



## 2021 Ohio Summer Library Program: Preliminary Report

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*"Our children and teens were away from our library for too long. It was wonderful to have the sound of children's laughter back in the building. Our families were excited to be back!"*

*Brenda Miller, New Madison Public Library*

While the pandemic continued to impact offerings and turnout, the situation improved greatly this year for summer library programming and summer reading challenges. Around Ohio, public library staff demonstrated creativity and flexibility, and patrons expressed enthusiasm and gratitude for their libraries.

*"We were able to use all that we learned last year to improve our service and have found that some things will be here to stay, such as curbside service, grab and go bags, and outdoor storytimes. Our regular patrons very much appreciate all that we offer, and it was great to see some of those we met out in the community bring their children to the library for the first time!"*

*Shannon Keese, Fairfield County District Library*

Of the 220 Ohio public library systems responding to the 2021 state summer library program (SLP) evaluation survey, all but one provided an SLP for children in 2021. 204 (93% of respondents) provided an SLP for teens, and 193 (88% of respondents) provided an SLP for adults.

**In 2021, 269,755 people participated in SLP at Ohio public libraries.** This is 56.5% of the total reported participation in 2019, and includes 180,042 children, 35,093 teens, and 54,620 adults.

*“Our staff worked very hard to put together great programming because children didn’t get much of a summer last year. We saw many new participants. We were thrilled by the number of kids and parents who made a point of telling us how much they appreciated all we do and how much fun they have at our events.”*

*Angie Humphrey, Montpelier Public Library*

In 2021, total reported attendance at Ohio library programs and events related to SLP (both in-person and online/virtual) was 543,549, including:

331,868 attendees at children’s programs

38,556 at teen programs

84,747 at adult programs

88,378 at all-ages programs

*“We were able to hand out 995 meals to children in our area with the help of Meigs Local Schools Food Service. Being able to participate in this program each year is extremely beneficial to our young patrons. Any chance to put a meal in the hands of the children in our community is a wonderful thing.”*

*Emily Sanders, Meigs County District Public Library*

In addition to SLP, Ohio public libraries continued to support children and communities by distributing meals and snacks through the USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), or by providing outreach or programming at non-library SFSP sites, or by distributing food through locally funded (non-SFSP) arrangements. According to Ohio Department of Education records, 162 individual Ohio public library locations were SFSP sites in 2021. This is a big gain after the significant decrease in 2020 when many library buildings had remained closed into the summer. **162 is the greatest number of Ohio public library SFSP sites in any summer to date.**

Several respondents to the state SLP evaluation survey reflected that 2021 was a challenging year, but many more expressed satisfaction and pride in their summer programming and turnout. Regardless of conditions, Ohio libraries provide engaging SLP experiences for their communities. The full Ohio SLP Evaluation report, available in December, will include stories and analysis from librarians across Ohio.