

ILLINOIS LIBRARIES

Agencies of Impact

A Data Study



Message from RAILS

At RAILS, our mission statement, "We Connect Libraries," reflects our belief in the transformative power of libraries. We go beyond brick-and-mortar walls, fostering collaboration and resource-sharing to empower libraries of all types and sizes.

This guide dives deep into the quantifiable impact of Illinois libraries, equipping you with data to demonstrate their value to your stakeholders. Whether you're a librarian, a board member, or a community advocate, this information will help you showcase:

- **Return on Investment:** Explore data revealing the tangible benefits libraries deliver in exchange for their operational costs.
- **Staffing Expertise:** Understand the qualifications and dedication of library professionals, highlighting their unique contribution to communities.
- **Community Reach:** Discover the extensive reach of libraries, showcasing how they serve diverse populations and bridge information gaps.

This information is crucial for everyone invested in the future of Illinois libraries. By understanding their true value as community hubs, logistics experts, and gateways to knowledge, we can make informed decisions about how to plan for the bright future of our communities. Funders can see the tangible benefits of their support, governing boards can optimize library services to better serve their communities, and the public can appreciate the full spectrum of resources that libraries offer.

Let's turn the page and discover the undeniable value of Illinois libraries.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica R. Harris".

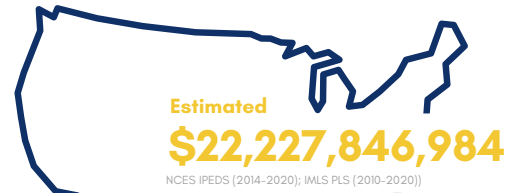
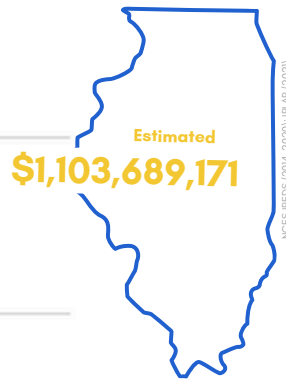
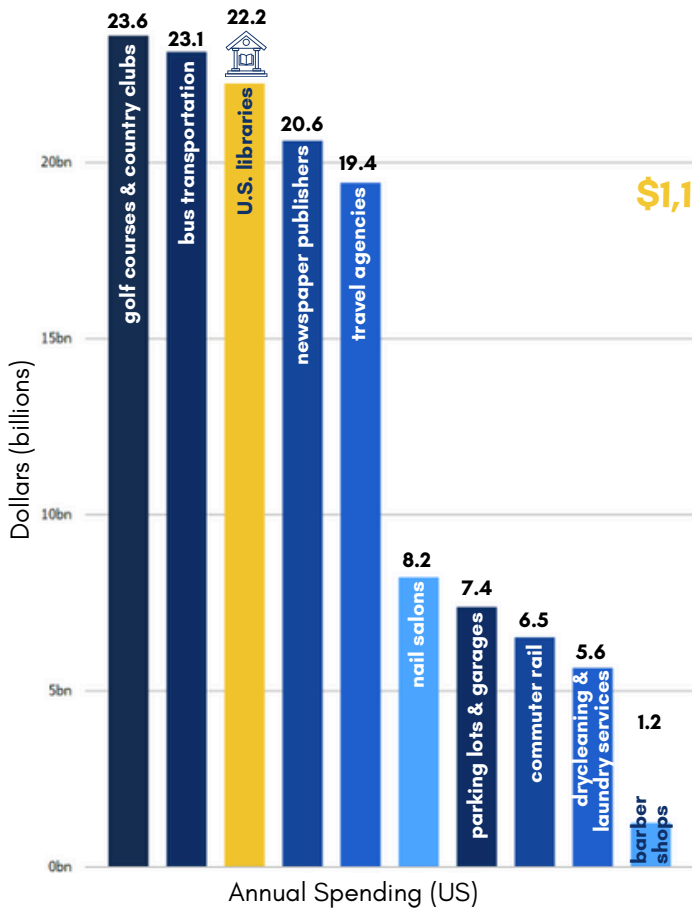
Monica Harris
Executive Director

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Libraries as Economic Engines

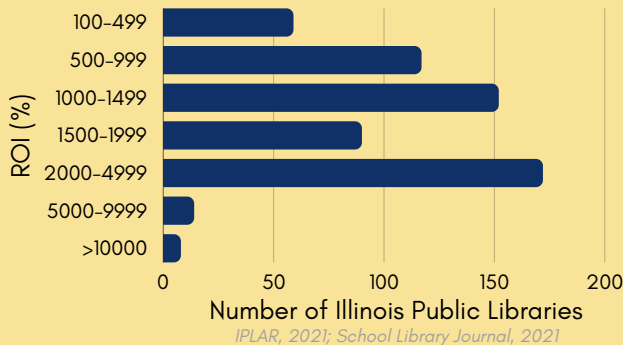
Library Expenditure Comparison



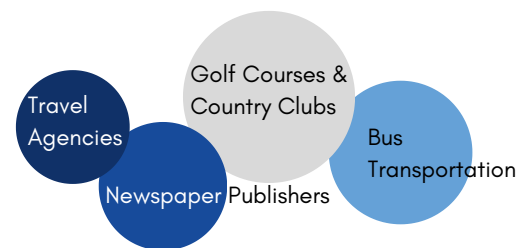
Illinois libraries purchased an estimated \$1.1 billion dollars in goods and services in 2021, exceeding spending on drycleaning and laundry services, commuter rail, and nail salons. This total approaches the level of spending by travel agencies, golf courses and country clubs, and newspaper publishers. Illinois libraries account for roughly 5% of the \$22.2 billion spent by U.S. libraries in 2021.

Value of Library Services

Return on investment (ROI) is just one method libraries use to assess the impact of their investment in materials and programs. For this study, we've examined the value of one collection component: print materials. Assuming an average purchase cost per library book of \$17.67, **95%** of Illinois public libraries demonstrated an ROI for print materials greater than 100% in 2021.



U.S. industries with similar approximate spending levels:



U.S. industries with smaller approximate spending levels:

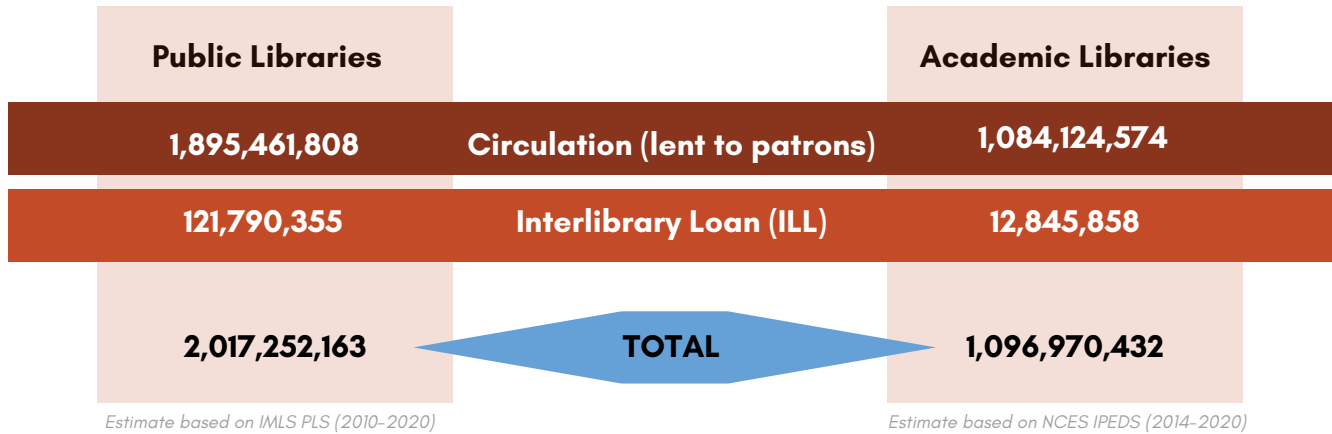


U.S. Census Bureau (2021); Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

Libraries as Logistics Experts

U.S. libraries circulate 3,114,222,595 items per year

(IMLS Public Libraries Survey (2010-2020); NCES IPEDS(2014-2020))

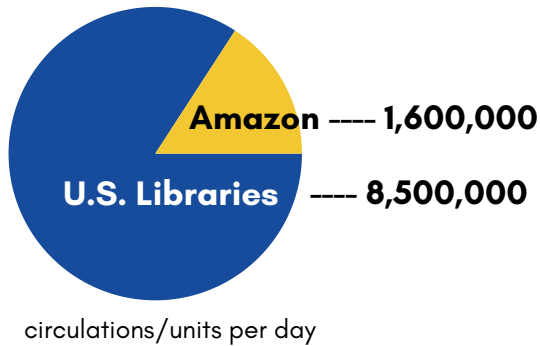


How do libraries compare to ?

In the U.S., public libraries have slightly more cardholders than Amazon has Prime Members.

Amazon has 153 million Prime Members in the United States. *(Statista, 2021)*

U.S. public libraries have an estimated 173,143,919 registered cardholders. *(IMLS PLS 2010-2020)*



Each day, U.S. libraries circulate over five times as many items as Amazon ships.

Amazon shipped approximately 1.6 million packages per day in 2021. *(Landing Cube, 2022)*

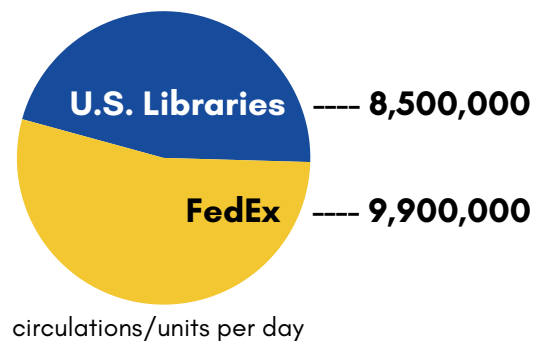
U.S. libraries circulated an estimated 8.5 million items each day. *(Based on data from IMLS PLS (2010-2020) and NCES IPEDS (2014-2020))*

How do libraries compare to ?

U.S. libraries circulate close to the same number of items shipped by FedEx.

FedEx shipped 9.9 million packages per day in 2021.

(Statista, 2021)



Libraries as Valued Destinations

One in three people in Illinois is a registered library cardholder; the same is true for one in two people nationwide.

Total number of registered library users in Illinois: **4.4 million**
(IPLAR, 2021)

Population of Illinois: **12.7 million**
(U.S. Census Bureau, 2021)



If Illinois library patrons paid the average cost of a sporting event each time they visited...



...public libraries would have generated an additional **\$1,444,878,471** in 2021.

(2021 Average ticket price based on data from Statista, Axios, Forbes, Reddit, and SeatGeek)

Attendance by Sport/Organization

Libraries

20,350,401

2.5x as many people visit Illinois public libraries each year as attend these Illinois collegiate and professional sports events combined.

8,063,235



Libraries as Global Information Suppliers

Collection Volume

36,889,960
print volumes
in public libraries
(IPLAR, 2021)



Illinois
Population:
12.6 million
(U.S. Census Bureau, 2021)



3x the population
of Illinois

16,941,409
Digital
Materials
Provided
by Public
Libraries
(IPLAR, 2021)

Illinois public libraries hold 36,889,960 print volumes, approximately **three items per person** statewide, a collection valued at nearly **\$652 million**.

Print Collection Value

Estimated Value of Library
Print Collections in Illinois:

\$3.6
billion

The total value of academic and public library print collections can be estimated by multiplying the number of print volumes by the average price per book.

Public Libraries	36,889,960 print volumes <small>(IPLAR, 2021)</small>	×	average book price \$17.67 <small>(School Library Journal)</small>	=	Total value \$651,845,593
Academic Libraries	30,023,008 print volumes <small>(NCES IPEDS 2014-2020)</small>	×	average book price \$99.14 <small>(US New Title Reports)</small>	=	Total value \$2,976,480,971

Delivery Service

11,551,005
items delivered
(LSOS, 2021)

×

average book price
\$17.67
(School Library Journal)

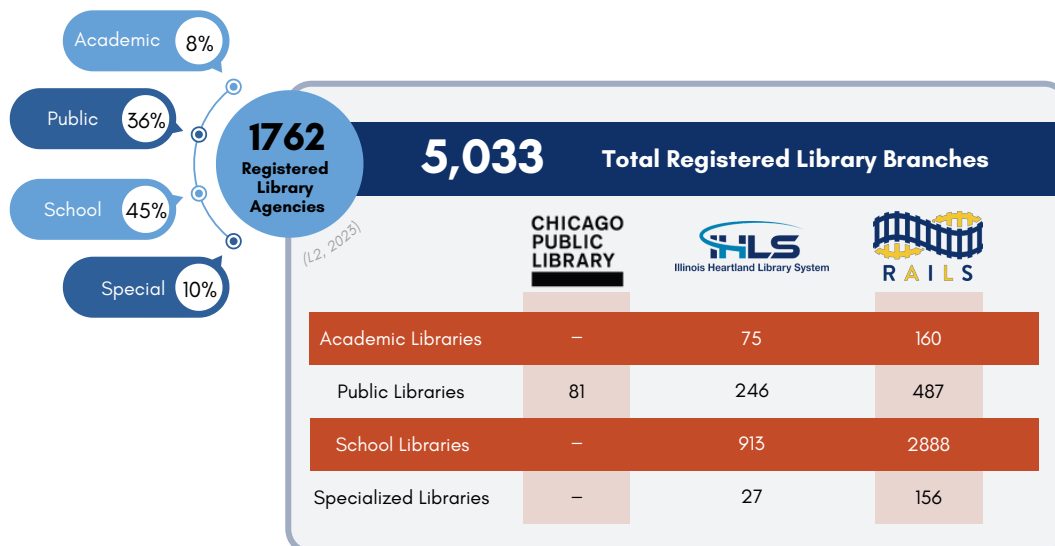
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Total value
\$204,106,259

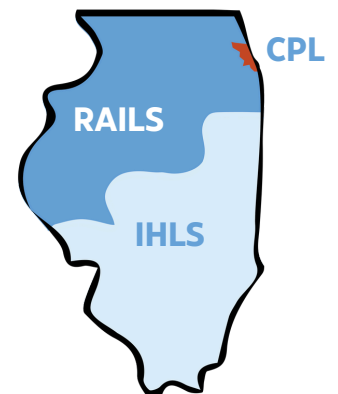
The cost to provide interlibrary loan service was nearly **\$6.5 million** in 2021. If libraries had purchased the 11.5 million items delivered by RAILS and IHLS, they would have paid more than **\$200 million**.

ROI for Interlibrary
Loan Service :
3082%

Library Access



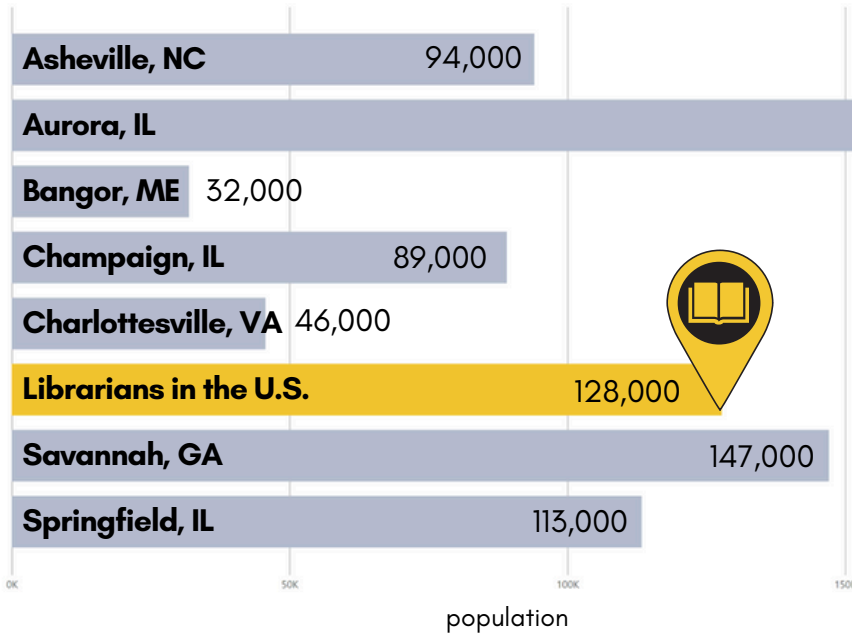
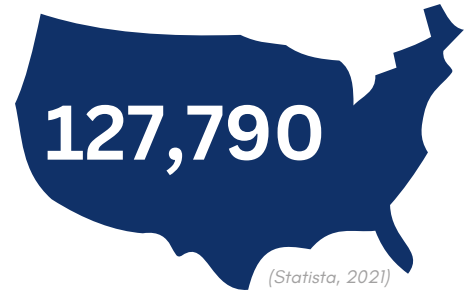
Map of Illinois
Library Systems



Librarians: a Vibrant & Sizable Profession

How many librarians are there nationwide?

Number of librarians in the U.S.



Librarians vs U.S. City Populations

(Data Commons, 2021; Statista, 2021)

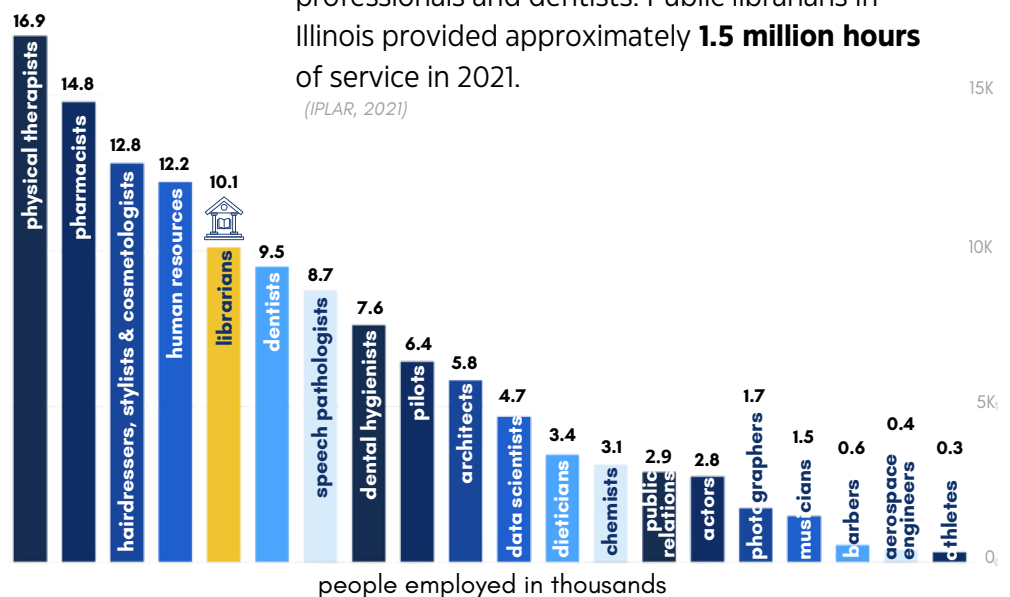
How do librarians compare to other professionals?

Number of librarians in Illinois



The number of librarians in Illinois is roughly comparable to the number of human resource professionals and dentists. Public librarians in Illinois provided approximately **1.5 million hours** of service in 2021.

(IPLAR, 2021)



Librarians vs Other Professions

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; data.illinois.gov)

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