What can I do to help libraries?

Get the facts and start the conversation!

The best way you can advocate for libraries is to be able to answer the question:

Do people need libraries in the 21st Century?

Yes!

FACT: People turn to libraries when searching for jobs. Last year, 4,077 people used the Job Help Center at Main Library, where they received help with career resources, resumes and applying online.This does not include the many people who use Library computers for job assistance at our 20 total locations.

FACT: One in five Mecklenburg County adults doesn't have Internet access at home. For thousands of people, the computer and Internet access available at the Library is their portal to the online world of information that many of us take for granted.

FACT: The Library is valued. 90% of Mecklenburg County residents believe that the Library is extremely or very important to the community. Those residents believe the most important services the Library offers are the ability to check out books, children's programs and computer and internet access.*

FACT: The Library is a year-round educational resource. 99% of the community agrees that the Public Library is a valuable educational resource.* The Library supports literacy and educational success through its early literacy efforts to prepare children for school, student-oriented programs and homework help after school, teen programs to help transition to college and the workforce, and summer reading programs to help students maintain academic achievement levels during summer break.

FACT: The Library improves the quality of life in the community. 96% of the community agrees that by providing free materials to all residents, the Public Library improves the quality of life in this community.*

**Source: Marketwise survey of Mecklenburg County residents and library users, Jan. 2013.*

UNDERSTANDING THE LIBRARY BUDGET

Get the Facts and Learn How You Can Help

YOU play an important role in the funding process for your public library. Stay informed about library funding, and share the facts in this brochure with others.

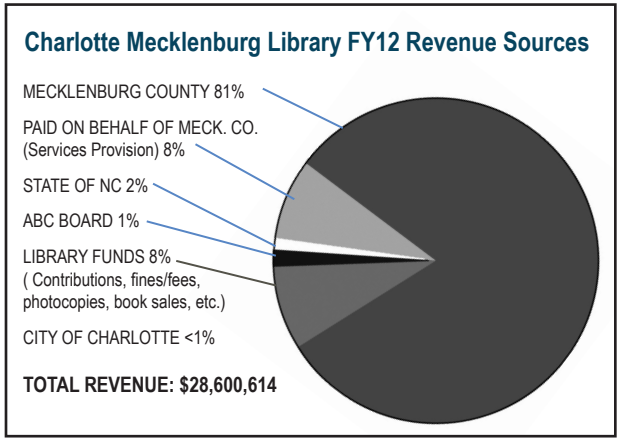
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

Updated 4/2013

Facts about Library funding

Q. Where does library funding come from?

The Library receives most of its operational funding and services provision from Mecklenburg County (approx.90%). Other funding sources, such as the State of North Carolina, the City of Charlotte, and the Mecklenburg ABC Board, make up a small portion of the Library's operational funding. Additionally, the Library seeks private contributions, grants and sponsorships throughout the year to support library services for all ages and provide resource enhancements. Revenue from fines and fees is also used to serve the community above and beyond what tax-based funding provides.



Q. What's the relationship between the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Mecklenburg County Government?

The delivery of Library service is the result of a partnership between the Library and Mecklenburg County. The Library is the managing partner that *delivers* services, and the County is the funding partner that *provides much of the funding* for those services. Each partner serves its specific function; but when issues arise that significantly impact the delivery of service and/or the cost of delivering service, both partners need to be consulted.

Q. Is Mecklenburg County Government mandated to fund libraries?

No. County funding for libraries is not State mandated. Therefore, County funding for libraries can be reduced or increased by decision of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners.

Q. What is the County's budget process?

Mecklenburg County begins budget preparations each year through a series of planning sessions. The County Manager's recommended budget is presented in mid-May, and the final budget is adopted by County Commissioners in early- to mid-June.

Q. Who oversees the Library's budget?

The Library's Board of Trustees oversees the Library's approved budget, based on recommendations from the Library CEO, Library Director and staff. The Board is responsible for decisions that affect staffing, locations, and books and materials. The Library's Board of Trustees does not have the ability to tax, borrow money, charge residents a fee for basic services like library cards, or carry over County funding from previous fiscal years.

Q. Who appoints the Library Board?

As established by the State of North Carolina, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Board is composed of eleven members, of whom ten are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and one by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. Appointees are selected from public applicants.

Q. What is the Library doing to plan for the future?

The Library CEO and County Manager work closely during the annual budget planning process. This close working relationship helps ensure that Mecklenburg County leaders understand the ongoing and future needs of the Library and the measurable value that library service provides to our community. It also helps Library leaders understand the financial obligations and priorities of Mecklenburg County.

This year, the Library is developing a new strategic plan in conjunction with Mecklenburg County's strategic planning process. The needs of the community, as well as Mecklenburg County's critical success factors and priorities, will play an important role in the development of this plan. More information is available at **www.cmlibrary.org/stratplan**.

Ways to Show Support

Learn what support groups are doing to help libraries.

- Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation, **foundation.cmlibrary.org**
- Friends of the Library, **cmlibraryfriends.org**

Give a financial gift. **cmlibrary.org/support**

Join our team of volunteers. **cmlibrary.org/volunteer**

Sign up for e-mail updates at **cmlibrary.org**.

Follow the Library on Facebook or Twitter.

Know who you can talk to about your library.

Contacting the Library

Information about contacting the Library is available at **www.cmlibrary.org**, or you can email Library Trustees directly at **libraryboard@cmlibrary.org**.

Contacting County Commissioners

Any citizen may contact his or her County district and at-large commissioner. Information on contacting commissioners is available at **www.charmeck.org**.

See the other side of this panel for more ways you can help.

Stay up-to-date on the Library's funding situation at cmlibrary.org.