Public libraries provide services for residents of all ages and backgrounds in a welcoming and supportive environment. Libraries promote literacy, address residents’ educational and recreational needs and enhance their quality of life. Libraries are important hubs that strengthen community connections and diversity. Libraries also support and promote reading skills.

Public libraries provide responsive collections, services and programs that proactively address diverse and changing community needs. Partnerships enhance and extend the library's reach, remove barriers and engage residents in services.

In an information society, access to the internet and technology is essential to meaningful participation in daily life. Public libraries have an important role in addressing the digital divide that is residents’ lack of access to technology or the skills to use it effectively. The digital divide relates to education, income and age. Libraries address this divide by providing internet and computer access, wireless access and user education. For some residents, the public library is their main access, while for others it augments access available at home, work or school. Increasingly, collections, programs and services are offered online, enhancing accessibility and engaging new library users.
## Library Services

**2012 Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Indicator/Measure</th>
<th>Internal Comparison of Toronto’s 2012 vs. 2011 Results</th>
<th>External Comparison to Other Municipalities (OMBI) By Quartile for 2012</th>
<th>Chart &amp; Page Ref.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Level Indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many hours of service do library branches provide?</td>
<td>Annual Number of Library Service Hours per Capita – (Service Level)</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Lower rate of library hours compared to others (service level indicator)</td>
<td>18.1 18.2 pg. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the size of library holdings/ collection?</td>
<td>Number of Library Holdings per Capita – (Service Level)</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Highest rate of library holdings compared to others (service level indicator)</td>
<td>18.3 18.4 pg. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Impact Measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do residents use the library system?</td>
<td>Annual Library Uses per Capita (Electronic &amp; Non-Electronic) – (Community Impact) (MPMP)</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>High rate of library use compared to others</td>
<td>18.5 18.6 pg. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do residents use non-electronic library services such as borrowing a book or visiting a branch?</td>
<td>Non-Electronic Uses per Capita – (Community Impact) (MPMP)</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>High rate of non-electronic library use compared to others</td>
<td>18.5 18.6 pg. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do residents use electronic library services such as accessing a database or using a computer workstation?</td>
<td>Electronic Library Uses per Capita – (Community Impact) (MPMP)</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>High rate of electronic library use compared to others</td>
<td>18.5 18.6 pg. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Measures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How often are items borrowed from the circulating collection?</td>
<td>Average Number of Times in Year Circulating Items are Borrowed /Turnover – (Customer Service)</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>High turnover rate of circulating materials compared to others</td>
<td>18.7 18.8 pg. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency Measures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What does it cost for each library use?</td>
<td>Operating Cost per Use – (Efficiency) (MPMP)</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Higher operating cost per library use compared to others</td>
<td>18.9 18.10 pg. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cost per Use – (Efficiency) (MPMP)</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Higher total cost per library use compared to others</td>
<td>18.9 18.10 pg. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Indicator/Measure</td>
<td>Internal Comparison of Toronto's 2012 vs. 2011 Results</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Results</td>
<td>Service Level Indicators (Resources)</td>
<td>Performance Measures (Results)</td>
<td>Performance Measures (Results)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 - Increased</td>
<td>1 - Stable</td>
<td>0 - 2nd quartile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 - Stable</td>
<td>1 - Unfavour</td>
<td>0 - 3rd quartile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 - Decreased</td>
<td>0% stable or increased</td>
<td>1 - 4th quartile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83% favourable or stable</td>
<td>50% above median</td>
<td>67% above median</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For an explanation of how to interpret this summary and the supporting charts, please see the Guide to the Summaries of Toronto's Performance Measurement Results. These quartile results are based on a maximum sample size of nine municipalities.
How many hours are library branches open for in Toronto?

Two aspects of library services that can be used to compare service levels are the service hours of library branches and the size of the library holdings (or collections).

Chart 18.1 summarizes the total number of library service hours and rate per capita for all Toronto library branches. The slight decrease in 2012 service hours was due to an 11-day closure as a result of the labour disruption.

Information on the total hours library branches are open per year in each of Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods can be found at Wellbeing Toronto.

Chart 18.2 compares Toronto's 2012 library service hours per capita to other municipalities, which are plotted as columns relative to the left axis. This calculation is based on the sum of hours at all library branches that were open, regardless of the size of those branches.

This measurement excludes the numerous electronic services provided on a 24-hour basis through library websites, as well as through outreach services such as bookmobiles.

Toronto ranks eight of ten municipalities in terms of having the highest number of library service hours per capita. Population density (persons per square kilometre) is plotted as a line graph relative to the right axis on Chart 18.2. Toronto is far more densely populated than the other municipalities. Municipalities with relatively lower population densities may require more library branches and hence more service hours so that the service can be provided within a reasonable distance of residents. In a denser setting such as Toronto, residents can use non-vehicular alternatives, such as public transit or walking, to travel to a library.

Increased population density may also bring increased need and demand for extended service hours. Residents, including students, require computer and wireless access, study space, research materials and a central community hub to relax and engage with others. Access to meeting rooms by community groups builds community networks and capacity.

This measure does not consider the size of library branches, the range of services provided at those branches and whether or not the service hours provided maximizes usage of library branches in municipalities. If the average weekly service hours per branch are compared, Toronto result of 53 hours per week ranks first of the ten municipalities.
What is the size of Toronto’s library holdings/collection?

Another indication of service levels is the size of the library holdings or collection per capita, which consists of both print and electronic media.

Print media include:
- Reference collections;
- Circulating/borrowing collections; and
- Periodicals.

Electronic and audiovisual media include:
- DVDs and CDs;
- Electronic databases and downloadable materials, including eBooks; and
- Audio books.

Chart 18.3 (City of Toronto) Library Holdings per Capita (Service Level)

How does Toronto’s library holdings/collection compare in size to other municipalities?

Chart 18.4 compares Toronto's 2012 number of library holdings per capita to other municipalities. Toronto ranks first of nine municipalities (first quartile) in terms of having the highest number of library holdings.

Toronto's high ranking reflects the library’s responsiveness to the diverse population and the comprehensiveness of the library's collections. Toronto offers extensive research and reference collections including special, historical and archival materials, ESL and literacy collections, electronic collections and recreational collections. To enhance accessibility, materials are offered for all ages in a range of reading levels, in over forty languages and in a variety of accessible formats, such as large print, and electronic formats including audio and eBooks.
How often do residents use Toronto’s library system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Library Uses / Capita</th>
<th>Non-Electronic Uses / Capita</th>
<th>Electronic Uses / Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 18.5 (City of Toronto & MPMP) Library Uses per Capita by Type (Community Impact)**

How does library use in Toronto compare to other municipalities?

There were over 97.2 million total library uses in Toronto in 2012. Chart 18.5 illustrates how many times Toronto’s library system was used, on a per capita basis. In 2012, total library uses were stable as a result of an increase in electronic uses (+5.5%) but a decrease in non-electronic (-4.9%) uses.

Information on the number of library uses and activities in Toronto’s 140 neighbourhoods, as well as other indicators, can be found at [Wellbeing Toronto](#).

An increase in electronic use represents efficiency in the way the service is delivered, as the library catalogue is now merged with the main website. Electronic usage is increasing over the longer-term and will represent a growing proportion of overall library activity.

Chart 18.6 compares Toronto’s 2012 library uses per capita to other municipalities with the following results, in terms of the highest rate of library use:

- Total library uses: ranks third of ten municipalities (second quartile).
- Non-electronic uses: ranks third of ten municipalities (second quartile).
- Electronic uses: ranks fourth of ten municipalities (second quartile).

One of the primary goals of a municipal library system is to maximize the use of library resources and programming by residents.

Library uses can be grouped into two categories: non-electronic and electronic.

Non-electronic library uses include:
- A visit to a library branch;
- Borrowing materials;
- Reference questions;
- Use of materials within the branch; and
- Attendance at programs.

Electronic library use is a growing service channel of many library systems. Uses include:
- The use of computers and wireless connections in libraries;
- Online collections available in branches; and
- 24-hour access to library web services and electronic collections from home, work or school.

**Chart 18.6 (OMBI 2012) Library Uses per Capita by Type (Community Impact)**
Data collection is an issue for the comparability of electronic use between municipalities, as there continues to be wide variation in the methodology and reliability of metrics in this area.

The quality of a library’s collection is an important consideration for library users. The average number of times each item in a library’s circulating collection is borrowed (turnover) is one way of measuring this quality.

Generally, if the number of times an item has been borrowed in a year is higher, it is an indication of how popular and relevant the item is to users.

Chart 18.7 provides data on the turnover rate of Toronto’s circulating collection for the years 2001 to 2012. The increase in collection turnover rate in 2012 results from a combination of increased circulation and a reduction in the size of the circulating collection and the ongoing selection of popular and relevant materials.

Chart 18.8 compares Toronto’s 2012 turnover rate for its circulating collection to other municipalities. Toronto ranks second of nine municipalities (first quartile) in terms of having the highest turnover rate.

Toronto achieved this high ranking while at the same time offering extensive non-circulating reference collections.
What does it cost in Toronto for each library use?

Chart 18.9 (City of Toronto & MPMP) Cost per Library Use (Efficiency)

How does Toronto’s cost per library use compare to other municipalities?

Chart 18.10 (OMBI 2012) Library Cost per Use (Efficiency)

The cost of library services in relation to the number of library uses can be used to assess the efficiency of library systems.

Chart 18.9 provides Toronto’s operating cost and total cost (operating cost plus amortization, excluding interest) per library use.

Starting in 2009, changes in accounting policy were instituted, therefore results of 2009 and subsequent years are not as comparable to 2008 and prior years.

To reflect the impact of inflation, Chart 18.9 also provides Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjusted operating cost results, which are plotted as a line graph. This adjustment discounts the actual operating cost result for each year by the change in Toronto’s CPI since the base year of 2002.

Both Toronto’s operating cost and total cost per use decreased from 2011, related to staff cost savings due to an 11-day closure as a result of a labour disruption, the reduction of 107 staff positions, the equivalent of 5.8% of the workforce, as well as higher amortization costs in 2012.

Chart 18.10 compares Toronto’s 2012 operating and total cost per library use to other municipalities. In terms of the lowest cost per library use, Toronto ranks:

- Sixth of ten (third quartile) for operating cost per use; and
- Sixth of ten (third quartile) for total cost per use.

Toronto continues to experience increases in service demand. Municipalities that have a higher proportion of electronic use in relation to total library uses (see Chart 18.6) will tend to have a lower cost per library use.
2013 Achievements and 2014 Planned Initiatives

The following initiatives have improved or are intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Toronto’s Library operations.

2013 Initiatives Completed/Achievements

- There was strong City and Board advocacy for access to e-content in public libraries resulting in increased collection size and usage by residents.
- The *Let’s Get Ready for Reading Guide* won the 2013 Ontario Public Library Service Award; with support from the Toronto Public Library Foundation 108,000 copies were made available to browse, borrow or buy from all branches of Toronto Public Library, and were distributed for free across Toronto to kindergartners, literacy centres, licensed daycares, family shelters and to every public library in Ontario.
- New KidsStop early literacy centres opened at the Mount Dennis and Bloor/Gladstone branches.
- System-wide education and learning programs with focus on technology were provided to older adults.
- Student success was supported through school outreach programs, after school programs including homework hub and study space. Reading support programs and volunteer opportunities to complete community participation hours.
- Employment and entrepreneurs were supported through expert staff assistance, spaces to meet and work, programs and seminars in partnership with City agencies and a comprehensive range of in-branch and online information resources.
- Online fines payment system offering a convenient option for library customers.
- Toronto Public Library’s Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy was updated to comply with the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and standards and to improve awareness of access to library services; initiatives included community stakeholder consultations, TPL website and electronic databases audit and staff training.
- Access to new technology was expanded through the opening of the Digital Innovation Hub at the Toronto Reference Library; and the S.P.O.T youth hub located at the Malvern Branch in partnership with the community.
- Branch projects in the 10 year capital plan and 2013 capital budget were advanced, including the new Fort York and Scarborough Civic Centre Branches and the Toronto Reference Library main renovation was nearly completed and will feature the Marilyn and Charles Baillie Special Collection Centre and new user-centred spaces in all departments.
- The Mount Dennis Branch reopened and featured an enhanced street presence, light-filled design, up-to-date technology which resulted in a 13% increase in branch visits.
- Proactively addressed the increasing demand for wireless service, a fiber wireless network was introduced at the Toronto Reference and North York Central libraries, with expansion to 45 additional branches planned for 2014.
- More than 77,000 Sun Life Museum+Arts Pass program were borrowed providing access to Toronto’s top museums, art galleries and attractions.

2014 Initiatives Planned

- Continue support for early literacy and emerging readers, with a focus on the Library’s Middle Childhood Framework (ages 6-12) to deliver effective and responsive service including enhancements to the Grade Four Outreach Program to engage newly independent readers and by providing outreach programs at the City’s 33 After School Recreational Care Programs (ARC).
• Support early literacy through the introduction of a KidsStop, interactive early literacy centers at the Fairview Branch.
• Meet the increasing demand in traditional services and electronic products within constrained budgets by applying measures to modify the hold and borrowing time of library materials and expanding the availability of electronic products.
• Increase access to e-content and development of more digital and co-created content.
• Increase support for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
• Increase customer engagement and service delivery through online and social media channels.
• Open the Library’s 99th and 100th locations with Fort York Branch in May and Scarborough Civic Centre in November, to support the population growth in these local communities; and celebrating the completion of the Toronto Reference Library’s revitalization.
• Introduce the second Digital Innovation Hub at the Fort York Branch equipped with digital design workstations, 3D printing and the latest technology, tools for self-publishing including HD digital cameras and audio and video production tools and staff support with plans for an additional hub at the Scarborough Civic Centre Branch.
• Implement expanded open hours at seven district libraries and the Toronto Reference Library as approved in the 2014 operating budget.
• Finalize public consultation and design for the Albion Branch and engage in public consultation and begin the design for the Wychwood Branch.
• Complete a building condition and an audit related to requirements for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
• Increase access to e-collections including books, audio books and magazines with a 90% increase in usage.
• Organize and host the Pan Am Games Showcase Program (Phase I) – Poetry Slam, a major spoken-word poetry competition.
• Develop partnerships to advance initiatives related to key City strategies including: Toronto Child and Family Advisory Network’s Middle Childhood Strategy, Youth Equity Strategy, Seniors Strategy and Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020.

Influencing Factors

Each municipality’s results are influenced to varying degrees by a number of factors including:

• Access: number and size of branches and hours of operation mean municipalities with lower population densities may require more library branches and more service hours to provide residents services within a reasonable distance.
• Collections: size and mix, as well as number of languages supported.
• Programs: range of public programs.
• Library use: mix, variety and depth of library uses and the varying amount of staff resources required to support those uses.
• Web services: availability and degree of investment.
• Demographics: socio-economic and cultural make-up of the population served.