

Program #80007 - Community Information

FY 2025 Department Requested

Department: Library

Program Contact: Sarah Mead

Program Offer Type: Operating

Program Offer Stage: Department Requested

Related Programs:
Program Characteristics: In Target

Executive Summary

Community Information provides reliable information and connection to library services and resources by phone, chat, email, and mail. This program serves community members of all ages through advanced account management, e-content platform connection and troubleshooting, second-level reference and research assistance, high-quality language translation support for public-facing library materials and information, and information services by mail to adults who are incarcerated. Community Information creates equitable access and removes barriers by connecting with communities in five languages and by being the place where patrons can receive service remotely.

Program Description

ISSUE: Library users depend on quick, effective, and accurate referrals to library services and information via phone, chat, email, and mail. Patrons want access and connection to resources and services without being required to enter a physical library space.

PROGRAM GOAL: The goal of Community Information is to offer remote connection to the library for users who experience barriers to accessing our resources in person, for a combination of reasons that include disability, homebound status, unreliable transportation, open hours that conflict with work or caregiving obligations, and incarceration. Community Information minimizes disparities by offering access across 70 hours per week, which is 13 more open hours than any physical library in the system; by being available to converse in users' preferred languages of English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian; and by using linguistic expertise to provide in-house translation support for library materials and information.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY: Community Information consists of two interdependent subteams: the Contact Center and the Reference, Information, and Content (RIC) team. The Contact Center provides answers to basic information needs, high-level account management, virtual tech support for library web and content applications, and referrals to library subject matter experts. The RIC team provides advanced research services, dedicated translation services for library web and printed information content, and reference by mail services to adults incarcerated across Oregon. RIC also contributes 24 hours per week to Oregon's chat reference co-operative.

RACIAL EQUITY ADVANCEMENT: This program connects with community members who face the greatest barriers to accessing library services in person, particularly communities living in isolation and poverty. Community Information continues to expand language services, having added Vietnamese, Russian, and Chinese Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) positions to the Contact Center, and Spanish and Vietnamese KSA positions to the translation team.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Performance Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Budgeted	FY24 Estimate	FY25 Target
Output	Number of contacts (phone, chat, email, mail) answered by Community Information staff	114,864	150,000	102,000	125,000
Outcome	% of Community Information patrons who report that their information need was met	N/A	N/A	N/A	95%

Performance Measures Descriptions

Due to the elimination of a public-facing communication channel at the library, the word "text" was removed from the output measurement, and the outcome measurement changed from "% of questions answered by Community Information staff via telephone without the need for a referral" to "% of Community Information patrons who report that their information need was met" in order to include more direct patron feedback in service evaluation.

Legal / Contractual Obligation

The budget reflects the passage of Measure 26-143: “Form Library District with permanent rate to fund library services,” November 2012 General Election. The district summary states in pertinent part: “If approved, the Multnomah County Library District would be formed with a permanent rate dedicated to library services, operations, books, materials, programs, activities and oversight of the district. Formation of a District would...prevent reductions in services, programs and activities, and hours.”

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Department Requested General Fund	Department Requested Other Funds
Program Expenses	2024	2024	2025	2025
Personnel	\$0	\$2,616,962	\$0	\$2,979,699
Materials & Supplies	\$0	\$75,009	\$0	\$72,479
Internal Services	\$0	\$172,750	\$0	\$196,524
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$2,864,721	\$0	\$3,248,702
Program Total:	\$2,864,721		\$3,248,702	
Program FTE	0.00	21.25	0.00	23.25

Program Revenues				
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

This program generates \$122,465 in indirect revenues.

The revenue allocated to this program offer reflects an intergovernmental service reimbursement from the Library District (99.97%) and resources from the County’s Library Fund (0.03%). It represents a prorated share of property taxes (98%), other revenues such as interest earnings, grants, and user charges for services provided to library patrons (2%).

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2024: 80007 Community Information

In FY 2024, the Community Information program was combined with the Library Events and Reader Services division in one program offer (80007); for FY 2025, Library Events and Reader Services is a separate program offer (80026).

Community Information has added translation team positions to utilize in-house linguistic expertise—providing culturally relevant information about library services and resources—and has added Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian-speaking staff to phone, chat, and email services. In FY 2024, the Community Information program also adopted a service previously provided by San Francisco Public Library, answering reference questions by mail to Oregon adults in custody. A replacement outcome measurement was implemented in FY 2024.