

# The Chester County Library System: A Value to the Economy



Public libraries are considered by many to be the heart of a community. Not as many people recognize them as economic engines, powering the development or revitalization of a community and reducing the costs of business in communities large and small across the nation. In fact, public libraries are just that. As our local community explores ways to improve our economy, the **Chester County Library System** plays a vital role by contributing valuable business information resources that support local business and provide an excellent return on investment.

The **Chester County Library System** broadly impacts our community's economic health by providing local businesses with cost-effective access to information, educating our workforce and increasing community vitality.

One study that evaluated the cash value of libraries to business estimates each business saves between \$500 and \$5,000 annually in expenses. In addition, libraries are good economic anchors. A Maryland survey shows that 80 percent of users attach other errands to their trip to the library.

As our economy transitions from industry to information-based, strong public libraries help attract "knowledge workers" and are often cited as a reason why small businesses choose to locate in a particular community. The **Chester County Library System** serves both as a knowledge center and a provider of access to programs, materials and online resources.

At the same time, our libraries are centers of lifelong learning and benefit employers through programs ranging from literacy to classes in computer skills, business databases and other tools that prepare workers to play productive roles in our local business community.

The **Chester County Library System** is an excellent steward of the community's investment, delivering valuable services for only \$35.68 per capita.

## JUST THE FACTS

- **49% of business customers indicated that they obtained most of their business/research information from their public library.**
- **78% of business customers indicated that information obtained from the public library contributed toward the success of their business.**
- **Without access to the information in their public libraries, 23% of business customers indicated that their costs would increase between \$500 and \$5,000.**
- **41% of business customers said that if they did not have access to the public library it would have some negative impact, and 33% said it would have a major negative impact on their business.**
- **59% of personal investors said they obtained the information needed for making investment decisions from their public library.**
- **32% of the respondents said the dollar value of the information obtained from the public library was \$10,000 or more.**

*Stephen Abram, SirsiDynix  
The Seattle Public Library & Foundation and City  
of Seattle Office of Economic Development*



**Chester County Library System**  
*Value to the County*

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