## How You Can Use It

**Justify new or ongoing library services:** Use data to prove that a new library service is growing over time or that an ongoing service is still heavily used. If it is all on the Internet, why is circulation still climbing?

**Measure effectiveness:** Use data to show that library services or programs are effective. If you hold more children's programs, can you show a corresponding increase in circulation of children's books?

**Use comparisons to lobby for more resources:** You suspect that libraries in towns of the same size get more local government funding, so you compare your budget to those of similar libraries and use the results as an advocacy tool.

**Write effective grant applications:** Combine demographic data and public library data in a grant application to show a local need and to propose a project at the public library to meet that need.

**Publicize your accomplishments:** Tap into FSCS data as you compile an annual report for your public library or develop a brochure describing the services and programs offered by your library.

**Create Fast Facts:** Use library data to create fun bits of information on a bookmark as a means of showing the importance of the library to your community. If the average cost of a book is $25, then how much money did patrons save by checking out books from your library?

**Highlight your library to a particular group:** Select data carefully, then use them to talk-the-talk with specific audiences. Would your chamber of commerce like to know the impact of the library's budget on the local economy?

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**Need more copies of this brochure?** Please see:
http://www.nclis.gov/statsurv/surveys/fscs/SDCmain/
SDCresources/FSCSbrochure2005.pdf

## FSCS Participating Agencies

**American Library Association**
**Office for Research and Statistics**
http://www.ala.org/ors

**Chief Officers of State Library Agencies**
http://www.cosla.org/

**Institute of Museum and Library Services**
http://www.imls.gov/

**U.S. Department of Education**
http://www.nces.ed.gov/

http://www.census.gov/

**U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science**
http://www.nclis.gov/

**9,000+ American Public Libraries**

10-05

## Do Public Libraries Still Matter?
### Yes, Public Libraries Definitely Matter!

## How Do You Know?
### I Have the Statistics To Prove It.

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**FSCS** Federal – State Cooperative System for Public Library Data

# Why We Do It

**Our Mission** The Federal-State Cooperative System for Public Library Data is a partnership of the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and state library agencies. It is the national census of public libraries. The data collected are tabulated, analyzed and disseminated annually to inform state and national policymakers.

**Our Values** **FSCS applies these values to our data collection process:**

- **Accountability**: FSCS participants assume responsibility for collecting, transmitting, and distributing public library data.
- **Cooperation**: FSCS participants work together for mutual benefit and the good of public libraries.
- **Inclusiveness**: FSCS participants work together to obtain the most useful data for local, state, and national policymakers and librarians.
- **Respect**: FSCS participants acknowledge that every participant has a vital role to play in producing quality data.
- **Responsiveness**: FSCS participants respond to each other in a helpful, appropriate, and timely manner.

**FSCS data products reflect these values:**

- **Accuracy**: FSCS participants strive to collect data that are correct.
- **Completeness**: FSCS participants work toward 100% response rates from public libraries and states.
- **Flexibility**: FSCS regularly offers participants an opportunity to review existing data elements and propose new ones to meet the changing needs of the library community.
- **Relevance**: FSCS collects core data elements of practical and lasting use to policymakers and librarians.
- **Timeliness**: FSCS participants strive to collect and disseminate current data that are of immediate and lasting usefulness.

# What We Do

- Monitor trends in public libraries

- Design standardized questions to illuminate these trends

- Evaluate and delete questions that are no longer useful

- Work with state libraries to be sure that FSCS' 55 standardized questions are included on each of the surveys for the fifty states and five territories

- Compile and publish the data at the national level

- Each state data coordinator compiles and publishes public library data for his particular state and provides these data to public librarians on demand

- Train state data coordinators at each state library on the most effective methods for surveying, compiling, analyzing, publishing, and promoting use of public library data

- Assist state data coordinators as they work with public library directors to compile and submit data

- Design tools to enhance use of public library data, including Web pages that help people identify public libraries, help librarians compare their libraries to other libraries, and provide access to public library data for each state from 1990 to date

- Promote use of data by local, state, and national policymakers, researchers, and public librarians

- Promote use of public library data by providing the Mary Jo Lynch Award for Library and Information Science (LIS) Students who feature the data in a research paper and honor innovative uses of the data by any interested people with the Helen M. Eckard Award
http://www.nclis.gov/statsurv/surveys/fscs/awardsFSCS/awardsFSCS.html

# How You Can Find Public Library Data

http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/Public.asp/
Provides quick access to *Public Libraries in the U.S.,* the most recent annual publication containing public library data aggregated for each state and links to all the NCES publications and files of public library data from 1990 to date.

http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/compare/
Use this data tool to create a list of libraries similar to yours, then select ways in which you want to compare your library to other libraries – do libraries like yours answer more reference questions, have more books, or get more funding from local government?

http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/librarysearch/
Use this tool to search for public libraries across the U.S. by library name, state, city, and by type of outlet (central, branch, bookmobile, or library system).

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# Fast Facts

- There were four times as many central public libraries and branch libraries as there were Starbucks outlets in 2002.

- For every American child through age 14, more than 11 juvenile books were checked out of public libraries during 2002.

- During 2002, public libraries spent a total $8 billion for operations, while Americans spent $8 billion on cosmetics that year.

- Public libraries employed 136,000 people full-time in 2002, the same number of employees as reported by FedEx.

- The federal government provided public libraries with 17 cents of financial support for every American while it collected more than 18 cents in taxes for every gallon of fuel sold in the US.