



Belleville Public Library & Information Center

The **Belleville Public Library & Information Center** is a municipal public library located in the Township of Belleville in Essex County, New Jersey. It is the hometown of many who have left a mark on American pop culture such as Connie Francis, Joe Pesci, and Tommy DeVito of The Four Seasons. The community borders Nutley, Bloomfield, Newark, and the Passaic River. It is within easy driving distance of several PALS Plus libraries, nearest to Clifton and Passaic.

The library serves a diverse community of 35,926, primarily composed of residents of Hispanic or Latino and Italian descent.

The library is currently a stand-alone and is running the Polaris integrated library system supplemented with Polaris' discovery platform as the online public access catalog. The library's contract with Polaris expires in October 2019.

Frances Bacardi is serving as the Interim/Acting Director as the Board of Trustees seeks a candidate to replace the previous director who left in early 2019.

The library is requesting Full membership in PALS Plus, which would entitle them to the WorkFlows integrated library system, the shared collection, and PC Network services, beginning October 2019 to coincide with the expiration of their contract with Polaris.

Note on Methodology

The figures used to calculate the PALS Plus totals were obtained from the 2018 New Jersey State Survey filings. Two PALS Plus libraries do not file a survey, therefore the data is incomplete. However, as the majority of our libraries do file the survey, there is sufficient data to provide clear, if somewhat incomplete, totals for PALS Plus libraries as a means of reference.

Financials

In 2018, the Belleville Public Library & Information Center's local tax support was \$932,299 with total operating expenditures of \$671,504. Considering the mean and median tax support of PALS Plus libraries (\$1,210,884 and \$713,725, respectively) and total operating expenditures (\$1,199,982 and \$684,443, respectively), the Belleville Public Library & Information Center rank within the median of PALS Plus libraries.

Ms. Bacardi explained that the lower expenditures from the previous year's amount of \$895,718 was the result of the loss of two degreed librarians which significantly reduced personnel costs and a material purchasing cap put in place to focus resources on a long-term weeding project and children's room renovation. As of April 2019, two degreed librarians have joined the staff as Reference and Young Adult librarians. Additionally, material acquisition is expected to return to normal levels this year.

Collection

The Belleville Public Library & Information Center holds a collection of 39,075 volumes in the following formats:

Books	36,347
Audiobooks	1,734
Videos	785
Music	200
Serials	6
Databases	3

The collection mean and median of PALS Plus libraries is 81,863 and 56,268, respectively. The collection size of the Belleville Public Library & Information Center would rank it below the median.

In 2018, \$35,429 was spent on library materials. A renovation of the library's children's room and a long-term weeding project required that a purchasing cap be placed for 2018 to allow for space limitations. As can be seen in *Appendix A: Belleville Public Library & Information Center Fact Sheet*, in the previous three years, the library averaged \$55,011 in material expenditures.

The weeding project, now completed, reduced the overall collection totals and freed much needed shelf space. The children's room renovation is set to be completed by the end of May, 2019 with 90% completion by May 3rd. Ms. Bacardi is committed to returning acquisition levels to normal.

The mean and median material expenditures of PALS Plus libraries is \$70,971 and \$58,986, respectively. While the money's spent in 2018 would place the Belleville Public Library & Information Center's materials expenditures below the median, at normal expenditure levels the library ranks near the median.

Circulation

In 2018, the Belleville Public Library & Information Center circulated a total of 23,998 items, broken down as follows:

Adult	13,202
Juvenile	10,796

The mean and median total circulation of PALS Plus libraries is 97,650 and 40,940, respectively. The circulation totals for the Belleville Public Library & Information Center rank it below the mean and median. It should be noted, however, that PALS Plus circulation totals may include transits sent to other libraries. If so, the PALS Plus circulation numbers would appear higher than what they actually are.

Ms. Bacardi has stated that one of the motivating factors of joining PALS Plus would be to expand the collection available to Belleville residents and increase borrowing activity.

Network

A network assessment found a stable and well-maintained technical infrastructure that can be easily integrated into our environment.

The addition of the Belleville Public Library & Information Center will not add any significant data traffic and as the PALS Plus connection capacity is set to increase to 1000 MBPS in July, there would

be no need to consider additional equipment or bandwidth resources.

Contribution to Assessment

As a Full Member, the Belleville Public Library & Information Center, would contribute to the ILS/Consortium and PC Network fees of our operating budget.

The PALS Plus funding formula relies on specific usage metrics captured throughout the year. As it is not feasible to capture the metrics for non-member libraries, approximate usage statistics were used to calculate the Belleville Public Library & Information Center's contribution to the annual assessment.

To that end, if the Belleville Public Library & Information Center had been a member for the entirety of FY19, they would have contributed \$31,402, roughly 4%, to operations. If approved for membership in FY19, the library's assessment would be prorated for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Additionally, as a new member, the Belleville Public Library & Information Center would contribute a one-time fee of \$10,000 to be added to PALS Plus reserves.

Conclusion

Ms. Bacardi and her staff are enthusiastic about joining PALS Plus and understand the benefits and value of being part of a consortium, not only for their patrons, but for their professional development and the services they wish to bring to their community. As Ms. Bacardi communicated to the library's board of trustees when presenting the need for membership in a consortium, "Like no man, no library can be an island and we (Belleville Public Library & Information Center) can no longer stand alone if we are to provide 21st century library services."

I share in Ms. Bacardi's and the staff's enthusiasm and would consider Belleville Public Library & Information Center a fine addition to PALS Plus.