DECREASING BARRIERS TO LIBRARY USE

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
Learning Outcomes

• **Identify potential barriers** to library use in your community

• Find and **develop solutions** to barriers

• **Consider alternative** policies, operations, and programming initiatives that may decrease barriers
What is a barrier?

Something that limits access
Barriers to Library Access

1. Policies
2. Fees
3. Accessibility
4. Literacies
5. Awareness
6. COVID-19*
1. Policies

People have difficulty understanding and navigating public library policies.

- **Borrowing Materials**
- **Membership**
2. Fees

People are afraid of, cannot always afford, and do not feel like they have options for paying fees.

- Late Fees
- Membership Fees
3. Accessibility

People have difficulty getting to the library during operating hours.

- Transportation
- Distance
- Operating Hours
4. Literacies

People lack literacy and digital literacy skills.

- **Social Stigma**
- **Intimidation**
5. Awareness

People do not understand what library services exist and how those services can benefit their lives.

- Services
- Programs
Methodology for identifying barriers.
Step 1.

Determine your library’s priorities.
SNAPSHOT of WCPL

- Decentralized system
- 23 locations
- 1.1 million residents
WCPL’s Tactical Plan

- Facilities that are Well Thought Out
- Products that People Love
- Experiences that are Pleasant
Step 2.

Identify barriers that impact priorities.
Facilities that are Well Thought Out

Experiences that are Pleasant

Products that People Love

BARRIERS vs. PRIORITY

Policies & Fees

Accessibility

Awareness & Literacies
Step 3.

Perform a gap analysis.
1&2. Policies & Fees

People have difficulty understanding and navigating public library policies.

- Regularly review and update policies

People are afraid of, cannot always afford, and do not feel like they have options for paying fees.
1&2. Policies & Fees

- Extend checkout period
- Enable autorenewal
- Ease library card registration
1&2. Policies & Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar - Dec</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>% +/-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,141</td>
<td>25,169</td>
<td>252%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
1&2. Policies & Fees

Extend checkout period
Enable autorenewal
Ease library card registration
1&2. Policies & Fees

People have difficulty understanding and navigating public library policies.

- Regularly review and update policies

People are afraid of, cannot always afford, and do not feel like they have options for paying fees.
The poor live on **less than $2 per day**.
Low income live on $2.01 - $10 per day.
Vulnerability Index

Inactive Library Cards with High Balances
AVERAGE LONG OVERDUE FEES PER INACTIVE CARDHOLDER vs MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Wake County Public Libraries
LATE FEE FREE POLICY

Important Numbers

1. Happy Customer
2. Renewals
3. Week Checkout
0. Late Fees
3. Accessibility

People have difficulty getting to the library during operating hours.

- **Location** - where libraries are located
- **Operating Hours** - when libraries are open
- **Frequency of Programs** - how often libraries offer programs
Location of Libraries

WCPL is committed to a regional system that places libraries where people live, work, and shop.
Operating Hours of Libraries

Consistent and plentiful hours provide more opportunity for patrons to visit the libraries.
Operating Hours of Libraries

Hours Open to the Public (County-wide)

- FY16: 60,477
  - Open: 29,357
  - Closed: 31,120
- FY17: 64,705
  - Open: 31,344
  - Closed: 33,361
- FY18: 64,325
  - Open: 32,730
  - Closed: 31,595
- FY19: 67,010
  - Open: 32,183
  - Closed: 34,827
- FY20 Proj: 74,352
  - Open: 35,709
  - Closed: 38,643

Source: Wake County Community Services
Frequency of Programs

Consistent, weekly programs make it easier to understand what the library offers and attend library programs.
Frequency of Programs

Total Number of Programs

- **Youth Programs**
- **Adult Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20 Proj</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9,229</td>
<td>10,780</td>
<td>10,833</td>
<td>11,726</td>
<td>15,561</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,306</td>
<td>9,750</td>
<td>9,865</td>
<td>10,660</td>
<td>14,133</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>923</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>1,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Wake County Community Services*
4. Literacies

People lack early literacy, information literacy, and digital literacy skills.
Types of Programs

Programs that are designed to instill the love of reading and foster the pursuit of knowledge create a bridge to literacies.
Libraries in Underserved Communities
Every Family Ready to Achieve
Programs for all ages fill community needs

Young Child

+ 

ABC Craft & Learn

Kindergarten Readiness
Every Family Ready to Achieve
Programs for all ages fill community needs

School Age

Books with BRIAN

Educational Success
Every Family Ready to Achieve
Programs for all ages fill community needs

Teens

LifeHacks @ the Library

Leadership & Life Skills
Every Family Ready to Achieve
Programs for all ages fill community needs

Young Adults

Level Up: to college and beyond

Path to higher education
Every Family Ready to Achieve
Programs for all ages fill community needs

Adults

Get That Job!

Information & Referral
Expansion of Services to Exceptional Populations

Sensory Storytime

Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

Young children and their families are invited to participate in an interactive storytime designed for exceptional audiences. Space is limited. Program runs through November.
5. Awareness

People do not understand what library services exist and how those services can benefit their lives.
Wake County Public Libraries is 'instilling the love of reading and fostering the pursuit of knowledge' by developing experiences that reflect the comfort levels of our library customers.
Libraries during COVID-19

Virtual Library
- eContent
- Programs/Services
- Self-Registration

Contact-free Services
- Books on the Go
- Book Bundles

Express Service
- Book Browsing
- On the Go Programs
Virtual Library
- eContent
- Programs/Services
- Self-Registration

LIBRARY ACCESS FROM HOME

Storytime Anytime
A COLLECTION OF VIRTUAL STORYTIMES.

Summer @ THE LIBRARY
Virtual
Contact-free Services
• Books on the Go
• Book Bundles

myraleighnc Books on the Go at @wcplonline went as smoothly as promised and exceeded expectations 🤩

For everyone looking for a bookshelf refresh, head to the Wake County Library site for details and to start reserving books 📘📚

#raleigh #downtownraleigh #dtr #northcarolina #wakecounty #librarybook #librarybooks #publiclibrary #readingisfundamental #919 #nc #covid19 #community #bookworm #readabook

30w

patricegraham What???? Thank you!!! Needed to hear about this! Thanks for sharing!!!

Liked by wcplonline and 59 others

JUNE 22, 2020

For information about COVID-19, visit cdc.gov.
Contact-free Services
• Books on the Go
• Book Bundles
**ENJOY YOUR EXPRESS LIBRARY VISIT**

Thank you for limiting visits to 30 minutes or less, wearing a mask and social distancing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVAILABLE</th>
<th>IN THE LIBRARY</th>
<th>VIRTUALLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check out books</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick up books on reserve</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return books</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse for books</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One 30 minute session and printing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick up an “on the go” program</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book discussions, storytimes, etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service appointments</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference, Job help, etc</td>
<td></td>
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Learning Outcomes

• **Identify potential barriers** to library use in your community

• Find and **develop solutions** to barriers

• **Consider alternative** policies, operations, and programming initiatives that may decrease barriers
Learning Outcomes

Understand our methodology for decreasing barriers:

• **Determine** your library’s priorities
• **Identify** barriers that impact priorities
• **Perform** a gap analysis