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City of Long Beach, City Auditor

Resources of Hope: Long Beach Libraries

What makes Long Beach's libraries resources of hope? Libraries play a critical role in promoting literacy development, educational activities, digital skills, health information, and economic materials.

As such, they are resources of hope providing learning spaces, varied opportunities, and valuable services for everyone - kids, teens, and adults.

We are so fortunate that our Library

Department offers hope through the main

library and 11 neighborhood branches geographically dispersed throughout Long Beach and an array of online services. Since

libraries are important to our diverse and dynamic City, we wanted to see if our libraries were meeting the social, cultural, and economic needs of our community members. Therefore, we performed an audit to assess the equity and effectiveness of Long Beach's Library materials, services, and programs compared to the communities they serve, library standards, and best practices.

We found that the Library can improve by developing a better understanding of the needs of each diverse community it serves and use that understanding to define the Library's strategic goals and services. For example, we found the Library offered most programs and materials in English even though Long Beach is linguistically diverse. So, one of our recommendations was that the Library use data, such as community demographics, to offer programs and materials in languages other than English where needed.

In addition, we found the Library can expand its reach through greater partnerships and better promotion of all it has to offer. We recommended the Library maximize partnerships with other City departments and community organizations to help fill gaps in service areas including technology, economic and digital inclusion, and youth and adult education programs. We also recommended that the

Library maximize promotion of services to let community members know of their offerings with tailored outreach activities throughout Long Beach's different neighborhoods. We commend the Library for agreeing to our recommendations and beginning to implement them to better meet the needs of our communities. Over the last year, the Library has expanded services. For example, new language resources through Khmer indexing allows patrons to search for Khmer materials more easily. The Library also launched several new digital and online services. This includes partnering with the City's Technology and Innovation Department for Tech To Go, the library's Chromebook and internet hotspot lending service and partnering with GetSetUp, an online learning service with interactive classes for adults ages 55 and older. These digital and online resources are especially important during these challenging times as inperson services are not always accessible. Be sure to check out all the valuable Library offerings available at LBPL.org.