

The Chester County Library System: Partner in Creating a Vital, Stable, Livable Community



Strong and vibrant public libraries are the cornerstone of vital and stable communities. Public libraries are the literal and figurative center of our neighborhoods, cities and counties. Increasingly, however, people in our communities are forced to make hard decisions about which services they can continue to support, which are vital and which are just nice to have. Chester County residents want and deserve strong public libraries that continue to meet the education, information and recreation needs of our young people, our business community and our seniors.

Like residents of most communities throughout the country, **Chester County** residents characterize a strong community as having thriving public schools, safe neighborhoods, engaged citizens, a healthy business environment and access to public libraries. In fact, six out of ten people prefer to live in a community with a library. Why? Because public libraries provide educational and learning opportunities for a lifetime, beginning with early literacy programs and summer reading and extending through adult literacy and skill development, with a wide range of opportunities in between.

Chester County public libraries are perhaps the one place where knowledge and opportunity are open to everyone and serve as an excellent support resource at a time when our schools are stretched thin and people who don't have computers and Internet service at home are at a growing disadvantage.

Public libraries emerge in studies of all kinds as critical to the livability of a community and are directly correlated in the minds of residents with strong communities. A national Marist Poll reports that nine out of ten people find library access valuable. Businesses rely on the public library for research and information; one recent study indicates that two-thirds of businesses say the public library contributes to their success.

Ultimately, community is built by bringing people together, and the **Chester County Library System** draws people together in ways that help build safe, strong, healthy neighborhoods where people thrive.

JUST THE FACTS

- **62 percent of people choose a neighborhood based on access to a public library.**

National Association of Realtors

- **Public libraries have an essential role in building strong communities. Public libraries are a natural place to bring people together to build healthy, safe neighborhoods.**

Asset-Based Community Development Institute

- **Public libraries are very important to the quality of community life.**

New York Regents Commission Survey

- **94 percent of people say that it is valuable or very valuable to have access to a public library in your community.**

The Public Library: A National Survey (Marist Poll)

- **78 percent of business customers say that the public library contributes to the success of their business, and 49 percent say they obtain most of their business/research information from a public library.**

The Value of Public Libraries: Impact, Normative Data and Influencing Funders

- **Strong public libraries help attract "knowledge workers." Public libraries are often cited as reasons why small businesses choose to locate in a particular community.**

The Seattle Public Library & Foundation and City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

- **Libraries connect individuals and help facilitate civic life.**

Help Seeking in an Electronic World, IMLS Survey



Chester County Library System
Value to the County

Individuals • Community • Economy

Read • Connect • Discover