

Service Population and Per Capita Standards

From Wisconsin Public Library Standards 5th Edition

Each of the quantitative standards offers recommendations that vary according to a library's service population. For these measures, a different service target is recommended for each of seven population categories.

Nonresident Borrowers

It is crucial, before applying the per capita standards for every library in the state, to develop a meaningful and accurate estimate of the population it serves. In Wisconsin, estimating a library's service population is complicated by the fact that libraries provide service to many individuals who do not reside within the municipality that established the library. These "nonresident borrowers" include county residents who have access to the library as part of the county's plan for library service, residents of other municipalities within the same system area, and, in many cases, residents of other system areas. In almost all cases, a library's true service population is greater than its "official" municipal population.

Methods for Estimating Service Population

It is recommended that a library employ one of the following methods for estimating its service population. Any of these methods will produce an estimate of the library's service population that is a truer reflection of its actual use patterns than the strict use of the municipal population. These methods will produce an estimate of the library's service population that can be used to apply the quantitative standards that appear in this document. Methods that allocate nonresident populations on any basis other than observed use of library collections and resources are subject to greater error. The DLTCL encourages all libraries to make an estimate of their extended service population as a point of reference for use of these standards and for other library planning purposes.

County Nonresident Circulation (*as calculated by the Division*)

Starting in 2000, the service population reported in the annual Wisconsin Public Library Service Data is based on each library's share of total circulation to county residents who do not live in a library community. For example, if the ABC Public Library accounts for 20 percent of the total circulation from libraries in the county to county residents who do not live in a library municipality, then 20 percent of the county nonresident population is allocated to the ABC Public Library. This number is then added to the library's municipal population to derive an estimate of the library's total service population. This estimate should, in most cases, be a more accurate estimate of service population than estimates used in previous Service Data editions. However, libraries with significant usage by residents of other library communities and/or residents of other counties may wish to use one of the alternative methods discussed below.

Systemwide Nonresident Circulation

If nonresident use data is gathered on a systemwide basis in a multicounty system, an allocation of the system nonresident population can be made, based on the library's share of the total system circulation to nonresidents. This variation has the advantage of rendering county boundaries within the system invisible.

Library Nonresident Circulation

A library also can examine resident borrowing as a proportion of total circulation and extrapolate a rough, circulation-based estimate of its overall service population. If residents and nonresidents can be assumed to borrow material at roughly the same rate per capita, and residents account for 85 percent of the library's total circulation, then it can be said that residents also account for 85 percent of the total population. If the library's municipal population is divided by the proportion of circulation transactions that go to residents, the result will be an estimate of the library's total service population. For example, a library with 85 percent resident circulation and a municipal population of 7,500 will have a service population of 8,824 ($7,500 \div 0.85 = 8,824$).

Population of Jurisdictions Served

If, through the observation of nonresident use, the staff of a municipal library is aware that a majority of residents of an adjacent town or towns use the library, it may simply add the population of the town or towns to its municipal population.

2013 Service Population Calculations

Service Population Calculations					
Library	Municipal Population	County Nonresident Circulation	Systemwide Nonresident Circulation	Library Nonresident Circulation	Population of Jurisdictions Served
Berlin	5,552	7,095	9,038	9,605	
Brandon	874	1,894	1,545	1,616	
Campbellsport	2,009	6,501	4,763	5,258	
Coloma	457	2,412	2,289	1,965	
Endeavor	461	772	629	620	
Fond du Lac	43,100	69,148	60,533	63,860	
Green Lake	2,818	4,041	4,592	4,505	
Hancock	413	1,398	1,181	1,132	
Kingston	326	2,201	1,875	1,381	
Markesan	1,456	2,859	2,644	2,738	
Menasha	17,454	24,960	34,407	34,923	
Montello	1,479	5,594	3,888	4,733	
Neenah	25,750	51,372	56,830	47,804	
Neshkoro	429	809	678	1,438	
North Fond du Lac	5,078	7,078	6,821	8,982	
Oakfield	1,088	2,233	1,748	1,744	
Omro	3,521	5,879	5,689	7,008	
Oshkosh	66,300	80,079	81,639	85,174	
Oxford	603	1,281	1,271	1,158	
Packwaukee	1,411	1,555	1,553	1,765	
Pine River	2,418	2,713	2,658	2,915	
Plainfield	859	1,305	1,800	1,634	
Poy Sippi	927	1,214	1,389	1,592	
Princeton	1,186	2,987	3,276	3,237	
Redgranite	2,152	2,820	2,737	4,001	
Ripon	7,664	11,640	11,683	12,324	
Wautoma	2,168	9,082	6,990	6,987	
Westfield	1,260	5,365	3,556	3,406	
Wild Rose	708	3,447	2,483	1,882	
Winneconne	2,394	6,433	5,979	5,911	
Totals	202,315	326,167	326,167	331,297	-