

MRL Annual Report 2024



At-A-Glance: FY 2024 Statistical Increases

- Library visits: systemwide 237,729; an increase of more than 9%; 12% in Harrisonburg
- Circulation: 864,628; an increase of 18.4% and the most in MRL history; 19.1% in Harrisonburg
- Computer use: systemwide passed 10,000 public uses
- WiFi usage: 1,417,200 sessions from 35,520 clients systemwide
- Library cards: 3,691 new registrations, a 17% increase; total registrations and renewals 9,278
- MRL saved patrons over \$15,000,000* by providing library services

*<https://ilovelibraries.org/what-libraries-do/calculator/>

Highlights: Completed Our 5-Year Strategic Plan

- Increased operating hours across all seven branches, including opening at 9:00am six days per week in Harrisonburg.
- Hired a full-time Young Adult Specialist position, leading to an expansion of teen programming and outreach.
- Full Strategic Plan can be seen on <https://mrlib.org/about-us/strategic-plan.html>



Highlights: Bringing People Together

- In FY 2024, meeting and study room usage increased by 500% thanks to our online reservation system and the addition of study pods.
- Visits to our website: 211,807. This is an increase, with our *Event Calendar* being our most popular page.



Highlights: Programming

- Summer Reading Challenge in 2024 increased to 5,800 participants, a 25% increase. Children recorded 2.5 million minutes of reading—1.2 million more than last year.
- Programming and Outreach: 50,382 participants at 2,401 programs, an attendance increase of 13.7% and an all-time high.



Highlights: Outreach

- Youth Services staff regularly visit 31 school and daycare locations. In November 2024, there were 102 total monthly classroom visits.
- We delivered 1,452 books for well-baby pediatric visits through our Prescription for Reading program.
- Adult Services staff initiated weekly programs for those with developmental disabilities
- Team provides enrichment and education in visits to three area retirement communities



Highlights: Collections

- Community Gear Library expanded its selection this year and has seen 257 checkouts in the first 10 months of 2024.
- Welcoming Library Collection: we added dozens of children's titles designed to welcome immigrant and refugee families and promote understanding of cultures and heritage.
- We added new financial literacy tablets and programming for children called *Thinking Money for Kids*, and JMU's Your Economic Success Kits



Highlights: Equitable Access for All

- Our new Access Cards provide access to online resources and physical materials to patrons who cannot provide a proof of address, such as travelling nurses and families in domestic violence shelters.
- We expanded collecting in languages other than English.
- American Shakespeare Center culture passes are now available at every branch.



Highlights: Spreading the Word

- 26,500 users of our weekly newsletter with an open rate of more than 41%
- Social media reach of more than 7,000 followers and 24.9 users weekly
- More than 36,000 website pageviews monthly
- Increasing potential donor base and first-time donors.



Challenges

- The rising cost and demand of eBooks and e-audiobooks
 - 84,618 e-checkouts; more than a 50% increase from the year before (55,265).
 - Costs can vary widely by publisher, but physical books are often around **\$18**, while leasing an eBook is often \$60 or more, and e-audiobooks can be even more expensive.

**Borrow ebooks
& audiobooks**

Libby.

The library reading app



Challenges

- An increased need for library space, due to:
 - More diverse titles and collections
 - Increased visits
 - Need for meeting and conference spaces
 - Requests for teenaged patrons to have their own space
- A space audit confirmed a need for additional and repurposed spaces.



Upcoming: Big Read 2025

- February 28 – April 12
- Support reading as a community with free adult and children's books
- Mural and community story quilt art projects
- Full list of events at

<https://mrlib.org/events/big-read/>



Q/A

