

Library District Demographics

The Poudre River Public Library District is located in Larimer County, northern Colorado. The District encompasses an 1,800 square-mile region from south Fort Collins to the Wyoming border. The city of Fort Collins and its growth area makes up 91% of the District population.

District Size: 1,800 square miles

Population: 203,312 (2016)

Median Household income: \$62,436

Median age: 32.3

Education: 43.6% bachelor degree or higher

Current Library System

The Poudre River Public Library District (Library District) was established in 2006 by voter approval. The Library District serves more than 203,312 people across a vast 1,800 square-mile region in northern Larimer County, Colorado. The Library District operates under the laws of the State of Colorado and is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees appointed to four-year terms by representatives from the City of Fort Collins and Larimer County. The Library District is funded through a 3 mill property tax. Taxpayer approval is required for an increase in the mill levy in order to provide additional revenue to the Library District to fund its capital needs and the additional operating costs that would accompany any new facilities.

Ninety-one percent of the Library District population lives in Fort Collins. The remaining populations live in the unincorporated rural and mountain communities of LaPorte/Bellvue, Waverly, Livermore, Lower Rist Canyon, Stove Prairie, Poudre Park, Upper Poudre Canyon and Virginia Dale. These communities are all located more than five miles from a Library District facility. Even in the most remote communities with a commute of more than an hour, residents report travelling into Fort Collins at least once a week.

Poudre River Public Library District has three libraries; Old Town Library, a 34,000 sq. ft. facility in downtown Fort Collins; Harmony Library, a 31,100 sq. ft. joint-use library facility with Front Range Community College; and Council Tree Library, a 16,600 sq. ft. family-oriented facility located in Front Range Village, south Fort Collins. Webster House, across the street from Old Town Library, serves as the Library District's administrative center housing library administration, information technology, collection

management, outreach, and human resources. The Library District has continued to grow since its creation in 2006. The three public facilities house about 375,000 physical items.

The Library District is dedicated to matching the community's diverse needs, interests, and priorities with opportunities for learning, intellectual stimulation, and personal enjoyment; and to enrich the cultural, educational, and economic life of the growing region.

To that end, the Library District held 2,509 programs in 2016, with over 66,000 attendees. Programming partnerships include Colorado State University, Larimer County Small Business Development Center, Rocky Mountain Association of Credit Unions, City of Fort Collins, Front Range Community College, and many others. The annual Library Author Series (with Colorado State University's Morgan Library) has brought over forty nationally-known authors to Fort Collins, including Terry Tempest Williams, Poet Gary Snyder, and Bill Bryson. The Library District also hosts an annual Battle of the Bards, a poetry contest for teens and adults; outreach literacy programs in the rural and mountain areas, local day care centers, and in schools located in the Library District's economically disadvantaged areas. The Library District's annual community book festival is held each October in partnership with Colorado State University and the City of Fort Collins Office of Economic Health. Children's services include weekly storytimes for infants, toddlers and young children in each of its three libraries, and a summer reading program for children and adults. Adult and teen classes include computer comfort, word processing, PowerPoint, Excel, teen coding, creative making, and more.

Most Recent Facilities Planning Process

In 2009, the Library District funded a comprehensive facilities master plan that identified space needs of the Library District and recommended expanded and additional facilities to meet those needs. According to the study, the Library District's 81,700 square feet of library space, or 0.5 square feet per capita, has the capacity to provide only the essential or most basic services as defined by Colorado Public Library Standards. The plan concluded that the higher level of services that the Library District provides to the community strains the capacity of existing facilities and limits the ability to fully implement a strategic plan.

The plan reported that current seating and study areas are limited and frequently crowded, public computing space is constrained, many collections areas are congested and less than optimal for easy browsing, and program and meeting spaces are too small to meet increasing demands. The recommendations in the 2009 facilities' master

plan included increasing the Library District's facilities space by 54,625 square feet. The result would be 0.8 square feet per capita, which would bring the Library District's space closer to the Colorado State Library standards. The Webster House administrative center, automated sorting systems, and the remodel of the Old Town Library resulted from this plan.

Most Recent Strategic Planning Process

The Board of Trustees met in May 2015 and drafted four overarching goals around which the Library District's strategic planning team developed strategies and tactics to effectively re-brand the Poudre River Public Library District as a "Platform for Continuous Learning". The Strategic Plan 2016-2018 identifies three target audiences on which to focus effective program development, collection growth, modified services, and facility usage to highlight a "continuous learning" brand. These target audiences are birth-to-third grade for school readiness; tweens and teens; and nonprofits, job seekers and the business community. These three audiences were identified as groups with which library resources and strengths can best be aligned to provide a platform for continuous learning. By targeting these three audiences, the Library District serves identified community needs and complements but does not duplicate services offered in the larger community. Strategies to support continuous learning for all library users are also addressed in the strategic plan. These include prioritizing excellent customer service, convenience, ease-of-use and streamlined access, digital learning, designing the library to be a place to learn, create and share, promoting social and cultural diversity through programs, services, and collections, and aligning organizational culture to reflect the library as a place of continuous learning.

The Poudre River Library Trust (Foundation)

The Poudre River Library Trust, Inc. was founded in 1999 and serves as the philanthropic arm of Poudre River Public Library District, raising funds and building an endowment to support the growth and vitality of the Library District. The Library Trust has assets of more than \$275,000 invested at the Community Foundation. The mission of the Library Trust is to collaborate with the Library District Board of Trustees and staff, Friends of Poudre Library, and donors to grow and manage funds to generate innovative Library programs, projects and services.

While the Library District has taxing authority, the revenue it raises from the annual mill levy are used to support the operational costs of the Library District's three libraries. Long-term capital needs require raising additional funds from private, foundation and corporate sources. The Library Trust's first goal is to support and enhance the Library's future facilities construction program. The second goal is to work toward a million dollar

endowment. The revenue earned from this endowment will give the libraries a way to enhance their reach into our community and to make up for funding that may be lost due to unforeseen perils in the future.

The Friends of Poudre Library

The Friends of Poudre Library are community volunteers who donate their time and energy to raise money to enhance and support the resources of the Poudre River Public Library District; to advocate and promote use and enjoyment of the Library; and to encourage literacy within the community.

The Friends raise money by quarterly used-book sales and at two books shops they maintain in Old Town Library and Harmony Library. The Friends contribute more than \$70,000 annually from book sale proceeds, fundraising and memberships to help fund library programs and events including the Summer Reading Challenge, Harmony in the Round, History Comes Alive, Visiting Author series, Fort Collins Reads (community one-book program), among others.