with limited English proficiency, almost all of Library materials, programs and services are in English only. In 2018, 95% of physical materials and 97% of programs were in English. People with limited English proficiency do not have the same opportunities to use and benefit from these library resources. Figure 6 illustrates the comparison between library programs conducted in a language other than English and the service population that have limited English proficiency.

Figure 6.
Long Beach residents with limited English proficiency can only use a small percentage of Library programs
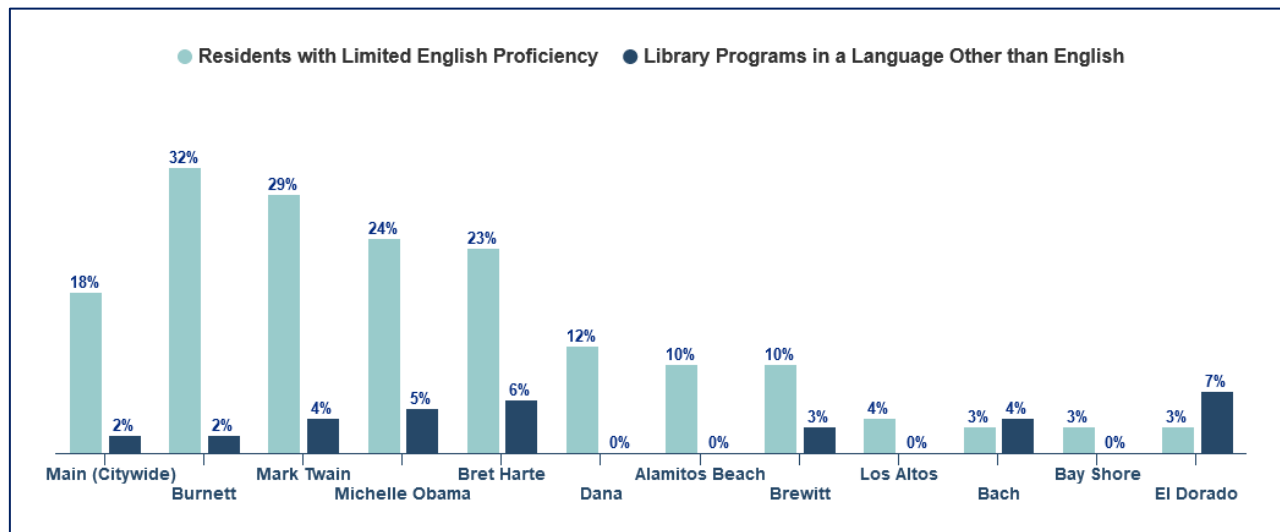
Library management and staff emphasized that they want to serve their linguistically diverse communities. They have been successful in several areas. For example, staff at the Mark Twain branch in Long Beach's Cambodia Town neighborhood collaborated with the United Cambodian Community non-profit organization to develop a catalog of Khmer-language materials and promote awareness of these materials among Khmer-speaking community members. In addition, central library staff offer a bilingual English-Spanish story-time program that rotates library sites and has high attendance rates. The Library reported that providing materials in other languages can be challenging due to the availability, cost, and additional steps needed to acquire the materials. However, the Library needs to build on its efforts to improve equitable opportunities for people with limited English proficiency.

Several other factors contribute to the Library's ability to offer more materials, programs, and services in languages other than English, including their staffing structure, use of bilingual staff, and their need for additional partnerships. These factors, and related recommendations, are addressed in Findings 4 and 5.
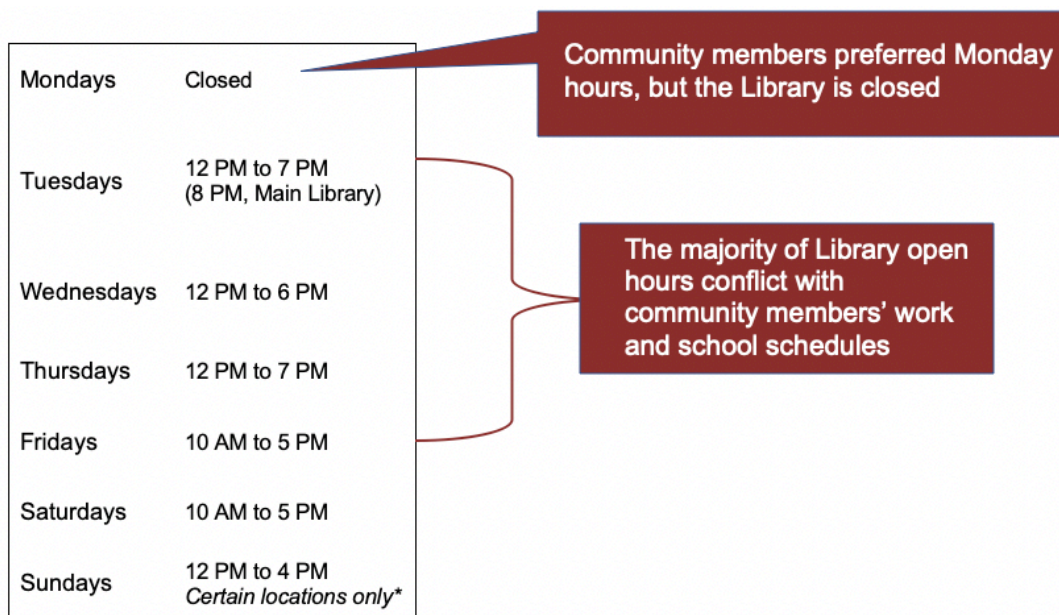
Recommendations

1.1   Offer more materials, programs, and services in languages other than English, and align additional offerings to each branch's community profile and language needs.

B. Library open hours are limited and do not align with community preferences.

During 2018, Library sites were open 34-38 hours and five to six days per week, depending on location as shown in Figure 7. Library staff, community members and community organizations stressed that the Library's open hours prevent access for many community members because they conflict with work and school schedules.
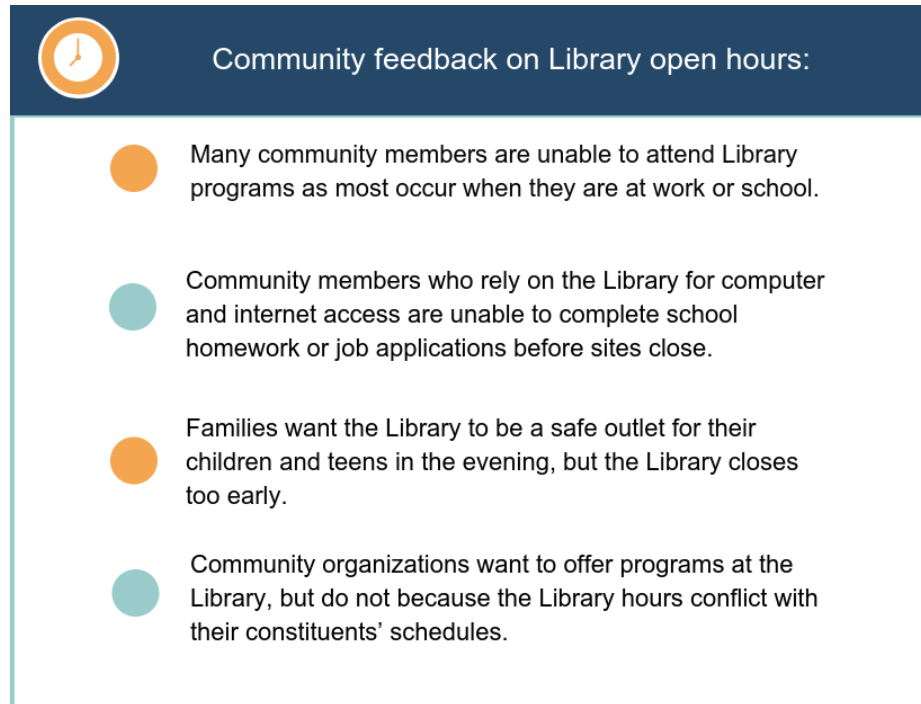
The Library's days of service also do not align with community preferences. In fall 2018, the Library surveyed patrons' preferences for adding either Monday or Sunday as a sixth day of service, if funding was available. Most survey respondents (55% overall and 80% of people who responded in a language other than English) preferred for libraries to open on Mondays. Library branch staff explained that most schools assign weekly homework on Mondays and many families request service on this day for youth to complete assignments. This is especially true in areas of Long Beach with higher rates of low-income families and people with limited English proficiency because they are more likely to use the free homework assistance. However, despite the survey results indicating that patrons preferred Monday as a sixth day of service, the Library maintained closure on Mondays in favor of Sunday hours at some locations based on direction from City Council.

Figure 7.
The Library's open hours are a barrier for community members

Mondays	Closed
Tuesdays	12 PM to 7 PM (8 PM, Main Library)
Wednesdays	12 PM to 6 PM
Thursdays	12 PM to 7 PM
Fridays	10 AM to 5 PM
Saturdays	10 AM to 5 PM
Sundays	12 PM to 4 PM *Certain locations only**

Community members preferred Monday hours, but the Library is closed

The majority of Library open hours conflict with community members' work and school schedules

Community members and organizations expressed that they want the Library to stay open later into the evening. They described the challenges of the Library's early closing hours, summarized in Figure 8.

Figure 8.
Community members want the Library to be open later in the evening

Community feedback on Library open hours:

- Many community members are unable to attend Library programs as most occur when they are at work or school.

- Community members who rely on the Library for computer and internet access are unable to complete school homework or job applications before sites close.

- Families want the Library to be a safe outlet for their children and teens in the evening, but the Library closes too early.

- Community organizations want to offer programs at the Library, but do not because the Library hours conflict with their constituents' schedules.

*Sunday hours are funded by City one-time funding. During 2018, Obama, Twain, El Dorado and Bay Shore Libraries were open on Sundays. Sunday hours have since been reduced to Obama and Bay Shore libraries only due to decreased funding for fiscal year 2020.

The Library's open hours are among the lowest compared to peer municipal library systems with similar city population sizes, as shown in Figure 9. Long Beach Library sites are open 35 hours per week on average. In contrast, most peer library systems averaged 48-61 hours per week, per library site.

Figure 9.
Long Beach Library's average weekly open hours are low compared to peer libraries
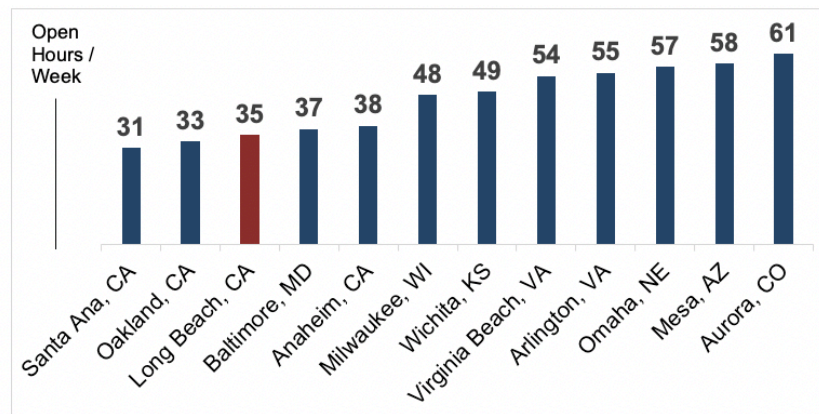
Library management said that increasing hours per day and/or adding service days per week requires hiring additional staff and adopting a split staffing schedule. City Council would need to identify funding for the Library for these staffing costs to increase Library open hours.

Recommendations

1.2   **Examine how to adjust and expand open hours and service days to respond to the needs of patrons and present a proposal of changes to the City Manager and then to City Council. The proposal needs to take into consideration staffing levels, funding, patron survey results, and which branches are located where services are needed the most.**

C. Fines for overdue materials prevent many patrons from using Library resources.

The Library's mission includes supporting free and equal access to information – a central mission shared by all public libraries. While Library resources are free for cardholders, the Library charges fines for physical materials that are returned late. Once a patron's fines reach $20, their library account is suspended, and they are prevented from borrowing physical materials and e-books/e-audiobooks and accessing some electronic resources.

While overdue fines are designed to ensure that library materials are returned on time, the outcomes of these fees have been less than positive. Overdue fines are unlikely to increase the likelihood that library materials are returned on time. Further, overdue fines are more likely to be a financial burden to lower income individuals and families and could impact their ability to use library resources meant to be accessible to all patrons. Lastly, the cost of collecting these fines often outweighs the revenue received. In Long Beach, revenue collected from overdue fines accounts for less than 1% of the Library's operating budget. A portion of Library Clerks' time is devoted to collecting overdue fines and reconciling the money collected. If the Library eliminated overdue fines, the staff time of the Library Clerks could be re-allocated to patron services, which create a greater community benefit.

> "Overdue fines are not distinguishing between people who are responsible and who are not. They're distinguishing between people who can and cannot use money to overcome a common oversight."
>
> Urban Library Council (CityLab 2019)

Over 22,000 Library cardholders have their library accounts suspended due to overdue fines. Nearly 1/3 of these cardholders are children and teens, as shown in Figure 10[5].

Figure 10.
Fines for overdue materials prevent many children, teens and adults from using the Library

Library fines disproportionately impact low-income community members.

Studies from government agencies and library systems across the country have demonstrated that overdue fines disproportionately prevent people from low-income areas and communities of color from accessing library resources.[6]. For example, the San Francisco Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector found that library users from higher and lower income areas accrued overdue fines at similar rates. However, library users from low-income areas and communities of color were more likely to be blocked from using library resources because of overdue fines. The fines were a greater financial burden on these community members who had less disposable income to pay the fines. Recognizing that overdue fines prevent equitable access to public libraries, the American Library Association adopted a resolution in January 2019 urging libraries to "scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them".[7]

As illustrated in Figure 11, over 35% of people living near libraries in North, West and Central Long Beach are living below the poverty line. These community members' ability to access valuable Library resources is more likely to be impacted by the current overdue fine system.

---

[5] This number may include some adults, as adults can use children and teen library cards belonging to members of their family.

[6] For example, a study by the San Francisco Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector includes a review of academic research, national publications and public library trends regarding the elimination of overdue fines. See: Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector, City and County of San Francisco. 2019. "Long Overdue: Eliminating Fines on Overdue Materials to Improve Access to San Francisco Public Library." Retrieved from: https://sftreasurer.org/san-francisco-public-library-votes-eliminate-overdue-fines

[7] "Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity," American Library Association. January 28, 2019. http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/economicbarriers

Figure 11.
Libraries in North, Central and West Long Beach serve large populations of people living below the poverty line

*Main Library serves the entire City.
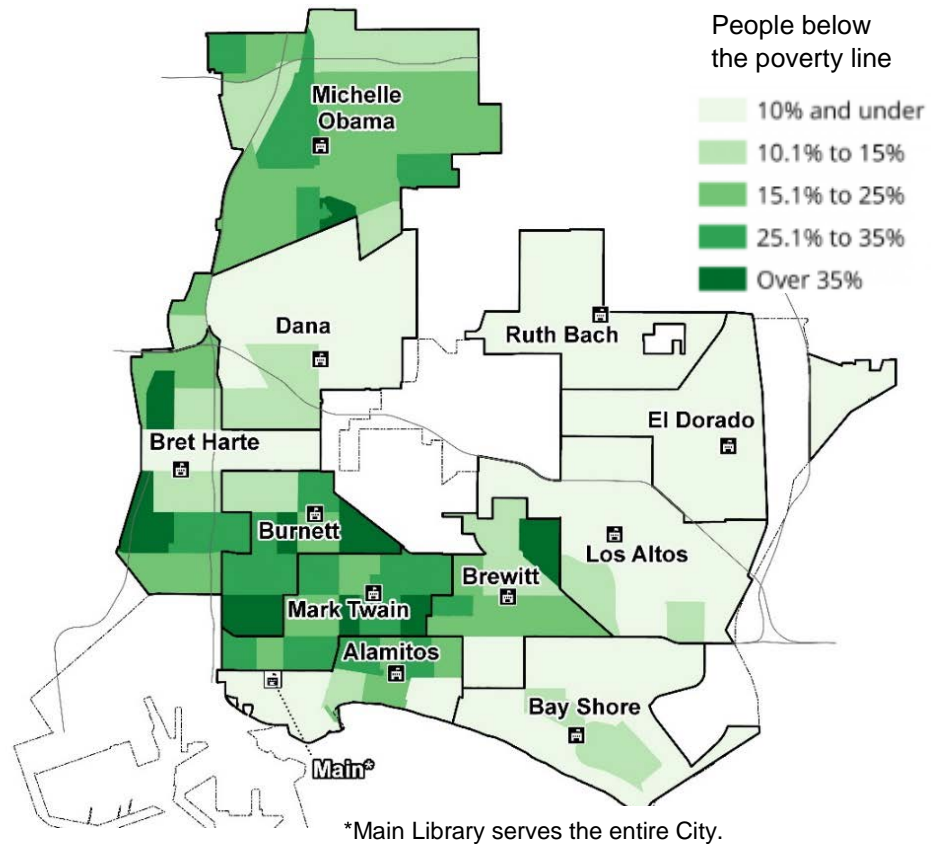
In addition, the fear of fines may dissuade some community members from borrowing items at all. Staff also described the existence of fines and the process of collecting fine payment as a strain on a patron's relationship with the Library.

The Library offered fine amnesty periods in 2016 and 2017, where for one month in each of these years, patrons were able to request a waiver of their overdue fines and restoration of their accounts. These amnesty periods were incredibly popular, with an average of nearly 5,000 patrons returning close to 15,000 items per amnesty period.

Leading public libraries have eliminated overdue fines to improve equitable access.

Public libraries across the U.S., including Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco and San Diego, have eliminated overdue fines to provide equitable access for all community members. 'Fine-free' libraries have reported positive impacts:

- Increased material circulation, library card registrations and customer satisfaction;

- No increases in late returns, longer hold times or gaps in the collection;

- Improved staff morale; and

- Optimized staff time by reallocating staff hours spent on managing fines to patron assistance, services and programs.

Common concerns about eliminating overdue fines can be addressed through the appropriate design of a fine-free structure. Fine-free library systems typically retain "lost item fees" that are assessed on lost or damaged physical materials. This maintains a monetary incentive for patrons to return items and allows the library to recover the cost of materials. In addition, libraries have automatically waived all patrons' existing overdue fines in conjunction with eliminating overdue fines moving forward. Fine-free structures can also include public awareness campaigns to ensure community members are informed of the changes and data evaluation plans to track and report outcomes. Eliminating overdue fines requires City Council approval to revise the City's Master Fees and Charges Schedule.

Recommendations

1.3 **Examine the current Master Fees and Charges Schedule and present to City Manager and then to City Council a revision to eliminate library overdue fines while retaining the lost/damaged item fees to maximize equitable access and community benefit.**

1.4 **Communicate changes to the fine and fee library policies to library patrons.**

1.5 **Collect and evaluate data to measure and report on the outcomes of going fine-free.**

1.6 **Present to City Manager and then to City Council a proposal to waive existing overdue fines on all library patrons' accounts.**

D. Adaptive technology for people with disabilities is only available at two of the 12 libraries.

The Main and Michelle Obama Libraries offer adaptive technology for people with disabilities, such as keyboards with braille, speech recognition software and computer screen readers. However, the Library said that many of these devices are costly, large, and complex to operate, requiring more funding, physical space and staff training to operate than is available at smaller library branches. As a result, adaptive technology is not available at 10 of the library sites. This restricts access to library services for people with disabilities.

The Library can expand adaptive technology to the remaining 10 branches if it uses a different approach.

Library staff recently reviewed trends in technology and services available at other adaptive technology centers. They reported that these centers focus more on providing one-on-one assistance with adaptive features and apps available on portable devices, such as smartphones and tablets. The Library has begun to offer this type of assistance at Main Library's Center for Adaptive Technology. This service could be implemented systemwide by training Library staff and/or volunteers on how to assist patrons and promoting the availability of this service to community members. Implementation would require minimal resources and improve equitable access for people with disabilities.

At audit focus groups, community members with disabilities expressed a deep appreciation for Library staff's efforts to make the Library inclusive for patrons with disabilities.

Recommendations

1.7 **Provide training for all library staff in customer service roles on assisting patrons in accessing portable adaptive technology.**

1.8 **Develop informational materials and promote the availability of adaptive technology and assistance services through notifications to registered borrowers and through City and community partner promotions.**

E. Parking fees at the Main Library restrict community members' opportunities to use that library.

The Main Library is the only library location that charges for parking. Parking is available in the adjacent Civic Center Garage, which is owned by the City. City Council sets the parking rates, which are shown in Figure 12. Metered street parking and other paid parking garages are also available.

Community members viewed the parking fee as a restriction to a public amenity. They described the financial hardship of paying for parking to use the library for more than 30 minutes, especially for frequent library users and people from low-income households. The parking fees could cause some library users to shorten their time at the library, not attend library programs, which are typically one-hour in duration, or not visit the Main Library at all.

Figure 12.
Community members must pay to park at the Main Library for longer than 30 minutes

Main Library Parking Rates

First 30 minutes	Free
Next 90 minutes, with library validation	$1.75
Each 20 minutes thereafter	$1.75
Daily maximum	$10.00

Some community members have less access to the Main Library because the parking fees are a financial hardship

Recommendations

1.9 **Present a proposal to City Manager and then to City Council to provide free parking for library patrons at the City Center Garage with library validation. The proposal should include a recommendation for an appropriate validation period that allows patrons enough time to attend programs and services at Main Library.**

Finding #2: *The Library does not effectively use data to ensure its services equitably meet community needs.*

The Library does not consistently use data for decision-making related to programs, services or resources.

To provide services that are relevant and equitable, the Library should use various types of data to understand the needs and interests of community members and develop services accordingly. For example, leading libraries like San Francisco, Oakland and Chicago use U.S. Census Bureau data to understand community demographics and track popular services to understand community needs and interests. We found that the Long Beach Library does not consistently use data when developing programs, services or resources. Instead, each branch develops its offerings based on staff knowledge and interests.

Figure 13 highlights several data sources, internal and external, that provide valuable information on community needs. The Library should use these types of data to inform goal setting, service planning, evaluation, and reporting.

Figure 13.
The Library needs to use data to help ensure its services are equitable

Data the Library needs to use:	When to use the data:	How the data can help:
U.S. Census Community Demographics	Tailoring materials and programs to each Library's community	• Library materials and programs at many branches do not match languages spoken by community members • Library staff were unaware that a Khmer-speaking population lives within the Michelle Obama Library service area
CA Department of Education School Performance	Planning educational services	• Some Long Beach schools need more support than others for student success
City and Community Public Engagement Initiatives	Understanding the needs of community members who do not currently use the library	• The Library does not regularly engage people who are not Library users • The Library should focus outreach on underrepresented community groups to maximize their limited resources
Library Database Material Use	Selecting Library materials that match community interests	• The Library's usage data shows that community members want more popular items, like DVDs and e-audiobooks, than is available • Community members expressed frustration with long wait times for items like bestseller books

The Library's internal data is not reliable.

In addition to the data sources highlighted in Figure 13, Library staff log information that could help in decision-making. For example, staff maintain a database of registered cardholders, track assistance provided to patrons, and estimate program attendance. This information could help Library staff understand how people use their services, identify trends and gaps, and allocate resources so that all community members have equal opportunity to benefit from their services. However, we identified issues with staff-created data that limit its usefulness. For example:

The Library needs to better track how community members use its services so it can make more informed decisions.

- Patron records, such as addresses, were inaccurate or incomplete. This prevents the Library from analyzing geographic trends, such as identifying neighborhoods with fewer patrons that need more outreach.

- Staff do not log patron assistance consistently and do not include enough detail to be able to identify common patron needs. If more information was tracked, the Library could develop partnerships or programs that address the most common needs.

- Staff re-categorized some patrons in the database to suspend library card access without management approval. This violates the Library's policy that management must review and approve all requests to suspend access for certain patrons (such as for not following Library use policies). It also makes patron records less reliable.

- Data tracking on programs varies in levels of detail and completeness. For example, some branches tracked programs implemented by community partners, while others did not. If all branches tracked similar data, Library management could use it for planning, evaluation, and accountability.

The Library does not evaluate outcomes of their services.

While the Library logs outputs of their services, such as the number of programs provided and an estimate of number of attendees, they do not evaluate outcomes. Without this evaluation, they cannot measure effectiveness or fully communicate their value. Other libraries similarly struggled to track outcomes because of difficulties gathering data and the expertise needed to design an outcome evaluation. Some libraries were more successful when they partnered with another agency, such as a local university, or paid a consultant to develop a system they could use to measure outcomes.

Library management is interested in using data more consistently moving forward. They stated that limited staff time and expertise have kept them from using data in the past. The American Library Association emphasizes the importance of data-driven decision-making and provides guidance for public libraries. This includes data competency training resources and data gathering templates. The Library needs to improve the way it collects data internally, and use both internal and external data to help ensure its services equitably meet community needs and equitably serve all community groups.
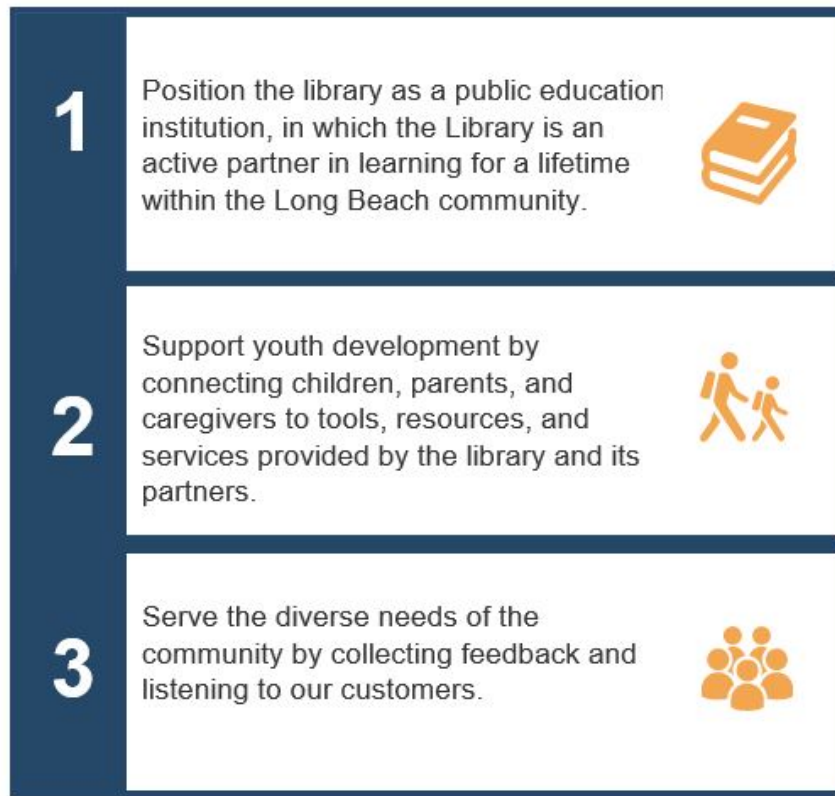
Recommendations

2.1   Develop policies and procedures for collecting and using data in decision-making. Include:
- **Processes for data analysis, such as goal setting, service planning, evaluation and reporting.**

- **Types of data and data sources that should be used;**

- **Identify staff responsible for gathering and analyzing the data, including defining which types of data are analyzed centrally for the system or by branch staff for their site; and**

- **Frequency of data collection and analysis.**

2.2 **Update templates that staff use to log information. The information collected should directly relate to how it will be used (defined through implementation of Recommendation 2.1).**

- **For example: Reference, technology and Family Learning Center assistance logs should categorize the type of assistance staff provide so that the Library can plan services based on common patron needs.**

2.3 **Provide guidance to staff to track data accurately, consistently, and in compliance with Library policies.**

- **For example: Patron records must be entered accurately and staff must log programs, outreach activities and community partnerships in the same way at each branch. Management should review data created by staff on a regular basis to provide feedback and accountability to staff.**

2.4 **Design and implement a system to evaluate outcomes of library services. This could be developed in partnership with CSULB (such as the Center for Community Education, or education, public administration, public health, social work and/or business programs) or by a consultant.**

Finding #3:   *The Library's programs and services are not always consistent with strategic goals, which results in inequitable services.*

The Library developed five goals as part of its 2017- 2020 Strategic Plan. The first three goals focus on how to better meet the needs of the Long Beach community. Figure 14 outlines those three strategic plan goals.

Figure 14.
The Library's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan goals focus on meeting community needs

> **1** Position the library as a public education institution, in which the Library is an active partner in learning for a lifetime within the Long Beach community.
>
> **2** Support youth development by connecting children, parents, and caregivers to tools, resources, and services provided by the library and its partners.
>
> **3** Serve the diverse needs of the community by collecting feedback and listening to our customers.

While the strategic plan formalized some of the Library's goals, it is not comprehensive of all Library goals. For example, serving multilingual populations is a Library goal that has been agreed upon informally and is recognized by staff; however, it is not outlined specifically in the strategic plan and management has not established measurable objectives for it.

The Library does not make sure all branch locations implement the system's strategic goals.

There is limited guidance, oversight, and support from management for Library branch staff to make sure that all Library locations implement and monitor both formal and informal goals. This allows branch staff to individually decide the extent to which they offer programs or services in these priority areas, if they are offered at all. While branches should have some flexibility and individuality, management needs to provide direction to ensure goals are implemented.

Due to this lack of central direction from management, the formal and informal goals are not being implemented consistently and, as a result, many of the set measurable objectives have not been achieved. Ultimately, some community groups may not have equal opportunity to benefit from a priority program or service because it is not offered at all branch locations where it is needed. For example, programs in languages other than English, programs for teens and adults, and job assistance services were offered inconsistently across library sites or not at all.

We found multiple other library systems that use a more centralized approach to developing and implementing their goals, including Oakland, San Francisco and Chicago. Figure 15 highlights Chicago's method. Key components of this type of centralized approach include annual review of community needs to develop goals, setting the expectations for the priority areas, and monitoring progress on the objectives that are set. For the Library to successfully implement this type of approach, they need to have reliable data gathering methods so that monitoring progress of the goals is possible, as addressed in Finding 2.

Figure 15.
The Chicago Library could be a model for Long Beach in using a central approach to ensure services match community needs

Best Practice - Centralized Approach to Programs and Services

Chicago Library

Strategy
- Set minimum expectations for each branch:
  - Number of programs
  - Type of programs
  - Strategic partners
- Reviewed data and community needs annually

- System wide priorities
- Reduced workload for staff
- Collected program and service data

Benefits
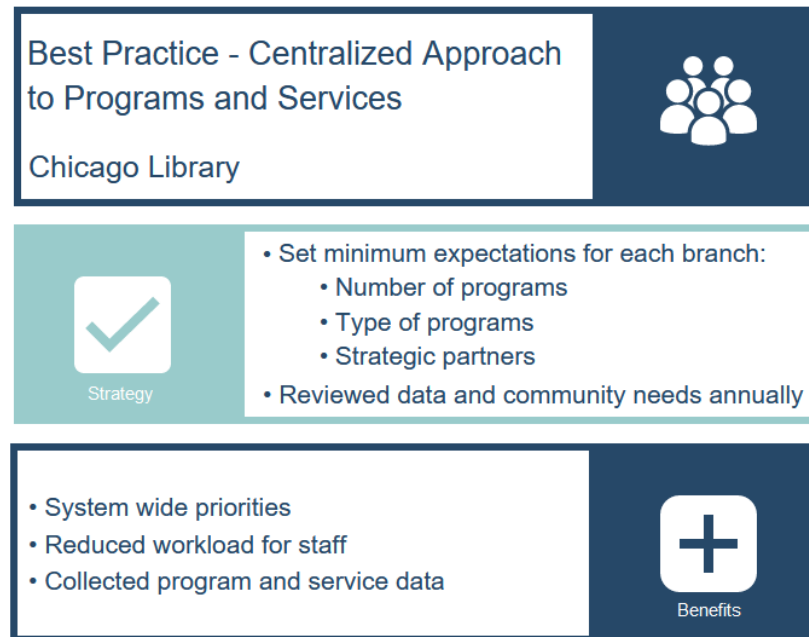
Recommendations

3.1   **Define all strategic goals as concrete, measurable objectives that align with community needs and communicate these to all branch staff.**

3.2   **Set annual minimum requirements for programs and services for each branch that align with the specific community demographics and needs of each branch's service area. Define minimum requirements by language, audience age, and type to match community demographics and needs.**

3.3   **Regularly monitor progress toward achieving the strategic goals through current processes, such as annual branch goal setting, monthly senior Librarian meetings and monthly and year-end branch reporting.**

Finding #4: *The Library does not maximize City and community partnerships to offer programs and services that meet community needs.*

The Library does not coordinate partnerships centrally to ensure partnerships align with their own strategic priorities.

In its strategic plan, the Library identifies partnerships as an important strategy. However, Library management does not centrally provide guidance for branch staff on establishing partnerships. Instead, each branch determines the partnerships they create and the extent to which they partner. As a result, partnerships do not always align with the Library's strategic priorities. Partnerships would be most impactful if they help fill the gaps in programs and services that the Library believes should be provided but cannot do so on their own, such as more adult programming, programs in other languages, and connecting patrons to community resources. At the same time, the Library offers benefits to these community partners because libraries are in diverse neighborhoods throughout the city, attract people of all ages, and have accessible community meeting spaces.

Community partnerships can help the Library fill key gaps in services.

Best practice libraries use a centralized approach to coordinating partnerships. For example, each year, central staff at Chicago and Oakland Public Libraries provide specific guidelines to branch staff on the types of partnerships to pursue. These and other leading libraries rely on partner organizations to fill some of the same service gaps that Long Beach has. The most prominent service gaps for Long Beach that need help from partnerships are:

- *Programs for teens and adults:* Most of the Library's programs are for children. Programs for teens, adults and older adults are offered inconsistently among branches and are based on the individual branch librarian's expertise and preferences. Community members and organizations said they want programs for teens and adults at their local branches. Partnering with different agencies could allow the Library to offer programs on a wider range of topics that appeal to this part of the community. There were organizations that expressed interest in providing support groups for LGBTQ individuals, health and wellness workshops, and job assistance services that could target teens and adults.

- *Programs and services in multiple languages:* With limited bilingual staff, the Library needs to collaborate with community organizations that provide services in the City's priority languages, Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog. For example, a community organization expressed interest in providing a Spanish language book club at the library.

- *Economic Inclusion Programs:* Economic inclusion services, such as job search assistance, job skills training and support for small businesses are important to community members. However, less than
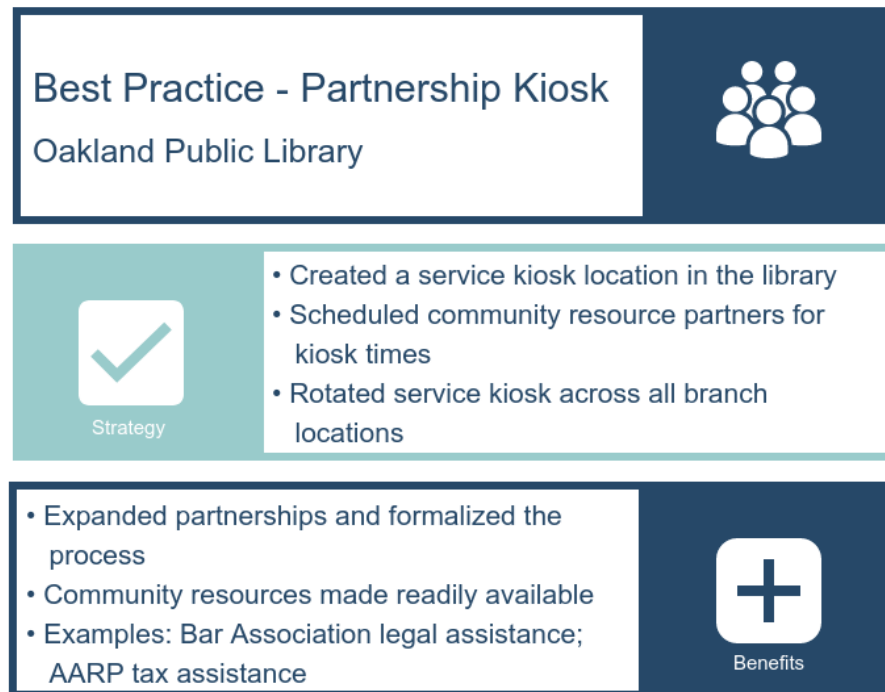
1% of Library programs focused on these topics. Patrons often visit libraries for career services and request staff assistance with completing resumes and exploring job opportunities; however, staff said they have limited time to adequately address these requests. Library management is in the process of coordinating partnership opportunities with Pacific Gateway, the City's Workforce Development Innovation Network, to offer more services in this area. Developing that partnership, as well as other partnerships, will help meet this need.

- ***Youth and Adult Education Assistance Programs***: Nearly half of all Long Beach Unified School District students are performing below grade-level standards in English/Language Arts and 57% are performing below standards in Mathematics. Citywide, 20% of adults ages 25 and older have not graduated high school. Accordingly, the Library currently offers literacy programs for infants to adults, homework assistance, free school supplies, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) programs, and an adult high school diploma program.

  However, many community members are unaware of the Library's educational services. In addition, community members highlighted the need for additional support for both youth and adults to pursue higher education. They requested college readiness programs and SAT/ACT preparatory classes for teens, and workshops on college and financial aid options for youth and adults. Of the nearly 3,600 programs offered in 2018, just three programs systemwide focused on college and career preparation.

- ***Patrons in need of community resources***: Community members stressed the need for the Library to be a central hub where they can find community resources and social services, such as housing assistance, health care, or legal services. While staff attempt to address patron requests for community resources as much as possible, they have differing levels of expertise and time available to assist. In partnership with the City Department of Health and Human Services, the Library started a pilot program that put Master of Social Work student interns at the Main Library and Mark Twain Branch to help connect patrons to community resources; however, this is part-time and temporary for now. The Library should build upon their partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services due to their existing resources for the Housing Authority and Multi-Service Center. Multiple best practice libraries, such as Oakland and San Francisco, bring community partners onsite on a regular basis to help patrons needing community resources. For example, agencies provide legal services, tax assistance and help accessing public benefits. Figure 16 highlights Oakland's approach of hosting a Community Kiosk to connect patrons to resources through community partners.

Figure 16.
The Oakland Library could be a model for Long Beach in using community partnerships to meet community needs

Best Practice - Partnership Kiosk

Oakland Public Library

Strategy
- Created a service kiosk location in the library
- Scheduled community resource partners for kiosk times
- Rotated service kiosk across all branch locations

- Expanded partnerships and formalized the process
- Community resources made readily available
- Examples: Bar Association legal assistance; AARP tax assistance

Benefits

Currently, staff at many branch locations are mostly reactive to partnership opportunities because they do not have time to identify needs and research organizations. However, if specific types of partnerships were identified centrally, it would make it easier for branch staff to actively pursue those opportunities. Another way that leading libraries increase partnerships is to include clear, easy-to-find information on their websites regarding the types of partnerships they are seeking and the process to coordinate with the organization. As a result, partners would understand what is needed and can initiate contact if they can help fill the need. Long Beach does not have partnership and co-sponsorship information readily available. The Library needs to more broadly advertise partnership opportunities, such as through their website, email lists, and social media to solicit partners for the specific needs that have been identified.

Library staff do not consistently manage partnerships.

Not all Library locations have community partnerships.

Some branches regularly and effectively partner with community organizations and City departments. Examples include: the Ruth Bach Library branch has various partnerships to offer healthy aging classes, the El Dorado branch partners with the Los Angeles Opera, and Mobile Studio staff partner with local public schools. In addition, some branches partner with other City departments, such as having the Office of Sustainability hold gardening workshops.

However, not all Library locations have partnerships. Further, not all Library partnerships are operating to their full potential. Our audit identified some common areas that hinder Library partnerships:

- ***Community organizations were not always aware of the value of partnering with the Library.*** Many agencies were unaware of all that the Library offers and how library services relate to their own services and the people they serve. As a result, there were missed opportunities to collaborate. In addition, if partners were more aware of Library services, they could promote them to their constituents.

- ***Organizations wanted the Library to initiate partnerships more often and to better coordinate logistics.*** Several organizations felt that partnerships did not happen unless they led the process. In addition, they described partnership opportunities that stalled because the Library did not follow through or did not communicate enough with them.

- ***The Library does not track or monitor their partnerships.*** While the Library's strategic plan says that each branch should establish at least one new partnership each year, the Library does not track branch progress or hold them accountable to this. Some branch staff report partnership programs on monthly logs, but others do not.

Library management needs to define expectations for staff and provide training in maintaining and managing partnerships. This should include guidance on promoting the value of Library partnerships to other agencies, outreach and communications, and performance monitoring. All branches should track partner events and attendance and collect feedback from patrons to inform partnership decisions in the future. For example, a partnership that was successful at one branch could be beneficial to the whole system. Management should review partnerships regularly and expand these partnerships when possible.

Recommendations

4.1   **Create annual minimum requirements regarding the number and type of partnerships that each branch should establish. Partnerships must focus on meeting priority community needs. These requirements need to be set centrally, such as by the existing centralized service committees.**

4.2   **Create a policy that defines expectations for staff responsible for identifying, initiating and maintaining partnerships. Provide training for staff in these areas.**

4.3   **Advertise partnership opportunities on the Library's website and other communication channels.**

4.4   Collect data on partnership progress at all locations including the type of service provided, the number of attendees, and patron feedback. Library management must monitor the progress of strategic partnership acquisition, enforce minimum requirements (see 4.1), and annually assess the success of each partnership using data collected. Progress could be monitored through current structures, such as monthly senior Librarian meetings and monthly and year-end branch reporting.

Finding #5:   *Lower staffing levels, outdated job descriptions, and limited use of volunteers restrict the Library's ability to meet community needs.*

While expectations for Library services have expanded, the number of Library staff has declined by 31% since 2008.

There has been a 31% decline in the number of Library staff following the recession in 2008. When interviewed, staff reported challenges in meeting expanding community needs due to lower staffing levels. The Library has attempted to offset City budget reductions by pursuing grant funding and private donations; however, they have not been able to generate enough ongoing funding to restore previous staff levels.

During the same time that staff have been reduced, the community has increased their expectations of the Library and the Library has expanded what it offers. Prior to 2008, the Library's focus was on lending materials, delivering books, and offering literacy programs. However, in more recent years, the Library has broadened its focus to include other services, programs, and partnerships.

With nearly 1/3 less staff, the Library faces challenges in meeting current community needs.

For example, changes in technology have widened the digital divide. One in five households in Long Beach does not have any type of internet access, and one in 10 households does not have access to any computing device at home. So, along with providing computers at branch locations, in FY13, all library branches upgraded to Wi-Fi to meet the demand for internet access. Library staff were impacted with additional responsibilities due to this upgrade. With computers and Wi-Fi offered, patrons then looked to Library staff to provide technology assistance. At multiple branches, the need for this assistance often exceeds the staff resources available. Many Library staff said that they often lack time to adequately address patron requests for technology assistance while fulfilling their other responsibilities.

Increased City funding for Library staff requires City Council approval. This could include allocating additional funds from the City's general fund and/or pursuing alternative funding sources. On average, the City allocates 2.6% of its general fund to the Library. City general fund dollars account for nearly all

(95%) of the Library's funding, in addition to small amounts of grants and private donations.

Library staff responsibilities do not match patron or community needs due to outdated job structures.

Library job descriptions reflect more traditional library roles, rather than mirroring modern library positions that allow for more flexible duties and job-sharing responsibilities. This restricts staff from providing services that meet changing patron needs.

Library job descriptions need to be updated to match current Library services.

Job descriptions allow for some, but not all, job classifications to assist with programs and patron-centric services. Senior Librarians, as the top decision-makers at each branch, have different preferences on which tasks are to be performed by certain staff classifications, which leads to inconsistencies across the system in how staff are used.

- Clerical and administrative classifications, like Clerks and Pages, were not designed to assist with newer priority service areas, such as programs, outreach, promotion, and patron reference assistance. These responsibilities fall on Librarians, which are the costliest of staff positions, and results in limited Librarian capacity.

- Although the Librarian Assistant classification was designed to assist with programs, some Librarians feel an advanced degree is required to do so; therefore, not all Library Assistants are participating in programming.

- Some Librarians allow Clerks to run programs while other Librarians do not.

Other public libraries have updated their positions, allowing Librarian Assistants, Clerks and other staff to implement programs and provide reference assistance under the guidance of Librarians. This provides patrons with more programming and assistance without burdening the Librarians' workload. Changes to the Library's staff and classification structure requires action from decision-makers outside of the Library, including the City's Human Resources and Civil Service Departments and the labor union representing Library employees.

Bilingual staff are in positions with outdated responsibilities and are not strategically assigned within the Library system, limiting language access to library services for patrons.

Updated job descriptions would improve language access.

The Library's outdated staff structure also limits language access for patrons. Most of the Library's bilingual staff are in non-librarian roles that largely are not involved in providing programs, patron assistance or outreach. If the Library updated their staffing structure, they could increase the number of bilingual staff in positions that interact with patrons.

- Only 48 of the Library's 187 total staff (26%) are bilingual, while nearly half of Long Beach community members speak a language other than English as their primary language.
  - Almost half of these bilingual staff (42%) work at the Main Library.
- 85% of the bilingual staff are non-Librarians and 38% of them are in classifications that do not normally participate in customer service, programs, or outreach.
- Some bilingual staff, including Senior Librarians, are placed at branches with majority monolingual English speaking communities or in positions that have more limited interaction with patrons, rather than at branches where their language skills are needed most.

Various libraries throughout the country have overhauled their staffing structures to better align with current library trends, including Oakland, Santa Ana and Hillsborough County, FL. Figure 17 summarizes Hillsborough County's model. Hillsborough County revamped its job classifications to address chronic staffing shortages and allocate more staff time to customer service, programs, and outreach. Their prior job descriptions were like those in Long Beach and reflected outdated library roles focused on clerical duties. Their new approach emphasizes the need to build the staffing structure around meeting customer service needs. Hillsborough County was able to achieve this without increasing costs, through natural attrition over a two-year period and reallocation of staff time previously spent on more traditional functions. They preserved all full-time positions, removed all part-time positions, and increased staff by two pay grades without additional cost.

Figure 17.
The Hillsborough County Library could be a model for Long Beach in updated staff structure to meet community needs
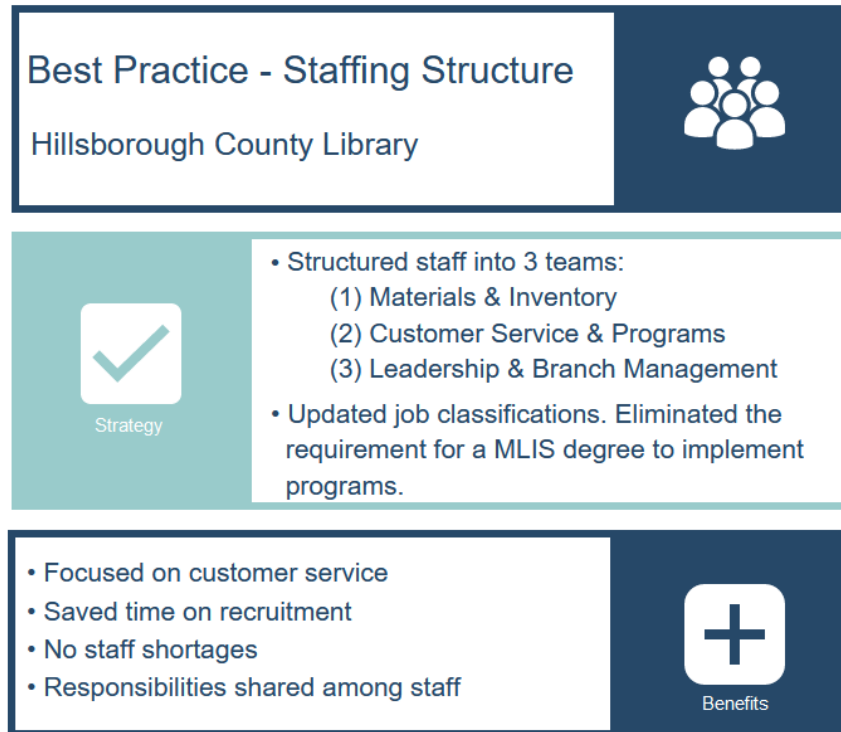
Volunteers can be better used to assist in library services.

With a more limited number of staff to meet growing community needs, volunteers can help supplement staffing. Community members want more volunteer opportunities in Long Beach. Currently, the Library is not maximizing volunteers to help provide priority services. During 2018, branches reported 7,428 total volunteer hours, ranging between 42 to 1,550 hours per branch in that year[8]. Half of the branches had under 500 volunteer hours in a year, which equates to only one volunteer for one day per week.

The Library's current volunteer program consists of:

- A central staff member serves as the part-time Volunteer Coordinator. However, this role is just one part of their responsibilities, rather than having a full-time staff member dedicated to this important function.

- Volunteer recruitment is ad-hoc, rather than strategic and centralized to find volunteers for roles that help meet community needs.

  o Many branch staff take a reactive rather than proactive approach to volunteers.

The Library's volunteer program is not strategic or centralized to help meet community needs.

---

[8] Volunteer hours are not tracked consistently, which may have contributed to the variance in hours and may affect the reliability of the data.

- o Many volunteer roles were designed for the volunteer's interests instead of Library priorities.

- The Library recently purchased a Volunteer Management Software; however, it has not been fully implemented for all volunteers.

- The Library's part-time Volunteer Coordinator has limited capacity and branch staff are largely responsible for recruiting, training and managing their site's volunteers. This results in an inefficient volunteer program that overburdens branch staff capacity and limits patron assistance.

Other library systems use volunteers for services like door greeters, library tours, and assistance with technology, jobs, and homework. It was also common for best practice libraries to partner with organizations for volunteers with specialized skills, like tax assistance through AARP volunteers who provide tax assistance or local Bar Association volunteers who provide legal assistance.

These other libraries that have more robust volunteer programs than Long Beach include Sacramento and Austin, TX. Outlined in Figure 18 below. the Austin Library system has a volunteer program with about 400 volunteers across 24 locations. These volunteers become ambassadors for the Austin Library system and many of their volunteers are eventually hired as staff, which cuts down on training time and costs.

Figure 18.
The Austin Library could be a model for Long Beach in using volunteers to help meet community needs

Best Practice - Volunteer Program
Austin Public Library

Strategy
- Defined specific positions for volunteers
- Hired a full time Volunteer Coordinator for the Department & designated a Volunteer Liaison at each branch
- Used volunteer management software

- Volunteer positions have a job description and set shifts
- Centralized volunteer management freed up staff time
- Volunteer management software organized and streamlined volunteer information

Benefits

Recommendations

5.1 Update staff job descriptions to diversify staff capabilities. Align job duties with strategic priorities and objectives.

5.2 Re-evaluate placement of bilingual staff to increase language access at locations where it is needed most.

5.3 Expand hours of the part-time Volunteer Coordinator role to a full-time position. The full-time Volunteer Coordinator can implement the following:

- Develop core volunteer roles and responsibilities that align with strategic priorities and objectives;

- Require volunteers to sign up for a regular, weekly schedule and require them to meet their schedule;

- Use Library website to publicize the volunteer program and opportunities available;

- Recruit centrally and by branch;

- Provide training centrally;

- Support branch staff by clearly defining their roles in managing the volunteer program;

- Set minimum expectations for the use of volunteers at each branch to align with branch staff capacity; and

- Utilize the recently purchased volunteer management software for all volunteer management tasks, including recruitment efforts, training, and scheduling.

5.4 Present a proposal to City Manager and then to City Council on how staffing for the Library should look to meet strategic priorities.

Finding #6: *The Library's limited outreach and promotion leaves community members and organizations unaware of all Library offerings.*

Community members and organizations expressed that the Library needs to increase public awareness about the programs, services, and materials that they offer.

- Community members said they had not visited a library but would have if they had known about specific programs and services that are offered.

- Frequent library users were not aware of all the services that were mentioned by other patrons during the focus groups. Some examples of services that participants were unaware of included career assistance, e-books, online resource databases, and the ZipBooks program.
- Community organizations would be more likely to establish or continue a partnership with the Library if the Library better communicated their value.

Demonstrating the value of the Library to the Long Beach community is the fourth goal in the Library's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, see Figure 19. This goal will be accomplished through community events, promotions, outreach, and customer service efforts, such as targeted communications, online resources, and annual reports.

Figure 19.
The Library's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan includes a goal to demonstrate the value of the Library

4 — Tell our story to demonstrate the value of the Long Beach Public Library to our community.
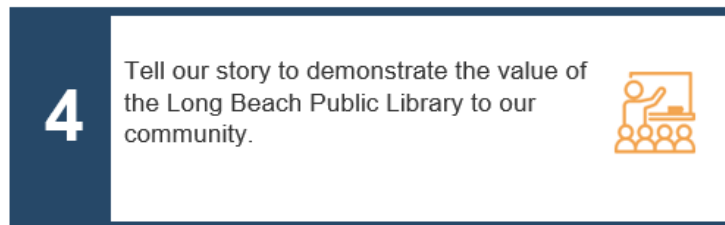
In addition, the American Library Association acknowledges that libraries must actively encourage people to come to programs, check out items, and strengthen the image of the library as a vital community center. The Association offers tools, resources, and support to help libraries strengthen their role.

The Library's outreach and promotion are affected by some current practices:

The Library needs to improve the way it promotes its services to community members.

- Outreach and promotion activities vary by branch.
  - The Library does not always leverage stakeholders to promote its programs and services to community members.
  - Some branch Librarians do their own outreach while others refer school or community events to central staff to attend if they can.
- Branch staff reported having limited capacity to effectively do outreach and promotion.
  - Not all branch staff, including non-librarian staff, that can be are involved in outreach events.
- During the audit period, the Library did not use its existing email campaign subscription to market programs, services, and resources to registered patrons.

      ○ Email campaign subscription was paid for as part of the strategic planning process and is available to management to use.
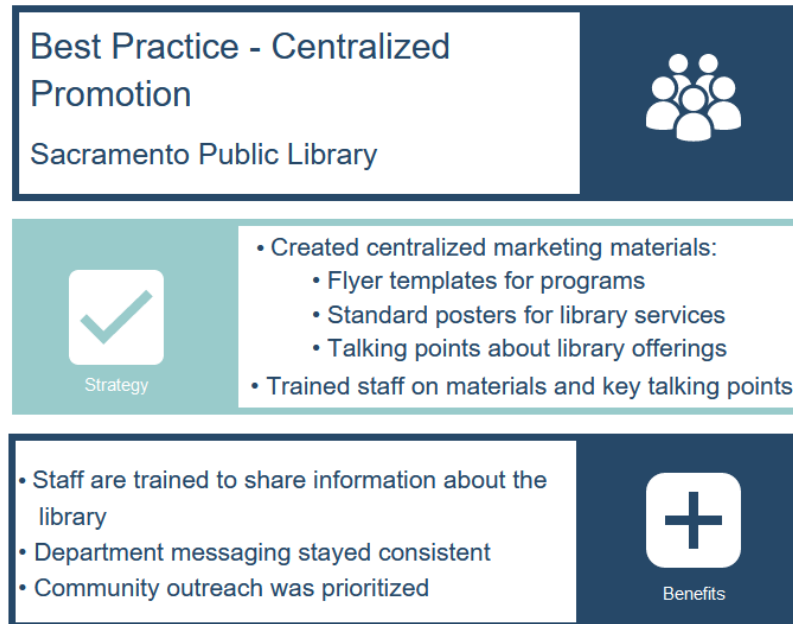
The Library participated in 229 community events in 2018 and launched an enhanced website in Spring 2019 with a systemwide activities calendar. However, the Library needs more outreach and promotion efforts with clear messaging to communicate the value of libraries. Several libraries calculate the value their library adds to communities as a financial return on investment. This information can be featured on their websites, annual reports, and other promotional channels to raise awareness of the impact and value of public libraries. Some additional ways that the Library could do more outreach and promotion include visiting local schools, attending more community-wide events, targeting promotion of all its offerings through partnerships and stakeholders, and marketing their services at other community locations like grocery stores or in Long Beach buses.

Community members at audit focus groups recommended ways the Library can promote their services:

- Monthly e-newsletters
- Library branch tours, orientations and door greeters
- Advertisements in local buses and newspapers
- Promote services through Long Beach Schools
- Streetlight banners
- Print mailers
- Promotional materials at public locations, like grocery stores and hospitals

To improve outreach and promotion, the Library should use a more centralized approach to ensure consistency of their message and reduce the branch staffs' workload. We found that best practice libraries use a more centralized approach, including Sacramento and Austin, TX. Figure 20 highlights Sacramento's strategy. Key components of this type of approach are making outreach a systemwide priority, setting expectations for branch staff, and providing tools to support staff in the outreach and promotion activities.

Figure 20.
The Sacramento Library could be a model for Long Beach in using a central approach to promotion

Best Practice - Centralized Promotion

Sacramento Public Library

Strategy
- Created centralized marketing materials:
  - Flyer templates for programs
  - Standard posters for library services
  - Talking points about library offerings
- Trained staff on materials and key talking points

- Staff are trained to share information about the library
- Department messaging stayed consistent
- Community outreach was prioritized

Benefits

Currently, the Library has an External Communication Committee, and Community Services and Youth and Family Services Divisions that all help with outreach and promotion to some level. Ideally, one group would be responsible for determining outreach and promotion priorities, setting and communicating expectations, and creating tools to support staff at the branches.

Recommendations

6.1 **Develop core messaging that communicates the impact of Library services on the community.**

6.2 **Strengthen centralized outreach and promotion systems to expand branch staff capacity utilizing existing staff committees or by dedicating other staff to these responsibilities. Develop talking points, promotional templates, and outreach materials for branch staff.**

6.3 **Establish minimum expectations for outreach and promotion activities by branch. For example, determine how many times staff should attend an offsite event each month.**

6.4 **Use existing email campaign subscription (OrangeBoy) to promote library services to registered patrons.**

6.5 **Cross-promote programs and services with strategic partners to maximize available resources and improve community awareness.**

III. Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of this audit was to assess the equity and effectiveness of the Long Beach Public Library's (Library) programs, services, materials, and resources compared to population served, industry standards and best practices. The audit scope covered Library offerings provided from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018 (1 year). To achieve this objective, we:

- Reviewed all programs offered onsite and offsite during 2018 and assessed the number of attendees;

- Assessed Library services across all 11 neighborhood branch locations and centrally at the Main library;

- Evaluated library materials and circulation data by reviewing reports from the Library's Sierra Integrated Library System;

- Conducted interviews with central administrative staff and branch staff from all 12 locations;

- Conducted focus groups with community members and interviews with stakeholder group representatives to understand community needs and wants;

- Assessed results of existing community engagement initiatives to further our understanding of community needs in Long Beach;

- Analyzed U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates data to understand community demographics;

- Analyzed fine and fee revenue collected by the Library;

- Benchmarked against similar library systems as well as best practice libraries nationwide; and

- Reviewed industry best practices by speaking with the American Library Association staff and reading applicable guidance online.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

IV. Appendix A: Community Engagement

To understand community needs and interests related to public library services, we reviewed 21 community engagement initiatives, facilitated seven focus groups with 148 Library patrons and Long Beach community members, and interviewed representatives from 15 Library stakeholder agencies.

A. Recent Community Engagement Initiatives
We reviewed summary results from 21 community engagement initiatives conducted between 2016-2019. This included four engagements focused specifically on Library services and 17 engagements focused on various community groups and/or service areas.

#	Engagement	Lead Agency
	Community Engagements	
	Library-Focused Engagements	
1	Development of the Library's Strategic Plan 2017-2020: Community Meetings & Stakeholder Interviews	OrangeBoy
2	Library Innovation Lab Grant: Immigrant Communities Needs Assessment	Library Community Services Division
3	Khmer Language Catalog Development Outreach - Focus Groups	United Cambodian Community
4	City of Long Beach Civic Center Development Survey	Plenary-Edgemoor Civic Partners
	General	
5	Around the Table 2017: Community Conversations and Survey	Long Beach Community Foundation & We Love Long Beach
6	City Budget Priorities Survey 2018	City Budget Oversight Committee
7	City Budget Priorities Survey 2019	City Budget Oversight Committee
8	Citywide Community Survey 2018	City Manager's Office
9	Long Beach Equity Profile	PolicyLink, City Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Equity

10	The People's Budget FY2019	Housing Habitability Coalition, Invest in Youth Campaign, Long Beach Language Access Coalition, Sanctuary Long Beach
11	The People's Budget FY2020	Community Budget Advocacy Workgroup
	Children & Teens	
12	Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan	DHHS Early Childhood Education Program
13	Invest in Youth Campaign 2017	Khmer Girls in Action, Invest in Youth Coalition
	Older Adults	
14	Long Beach Age-Friendly Initiative	DHHS Older Adult Services
	Accessibility for People with Disabilities	
15	Accessibility Survey - ADA Self-Evaluation	City Manager: Accessibility Coordinator
	Economic Development	
16	Everyone In: Economic Inclusion Listening Tour 2018	Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, City Economic Development Department, and DHHS Office of Equity
	Digital Inclusion	
17	Digital Inclusion Survey	City Technology and Innovation Commission
	Homelessness	
18	Everyone Home Long Beach	Everyone Home Long Beach Task Force, DHHS
	Development & Planning	
19	Land Use Element Community Engagement	City Development Services Department
	Health	
20	Community Health Needs Assessment 2019	Long Beach Collaborative: DHHS, Memorial Care, Dignity Health, Children's Clinic, Long Beach Forward
	African American Community	

21	African American Cultural Center Engagement 2019	African American Cultural Center Community Advisory Committee

B. Focus Groups

We facilitated seven focus groups with a total of 148 Long Beach community members and Library patrons. We facilitated four of these groups with specific populations in partnership with community organizations. The populations were selected based on the Library's focal populations and a review of community groups with minimal to no representation in the recent community engagements detailed in section A. In line with the City's Language Access Policy, we attempted to coordinate with a Filipinx-serving organization to facilitate a focus group with Tagalog speakers but were unable to do so. At the recommendation of a Cambodian-serving organization, we did not facilitate a focus group specifically with Khmer-speakers as recent engagements had already gathered enough input for our audit purposes.

Three of the focus groups were open to the public and hosted at Library branches in North, South and East Long Beach that offered the greatest access for community members, including geographic distribution, parking and transit access, and meeting room space.

In consultation with the City's Office of Equity, we used strategies to promote equitable participation in the focus groups. This included providing language interpretation through the City's Language Access Program and Accessibility Coordinator, gift card stipends, free child watch services, weekend and evening schedule options, snacks and drinks, and multilingual digital and print promotion in partnership with community organizations.

We thank the focus group participants and community organizations for their collaboration, time and expertise.

Specific Focus Groups		
Focal Population *All focal groups included low-income individuals/families*	**Partner Agency**	**Number of Participants**
Veterans	U.S. Vets	14
Spanish speakers	Latinos in Action	32
Disability community (people with disabilities, family members and service providers)*	Citizen's Advisory Council on Disabilities	15
People experiencing homelessness	Mental Health America Los Angeles	14
	Total Participants:	75

Due to the structure of this event, conversations were conducted individually rather than as a group.

General Focus Groups		
Focal Population	**Location**	**Number of Participants**
General community members & Library Patrons	Michelle Obama Library	11
	El Dorado Library	38
	Billie Jean King Main Library	24
	Total Participants:	73
Grand Total Focus Group Participants (Specific & General Focus Groups):		***148***

C. Stakeholder Interviews

We conducted interviews with representatives from 15 agencies identified as Library stakeholders. We thank these stakeholders for their collaboration, time and expertise.

#	City of Long Beach Departments
1	Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Early Childhood Education
2	DHHS Office of Aging
3	DHHS Fatherhood Initiative
4	DHHS Homeless Services
5	DHHS Veteran's Affairs
6	Economic Development Department, Pacific Gateway
7	Parks, Recreation & Marine Department, Community Recreation Services
8	City Manager's Office, Citywide Accessibility
9	Technology & Innovation Department, Digital Inclusion Initiative

	Community Organizations
10	Long Beach Unified School District
11	United Cambodian Community
12	Latinos in Action
13	U.S. Vets
14	The LGBTQ Center
15	Mental Health America, Los Angeles

V. Management Response

Date: October 8, 2020

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager

From: Glenda Williams, Director of Library Services

For: Laura L. Doud, City Auditor

Subject: **Library Services Performance Audit Response**

It was an informative and enlightening experience working collaboratively with the City Auditor's Office to evaluate Long Beach Public Library's (LBPL) current performance with regards to programs and services offered to the public. The City Auditor team consisting of Hannah Gardener, Stephanie Harper, and Jessica Tims, was exhaustive in its efforts. The Library Management team is appreciative of their willingness to listen to and engage with administration, library staff, community partners, and residents to fully understand the challenges and hurdles the Department of Library Services (Department) must overcome in order to provide the best possible service to City residents.

When the Department faced significant staffing and materials budget cuts as a result of economic downturns in 2008 and 2012, the number of library locations (12) remained the same, despite reductions totaling approximately $2.65 million. These cuts drastically reduced the number of staff available to serve the public and develop programs and significantly reduced the materials budget, which, even prior to the reductions, was not enough to meet the needs. The Department, even with a deep reduction in staff capacity and diminished ability to bolster and improve library collections, continues to strive to deliver core services such as children's and teen programming, educational support, services to older adults, workforce development, and reading and audiovisual materials for all age groups in alignment with best practices defined by the American Library Association. Guided by LBPL's mission of meeting the information needs of our culturally diverse and dynamic population, there were more than 4.5 million patron visits in the last five years. In addition to preserving core services, such as children's storytime, LBPL has led the way in innovation with its makerspace and STEAM-focused "Studio" programs. In 2017, LBPL was recognized for its innovative approach to library services by the Institute of Museum and Library Services with a National Medal, the highest honor that can be earned by a public library or museum in the United States.

Library Administration fully recognizes that despite the accolades, there is still work to be done to better reach and serve Long Beach's economically, linguistically, and racially diverse residents. We are committed to taking the actions necessary to better align our programs and services with the needs of Long Beach residents who speak languages other than English—focusing on hiring staff that are bilingual Spanish, Khmer, or Tagalog; reallocating materials budgets to build stronger library collections in languages other than English; and expanding existing bilingual programs such as "Cuentos y Cantos," LBPL's Spanish bilingual storytime program. While the expansion of programs in languages other than English can best be

achieved by hiring additional staff with the needed language expertise, the Department recognizes the City Auditor's recommendation of partnering with local nonprofits to help to fill the gap by expanding current program offerings in the short term.

Library Administration is in full support of the City Auditor's recommendation to add dedicated public relations staff. This will improve LBPL's ability to reach traditionally hard to reach populations and to better "tell its own story" about its wealth of print and digital resources and educational programs. The enhancement of a dedicated data analyst will also greatly improve LBPL's ability to align its programs and services with current demographics and gauge the library's progress toward meeting determined outcomes measures. This recommendation and many more will require additional structural funding to bring them to fruition.

While additional work is needed to meet the multilingual needs of Long Beach residents, it is important to note that LBPL has made great strides in better serving the needs of the many library people experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges, a key area of need for the City of Long Beach as a whole. Thanks to our partnership with the City's Department of Health and Human Services, for the first time ever, LBPL was able to provide enhanced services through the implementation of a social worker pilot program. The program, the first collaboration of its type within the City, placed Masters in Social Work (MSW) graduate interns in two library locations, Billie Jean King Main Library and Mark Twain Library. From September 2019 to March 2020, a total of 163 contacts were made that connected some of the library's most vulnerable patrons to much needed social services, housing and employment opportunities. The MSW interns also assisted with the de-escalation of several mental health crises, thereby fostering a more welcoming library environment for all patrons.

In today's unprecedented times of simultaneously wrestling with the effects of a global pandemic while endeavoring to dismantle structural racism and uplift racial equity, LBPL plays an integral role in rebuilding community trust and supporting the growth of the entire community. More than ever, we need the support of the City and residents to build an ever-stronger public library that is equipped and capable of providing the support Long Beach residents need. However, the Department is also keenly aware of the City's current financial situation, as well as the future years of projected multi-million deficits due to reduced revenue streams, increased business operational expenses and pension obligations which have been exacerbated by the current pandemic. We look forward to the opportunity to implement the improvements recommended by the City Auditor and working to better service the Long Beach community as funding streams come online.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-6016.

ATTACHMENT

cc: LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
        KEVIN JACKSON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
        TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
        REBECCA G. GARNER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY TO THE CITY MANAGER

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
1.1	Offer more materials, programs, and services in languages other than English, and align additional offerings to each branch's community profile and language needs.	H	9	A	Library Services	Library Management will develop standard LAP procedures for staff to implement when creating publicity for programs. Staff will investigate ways of increasing programming in other languages through partnership with outside agencies for neighborhood libraries where there is a need to increase programs in languages other than English in alignment with demographic profiles. Structural funding ($540K) for additional library staff (2 Library Assistants, 2 General Librarians and 1 Senior Librarian) to complete the recommendation will be explored in FY21.	Third quarter of FY 2021
1.2	Examine how to adjust and expand open hours and service days to respond to the needs of patrons and present a proposal of changes to the City Manager and then to City Council. The proposal needs to take into consideration staffing levels, funding, patron survey results, and which branches are located where services are needed the most.	H	12	A	Library Services	As part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 and 2021 budget processes, the Library provided City Council different plans to restructure the library schedule. For FY 2019, the Library proposed transitioning half (six) the libraries to a Sunday—Thursday schedule, while the other half would remain operating Tuesday—Saturday, ensuring libraries were available seven days per week. This was supported with patron survey data completed at the time. Again for FY 2021, the Library proposed transitioning the three newest and largest libraries (BJK Main Library, Michelle Obama and Mark Twain Libraries) to a seven-day schedule. However, this was dependent on the remaining nine libraries being reduced to operating three days per week. Neither proposal was accepted by City Council. The current cost to expand the three largest libraries and keep everyone else status quo will require $1.9 million in additional structural funds. Library Management will re-examine open hours and will provide a recommendation to the city manager as part of the FY22 budget process.	Fourth quarter of FY 2021

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
1.3	Examine the current Master Fees and Charges Schedule and present to City Manager and then to City Council a revision to eliminate library overdue fines while retaining the lost/damaged item fees to maximize equitable access and community benefit.	M	15	A	Library Services	A proposal was submitted to the City Manager during FY 2020. Being cognizant of the City's financial challenges, the Library would need a corresponding annual revenue offset of $250,000 for the Library's revenue commitment as reflected in the annual budget. The majority of this amount is due to fines and fees collected from people that use any of the 12 Long Beach Publixc Libraries. Library Management will explore funding and discuss with City Management for further consideration as part of the FY22 budget process.	Fourth quarter of FY 2021
1.4	Communicate changes to the fine and fee library policies to library patrons.	M	15	A	Library Services	Once additional structural funding is secured and City Management/City Council approves to adopt a fine-free structure, Library staff will develop a marketing plan to communicate changes to all community members and to re-connect with affected patrons. Section 6.1 addresses staffing strategies that enable stronger marketing efforts.	TBD pending Long Beach City Council approval
1.5	Collect and evaluate data to measure and report on the outcomes of going fine-free.	L	15	A	Library Services	Should City Management/City Council approve Library's proposal to adopt a fine-free structure, Library staff will create outcome evaluation measurements informed by the Public Library Association's Project Outcome approach for collecting, evaluating, and analyzing library impact data.	TBD pending additional structural funding for 1.3
1.6	Present to City Manager and then to City Council a proposal to waive existing overdue fines on all library patrons' accounts.	H	15	A	Library Services	Current overdue fines and fees exceed $3.5 million. Library staff will request to waive existing overdue fines on all library accounts once a revenue offset has been identified.	TBD pending Long Beach City Council approval

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
1.7	Provide training for all library staff in customer service roles on assisting patrons in accessing portable adaptive technology.	M	16	A	Library Services	The Long Beach Public Library currently offers adaptive hardware, software, and assistive devices at the Billie Jean King Main Library and Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library. However, there are now several low or no cost adaptive software applications that are available for download to smart phones and tablets. This presents a cost effective means for the library to expand adaptive technology to smaller branch libraries throughout the city. Staff from the Billie Jean King Main library will identify a core collection of low or no cost applications to download onto staff tablets and create a self-directed training course that will be required for all public service library staff. The project will be led by the Community Services Senior Librarian at BJK Main Library, who oversees the Center for Adaptive Technology (CAT). The position is currently vacant and awaiting recruitment by Civil Service. We anticipate completing this effort within six months after filling the vacancy.	End of FY 2021
1.8	Develop informational materials and promote the availability of adaptive technology and assistance services through notifications to registered borrowers and through City and community partner promotions.	M	16	A	Library Services	Library staff will develop an informational brochure to highlight the CAT at Billie Jean King Main Library and the adaptive technology available at Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library. This information is currently only available digitally on the library's website. The library will also regularly include information about its adaptive technology resources in the LBPL Connect newsletter.	Second quarter of FY 2021

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
1.9	Present a proposal to City Manager and then to City Council to provide free parking for library patrons at the City Center Garage with library validation. The proposal should include a recommendation for an appropriate validation period that allows patrons enough time to attend programs and services at Main Library.	M	17	A	Library Services	The library is aware that both the cost and availability of parking in the Civic Center public parking garage presents a barrier to service for many library patrons. This feedback has been noted in library patron surveys, focus groups and stakeholder meetings and at various public forums. Currently, library patrons enjoy 30 minutes free parking, but must pay for any time beyond this. Free library programs typically span 45 minutes to 3 hours, meaning that anyone attending a program who has driven to the library will be required to pay to park. Library staff will submit a proposal that includes a survey of neighboring main/central libraries parking fees. Annual structural funding will need to be identified to offset the estimated revenue loss in the amount of $100,000 - $150,000 annually. This amount is based on what is projected to be paid for parking by library patrons accessing resources and attending events and programs at the Billie Jean King Main Library.	TBD pending Long Beach City Council approval
2.1	Develop policies and procedures for collecting and using data in decision-making. Include: • Processes for data analysis, such as goal setting, service planning, evaluation and reporting. • Types of data and data sources that should be used; • Identify staff responsible for gathering and analyzing the data, including defining which types of data are analyzed centrally for the system or by branch staff for their site; and • Frequency of data collection and analysis.	M	19	A	Library Services	Library Administration will explore funding in the amount of $120K -$130K for a data analyst position as part of the FY22 budget process. Once the data analyst has been acquired, the Library will explore expanding its current data collection processes and database to include additional policies and data points for decision making. Community profiles and materials and program alignment could be re-evaluated every 3 years. Library management will also investigate securing funding to purchase software that will effectively enhance data collection of outputs and outcomes.	Fourth quarter of FY 2021
2.2	Update templates that staff use to log information. The information collected should directly relate to how it will be used (defined through implementation of Recommendation 2.1). • For example: Reference, technology and Family Learning Center assistance logs should categorize the type of assistance staff provide so that the Library can plan services based on common patron needs.	L	20	A	Library Services	Library management will update current templates to better track outputs for all programs and services once a data analyst is on board.	TBD pending data analyst position

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
2.3	Provide guidance to staff to track data accurately, consistently, and in compliance with Library policies. • For example: Patron records must be entered accurately and staff must log programs, outreach activities and community partnerships in the same way at each branch. Management should review data created by staff on a regular basis to provide feedback and accountability to staff.	M	20	A	Library Services	Library Services' current circulation policy will be updated and training on the new policy which would include procedures for entering data into the integrated library system will follow. This much needed policy revision and subsequent training would address the issue of the accuracy of patron record entry. Staff will receive refresher training via a training slide deck on the current online system for tracking program statistics, the Core Stats Database.	Third quarter of FY 2021
2.4	Design and implement a system to evaluate outcomes of library services. This could be developed in partnership with CSULB (such as the Center for Community Education, or education, public administration, public health, social work and/or business programs) or by a consultant.	L	20	A	Library Services	Library Management will begin the process of training and implementing of Project Outcome, an outcomes measurement methodology developed by the Public Library Association. This will be implemented systemwide over a span of 5 years. The department feels that outcomes measurement would best be facilitated by implementing an already recognized outcomes measurement methodology used by other public library systems and backed by one of our discipline's professional organizations.	FY 2021 - FY 2026
3.1	Define all strategic goals as concrete, measurable objectives that align with community needs and communicate these to all branch staff.	M	22	A	Library Services	Although full implementation of this recommendation requires funding in the amount of $60,000 - $80,000 to hire a consultant to create a new strategic plan (the current strategic plan expired in 2020) and aligned goals, Library management will look at department priorities as part of the FY22 priority service budget process. Priority service budgeting includes aspects of zero-based budgeting, best budgeting practices, and provides transparency – identifying the most essential & important, as well as least important priorities. The Library would prefer to align the new strategic plan with the City's strategic plan that is currently in progress.	Second quarter of FY 2021

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
3.2	Set annual minimum requirements for programs and services for each branch that align with the specific community demographics and needs of each branch's service area. Define minimum requirements by language, audience age, and type to match community demographics and needs.	H	22	A	Library Services	The Library management team will work collaboratively with staff in FY 2021 to initiate the process to develop appropriate minimum standards per branch for programs and services with community demographics and tailored by location to account for varying branch size and staffing levels. These minimum requirements will be reflected as goals to meet and progress made in a revised annual report template to be implemented by December 2022.	FY 2021 - FY 2022
3.3	Regularly monitor progress toward achieving the strategic goals through current processes, such as annual branch goal setting, monthly senior Librarian meetings and monthly and year-end branch reporting.	M	22	A	Library Services	Once section 3.1 is complete, the monthly report template completed by Senior Librarians (supervisors) will be retooled to reflect the minimum standards for materials, programs and services.	Pending 3.1
4.1	Create annual minimum requirements regarding the number and type of partnerships that each branch should establish. Partnerships must focus on meeting priority community needs. These requirements need to be set centrally, such as by the existing centralized service committees.	H	26	A	Library Services	Long Beach Public Library places great value on partnerships both with community organization and sister City Departments. Partnerships are in the current strategic plan and has resulted in successful partnerships: MSW intern pilot with the Health Department, Khmer language classes with Living Arts Long Beach, Veterans Resource Center in partnership with CalVet, HomeFront Rising and the CA State Library. The Library does recognize the need to establish strong partnerships in all areas of the city so that each unique neighborhood may enjoy the benefits that partnership offers. Using branch library demographic profiles and patron feedback, library administration will set annual minimum requirements for the number and type of partnerships that each library location must develop and nurture. Appropriate staff will receive guidance and training to ensure complete comprehension of expectations, and progress will be monitored and tracked in monthly reports. This will be included in the FY 2021 Annual Plan of Service.	FY 2021

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
4.2	Create a policy that defines expectations for staff responsible for identifying, initiating and maintaining partnerships. Provide training for staff in these areas.	M	26	A	Library Services	Library Bureau Managers in collaboration with Senior Librarians and staff responsible for outreach and engagement will establish guidelines for partnerships that include clear expectations for staff in identifying, initiating, and maintaining community partnerships. These guidelines will be developed and staff trained as part of the library's FY 2021 Annual Plan of Service.	FY 2021
4.3	Advertise partnership opportunities on the Library's website and other communication channels.	H	26	A	Library Services	After guidelines for community partnerships are established and staff have been trained (see 4.2), a space on the library's website will be identified to advertise partnership opportunities and/or promote community partnership activities. Partnership opportunities may also be promoted through the LBPL Connect newsletter and library social media platforms. This will be added to the library's FY 2022 Annual Plan of Service.	FY 2022
4.4	Collect data on partnership progress at all locations including the type of service provided, the number of attendees, and patron feedback. Library management must monitor the progress of strategic partnership acquisition, enforce minimum requirements (see 4.1), and annually assess the success of each partnership using data collected. Progress could be monitored through current structures, such as monthly senior Librarian meetings and monthly and year-end branch reporting.	L	27	A	Library Services	The procedures for documenting and reporting community partnership data points (type of service provided, number of attendees, patron feedback) will be included in the guidelines referenced in section 4.3. Progress in this area will be reported in Senior Librarian monthly reports so that library administration can monitor compliance. Annual assessment of strategic success will be analyzed and shared by Main Library Bureau staff responsible for community outreach and engagement.	FY 2022

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
5.1	Update staff job descriptions to diversify staff capabilities. Align job duties with strategic priorities and objectives.	H	32	A	Library Services	The Library acknowledges this should be done, however it cannot be completed without the Civil Service and Human Resources Departments, as well as the unions representing Library employees (mostly IAM). The most recent Library classifications with new job descriptions are Library Assistant created in 2019, and Senior Librarian created in 2017 as part of the FY 2017 budget process. The Library hosts monthly Labor Management Committee (LMC) meetings with IAM – a forum where both IAM and Library management discuss any employee relations issues of mutual concern and meet & confer meetings for all issues, including employee recruitments and more. Library Management will continue to meet and confer with IAM and update job descriptions to diversify staff capabilities upon recruitment of new positions.	FY 2021 - FY 2027
5.2	Re-evaluate placement of bilingual staff to increase language access at locations where it is needed most.	H	32	A	Library Services	Almost 30 bilingual staff are currently assigned to work at library locations according to bilingual needs. Additionally, bilingual skill needs are emphasized as a desirable qualification with each new job bulletin/posting. Library Management will review placement of current bilingual staff to ensure they are being utilized where they are most needed. Library Management will also examine appropriate placement of new bilingual hires to increase language access as they come on board.	Second quarter of FY 2021

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
5.3	Expand hours of the part-time Volunteer Coordinator role to a full-time position. The full-time Volunteer Coordinator can implement the following: • Develop core volunteer roles and responsibilities that align with strategic priorities and objectives; • Require volunteers to sign up for a regular, weekly schedule and require them to meet their schedule; • Use Library website to publicize the volunteer program and opportunities available; • Recruit centrally and by branch; • Provide training centrally; • Support branch staff by clearly defining their roles in managing the volunteer program; • Set minimum expectations for the use of volunteers at each branch to align with branch staff capacity; and • Utilize the recently purchased volunteer management software for all volunteer management tasks, including recruitment efforts, training, and scheduling.	M	32	A	Library Services	The Long Beach Public Library does not have a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator position. This work is currently split among several staff members with other competing responsibilities and as a result a cohesive, coordinated approach to recruiting, training, and managing volunteers systemwide has been lacking. A full-time employee in this role would provide a great benefit to the system as a whole and each library location would reap the rewards of a centralized approach. Library Services would require an increase in general budgeted funding of approximately $128,000 annually. This enhancement would fund a FT General Librarian to focus exclusively on Volunteer Services and provide a modest $8,000 budget to fund related costs, such as volunteer management annual software maintenance subcription and promotional materials. Library management will investigate funding for the dedicated Volunteer Coordinator as part of the FY22 budget process.	Fourth quarter of FY 2021
5.4	Present a proposal to City Manager and then to City Council on how staffing for the Library should look to meet strategic priorities.	H	32	A	Library Services	As highlighted in section 5.1, dated classification specifications and job descriptions hinder Library Services' efforts to evolve library programs and services to meet the rapidly changing needs of today's library users. Library management will review the recommended models in this report and identify and study other library systems with similar challenges, demographics, and priorities. A report to City Management and/or City Council with findings will be provided, including recommendations with the goal of adopting a model of staffing that will allow the Long Beach Public Library to meet or exceed its current strategic priorities.	FY 2021

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
6.1	Develop core messaging that communicates the impact of Library services on the community.	H	35	A	Library Services	Unlike similar sized library systems and some City departments, Long Beach Public Library does not have a communications or marketing team to develop core messaging or draft specific messaging or marketing initiatives. Library staff will continue to promote library events via social media, flyers and the Library's website at longbeach.gov/library. However, in order to fully address this recommendation and that of section 6.2, Library Services would require structural funding ($290,000) to hire a FT Public Information Officer, Public Affairs Assistant and convert a current position to a Visual Arts Specialist.	FY 2021
6.2	Strengthen centralized outreach and promotion systems to expand branch staff capacity utilizing existing staff committees or by dedicating other staff to these responsibilities. Develop talking points, promotional templates, and outreach materials for branch staff.	M	35	A	Library Services	Library staff will maintain current outreach and promotion systems as current staffing allows. However, in order to fully address this recommendation Library Services would require structural funding ($290,000) to hire a FT Public Information Officer, Public Affairs Assistant and convert a current position to a Visual Arts Specialist.	FY 2021
6.3	Establish minimum expectations for outreach and promotion activities by branch. For example, determine how many times staff should attend an offsite event each month.	H	35	A	Library Services	Library Administration will explore funding for a PIO/PAA as part of the FY22 budget process. Once a PIO/PAA has been acquired, branch minimums for outreach and promotion will be set in relation to the efforts of a centralized marketing campaign. Branch outreach and promotion would be designed to support and enhance the coordinated systemwide effort and would also be dependent upon staffing levels at each branch library.	Fourth quarter of FY 2021
6.4	Use existing email campaign subscription (OrangeBoy) to promote library services to registered patrons.	H	35	A	Library Services	This recommendation was completed with the April 2020 launch of the bi-weekly LBPL Connect newsletter.	Third quarter of FY 2020
6.5	Cross-promote programs and services with strategic partners to maximize available resources and improve community awareness.	M	36	A	Library Services	As part of the library's FY 2021 Annual Plan of Service, Main Library Community Services staff will develop a centralized list of strategic partners with whom to cross-promote library programs and services. Staff at each branch library will send monthly program information to Main Library Community Services staff, who will be responsible for communicating with these partners.	FY 2021

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Library Services Department
Library Services Performance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation

Priority

H – High Priority - The recommendation pertains to a serious or materially significant audit finding or control weakness. Due to the seriousness or significance of the matter, immediate management attention and appropriate corrective action is warranted.

M – Medium Priority - The recommendation pertains to a moderately significant or potentially serious audit finding or control weakness. Reasonably prompt corrective action should be taken by management to address the matter. Recommendation should be implemented no later than six months.

L – Low Priority - The recommendation pertains to an audit finding or control weakness of relatively minor significance or concern. The timing of any corrective action is left to management's discretion.

Shaded areas - to be completed by the department

VI. Rebuttal to Management Response

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 3, 2021

To: Glenda Williams, Director of Library Services

Thomas B. Modica, City Manager

From: Laura Doud, City Auditor

Subject: Rebuttal to Management Comments on the Library Servcies Performance Audit

We received the Library Services management response to our Library Services Performance Audit, and after discussions with the Library regarding their response, we submit this rebuttal to clarify our recommendations and our expected approach for the implementation of these audit recommendations as the department agreed to them. Management's response suggests that the Library needs additional funding to implement some of the key recommendations. However, our Office believes that there are steps that the Library can take to implement most of the audit recommendations with their existing resources.

While management agreed with all of the audit recommendations, they indicated in some of their responses that there will be no implementation until funding can be identified. While we understand that funding may help take implementation to the next level, some examples of specific recommendations that our Office believes the Library can implement with existing resources are outlined below. We also included information to clarify recommendations and Management's response regarding overdue fines.

- Recommendation #1.1 proposes that the Library offer more materials, programs, and services in languages other than English, which will help to align with the needs of the communities surrounding each branch. Throughout the report, existing resources were discussed that could be utilized to implement this recommendation. This includes examining the placement of current bilingual staff and fostering partnerships with outside agencies that can help support services in additional languages. Before the Library hires more staff to assist with these activities, the Library should start with aligning staff skills, such as language, with branch location needs and exploring partnerships with organizations that can also support services in languages needed.

- Recommendation #1.2 proposes the Library adjust and expand open hours and service days to better respond to the needs of patrons. It is

important that open hours match where services are needed the most. We understand that expanding open hours will require additional funding. However, the Library can adjust the current schedule of hours to meet the needs of each particular branch and their surrounding community. Open hours should align with community preferences, obtained through surveys and during audit focus groups, on the days of the week and times of the day that the patrons need the branches to be open most. While the City Council ultimately makes decisions on open hours the Library can offer the City Council recommended alternative schedules and explain how their alternatives will better meet community needs.

- Recommendations #1.3 and 1.6 propose that the Library eliminate overdue fines going forward as well as waive existing overdue fines on customer accounts. The Library's budget includes an annual revenue commitment of approximately $250,000 from overdue fines, which is around 1% of the department's total operating budget. While the Library's response noted that there is $3.5 million due on outstanding accounts, that number is irrelevant and inaccurate. After reviewing the detail of the $3.5 million, the large majority is either attributed to other fines and charges or is over ten years old. If these recommendations are implemented the Library will need to have their budget for annual revenue of $250,000 adjusted to reflect that overdue fines will not be charged or collected. We do reiterate that the recommendation also proposes to retain the lost/damaged item fees to incentivize patrons to return items and allows the Library to continue to recover the cost of materials.
  While revenue impact was considered when making these recommendations, they were proposed because studies and other library systems across the country have demonstrated that overdue fines disproportionately prevent people from low-income areas and communities of color from accessing library resources, which are meant to be accessible to all patrons. Other libraries across the country have eliminated overdue fines and have reported other related positive impacts, such as increased circulation, more customer satisfaction, no increases in late returns or hold times, and improved staff morale and optimized staff time by reallocating hours previously spent managing fines with possibly minimal returns, to priorities like patron assistance, services, and programs.

- Recommendations #2.1 – 2.3 address developing policies and procedures surrounding Library material, program, and service data and its collection. The data collected from Library staff is not completely

accurate or consistent across all branches. To provide services that are relevant, the Library should use data to understand the needs of the community and develop their services accordingly. The Library uses excel spreadsheets to collect data from its branches for things such as tracking assistance provided to patrons and estimating program attendance. Our recommendations would improve the process by having the Library set more parameters and expectations around this data collection. While the Library wants to purchase a system to house its data, updating and ensuring the accuracy of their current spreadsheets could immediately improve their data collection.

- Recommendation #3.1 proposes the Library define its strategic goals and create measurable objectives that align with community needs. The Library hired a consultant a few years ago to develop a strategic plan, and while it expired in 2020, we believe that it is a great starting point for the Library to expand on going forward. In addition, our audit report outlines the major needs of the community that were identified through our own focus groups as well as prior community engagements performed with stakeholders. As part of the audit, we reviewed 21 community engagement initiatives, facilitated seven focus groups, and interviewed representatives from 15 stakeholder agencies, as well as benchmarked against similar library systems and best practice libraries across the country. Also, as mentioned in Library's response, the City's Fiscal Year 2022 priority service budget process will help them identify their priorities. Therefore, the Library has enough information to build on their existing strategy to define goals and objectives without hiring a consultant.

- Recommendation #5.1 addresses that while the Library cannot accomplish changing job descriptions themselves, they must work with the Departments of Civil Service and Human Resources, as well as the IAM Union to update them. The Library needs to update job descriptions to better diversify staff job duties. If job duties can be diversified it will help the Library implement many of the other recommendations in this audit as well as overall improve their operations, because there will be more flexibility for staff to focus on priority tasks. This recommendation is based on our benchmark of other top libraries across the nation and what they were able to do without adding more funding. Other public libraries have updated their job descriptions, which gave staff more time for customer service, programs, and outreach, which are priorities for Library Services. Our report provided a benchmark example of a library that was able to implement this without increasing costs.

- Recommendations #6.1 – 6.3 were made to strengthen the Library's outreach and promotion for all the great services and programs they provide. While it would be helpful for the Library to add more staff to assist and expand their promotional activities, they can make changes to their current outreach and promotion approach to become more efficient in their efforts. If the Library uses a more centralized approach and establishes minimum expectations for branches, then branch staff can be more informed and focused in their promotional efforts and should be able to improve on their current communication of the Library's community impacts.

In conclusion, we hope that the Library will take steps to implement all the audit's recommendations. We understand the current budget landscape of the City and we consistently hear from the City there are insufficient funds, personnel, and other resources to meet all service needs. With the constraints facing the City, management must be proactive and innovative in seeking non-traditional solutions to these ongoing challenges.

Long Beach City Auditor's Office
411 W. Ocean Blvd., 8th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
Telephone: 562-570-6751
Fax: 562-570-6167
Email: Auditor@longbeach.gov
Website: CityAuditorLauraDoud.com
MyAuditor App available at the App Store or Google Play

Follow Us:
Facebook: @LBCityAuditor
Instagram: @LBCityAuditor
Twitter: @LBCityAuditor

CITY AUDITOR'S FRAUD HOTLINE: 1-888-FRAUD-07