

East Baton Rouge Parish Library Highlights for 2021

- Library services and programs remain impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Library maintained slightly reduced service hours to allow for deep cleaning and to accommodate staff shortages due to quarantine.
- Digital Circulation leveled out at 1,029,771, less than half of our circulation total of 2,404,134. Many “digital” patrons returned in-person for physical items.
- The overall visitor Gate Count rose 33 % to 1,221,140; most of these visitors came inside the building to use library services and resources.
- The Library’s Collections remain stable, comprising more than 2 million items. Major new additions to the collection included several distinct collections for the BR Room’s Archive (including the African American Funeral Programs Database) and special online resources such as Black Life in America, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Ethnic Diversity Source, and the Wall Street Journal.
- BR City Key Website was revised in 2021 and included updated COVID and food disparities.
- The Library issued 61,916 new library cards in 2021, including new Student Computer-Use-Only cards. The total Patron Count increased to 323,625, which is 74 % of the parish population.
- Library staff produced 9,165 programming events and activities, with an estimated 398,470 people participating. Of these, 757 were Virtual programs with 79,072 viewers. 9,380 patrons participated in 3,160 Self-Directed Activities such as Grab and Geaux Bags. Highlights for the year: One Book One Community featuring *The Yellow House*; the Mid-City Micro Con; the 8th Annual BR Mini-Maker Faire®; the 44th Annual Author Illustrator Program featuring author Salina Yoon. Beanstack provided a virtual Summer Reading Club platform which was extended throughout the year. A new cohort of children “graduated” from *1000 Books Before Kindergarten*. Other Special Literacy Projects included the new *Reading is Elementary* program, which enrolled 566 children, the Literacy Calendar, and Garden Stories was expanded to Baker City Park. Library staff implemented the Home Library Pilot Project working with at-risk 3rd graders at five schools and began the Press Start! Ready, Set, Read! Initiative at all branches. The Library participated in the Conscious Kids Project. The Carver Branch Library was selected as a Maker-Ed pilot site by Knock Knock Children’s Museum. The Library continued its participation in the Urban Library Council’s Entrepreneurship Pilot Project and made plans to roll out circulating Wi-Fi Hotspots.
- Reference/information questions rose to 881,721, reflecting ability for patrons to come in person to any location to ask for assistance.
- Database sessions rose 31 %. Website activity continued to show increases, with activity related to the Library website up 19 %. Views and retrievals to the Library’s Online Catalog dropped, as patrons no longer needed to limit remotely search the catalog.
- Recording 754,482 logins, the Library’s Wi-Fi remained extended out into parking lots or public spaces at all locations; however, most of this usage took place inside library spaces or in the Plaza at the Main Library or at River Center Branch Library.
- Meeting Rooms were used 1,986 times with an estimated 49,840 in attendance. Civic groups began to return, but with reduced attendance.
- Study Rooms at Main, Baker, Bluebonnet, Delmont Gardens, Fairwood, Greenwell Springs, Jones Creek and River Center Branches were used 10,988 times.
- Outreach Service visits recorded 1,702 stops at pre-schools and day care centers, retirement centers, schools, and events.
- New Interactive Learning tables were placed on the public floor at each library location.
- Design Development continued for the new South Branch Library, which is expected to go out for bid in summer 2022.
- The new River Center Branch Library was named an American Libraries’ Design Showcase library and received the Gold Rose Members’ Choice award for architectural design.
- Furniture installations for the renovated Jones Creek Regional Branch were completed in first quarter of 2021.
- The Library was again recognized as a Star Library; this is the 9th year the East Baton Rouge Parish Library has been so designated.