



# BELGRADE LIBRARY & COMMUNITY CENTER





# **LIBRARY SERVICES**

**Our library's mission is to empower a community of lifelong learners.**

**The library aims to be the community's source for information, inspiration and connection.**

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**Desired outcome: an educated, informed, safe and connected community.**

- Exposure to early literacy - children start school ready to read.
- Address the national literacy crisis through fun programs focused on literacy development, cultivating interest and enthusiasm.
- Students have access to resources to help them thrive as they grow into adulthood.
- Centralized trusted space that connects people to local resources – information on natural disaster assistance, taxes, career building, housing, tech assistance, health and wellness, etc.
- Equal access for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, background, race, or religion.

# LIBRARY STATISTICS

## April-October ‘25

| Month     | Library Visits | Program Attendance |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| April     | 13, 241        | 1,103              |
| May       | 10,790         | 1,292              |
| June      | 11,359         | 1,328              |
| July      | 13,797         | 1,822              |
| August    | 11,183         | 936                |
| September | 11,024         | 1,369              |
| October   | 11,454         | 2,279              |
| Total     | 82,848         | 7,850              |

## January-October ‘25

Library Card Sign-ups: 1,401

Volunteer Total: 43

Volunteer Hours: 846

# CURRENT CHALLENGES

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- Staffing shortage: 9 employees total (6 FTE, 3 PTE; 7.6 FTE)
- Hours of operation: 36 hours a week (8 hours less from previous year) - we currently do not meet Montana State Library - public library standards.
- Impact: reduced programs, delayed response time, partnership decrease, reduced sponsorships, untended collections and limited outreach and promotion – resulting in engagement decline.
- Services not optimally provided include tech sessions, ILLs, Makerspace programs, book sales, book donations, tax assistance, VA hours and community corner.



# PROSPECTIVE REMEDIES

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## Why:

- A \$14 million bond measure was approved by voters in 2021 to fund the design, construction and furnishing of the new library and community center. An annual operational levy was not presented.
- Budget overrun – the total cost of the new library reached \$22 million, significantly higher than the original anticipated budget. Reasons: unexpected expenses during the project and the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted planning and funding efforts and led to increased costs for materials and labor.
- Operational levy transition – in response to property tax changes passed in the 69<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislative Session (2025), City of Belgrade adopted a resolution to transition the library operations mill levy to a dollar-based mill levy.
- Increasing costs for materials, software/technology & MSL services.
- Potential constraint for future growth.

## Solutions:

- A library levy.
- City Management reallocate funds – search for dollars in the current General Fund budget due to the unforeseen expenses. Freeing up dollars for the library would require reducing funding from existing services across city departments.
- Continue with the existing library operational budget.

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# LIBRARY LEVY

## Levy description:

The library determines the new total dollar amount needed, \$1,416,718, to cover inflation, staff wages, materials and new programs.

### How the levy would be used:

Annual operations – software/technology maintenance, utilities, supplies and staffing.

|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Total Library Income             | 624,022.00                       | 9.45  | 310,434.00   |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
| Support from Other Funds/Balance | 616,718.00                       | 18.78 | 616,718.00   |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
| Additional Personnel             | 350,000.00                       | 10.66 | 350,000.00   |
| Additional Operations            | 450,000.00                       | 13.70 | 450,000.00   |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  |                                  | 9.45  | 310,434.00   |
|                                  |                                  | 18.78 | 616,718.00   |
|                                  |                                  | 28.23 | 927,152.00   |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  | Additional Personnel             | 10.66 | 350,000.00   |
|                                  | Additional Operations            | 13.70 | 450,000.00   |
|                                  |                                  | 24.36 | 800,000.00   |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  | Library Debt Levy                | 44.07 | 1,513,836.00 |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  |                                  |       |              |
|                                  | Total Operations Increase Needed |       | 1,416,718.00 |

## What it will cost the average taxpayer:

| 100,000.00 | 300,000.00 | 600,000.00 |                                    |
|------------|------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| 10.40      | 31.19      | 62.37      | Current Library Operations         |
| 20.66      | 61.97      | 123.95     |                                    |
| 31.05      | 93.16      | 186.32     | To cover existing operating cost   |
|            |            |            |                                    |
| 11.72      | 35.17      | 70.34      |                                    |
| 15.07      | 45.22      | 90.43      |                                    |
| 26.79      | 80.38      | 160.77     | To increase personnel and services |
|            |            |            |                                    |
| 57.85      | 173.54     | 347.09     | To Add All                         |
| 48.48      | 145.43     | 290.86     |                                    |
| 106.32     | 318.97     | 637.95     | Total Annual Library Tax Bill      |

The average cost of a new hardcover book is \$27.99.

## Economic impact:

- Generate economic activity – the library provides individuals with resources to pursue economic opportunity.
- Libraries often directly hire local professionals and small business owners to lead classes and workshops.
- Libraries can increase property value.
- Libraries are a sustainable resource that helps reduce individual spending on expensive books/materials, which are partially driven up by high energy costs.



# REALLOCATE FUNDS

- In addition to the \$450,000 General Fund dollars (facility, technology and administrative expenses) used towards the library, we would need an additional \$350,000 for personnel expenses.
- The new 26,000 sq. ft. library is operating on the old library's budget, a facility less than half its size (9,000-10,000 sq. ft.), with less staff, greatly increased utility fees, maintenance of additional service points and a volume of foot traffic/user engagement that has more than doubled.
- If General Fund dollars are reallocated, the library's hours of operation and staffing would increase, as would its programs and services.
- Note: the reallocation of General Fund dollars could prove burdensome for other city departments, triggering consequences that might still negatively affect the library.

## IF LEVY PASSES

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- Patrons will receive greater essential services, educational resources (updated collection – books and digital content – additional computer access – Wi-Fi, print & fax – and research databases), meeting spaces and interlibrary loans.
- Enhance early literacy outcomes and maximize support for parents in their crucial role as their child's first teacher.
- Free and new programs – adult education & workshops, Storytime, One Book and summer reading.
- Increased hours of operation, staffing and pay.
- Free up \$450,000 from the General Budget fund, which could potentially be used towards public safety.

## IF LEVY DOES NOT PASS OR WE CONTINUE WITH CURRENT LIBRARY OPERATIONAL BUDGET

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- The library will further reduce its hours of operation - risk state aid.
- Reconsider/extinguish after hour library programs.
- General programming and services will be reduced.
- New initiatives and partnerships will be delayed.
- Costs will continue to increase at a greater rate than our funding.



QUESTIONS?



BELGRADE  
COMMUNITY  
LIBRARY

City of  
**B**ELGRADE