

READ AND SUCCEED

Library Resource Allocation and Usage Benchmarks



**Arlington Public Library
December 2010**

LIBRARY RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND USAGE BENCHMARKS

Benchmarking is a process by which performance or resource measures from an organization are compared to the same measures of other similar organizations. The results of the process can assist with making evaluations relating to efficiency and service quality, as well as providing data to make a case for increased resource allocation or service improvements. It also allows an organization to project how increases or reductions in resource allocations might impact service outputs and quality. Since library systems may vary in what services they offer and how those services are configured and funded, we acknowledge the difficulty of making exact comparisons from one library system to another. But the data presented in this report allows us to see how our library system stands in relationship to its peers both for purposes of performance as well as assessment of its financial resources.

For the past several years, the Library has reviewed benchmark data. The same libraries were used for the fiscal years 2007, 2008 and 2009 (Texas libraries only for FY07) and, with exceptions as indicated. The data was obtained using the Texas State Library Annual Statistics for Texas Public Libraries, Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Annual Statistical Report, International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Performance Measurements, and directly from the libraries. Since the ending dates for the cities' fiscal years vary, FY 2010 data to these agencies will not be submitted until 2011.

The data reported is presented in two sets. The first set is a comparison of the seven largest multi-branch library systems in the DFW Metroplex. The second set compares a group of thirteen libraries located throughout the United States that serve similarly sized populations and have similar characteristics. Since many library systems serving populations comparable to Arlington's have a substantially higher number of branches, an effort was made to select library systems with less than 10 branches. A higher number of branches will naturally reflect higher expenditures on staffing, supplies and maintenance. Each of the libraries in the national group represents a municipal library system rather than a county system or a multi-jurisdictional library district.

The following data points were chosen for comparison:

- Population served and the number of facilities
- Square footage of library space per capita
- Expenditures per capita
- Materials expenditures per capita
- Full-time equivalent (FTE) staff
- Circulation per capita

- Holdings per capita
- Visits per capita
- Borrowers as a percentage of service area
- Web visits per capita (FY09 only)

Population Served and Number of Facilities

The tables below detail the legal population of each library's service area, square miles of service coverage and the number of library facilities operated by the library system. Note that each library system, with the exception of Plano, has a Central Library and there are varying numbers of branch libraries.

DFW Lib Name	FY07 Pop.	FY08 Pop.	FY09 Pop.	07 #of Bldg	08 # of Bldg	09 # of Bldg
APL	367,197	369,150	374,417	6	7	7
Dallas	1,232,940	1,300,500	1,306,350	26	27	27
Denton	109,561	115,506	119,454	3	3	3
Fort Worth	653,320	702,850	720,250	15	15	15
Garland	217,963	228,450	222,650	5	6	4
Irving	196,084	215,893	201,358	5	5	5
Plano	284,790	260,900	263,800	5	5	5

As pointed out previously, the national libraries selected were chosen because they operated 10 or less branches. Out of the 86 U.S. libraries reporting to PLDS (both municipal and county) serving 250,000 to 499,999, 51 or 59% have 10 or more branches. Only 16 libraries (19%) had 5 or fewer branches. The number of facilities operated obviously has a marked effect on expenditures, staffing and other workload measures, so choosing libraries with a significantly higher number of branches would not have been productive for the purposes of this comparison.

National Library Name	FY08 Pop.	FY09 Pop.	FY08 # of Bldg	FY09 # of Bldg
Arlington	369,150	374,417	7	7
Aurora CO	312,000	314,326	7	7
Corpus Christi TX	278,500	286,462	5	5
Glendale AZ	243,540	246,076	3	3
Greensboro NC	364,032	371,774	7	7
Lexington KY	279,044	279,044	6	6
Lincoln NE	261,742	278,728	8	8
Mesa AZ	452,355	478,014	3	3
Mobile AL	356,692	359,279	9	10
Omaha NE	486,929	502,032	11	12
Plano TX	260,900	263,800	5	5
Virginia Beach VA	433,033	434,421	11	11
Wichita KS	361,420	366,046	9	9

Benchmarks, 2009

Although all cities show increases in population, only Garland show a decrease in the total number of buildings open to the public during FY09, while Mobile AL and Omaha NE show increases. As further tables will illustrate, the continuing fiscal crisis in many cities and states will affect not only buildings open or closed, but number of hours those buildings are open, materials expenditures, and total expenditures. These economic impacts will also be noted in per capita changes in circulation and holdings.

Square Footage of Library Facilities

The tables below detail the total square footage of the central library and branch libraries for each library system. For comparative purposes, we have calculated the square footage *per capita* for each library system. This data point shows the amount of library space available for each person in the population served by the library.

Library Name	Total Sq Ft. FY08	Total Sq Ft. FY09	Sq Ft per Capita FY08	Sq Ft per Capital FY09
Arlington	127,875	127,885	0.35	0.34
Dallas	1,002,152	1,022,045	0.77	0.78
Denton	67,380	100,202	0.58	0.84
Fort Worth	312,495	312,495	0.44	0.43
Garland	126,907	120,895	0.56	0.54
Irving	131,340	131,340	0.61	0.65
Plano	180,000	180,000	0.69	0.68

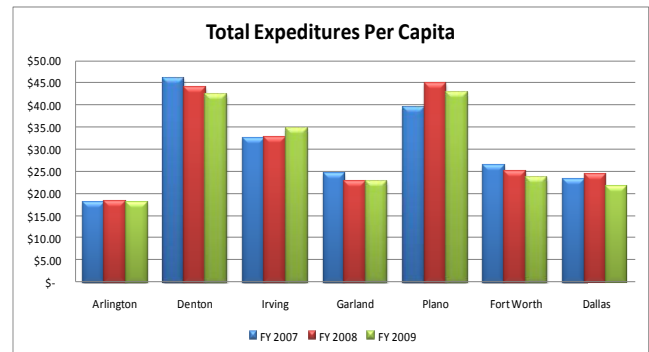
The changes in per capita square footage from FY08 to FY09 are the result of the opening or closing of various buildings, the renovation or expansion of existing buildings, and the changes in population served. Arlington continues to have the lowest per capita square footage among both the state and national benchmark libraries and, while it is easy to say that Arlington's increases in population have an ongoing impact on per capita measures, the same could be said for all the Texas benchmark libraries and many of the national benchmark libraries as well.

Library Name	Total Sq Ft. FY08	Total Sq Ft. FY09	Sq Ft per Capital FY08	Sq Ft per Capital FY09
Arlington TX	127,875	127,885	0.35	0.34
Aurora CO	187,343	134,343	0.60	0.43
Corpus Christi TX	96,500	108,500	0.35	0.38
Glendale AZ	113,630	113,630	0.47	0.46
Greensboro NC	162,149	162,149	0.45	0.44
Lexington KY	183,790	205,162	0.66	0.74

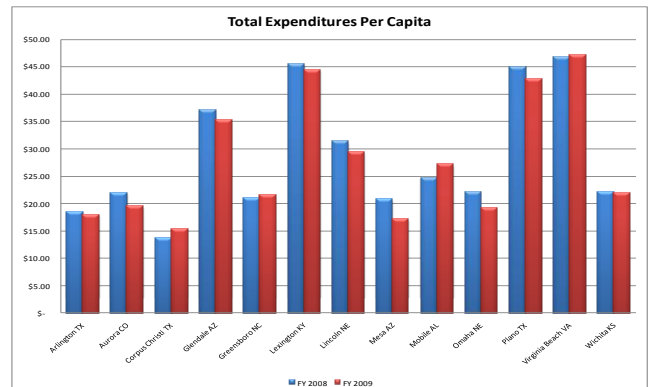
Library Name	Total Sq Ft. FY08	Total Sq Ft. FY09	Sq Ft per Capital FY08	Sq Ft per Capital FY09
Lincoln NE	188,400	188,400	0.72	0.68
Mesa AZ	173,000	173,000	0.38	0.36
Mobile AL	163,091	177,141	0.46	0.49
Omaha NE	290,683	302,583	0.60	0.60
Plano TX	180,000	180,000	0.69	0.68
Virginia Beach VA	301,405	301,405	0.70	0.69
Wichita KS	151,639	151,639	0.42	0.41

Expenditures Per Capita

The charts below present how much each library system spends per person in its legal service area. In the DFW Metroplex, Arlington spends the least per capita for library services at \$17.90 per capita during FY09. Due to fiscal year cuts, all Metroplex benchmark libraries showed at least slight decreases in expenditures per capita except for Irving.



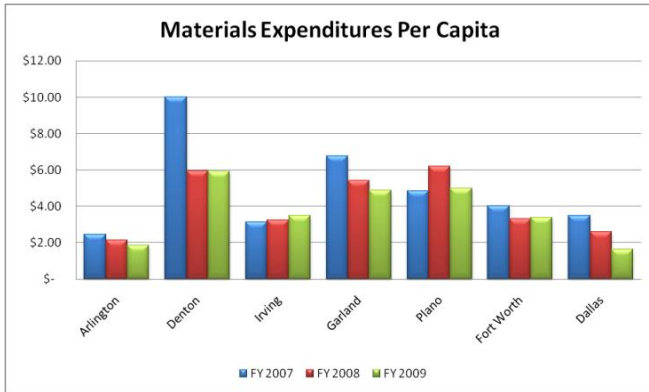
Out of the comparable 13 libraries nationally, only Corpus Christi and Mesa AZ spent less than Arlington during FY09. Due to fiscal year cuts, nine of the national benchmark libraries showed a decrease in expenditures per capita from FY08. As reported by the PLDS, the mean or average expenditures per capita for FY09 for libraries serving populations between 250,000-499,999 was \$38.01.



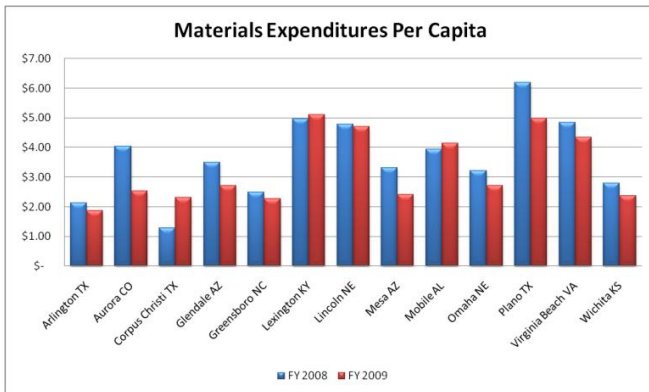
Benchmarks, 2009

Materials Expenditures Per Capita

The charts below indicate how much per person in the legal service area is spent on the purchasing of library materials (books, DVDs, magazines, electronic databases, etc.). In FY07 and FY08, Arlington spent the least per capita for materials of any the benchmark group in the DFW Metroplex. With funding decreases during FY09, Dallas now has the lowest per capita expenditures for materials with Arlington being second lowest. Five of the seven Metroplex benchmark libraries showed decreases in materials expenditures for FY09 compared to FY08.



For FY09, Arlington had the lowest per capita expenditures for materials for any of the national benchmark libraries. This though nine of the other libraries showed decreases in their per capita expenditures for materials for FY09 compared to FY08.



Staffing

The tables below describe the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff employed by each library. The number of FTE staff has a direct impact on the number of hours the library can be open and the types of services the library can offer. This is an obvious area where the decreases in library budgets have had a direct impact on the number of staff available to assist residents. All Metroplex benchmark libraries showed no growth or decreases between FY08 and FY09.

Library Name	Total FTEs FY 07	Total FTEs FY08	Total FTEs FY09	07 FTE per 1000 Pop.	09 FTE per 1000 Pop.	% Change 07-09
Arlington	112.75	110.75	108.5	0.31	0.29	-0.04
Dallas	515.00	445.90	436.0	0.42	0.33	-0.15
Denton	49.50	49.50	49.5	0.45	0.41	0.00
Fort Worth	263.50	308.50	207.8	0.40	0.29	-0.21
Garland	68.50	68.50	68.5	0.61	0.31	0.00
Irving	93.00	92.00	90.0	0.47	0.45	-0.03
Plano	173.00	165.00	167.0	0.61	0.63	-0.03

Within the national benchmarking group, Arlington ranks 9th out of the 13 libraries in staffing in relation to legal service area. With decreases in staffing at several of the benchmark libraries during FY09, Arlington is now only slightly below the median of 0.33 FTE staff per 1000 population. Staffing is often a factor of the number of facilities operated and the number of hours the facility is open since a base number of staff is generally necessary for building operation.

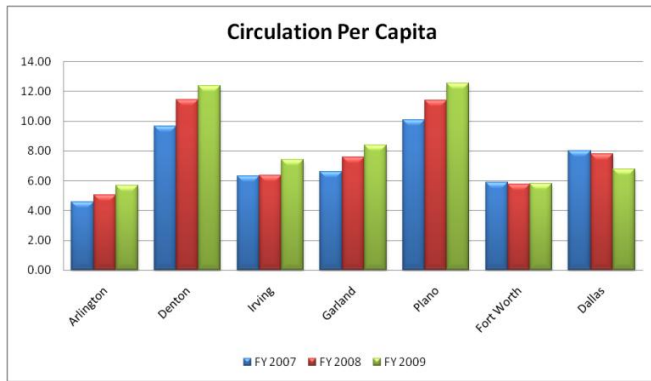
Library Name	# of Facilities FY08	# of Facilities FY09	Total FTEs FY08	Total FTEs FY09	FTE per 1000 Pop.	% Change 08-09
Arlington TX	7	7	110.75	108.5	0.29	-0.02
Aurora CO	7	7	104.00	91.2	0.29	-0.12
Corpus Christi TX	5	5	63.50	64.5	0.23	0.02
Glendale AZ	3	3	86.76	86.8	0.35	0.00
Greensboro NC	7	7	104.00	109.1	0.29	0.05
Lexington KY	6	6	182.00	261.0	0.94	0.43
Lincoln NE	8	8	117.00	111.5	0.40	-0.05
Mesa AZ	3	3	121.40	92.8	0.19	-0.24
Mobile AL	8	10	152.00	154.5	0.43	0.02
Omaha NE	11	12	154.00	157.0	0.31	0.02
Plano TX	5	5	165.00	167.0	0.63	0.01
Virginia Beach VA	11	11	264.92	262.9	0.61	-0.01
Wichita KS	9	9	125.30	121.8	0.33	-0.03

Circulation per capita

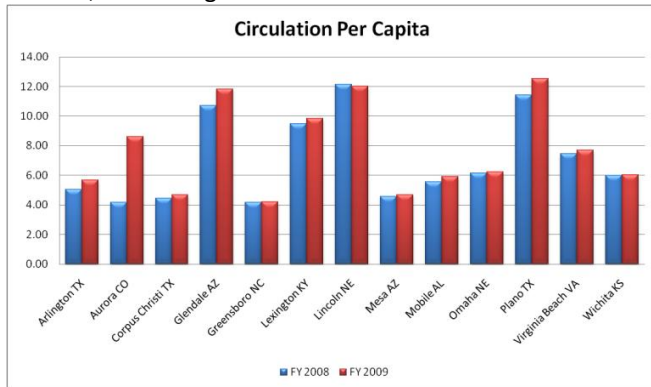
Circulation is the measure of how many library items (books, DVDs, CDs, etc.) are borrowed by library customers, i.e. how much the collection is used. The circulation per capita measure indicates how many items are checked out per person in the legal service area. Although Arlington continues to show good growth in total circulation year-to-year, with FY09 circulation of 5.68 per capita, the Arlington Public Library continues to

Benchmarks, 2009

rank lowest amongst the DFW Metroplex large library systems.

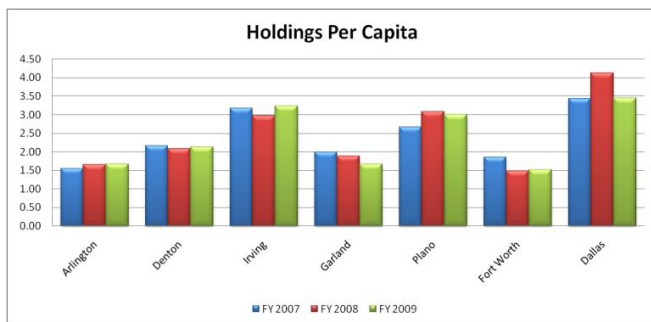


Within the national benchmark group, the Arlington Public Library ranks tenth in circulation per capita. According to the PLDS, in FY09, the mean or average circulation per capita for all libraries serving populations of 250,000 - 499,999 was 9.13. For the benchmark libraries, the average was 7.69.



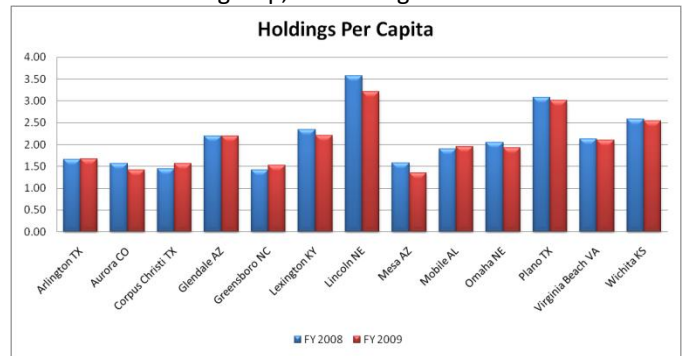
Library Materials Holdings

Library Materials Holdings per capita describes the total number of items in the library's collection (books, media, etc.) divided by the number of people in the legal service area. Arlington Public Library has 1.67 items for each person in the service area, fewer than the other libraries in the DFW Metroplex with the exception of Fort Worth.



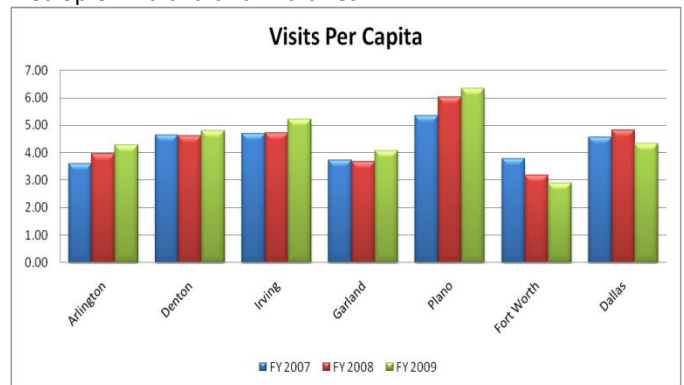
The majority of the libraries in the national group have more holdings per capita than the Arlington Public Library. Only Corpus Christi, Greensboro, Aurora, and Mesa have fewer items per capita. In 2009, according to

the PLDS, the mean holdings per capita for all libraries serving 250,000 - 499,999 was 2.80 volumes per capita. For the benchmark group, the average was 2.05.

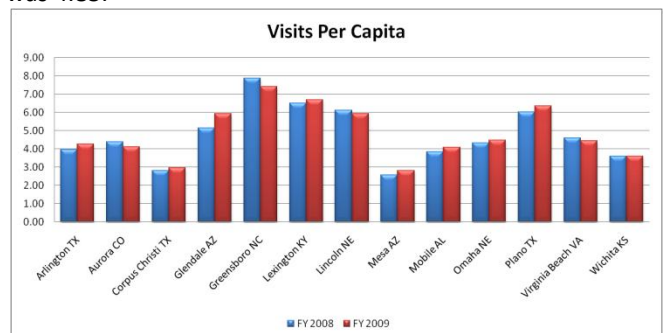


Visits Per Capita

Visits per capita is a measure of the number of people entering the library divided by the number of persons in the legal service area. This measure reflects the number of people who visited a library facility regardless of the reason for the visit. Customers may visit the library to check out materials, attend a program, use a public computer, read a magazine, meet a study group, attend a community meeting, etc. It should be noted that this does not include virtual visits to the library. Arlington's visits per capita rank fifth out of the seven DFW Metroplex multi-branch libraries.

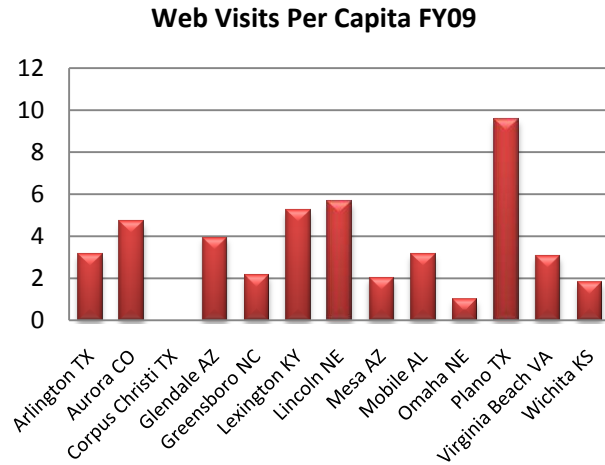
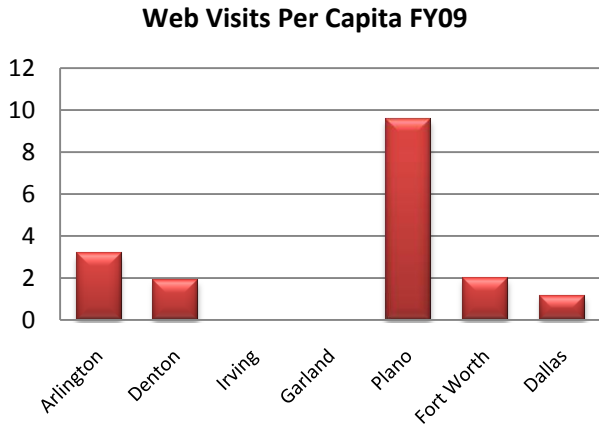


The figure of 4.27 visits per capita for Arlington ranks eighth within the national group. According to the PLDS, in FY09, the mean visits per capita for libraries serving 250,000 - 499,999 was 5.30. For the benchmark group it was 4.85.



Web Visits

One new measure added for FY09 is number of reported visits to each library’s webpages. Although not all libraries reported these numbers in FY09, it is an increasingly important measure of a library’s impact in their local community and beyond. One of the factors limiting the usefulness of this measure is the lack of an adequate description of the measure – what can be counted and what cannot be counted. This will be resolved by the state and national reporting agencies as they hone this statistical measure. It can also be an indicator of the community’s affluence, i.e., the more residents who can afford home internet access, the higher the community’s use of the library’s website.



Borrower Registration

The percentage of the legal service area holding a library card is generally thought of as a good measure indicating the number of people who are aware of and utilize library services. From a retail standpoint, it is on par with the concept of “market penetration.” Factors that influence this measure may include the length of time before a library card expires, how convenient library services are to users (i.e. number of facilities, hours of service), as well as whether or not library services are perceived to have value to residents. The accuracy of borrower registration records can also be affected by how often library cards expire and how often a library “purges” their database of expired cards. The Arlington Public Library counts only cards that are considered to be “active” cards, i.e. they have been expired less than 12 months. The Circulation per registered borrower shown in the next table reflects how many items the “average” borrower may check out from the library within a given year.

Library Name	FY08	FY09	FY08 per Capita	FY09 per Capita	% Change
Arlington	133,770	148,620	0.36	0.40	11.10%
Dallas	641,431	689,515	0.49	0.53	7.50%
Denton	79,619	66,854	0.69	0.56	-16.03%
Fort Worth	181,649	191,851	0.26	0.27	5.62%
Garland	204,219	212,257	0.89	0.95	3.94%
Irving	232,969	231,919	1.08	1.15	-0.45%
Plano	192,578	196,093	0.74	0.74	1.83%

Library Name	FY09 Total Borrowers	% of Borrowers	Circulation	Circ per Borrower
Arlington	148,620	40%	2,125,974	14.30
Dallas	689,515	53%	8,887,605	12.89
Denton	66,854	56%	1,478,871	22.12
Fort Worth	191,851	27%	4,190,958	21.84
Garland	212,257	95%	1,867,317	8.80
Irving	231,919	115%	1,491,976	6.43
Plano	196,093	74%	3,307,059	16.86

Benchmarks, 2009

According to the PLDS, the mean percent registration by population for libraries within the 250,000 – 499,999 population range in FY09 was 55.3%. For the benchmark libraries, it is 59.4%. While Arlington’s measure in this area is by far the lowest in the group, it should be noted that this percentage reached a record high in mid-2009 and reached 40% at the end of FY09.

Library Name	FY08 Card holder	FY09 Card holder	FY08 per Capita	FY09 per Capita	% Change
Arlington TX	133,770	148,620	0.36	0.40	11.1%
Aurora CO	163,000	162,804	0.52	0.52	-0.1%
Corpus Christi TX	150,143	179,266	0.54	0.63	19.4%
Glendale AZ	185,471	174,571	0.76	0.71	-5.9%
Greensboro NC	214,893	236,007	0.59	0.63	9.8%
Lexington KY	211,444	229,835	0.76	0.82	8.7%
Lincoln NE	207,545	201,024	0.79	0.72	-3.1%
Mesa AZ	226,839	306,427	0.50	0.64	35.1%
Mobile AL	165,844	181,420	0.46	0.50	9.4%
Omaha NE	265,806	235,863	0.55	0.47	-11.3%
Plano TX	192,578	196,093	0.74	0.74	1.8%
Virginia Beach VA	207,625	215,226	0.48	0.50	3.7%
Wichita KS	225,317	159,274	0.62	0.44	-29.3%

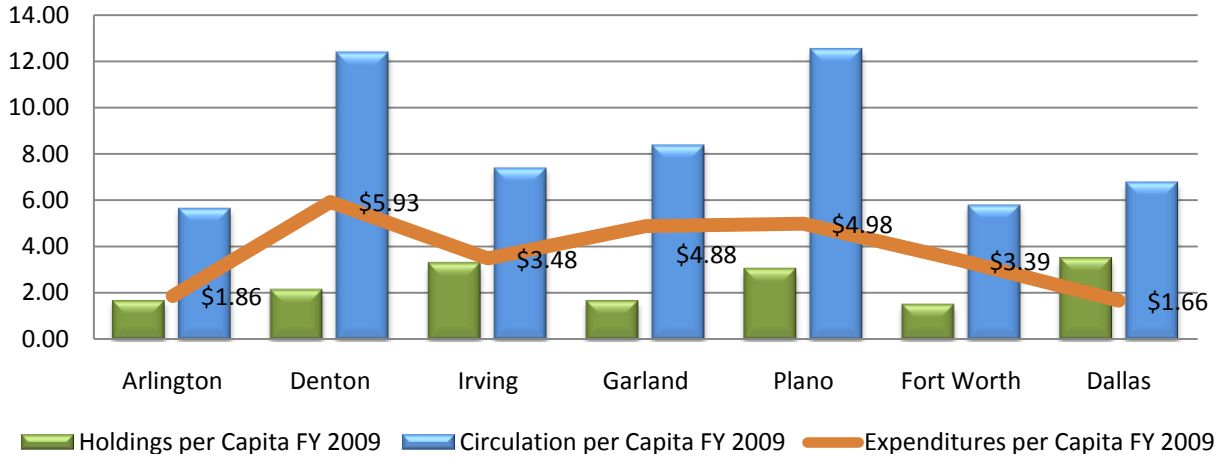
Library Name	FY 2009 Total Registered Borrowers	Percentage of Registered Borrowers	Circulation	Circulation per Registered Borrower
Arlington TX	148,620	40%	2,125,974	14.30
Aurora CO	162,804	52%	2,702,401	16.60
Corpus Christi TX	179,266	63%	1,339,242	7.47
Glendale AZ	174,571	71%	2,913,767	16.69
Greensboro NC	236,007	63%	1,561,556	6.62
Lexington KY	229,835	82%	2,750,161	11.97
Lincoln NE	201,024	72%	3,347,770	16.65
Mesa AZ	306,427	64%	2,243,251	7.32
Mobile AL	181,420	50%	2,121,584	11.69
Omaha NE	235,863	47%	3,128,773	13.27
Plano TX	196,093	74%	3,307,059	16.86
Virginia Beach VA	215,226	50%	3,343,841	15.54
Wichita KS	159,274	44%	2,203,436	13.83

Relationships between measures

As indicated in many of the discussions above, it is expected that there are causal relationships between many of the measures. Library materials holdings per capita is certainly directly affected by materials expenditures per capita. And it would follow that circulation per capita is probably also impacted by the quality and quantity of the collection available to check out. Circulation is probably also impacted by whether or not residents have convenient access to a library facility, are able to find a parking space, and don’t have to wait to check out materials, etc. These relationships are illustrated in the charts below, and detailed further in the tables on the following page.

Benchmarks, 2009

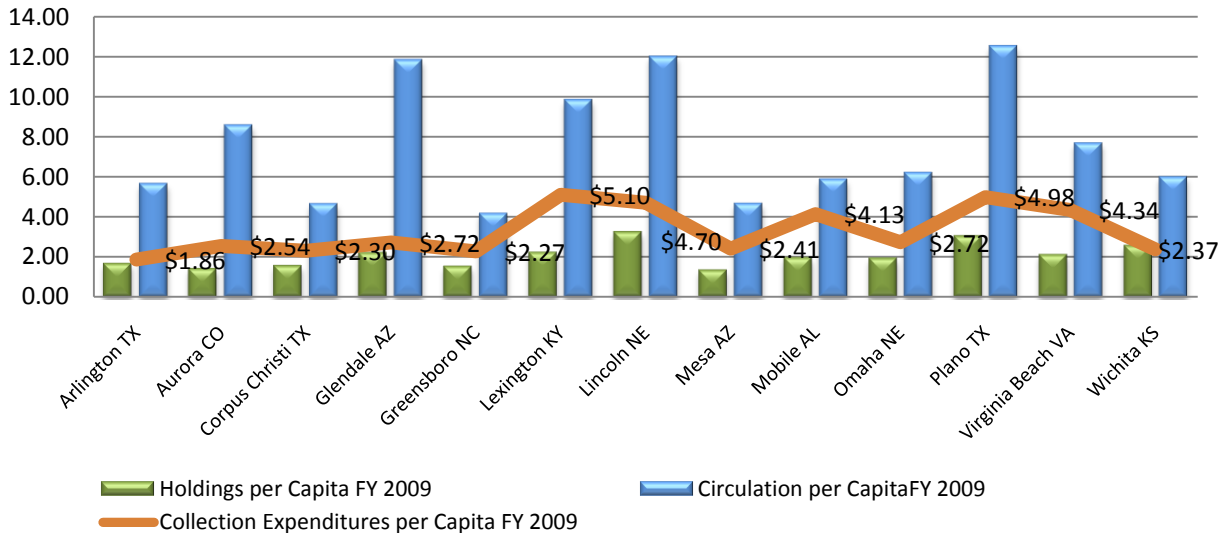
Comparison -- Expenditures per Capita to Holdings and Circulation per Capita, FY 2009



It is notable that in the DFW Metroplex group, Plano has the highest expenditures per capita, second highest Material Expenditures per Capita, highest Circulation per Capita, highest Visitors per Capita, and highest Web Visitors per Capita.

Library Name	Sq Ft per Capita	Total Exp. per Capita	Material Exp. per Capita	Circ per Capita	Holdings per Capita	Visitors per Capita	Web Visitors per Capita
Arlington	0.34	\$17.90	\$1.86	5.68	1.67	4.27	3.15
Dallas	0.78	\$21.53	\$1.66	6.80	3.45	4.32	1.15
Denton	0.84	\$42.37	\$5.93	12.38	2.13	4.80	1.89
Fort Worth	0.43	\$23.55	\$3.39	5.82	1.51	2.90	1.96
Garland	0.54	\$22.69	\$4.88	8.39	1.67	4.06	NA
Irving	0.65	\$34.60	\$3.48	7.41	3.24	5.23	6.79
Plano	0.68	\$42.73	\$4.98	12.54	3.01	6.35	9.58

Comparison -- Expenditures per Capita to Holdings and Circulation per Capita, FY 2009



Benchmarks, 2009

Library Name	Sq Ft per Capita	Total Expenditures per Capita	Material Exp per Capita	Circ per Capita	Holdings per Capita	Visitors per Capita	Web Visitors per Capita
Arlington TX	0.34	\$17.90	\$1.86	5.68	1.67	4.27	3.15
Aurora CO	0.43	\$19.43	\$2.54	8.60	1.42	4.10	4.68
Corpus Christi TX	0.38	\$15.20	\$2.30	4.68	1.56	2.97	NA
Glendale AZ	0.46	\$35.17	\$2.72	11.84	2.19	5.94	3.94
Greensboro NC	0.44	\$21.59	\$2.27	4.20	1.52	7.42	2.13
Lexington KY	0.74	\$44.42	\$5.10	9.86	2.21	6.69	5.25
Lincoln NE	0.68	\$29.36	\$4.70	12.01	3.21	5.92	5.64
Mesa AZ	0.36	\$17.06	\$2.41	4.69	1.34	2.82	2.02
Mobile AL	0.49	\$27.13	\$4.13	5.91	1.95	4.09	3.15
Omaha NE	0.60	\$19.18	\$2.72	6.23	1.93	4.46	1.00
Plano TX	0.68	\$42.73	\$4.98	12.54	3.01	6.35	9.58
Virginia Beach VA	0.69	\$47.15	\$4.34	7.70	2.10	4.45	3.04
Wichita KS	0.41	\$21.87	\$2.37	6.02	2.55	3.61	1.80

In further analysis of the national comparison group consider this examination of how many times a library appeared in the top 3 in *Resource allocation* measures (Expenditures, Materials Expenditures, Holdings, Square Footage and Staffing) in relation to the number of times a library also appeared in the top 3 in *Usage measures* (Circulation, Visitors and Borrower Registration). In addition the findings were also calculated for the number of times a library appeared in the bottom three in all categories. The results are below:

Resource Allocation measures				
Expenditures	Materials Expenditures	Staffing	Square Footage	Library Materials Collection
1. Virginia Beach	1. Lexington	1. Lexington	1. Lexington	1. Lincoln
2. Lexington	2. Plano	2. Plano	2. Virginia Beach	2. Plano
3. Plano	3. Lincoln	3. Virginia Beach	3. Plano	3. Wichita
11. Arlington	11. Corpus Christi	11. Arlington	11. Corpus Christi	11. Greensboro
12. Mesa	12. Greensboro	12. Corpus Christi	12. Mesa	12. Aurora
13. Corpus Christi	13. Arlington	13. Mesa	13. Arlington	13. Mesa

Library Usage measures		
Circulation	Visitors	Borrower Registration
1. Plano	1. Greensboro	1. Lexington
2. Lincoln	2. Lexington	2. Plano
3. Glendale	3. Plano	3. Lincoln
11. Mesa	11. Wichita	11. Omaha
12. Corpus Christi	12. Corpus Christi	12. Wichita
13. Greensboro	13. Mesa	13. Arlington

While it is beyond the scope of this report to prove a causal relationship or even a correlation between resource allocation to libraries and library usage, the result of the above analysis may point toward that conclusion. Plano TX, Lexington KY, and Lincoln NE seem to allocate the most resources to libraries out of this group. In addition, they also show the heaviest usage of libraries. Conversely, Corpus Christi TX, Greensboro NC, Mesa AZ and Arlington TX seem to allocate the least resources toward libraries and these are also the libraries that rank toward the bottom on at least one indicator of library usage.

Other Industry Benchmarks and Standards

In addition to the peer libraries selected below, three other means of comparison exist that may be valuable for discussion:

1. Texas Public Library Standards
2. Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings
3. Library Journal’s LJ Index of Public Library Services

1. Texas Public Library Standards:

The Texas Public Library Standards were crafted by a joint task force of the Texas State Library & Archives Commission and the Texas Library Association in 2004. These standards provide for basic, enhanced and comprehensive service standards. APL’s current performance against some of the objective benchmarks included in these standards is indicated below:

<i>TPL Standard</i>	<i>APL</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Enhanced</i>	<i>Comprehensive</i>
Collection Size (items per capita)	1.67	1.5 items	3 items	4 items
Circulation per capita	5.68	3.0	5.0	8.0
Expenditures per capita on materials	10.4% operating budget	10% of operating budget	15% of operating budget	20% of operating budget
Staffing (FTE’s per unit of population)	108.5 (1 staff member per 3,450 in population)	1 FTE per 2,750 in population	1 FTE per 2,500 in population	1 FTE per 2,250 in population
Technology (computers per unit of population)	1 computer per 2,034 in population	1 computer per 2500 in population	1 computer per 2000 in population	1 computer per 1500 in population
Service hours	70 (at the Central Library only, Sept. – May)	65 hrs/wk	70 hrs/wk	72 hrs/wk

APL’s performance level on each standard is highlighted in red above. It can be noted that APL meets basic standards on some items, enhanced on others and does not meet even the basic standard for staffing level

2. Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings:

Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings have used federal data to score and rank public libraries using 15 input and output measures and have been in existence since 1999. The measures are weighted and include: Expenditures per capita, percentage of budget to materials, materials expenditures per capita, FTE staff per 1000 in population, periodicals per 1000 in population, items per capita, cost per circulation, visits per capita, collection turnover, circulation per FTE staff hour, circulation per capita, reference per capita, circulation per hour, visits per hour, circulation per visit. Thomas Hennen Jr., author of the ratings, calls them “similar to an ACT or SAT score with a theoretical minimum of 1 and a maximum of 1,000. Most libraries scored between 260 and 730, so scores above and below those numbers are remarkable.” While the Hennen Ratings have been subject to criticism over the years due to methodology, the measures above are undoubtedly valid ones to examine for libraries; it is the method of weighting and ranking that is generally questioned.

APL’s score in the Hennen Ratings was 401 and ranked in the 33% of libraries in the 250,000-500,000 population group, i.e. 67% of the libraries in this population group scored higher than APL on the input and output measures listed above. This latest ranking was based on 2007 data. Of other Texas libraries in this population group, Plano scored a 665 (76%), Corpus Christi scored 318 (20%), Fort Bend County Library System score 585 (66%) and Montgomery County scored 396 (31%). The highest ranked municipal library in the 250,000 – 500,000 population group was Madison WI, It ranked #7 on the list with a score of 797. Other top 10 libraries in this population group were county or city/county libraries. The average ranking for the 540 public libraries in Texas in this survey was 374.

3. Library Journal’s LJ Index

Due in part to the criticism leveled at the Hennen Ratings, *Library Journal* recently created its own rating system in 2009. The *LJ* Index divides libraries into nine peer comparison groups that are based on total operating expenditures. Within each group the highest scoring libraries are recognized using 5-star, 4-star, and 3-star libraries. Each star-rating group contains ten libraries, except for the \$30 million and above group for which each star-rating contains five libraries. Star ratings are based on scores.

APL, with a FY09 budget of \$6,702,016 would fit into the peer group with a budget of \$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999. The following table summarizes the performance of the 5-, 4- and 3-star libraries on these measures and contrasts APL’s performance. Categorizing the libraries by budget does respond to the criticism often leveled at the Hennen ratings that libraries that are generously funded will of course produce higher output measures.

Benchmarks, 2009

Output measures	Average 5-star	Average 4-star	Average 3-star	APL
Circulation per capita	29.63	20.34	19.47	5.03
Visits per capita	17.98	12.37	9.16	3.95
Program attendance per capita	1.06	0.67	0.69	0.19
Computer Use per capita	6.09	3.16	2.51	0.80
LJ Index total score	1198-2789	974-1144	850-953	349

Out of the 175 libraries in the budget category, APL ranked 157. The LJ Index published in 2010 is also based on 2007 federal data.

The intent of this benchmarking exercise has been to illustrate where the Arlington Public Library system stands in relationship to peer libraries, both within the DFW Metroplex and nationally. This process will be completed on an annual basis in order to recognize the trends that may occur in resource allocation and library usage. The conclusions that can be drawn from this year's analysis alone include:

- Arlington allocates substantially fewer resources to facilities, staffing and overall library operations than its peers within the DFW Metroplex and nationally.
- Arlington spends substantially less on collection materials, and probably as a result, has fewer materials per capita than its peers within the DFW Metroplex and nationally, as well as lower circulation of materials.
- Arlington exhibits somewhat higher usage measures (i.e. Circulation and Visitors) than other libraries with similarly low resource allocations, perhaps indicating our ability to “do more with less.” However, as the LJ Index illustrates especially well, there are still libraries at similar expenditure levels that are performing at higher levels.

CONCLUSIONS

In closing, an assessment of the need for public library services in the face of continuing economic challenges was published by the International City Management Association this year in their FY09 Library Services report:

In the continuing economic downturn, local leaders are struggling with further reductions in service – some for the third consecutive year. Against the service loss, they are balancing increases in taxes and fees on a population that has more residents unemployed and many facing increasingly tough choices of their own... Even more challenging questions surround services that are often labeled “discretionary” but are important to the quality of life in a community and to social equity. The latter objective, social equity, becomes especially critical in a down economy. During the boom years, social equity was about the abject poor. Today, many middle- and upper-middle-income households have seen their worlds shattered and need assistance they would never have anticipated. The most vulnerable are even more desperate than before.

Individuals, like governments, have to decide what is core in their budget; maintaining Internet access is a challenge when you're unemployed and trying not to lose your home and health care.

This is where America's public libraries emerge as a core service for local governments. With greater frequency libraries are emerging as “first responders” in the economic crisis.

Just as it is important to understand the implications of cutbacks in public safety and public works, it is important to understand the implications of reduced access to public libraries...

Most community services are facing some declining resources; libraries face the far more difficult task of responding to greater demand with fewer resources. In this time of technology, when residents without e-mail and Internet access are increasingly disenfranchised from society, libraries are and will continue to be the “first responders” for many residents in need.

References

Carlee, R.. "So What Does It All Mean". ICMA Center for Performance Measurement, FY09 Library Services, 273-300.

Hennen, T. J. (2009, 2010). Hennen's American Public Library Rating Index. Retrieved June 25, 2009 and December 17, 2010 from <http://haplr-index.com>

International City/County Management Association, *FY09 Performance Measurement Data Report*.
http://icma.org/en/results/center_for_performance_measurement/cpm_participants/publications/data_reports/2009_data_report

Lyons, R. & Lance, K.C. (2009, 2010). "America's Star Libraries: The LJ Index of Public Library Service 2009" *Library Journal*: February 15, 2009 26-31, October 1, 2010, http://www.libraryjournal.com/lj/articlereview/886939-457/americas_star_libraries_2010_the.html.csp , accessed December 17, 2010.

Public Library Association. *Public Library Data Service Statistical Report, 2008, 2009*. Chicago: PLA

Texas State Library & Archives Commission (2004). *Public Library Standards*. Austin: TSLAC.

Texas State Library & Archives Commission, *Statistics for Texas Public Libraries 2008, 2009*.
<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/pls/#stats>

Varvel, V.E., Lei, X. (2009, 2010). "Characteristics and Trends: In the Public Library Data Service 2008 Report." *Public Libraries*: 48 (2) 6-12; 49(2) 6: www.publiclibrariesonline.org , accessed December 16, 2010.

Dr. Robert Cluck
Arlington Mayor



READ

Arlington Public Library System

George W. Hawkes Central Library
101 E. Abram St., 817-459-6900

East Arlington Branch Library
1624 New York Ave., 817-275-3321

Lake Arlington Branch Library
4000 W. Green Oaks Blvd. 817-478-3762

Northeast Branch Library
1905 Brown Blvd., 817-277-5573

Southeast Branch Library
900 S. E. Green Oaks Blvd., 817-459-6395

Southwest Branch Library
3311 S. W. Green Oaks Blvd., 817-459-6386

Woodland West Branch Library
2837 W. Park Row Dr., 817-277-5265

www.arlingtonlibrary.org

<http://twitter.com/arlingontxlib>

<http://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonLibrary>

