

TRANSFORM



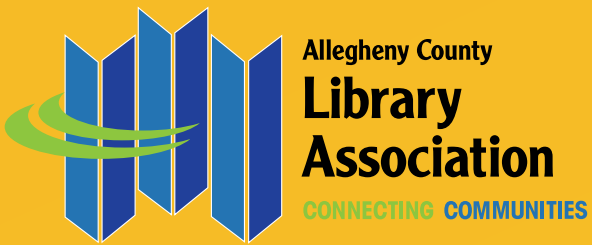
ADAPT



GROW



EVOLVE



2021
IMPACT REPORT



The year 2021 has brought with it many changes for all of us, including our libraries. As libraries throughout Allegheny County navigate this new reality, we are all continually learning and growing our services to find ways to better serve the citizens of Allegheny County.

From curbside services to virtual programming, our libraries have discovered that some of the stop-gap measures taken during the pandemic were effective new ways to serve our communities. Our ability to adapt and respond to our communities' needs is why libraries remain as an essential asset to our region.

Beyond books, libraries are filling more roles than ever before and have become trusted institutions that can be relied upon for quality and accurate information in all areas of our service.

The Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA) works hard to support each of its 46 member libraries within the county and allowing them to serve their unique communities in new and exciting ways.

One of the ways we are meeting that need is through our new Social Work Intern Program. Social work students from the University of Pittsburgh are placed in libraries across the county to assist librarians and patrons with social service-related needs. Whether it is assisting with unemployment or housing applications, or hosting support groups or other group discussions, the social work interns work closely with library patrons to provide valuable services.

In addition, ACLA places an emphasis on the support and programming we provide to our youth. ACLA's Youth Services department works closely with our member libraries to provide quality programming that allows our county's youngest citizens to learn and explore. ACLA's efforts also include the ability to offer training opportunities for youth services staff across the county through nationally recognized professional development programs such as Library Juice Academy.

Because learning never ceases, ACLA takes pride in promoting and encouraging professional development in all areas of library service to ensure Allegheny County libraries move forward with the latest innovations and best practices.

We anticipate these training opportunities will increase in availability and frequency now that our region has moved beyond the pandemic.

At its core, ACLA's shared services remain a staple of our mission to support our member libraries. Accounting services is just one example of a critical component that helps to ease the burden placed on libraries with limited staff, who can now spend valuable time focusing on direct services to its patrons. ACLA expands the traditional resources of its more than 70 library locations beyond what they can accomplish individually.

This support for our member libraries only works if the libraries have a strong foundation of leadership among its library boards and volunteer positions. To this end, ACLA initiated an aggressive outreach campaign in 2021 for its newest initiative - The Talent Bank. This program encourages all interested community members to apply to serve on one of the member library's boards and committees. We hope that through the use of The Talent Bank, we can help to build our library leaders from the richness and diversity of our county, which in turn will help our libraries to better reflect our communities.

ACLA is proud of its role to support libraries that welcome, inspire, educate and provide equal opportunities and access to all residents of Allegheny County. I encourage you to read about the impacts our libraires are making in our communities in this annual report and look forward to ensuring our libraries continue to play an integral part of providing lifelong learning, programs and resources.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amy Anderson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Amy Anderson
CEO
Allegheny County Library Association

The Bottom Line

ACLA and its member libraries experienced a significant increase in total circulation during 2021, even with the pandemic. 10,329,537 resources were circulated, which is a staggering 26% increase from the previous year.

From that circulation, 3,145,654 of the resources were electronic (ebooks, eaudio, streaming video).

ACLA's nearly 500,000 cardholders had open and free access to its 46 libraries and more than 70 locations, along with ACLA's online Library Catalog and virtual programming websites.

Residents also consumed 11,722,318 minutes of computer time and 26,105,653 minutes of Wifi.

In addition to traditional resources, ACLA and its member libraries offer myriad of programs for individuals of all ages.



In Person Programs

Programs - 9,508

Attendance - 135,478

Virtual Programs (Live)

Programs - 6,191

Attendance - 166,505



Virtual Programs (Recorded)

Programs - 4,625

Attendance - 121,130



Take & Make Activities

Activities - 2,525

Participants - 74,395

Engaging Our Youth

Allegheny County Library Association's Youth Services has evolved over the past year by continuing to adapt new ways for our children to learn and explore. Virtual Bingo Cards, Story Walks and the Nature Backpack program are just a few ways in which our county's youth have been able to participate in non-traditional educational adventures.

In 2021, ACLA Youth Services implemented 34 programs, which were utilized by nearly 1,200 participants.

Individuals were able to access these programs in person at their local libraries, through ACLA's new virtual learning programs website - aclavirtualllearningprograms.org, or on it's Facebook page. The virtual learning program website houses a system-wide calendar allowing users to download monthly interactive Virtual Bingo Cards or participate in various Story Walks offered by our member libraries - an offline, outdoor activity that can be done with the whole family.

All these programs and content are conducted in cooperation with our valued partners:

- Allegheny County Parks
- Allegheny Land Trust
- Carnegie Museum of Natural History
- Carnegie Science Center
- The Frick Pittsburgh
- Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh
- KDKA-TV/Meteorologist Ray Petelin
- Light Education Initiative
- Millie's Homemade Ice Cream
- Museum of Jewish Heritage (New York City)
- Mystic Seaport Museum (Mystic, CT)
- National Aviary
- National Weather Service
- Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens
- Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium
- Rachel Carson Trail Conservancy
- Remake Learning
- Senator John Heinz History Center
- Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall
- Spark Books
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy



Putting Reading in the Spotlight

The 9th annual Children's Choice Awards, CCA, hosted annually by ACLA and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), also celebrates reading and encourages school and public library collaboration.

Students in grades 3-6 are encouraged to read three of the offered titles to attend the culminating event. Throughout the month of April, students voted online for their favorite book. The 2021 CCA winning title was *When Stars Are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, a graphic novel based on Mohamed's life growing up in a refugee camp.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the culminating event was virtual offering more flexibility for schools to participate and the ability to schedule more presenters. Melissa Savage, the 2018 CCA winning author of *Lemons*, was the keynote speaker. Participants also enjoyed a presentation by local cartoonist, Joe Wos.

Nearly 300 students from across the county and region attended the virtual Children's Choice Awards. There were participants from nine charter or private schools and eight from outside of Allegheny County, as well as 21 school districts in Allegheny County, including those listed here with their public library:



Allegheny Valley School District
(Springdale Free Public Library)

Bethel Park School District
(Bethel Park Public Library)

Brentwood School District
(Brentwood Library)

Carlynton School District
(Andrew Carnegie Free Library and
Crafton Public Library)

Elizabeth Forward School District
(Carnegie Library of McKeesport)

Fox Chapel School District
(Cooper-Siegel Community Library)

Gateway School District
(Monroeville Public Library)

Hampton School District
(Hampton Community Library)

Highlands School District
(Community Library of Allegheny Valley)

Montour School District
(Robinson Township Library)

Moon Area School District
(Moon Township Public Library)

Mt. Lebanon School District
(Mt. Lebanon Public Library)

North Allegheny School District
(Northland Public Library)

Northgate School District
(Andrew Bayne Memorial Library
and Avalon Public Library)

North Hills School District
(Northland Public Library)

Penn Hills School District
(Penn Hills Library)

Pine Richland School District
(Northern Tier Regional Library)

Riverview School District
(Oakmont Carnegie Library)

South Fayette Township School District
(South Fayette Township Library)

West Allegheny School District
(Western Allegheny Community Library)

Woodland Hills School District
(Braddock Carnegie Library, C.C. Mellor Memorial
Library and Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale)

In addition to the CCA, ACLA also hosted the Picture Book Children's Choice Awards for students in grades K-2. This program provides libraries with an opportunity for outreach to younger elementary school students. Libraries are encouraged to visit five times during the school year, reading a book and, if time allows, doing an extension activity at each visit. As with the CCA, the students vote on their favorite title. The purpose of this program is to create awareness of the public library, promote reading and for kids to learn about civic responsibility with the voting component.

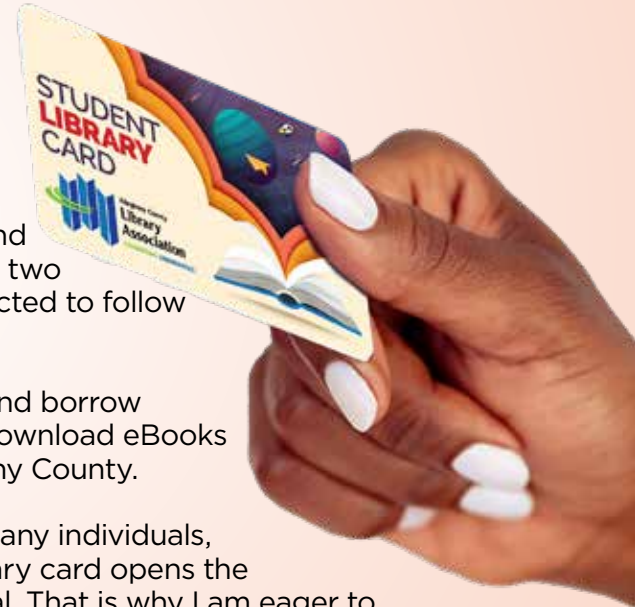
Forging Connections with Our Schools

Public libraries and school districts are partnering to improve students access to materials available to them at the public libraries.

The Student Library Card program allows students to explore and utilize the many free resources including traditional books, virtual programming and innovative and engaging educational and entertainment resources. ACLA has implemented the program in two school districts throughout the county, with another twelve expected to follow in throughout 2022.

The library card allows students to go beyond its school library and borrow materials, access data or databases, use library computers and download eBooks and other electronic resources from any public library in Allegheny County.

The Student Library Card program has caught the attention of many individuals, including Pennsylvania State Senator Jay Costa who said, "A library card opens the world to young people, and access to libraries should be universal. That is why I am eager to share the work that has been done by the Woodland Hills School District and the libraries within it - The Braddock Carnegie Library, the Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale, and CC Mellor Memorial Library - which partnered to ensure that every student in the district's schools have a library card from the Allegheny County Library Association, in their name. This pilot, which allows students to access not only their local library, but all the libraries in Allegheny County, is a model for other districts, and is already growing. I am proud of the work of these vital community institutions and look forward to continuing to support them."



Improving Our Communities with Partners

ACLA has a strong network of organizations that help us provide essential programs and services to the residents of Allegheny County. We value these relationships and appreciate their commitments to improving our communities.

- AARP
- Allegheny County DHS
- Allegheny County Health Department
- Allegheny HealthChoices
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit
- Area Agency on Aging
- Blood Science Foundation
- Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
- Footbridge for Families
- Fred Rogers Center
- Global Wordsmiths
- Jefferson Community Collaborative
- League of Women Voters
- Library Juice Academy
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
- University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information

Diversifying Our Leadership Boards and Committees

Because our libraries represent the needs of all, it is essential that library leadership reflect the people who live in our communities. Many opportunities for library board of trustees and volunteer committee positions exist among ACLA's 46 public libraries.

In an effort to diversify the leadership positions, ACLA launched The Talent Bank in 2021. This new online resource was developed to help local libraries acquire the interest and talents of community members to serve on boards and committees.

To promote the campaign, ACLA created several electronic resources and relied on its member libraries to help spread the word. A social media campaign was launched, and libraries posted social media images, published a newsletter article and incorporated posters in each of their individual libraries.

"I am looking for new opportunities to serve the community that has been so kind to me."

"Libraries are as essential to the education of this country as the public school system. My strong feelings for libraries make me want to give my talents to keep libraries relevant in today's world."

Those interested in positions can visit ACLA's website (aclalibraries.org/the-talent-bank) and submit an expression of interest. An individual's information is then sent to their local library for consideration. Libraries independently reach out to each applicant to discuss volunteer opportunities for boards and/or committees.

In just the last few months of 2021, ACLA connected 20 individuals with their local libraries. The Talent Bank applicants were from a variety of backgrounds including lawyers, marketers, human resources professionals, business owners, stay-at-home parents, and librarians. Some are lifelong residents of Allegheny County, and some are new to the area, including immigrants.

Here are just a handful of some of the responses ACLA received from applicants:

"My wish is to share my skills with the library world in whatever way I can. I am passionate about helping libraries achieve the highest level of excellence they can achieve while continuing to learn and grow. There is so very much to love about a library - and I want to spread that love to the community."



Love Your Library Campaign Smashes Fundraising Record

ACLA and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's annual **Love Your Library campaign** raised a record-breaking \$1.23 million in charitable contributions in September 2021. Of this amount, almost \$772,000 was eligible for a prorated match from the generous matching contributions of \$200,000 from The Jack Buncher Foundation.

Now in its sixth year, the Love Your Library campaign continues to raise both awareness and money to support essential services provided by county libraries, including collections, literacy programs and much more.

More than 7,450 donors contributed to the campaign, including almost 1,600 new donors.

“Our library supporters continue to express their appreciation for the valuable resources and programs provided by our community libraries,” said Amy Anderson, Chief Executive Officer of the Allegheny County Library Association. “We are grateful for the contributions of each individual and the unwavering financial support of The Jack Buncher Foundation.”

Since its inception, the Love Your Library campaign has raised more than \$5.26 million for Allegheny County libraries. This special drive coincides with the American Library Association's National Library Card Sign-Up Month.

“Our library supporters continue to express their appreciation for the valuable resources and programs provided by our community libraries”

- Amy Anderson, Chief Executive Officer



A Solid Foundation

Beyond other revenue sources, ACLA and its member libraries rely on these dedicated supporters to provide project-specific contributions. ACLA and its member libraries are gracious for their support which allows for the delivery of programming and vital resources to Allegheny County residents.

Forbes Funds

Explored the feasibility of restructuring the Millvale and Sharpsburg libraries to better serve the Triboro area (Millvale/Etna/Sharpsburg): **\$25,000**

Grable Foundation

Youth Services Professional Development: **\$80,000**

Hillman Foundation

Established a full-time social work program coordinator position, and funds student stipends for two years: **\$150,000 over 2 years**

Jefferson Regional Foundation

Social work student stipends, baby book bags, and library transition support: **\$45,000**

Anonymous Foundation

Innovations in Library Service: **\$200,000 over 2 years**

Innovation and collaboration grants, school library card project, board training and development.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS:

Allegheny County


\$35,000 for Youth Services and Mobile Library Services

PA DCED Keystone Communities

Improvements for 20 library facilities to make them more accessible: **\$131,018.21**



Mobile Library Services



In 2021 Mobile Library Services (bookmobile) was still impacted by the pandemic. From January through the end of June, all services were provided exclusively via curbside delivery or virtually. Beginning in July, ACLA re-started in-person services to community route subscribers and summer day care centers. ACLA's older adult route began in-person services in August.

During the year, ACLA provided a total of 514 curbside visits (411 hours) and 329 in-person visits (345 hours) to Allegheny County residents in communities, senior facilities and preschools.

Our virtual programming to Head Start classrooms and preschools consisted of 204 programs (story-times) generating 1,776 views.

Bookmobile visits served a total of 106 sites across 47 municipalities that included 55 preschool locations with 63 classrooms, 45 senior facilities and 6 community (fee-based) sites.

In total, Mobile Library Services traveled 11,766 miles to serve our underserved and hard to serve audiences.

Breaking Down Barriers

ACLA and its member libraries have continued its goal to improve access to information and resources to Allegheny County residents.

Originally launched in 2019, the Fine Free program expanded in 2021 with twenty-one participating libraries (43 locations), along with ACLA's Mobile Library Services (Bookmobile), eliminating overdue fines on outstanding resources and materials. The libraries have also granted amnesty on the overdue fines accrued on any items returned to their locations.

While on the surface, the program may appear to be offering undue forgiveness to guilty parties, or wreaking havoc on already strapped library budgets, the program has already resulted in increased circulation and patron registrations beyond initial expectations.

During the initial phase, total circulation in seven of the nine initial participating libraries increased by nearly 14%. New library card registrations in these libraries also jumped 15% during the first three-month period. In addition, active library users in one of the participating libraries increased by an astounding 48%.

Library budgets have also seen minimal impact due to the new program. On average, fines account for no more than 3% of a library's overall budget. However, this reduction is minimized and/or offset when factoring in staff time to collect and reconcile the fines.

Even with this new program, all library materials still have a due date, and the items still must be returned, however, ACLA and its member libraries want to continue to encourage everyone to explore all the wonderful books, movies, and other materials and quality programs that the libraries of Allegheny County have to offer.

F I N E

F R E E

ACLA 2021 Board

Tracy Soska

President
South Region Representative

Aliya Khan

Vice President
At Large Representative

Rich Fuller

Treasurer
At Large Representative

Christine McIntosh

Secretary
Librarians Advisory Council
Representative

Russell Ayres

Central Region Representative

Sally Coyne

East Region Representative

Pamela Golden

Regional Asset District
Representative

Jack Murtagh

North Region Representative

Patricia Shetler

West Region Representative

How Resources are Invested

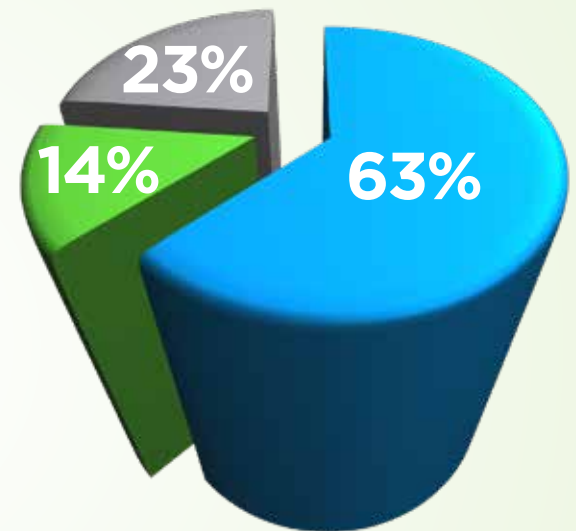
ACLA, its 46 member libraries, and the Mobile Library Services program are grateful for the multiple revenue streams that ensure our local libraries provide exceptional resources and programming to the residents of Allegheny County.

In 2021, Federal funding was obtained through The Cares Act, PPP Loan program and other sources. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides an annual subsidy to public libraries through the Department of Education's Office of Commonwealth Libraries. In addition, funding is secured through a portion of table gaming revenues from the local casino.

The Allegheny County Regional Asset District (RAD) continues to invest heavily in libraries by committing one-third of its total allocation to library services.

Municipalities and school districts throughout the county also provide necessary funding to support their specific community library.

Finally, other local revenue is generated through a combination of donations, grants, fundraisers, fees, and fines.



OUR INVESTMENTS

- Professional Staffing
- Materials
- Programming, building upkeep, and technology



ACLA and its member libraries appreciate the enduring support of the Allegheny County Regional District (RAD).



aclalibraries.org