

# TEN REASONS WHY LIBRARY SERVICE IS ESSENTIAL TO A COMMUNITY

With intense competition for municipal dollars, the idea may be put forward that the library is less critical than other services provided by the community. Should that happen, an immediate response from library officials is necessary in order to avoid disproportional budget cuts. The following reasons may be useful in that response:

1. The library's collections and services are a necessary component of the local school and college program, and essential to independent learning efforts by residents of all ages.
2. Studies have shown that children who read maintain and improve their reading skills better than those who do not, particularly over the long summer vacations. Over vacations and on evenings and weekends, the public library is the only library available to the school child.
3. Specially designed library programs, reader services, and collections introduce young children to the world of reading, stimulate young minds, and help create a life-long interest in learning. For children of preschool age, the public library is the only library available.
4. The library is often the only readily available local source of comprehensive information needed by people for personal, family and job related purposes.
5. Individuals save money when they use their library by borrowing materials rather than buying them, and by becoming more knowledgeable on consumer spending; personal finance; home and auto repair, and many other skills.
6. The community's economy benefits when business people use library resources to make wise business decisions, employees use it to improve their job skills, or the disadvantaged use it to help break the cycle of poverty.
7. Libraries are a municipal service readily available to all. In a year, more people will use the services of their public library than the services of most other municipal departments.
8. Much of a library's reference material is not publicly available elsewhere in the community nor could many of the reference books be purchased at local book stores.
9. The public library is a major contributor to the community's quality of life. Large print books and books on audiocassette can be essential to those with handicaps while popular reading materials are in high demand by a large segment of the population.
10. The library is not just a collection of books; service is what makes a library. The collection itself is of little use unless a skilled, knowledgeable staff is available to organize and maintain the collection and help people use it.

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