



**DOWNTOWN LIBRARY**  
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[RAPIDCITYLIBRARY.ORG](http://RAPIDCITYLIBRARY.ORG)



Date: February 14, 2022  
To: RCPL Board of Trustees  
From: Sam Slocum, Senior Librarian  
Re: 2021 Statistics Summary

**Summary:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, safety precautions were implemented, such as requiring face masks, quarantining materials, and restrictions on the number of people able to attend events and occupy meeting rooms. As a consequence of these precautions and a general change in the community's pandemic-related behavior, many of the library statistics are fluctuating.

In 2021, the library experienced increases in new borrowers, computer use, patron contacts, Pop-Up library use, library entries, checkouts, database use, and social networking engagement. There were decreases in total borrowers, drive-thru use, and event attendance.

### Library Services

- New borrowers increased by 31%, but total borrowers decreased 13%. This amounted to over 3,000 new borrowers in 2021 with 33,079 total borrowers at the end of the year
  - The decrease in borrowers is due to two factors: the annual purge, and a change in bookkeeping which moved older accounts with outstanding materials to a non-statistical category; there are currently 3,846 patrons in that category
- Community members spent over 236,000 hours using library computers and Wi-Fi, a 43% increase compared
- Library staff engaged with over 47,000 individuals
  - Nearly 6,000 of those patrons requested reference and research services
- 20,065 more people visited the library in person than the previous year, for an 11% increase
  - 13,003 patrons used drive-thru services; this is a 57% decline from the pandemic height in 2020, but is a 252% increase from pre-pandemic levels
  - 1,881 people visited to the Pop-Up library locations between May and September

### Collections

- Physical checkouts of books, DVDs, audiobooks, and magazines increased 20%
- Research database use increased by 14%

### Public Awareness and Customer Relations

- The number of library-hosted events increased by 29% in 2021, with 97 more programs than in 2020
  - Event attendance decreased 16% with 3,270 fewer attendees
- There were over 154,000 social networking engagements via Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest for promotions and education