



**Poplar
Bluff
Library**

**2025
ANNUAL
REPORT**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Shannon Midyett
Library Director

COMMUNITY
CONNECTOR

Planning with intention to strengthen the library's position as a community connector

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Poplar Bluff Library has always been more than a building filled with books. It is a place where people come to learn, connect, create, and feel a sense of belonging. As our community continues to change and grow, so too must the Library—guided by the voices, needs, and hopes of the people we serve.

In 2025, the library completed an in-depth and robust strategic planning cycle. During this planning phase, community members, partners, and staff shared their experiences, priorities, and ideas through surveys, conversations, and visits across our service area. Their input affirmed what many already know: the Library is a valued part of community life, and it has an important role to play in supporting learning, creativity, and opportunity. Just as important, the feedback pointed to areas where the Library can do more—reach more people, strengthen partnerships, and better align services with how our community lives and works today.

Our full five-year strategic plan will be released in early 2026. The strategies outlined in this plan focus on practical, people-centered impact. They emphasize expanding access to services, supporting learning at every stage of life, enriching cultural experiences, and ensuring library spaces continue to serve a wide range of needs. Together, these priorities reflect a shared belief that the Library should be flexible, welcoming, and responsive to change.

This plan is not a promise to do everything at once, nor is it a fixed endpoint. It is a framework to guide decisions, focus resources, and measure progress over time. Just as importantly, it is an invitation—to community partners, supporters, and residents—to continue shaping the Library's future with us.

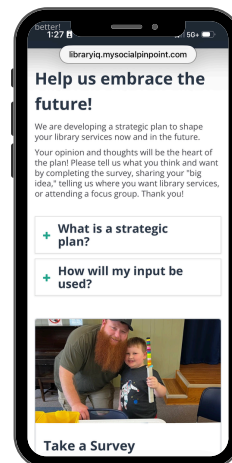
Thank you to everyone who contributed their voice and perspective. Your input makes our library stronger and the work we do more meaningful. We look forward to the work ahead and to continuing to serve Poplar Bluff as a place for learning, connection, and possibility.

Shannon Midyett
Library Director



PLANNING THE FUTURE

In June 2025, the Library launched a strategic planning process to guide its work over the next five years. Community members were invited to share their perspectives through surveys and in-person listening sessions, helping to surface priorities, needs, and aspirations for library services. With input from more than 400 participants, staff analyzed the feedback and used it to shape a set of draft goals and strategies. This work also informed the development of updated mission and vision statements, along with a refreshed set of core values to better reflect the Library's direction and commitment to the community.



VISION

To serve as the community's primary destination for reliable information, meaningful connections, and discovery.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide free and equitable access to information, resources, and educational and cultural programs for all community members. This involves serving as a vital community hub for lifelong learning, fostering literacy, and ensuring access to all ideas and perspectives in a safe environment for all.

CORE VALUES

- **Provide access to knowledge:** Offer free and open access to books, digital information, and technology to support personal and professional growth.
- **Foster literacy and lifelong learning:** Create reading habits, support formal and self-directed education, and encourage continuous learning for all ages.
- **Serve as a community hub:** Act as a gathering place for people of all backgrounds to connect, attend events, and participate in community life.
- **Support community development:** Empower citizens and strengthen the community by providing resources for cultural, creative, and professional development.
- **Promote intellectual freedom:** Champion everyone's right to access a wide range of information and perspectives without censorship.
- **Ensure access for all:** Provide services and resources that reflect the community's needs and are open and welcoming to everyone.

PATRON SERVICE

ONE DAY AT THE LIBRARY

- 240 visitors
- 6 New Cardholders
- 600 Checkouts
- 173 PC/Wifi sessions
- 221 Pages Printed/Scanned/Faxed
- 3 Meetings/Study Sessions
- 31 Phone Calls



With **324 open days** out of 365, the library is available to the public nearly **90% of the year.**

COMPARED TO 2024

- 30% increase** in computer usage
- 32% increase** in print/scan/fax service
- 48% increase** in meetings and study sessions



Library Hours

| Main | Ridgel |
|---|----------------------------|
| Mon - Thur: 9 am - 7 pm | Mon - Thur: 9 am - 7 pm |
| Fri: 10 am - 5 pm | Fri: 10 am - 5 pm |
| Sat: 11 am - 3 pm | Sat - Sun: Closed |
| Sun: 1 pm - 5 pm | |
| Ridgel Lockers Daily: 6 am - 10 pm | |

ONE YEAR OF SERVICE



3,855 Hours of service*



77,843 Visitors



9,973 Phone Calls



484 Passport Applications



234 Meetings



663 Study Sessions



22,718 Computer Sessions



33,211 Wi-fi Sessions



71,541 Print/Scan/ Fax

*Hours of service impacted by Ridgel Branch closure from March 15 until August 18.

DISCOVER MORE

KID'S CATALOG



With the start of the school year, the new Kid's Catalog went live. Content in this area is limited to items intended for children under 13 and is navigated using picture icons rather than written labels. This aids younger readers in finding items of interest even as they are learning to read.



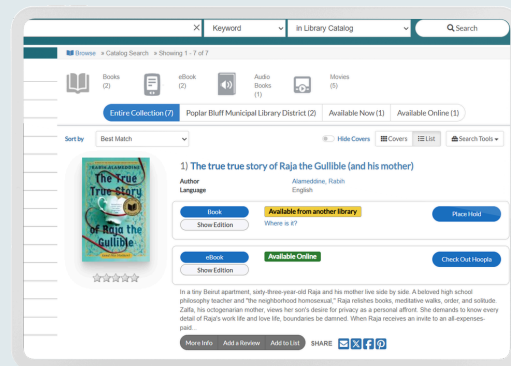
POPLAR BLUFF LIBRARY APP

This all-in-one, mobile-friendly app enables users to view their checked-out items, search for new materials, reserve meeting spaces, and access a list of library programs. Since its launch in September 2025, the app has achieved 424 downloads.

Through 2024 and 2025, staff recategorized each book in the adult nonfiction section to create a new system using everyday terms. You can now look for items in user-friendly categories such as: Cooking, Home and Garden, and History.



NONFICTION NEIGHBORHOODS



ASPEN SEARCHING

The library also joined a pilot program to launch the Aspen Discovery Layer for the adult catalog in September. This search platform allows users to search across both physical and digital collections, adds one-click search filters, and has color-coded availability statuses.



BOOKS AND BABIES



SENSORY GARDEN PLANTING



SUMMER READING DINOS



TEEN HANGOUT



SUMMER READING DINOS



PARENT MENTORING



COOK, CRAFT, TINKER

PROGRAMS

334 EVENTS
9,976 ATTENDEES



For more than 20 years, First Midwest Bank has been pedaling our Summer Reading Program forward with their incredible “Read and Ride” sponsorship! Thanks to their generosity, our grand prize winners have taken home bikes, scooters, wiggle cars, and helmets, inspiring kids to keep reading AND stay active all summer long. We’re so grateful for this amazing partnership and the countless young readers who have rolled away with unforgettable memories.

PARTNERS

- American Red Cross
- Butler County Emergency Management
- Crown Hospice
- Mingo Wildlife Refuge
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Missouri Highlands
- Poplar Bluff Good Games
- Poplar Bluff Parks and Recreation
- Three Rivers College Bidewell Fitness Center
- University of Missouri Extension Office

SPONSORS

- Big Whiskey’s
- Brittany Kovach Photography
- China Garden
- Colton’s
- Dairy Queen
- Feng’s
- First Midwest Bank
- Foxtrot
- Friends of the Poplar Bluff Library
- Hefner’s Furniture
- Krabby Daddy’s
- Panda Express
- Poplar Bluff Downtown Realty
- Snowball Daddy’s
- Southern Bank



COMPARED TO 2024

75% increase in attendance at teen programs

25% more programs for adults

24% increase in attendees who turned in a Summer Reading Log

FACILITIES



New furniture in the Main Branch theater has made the space more flexible and comfortable for classes and staff trainings, with added seating to accommodate larger groups. Built-in power at each seat makes it easy to run all-day sessions where attendees need laptops or other devices.



This is a dedicated space for nursing mothers to express milk, providing a private, comfortable place to pump. This returns our designation as a "Gold Level Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite" from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

OUTSTANDING STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR



The Poplar Bluff Municipal Library Foundation hosted its second banquet on April 11. The foundation presented the Sue Crites Szostak Outstanding Staff Award. Recipients are nominated by their peers for excelling in their duties and enriching the library. This year's recipient was Joshua Bishop, Facilities Manager.



TORNADO DAMAGE: MARCH 15, 2025



On March 15, a tornado impacted Poplar Bluff and the surrounding areas. The Main Branch was unharmed, but the Ridgel Branch sustained structural damage. The west facing exterior wall caved in approximately six inches. In addition to the wall, both outdoor signs, a parking lot light, one of the bathrooms, and a meeting space sustained damage.

Ridgel Branch was temporarily closed until repairs could be made. With the extent of the damage through the region, those repairs would not begin until July. The total cost for repairs was \$55,250 and was covered by insurance.

Since first opening, Ridgel had become a convenient location for busy patrons to return items. The community requested that the outdoor bookdrop at Ridgel be opened while repairs were underway. The book drop reopened on June 10. The Ridgel Branch officially reopened on August 18.

DIGITAL COLLECTION

2M+ ITEMS

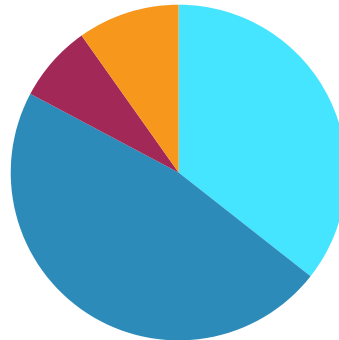


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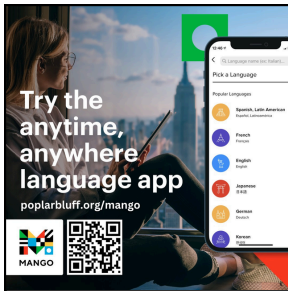


82,085 DIGITAL CHECKOUTS

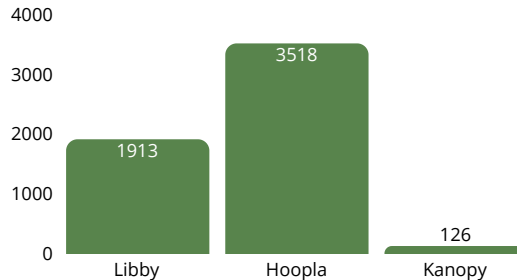


CHECKOUTS BY FORMAT

- Audiobook.....46%
- eBook.....44%
- Movie.....7%
- Other.....3%



TOTAL USERS BY PLATFORM

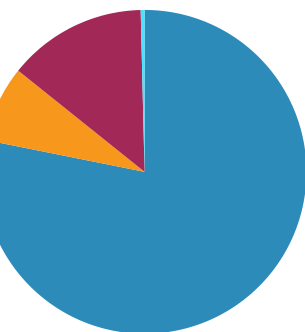


MARKET RESEARCH

to launch your small business

data axe reference solutions

poplarbluff.org/business

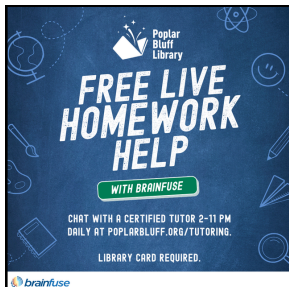


DATABASE USAGE BY TYPE

- Business/Career.....<1%
- Genealogy.....8%
- Learning.....14%
- Research.....78%

COMPARED TO 2024

- 15% increase in digital checkouts
- 154% increase in Newspapers.com searches
- 21% increase in Brainfuse tutoring usage



PHYSICAL COLLECTION

54,705 ITEMS

112,308 PHYSICAL CHECKOUTS

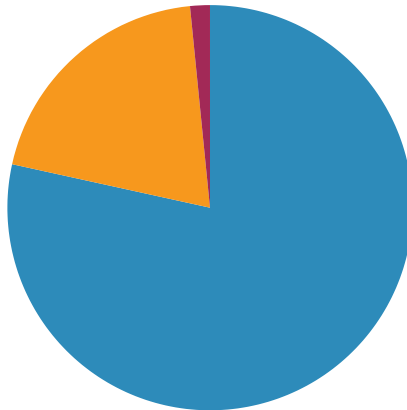


BY AUDIENCE

- Children.....47%
- Teen.....5%
- Adult.....48%

BY FORMAT

- Print.....78%
- DVD.....20%
- Audio/Other.....2%



MISSOURI EVERGREEN



5 million+ items available



79 libraries



11,266 items borrowed

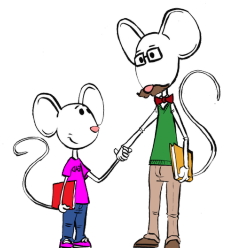


10,041 items loaned

Estimated \$281,650 saved through resource sharing

HOOKED ON PHONICS

Each Hooked on Phonics kit checks out for 6 months. It allows families to build a strong foundation for fluency and phonics skills at home. These kits checked out 33 times in 2025.



Check out a complete kit today.



LIBRARY FINANCES

Library Revenues

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sales Tax | FY2025 | FY2024 |
| Patron Services | 1,673,379 | 1,674, 686 |
| State Aid & Grants | 41,881 | 34, 278 |
| Gifts & Contributions | 25,139 | 44,163 |
| Interest | 11,436 | 33,162 |
| | 70,901 | 75,405 |
| Total Revenues | \$1,822,736 | \$1,861,694 |

Library Expenditures

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Salaries and Benefits | FY2025 | FY2024 |
| Library Operations | 854,858 | 729,517 |
| Library Materials | 418,035 | 392,496 |
| Capital Outlay | 162,507 | 118,507 |
| TIF* | 36,363 | 206,886 |
| | 171,902 | 164,433 |
| Total Expenditures | \$1,643,665 | \$1,611,785 |

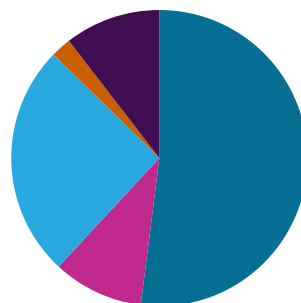
Fund Balance

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning of year | FY2025 | FY2024 |
| Net change in fund balance | 1,829,600 | 1,579,691 |
| | 179,071 | 249,909 |
| Fund Balance, End of Year | \$2,008,671 | \$1,829,600 |

*Tax Increment Financing for Eight Points Development

EXPENSES

| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| Salaries | 52% |
| Materials | 9.9% |
| Library Operations | 25.4% |
| Capital | 2.2% |
| TIF | 10.5% |





Poplar Bluff Library

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Dr. Gus T. Ridgel Branch
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