IMPERIAL COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

LIBRARY USAGE REPORT

Prepared for:

Imperial County Library System

Imperial County Community & Economic Development Department

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Evalcorp Research & Consulting

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Introduction

As part of the 2018 Imperial County Library System Countywide Needs Assessment, library usage information was examined to help determine priorities and recommendations for service enhancement moving forward. To this end, EVALCORP conducted an extensive review of library usage data, compiled the information by calendar year (CY), and analyzed library usage data across four main categories:
   1. Active library members
   2. Circulation of library materials among members
   3. Library patrons
   4. Library services and programs

Data Compilation

EVALCORP staff were provided access to the Biblionix Apollo System, Imperial County Library's circulation and membership database. Seven data reports were downloaded and used to calculate the proportion of active library members by branch and age, as well as the proportion of circulated library materials (i.e., by material type and circulation method). Additionally, data were obtained from library staff's internal tracking summaries, including summaries of daily statistics recorded by library staff at each branch. Monthly frequencies from these reports were used to calculate sum totals by CY.

Report Organization

The following report presents an overview of Imperial County's estimated population and key demographic data as context for differences observed in library usage across branches.

Next, current library usage levels calculated from available data are presented at the countywide level and then by branch (ordered alphabetically). Within both the countywide and individual branch sections of the report, data are organized by the four main categories outlined above (i.e., active library members; circulation of library materials; library patrons; and library services and programs). Computer usage data and average number of program attendees by month are included for each branch.

Imperial County & Library System Overview

Imperial County Library Service Areas

The County library system provides services to residents living within 12 regions of the county. Four of the twelve service areas currently have an operating library branch. Areas with operating library branches include Calipatria, Heber, Holtville, and Salton City (these locations also have the largest population according to United States Census data).

Table 1. Imperial County Library List of Jurisdictional Locations & Demographic Data*

County Library Jurisdiction Locations	County Library Branch	Region of County	Population Size Estimate	Average Household Size	Median Age (years)	Spanish-speaking Households
1. Bombay Beach	No	Northwest	317	1.77	71.2	6%
2. Calipatria	Yes	Central	7,511	3.75	32.1	64%
3. Desert Shores	No	Northwest	1,173	2.99	26.1	84%
4. Heber	Yes	South	4,287	4.37	28.4	96%
5. Holtville	Yes	Central/South	6,230	3.58	29.4	74%
6. Niland	No	Central/North	868	2.57	43.9	57%
7. Ocotillo	No	Southwest	126	3.07	33.8	0%
8. Palo Verde	No	Northeast	81	1.13	72.1	11%
9. Salton City	Yes	Northwest	5,217	3.40	29.6	58%
10. Seeley	No	Central/South	1,626	3.86	27.7	80%
11. Westmoreland	No	Central	2,014	3.56	27.8	83%
12. Winterhaven	No	Southeast	212	1.62	54.1	7%

*Demographic indicator data pulled from United States Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimates (i.e., population size estimate, average household size, median age, and Spanish-speaking households).

Operating Library Branches

Of the four operating library branches, Calipatria has the largest building space, followed by Holtville. The Heber branch location operates using part of the building space, with the other portion of the building currently used as a public community center. Calipatria and Holtville branches have Friends of the Library groups, which assist library staff with fundraising, events, recruiting volunteers, and making financial decisions. Resources, funding, staff, and operating times vary across the four branches (see **Table 2**), which may explain differences observed across branches in the usage findings on the following pages.

Table 2. Imperial County Library Branch Overview

Branch Location	Size of Building (Sq. ft.)	Number of Full time Staff	Days & Hours Operating	Volumes Held	Computer Stations	Reading Seats
1. Calipatria	3,600	1.50	8 hr/day; M-F	19,014	6	15
2. Heber	420	0.70	8 hr/day; M, T, Th	7,677	2	4
3. Holtville	3,400	1.50	8 hr/day; M-F	31,262	8	30
4. Salton City	635	0.20	5 hr/day; T-Th	4,081	3	3
Total	n/a	4.00	n/a	62,034	19	52

*Data indicators presented in table are from the 2016/17 Annual Library Report provided to the State.

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Active Library Members

The information provided below shows the proportion and number of active members at each of the four operating County Library branches for the calendar years (CY) of 2015, 2016, and 2017. "Active members" refer to any library card holders who created an account with the County Library before January 1, 2018 and whose library card does not expire until after January 1, 2018. Data current as of December 31, 2017.

Library card holders can select a preferred branch or can be categorized into a branch of the library by a staff person depending on when and at which branch they obtained/renewed their membership. Some members' preferred branch is undefined which indicates no location was selected as their preferred branch.

Figure 1. Proportion of Active Membership by Branch, CY 2015-2017

Year	Calipatria	Heber	Holtville	Salton City	Headquarters & Undefined
2015	21%	12%	57%	5%	5%
2016	20%	17%	47%	8%	8%
2017	22%	18%	45%	8%	7%

■ Calipatria ■ Heber ■ Holtville ■ Salton City ■ Headquarters & Undefined
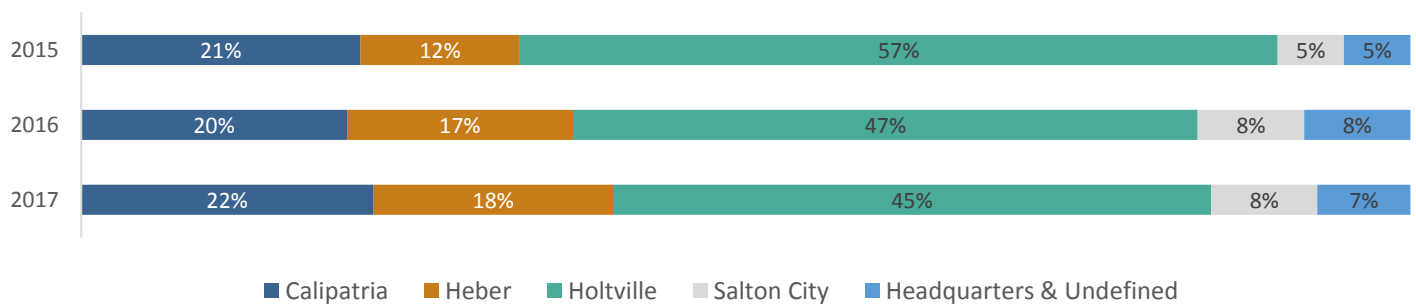
Key Highlights

- Holtville had the largest proportion of active library card holders during the last three calendar years.
- Between 2015 and 2017, the proportion of active library card holders increased across the branches of Calipatria, Heber, Salton City, and Headquarters/undefined branches; whereas, Holtville decreased (57% to 45%).

Table 1. Number of Active Members by Branch, CY 2015-2017

Branch	2015	2016	2017	Trend Line
Calipatria	310	429	631	
Heber	180	353	513	
Holtville	849	984	1,287	
Salton City	73	166	219	
Headquarters & Undefined	72	179	200	
Total	1,484	2,111	2,850	

Key Highlights

- The number of active members has increased across all branches.
- At the end of 2017, Holtville still had the highest number of active library card holders; however, all other branches had at least doubled their active membership numbers between 2015 and 2017.
- Differences in each location's population size may explain the variances observed across branch membership (see page 2, Imperial County's Population & Demographics, for more detail).

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Circulation of library materials by type of material and method of circulation across calendar years 2015, 2016, and 2017 are described below (Circulation data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reported reflect August to December 2015). Library materials consist of printed books and magazines and non-print items like DVDs or CDs. Print materials are cataloged by the age group of the intended audience or identified as a non-English language-specific item, regardless of intended audience age group. "Circulation" is defined as any materials that are moved through the system via check out at the circulation desk, or through online, phone, or in-person renewal (and does not include computer station or other in-library use). Data are aggregated across all four branches and are current as of December 31, 2017.

Figure 2. Circulation of Materials by Material Type, by CY

Legend: 2015, 2016, 2017

Adult: 20%, 15%, 13%
Juvenile: 58%, 67%, 62%
Young Adult: 8%, 5%, 4%
Non-English: 8%, 7%, 8%
Non-Print: 6%, 6%, 12%
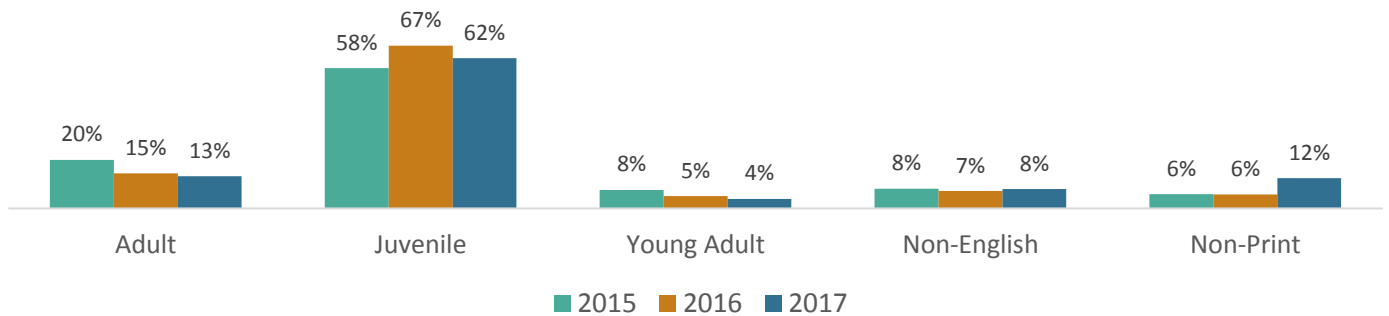
Key Highlights

- Print materials for juvenile patrons (i.e., ages 12 and under) were consistently the most often circulated.
- An increase in circulation of non-print materials occurred in CY 2017 (i.e., 12% in 2017 which is up from 6% just two years prior).

Figure 3. Methods of Circulation, by CY

2015: 63%, 14%, 23%

2016: 43%, 12%, 45%

2017: 61%, 20%, 19%

Legend: Checkout at circulation desk, Online or phone renewal, In-person renewal
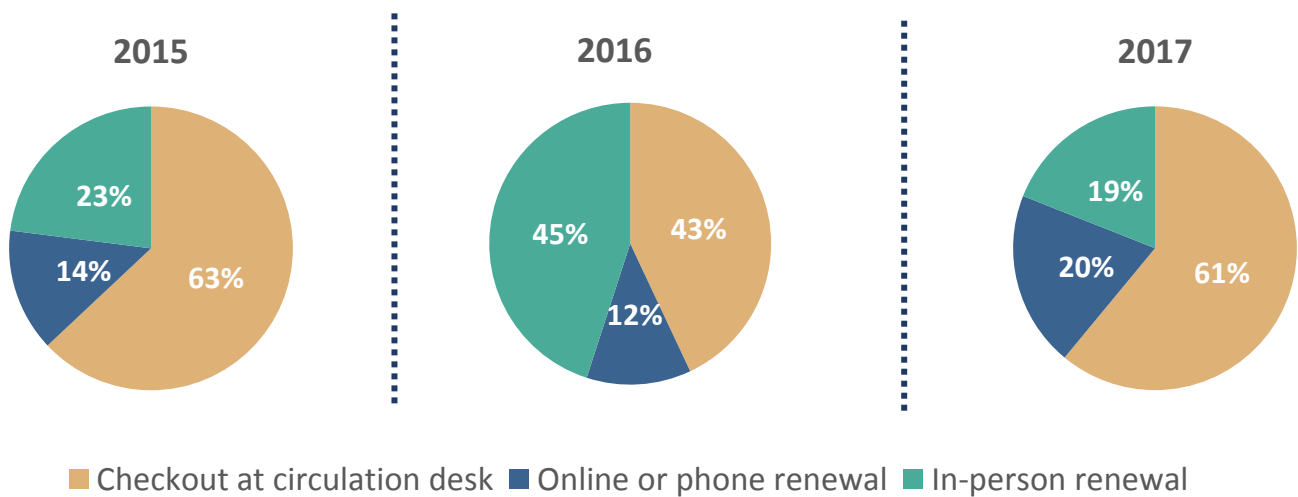
Key Highlights

- CYs 2015 and 2017 circulation methods were similar in that almost two-thirds of materials circulated were checked out by members at the circulation desk (i.e., not renewed in-person, online, or over the phone).

Library Patrons

The information provided below shows the proportion and number of patrons at each of the four operating County Library branches for the calendar years of 2015, 2016, and 2017 (Patronage data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reflect data from August to December 2015 and numbers reported in **Table 2** show an estimated number of patrons for the 2015 year, based on data from August to December 2015). "Library patrons" refers to any person that visits the library (including those who enjoy the facility as a designated cool space of the County); patronage is not limited to persons with library card membership. Patrons are counted when they enter the library, and numbers reflect persons as they walk through the entrance; other tracking processes capture the number of patrons using various services and participating in library programs. Data current as of December 31, 2017.

Figure 4. Proportion of Patronage by Branch, CY 2015-2017

Year	Calipatria	Heber	Holtville	Salton City
2015	38%	11%	47%	4%
2016	37%	18%	40%	6%
2017	36%	18%	42%	6%
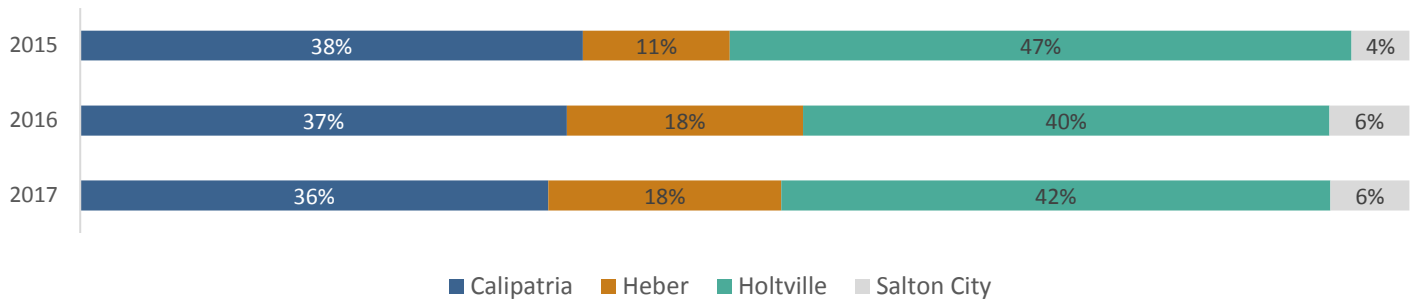
Key Highlights

- Holtville had the largest proportion of patrons visit the library during the last three calendar years.
- The Calipatria branch had the second highest proportion of library patrons, consistently making up over one-third (36% to 38%) of patrons between CYs 2015 and 2017.

Table 2. Number of Patrons by Branch, CY 2015-2017

Branch	2015 (Estimated)	2016	2017	Trend Line
Calipatria	15,360	16,610	13,892	
Heber	4,476	8,063	5,500	
Holtville	18,996	17,967	16,294	
Salton City	1,764	2,736	3,236	
Total	40,596	45,376	38,922	

Key Highlights

- Across all branches, patronage was highest during CY 2016.
- Holtville and Calipatria branches had more than twice as many patrons visit each year compared to other branches; however, they operate five days each week while Heber and Salton City operate three days a week.
- Headquarters and other undefined locations are not reported because library services are not offered to the public in these locations.

Library Services and Programs

Types of library services and programs across calendar years 2015, 2016, and 2017 are described below (Service and program data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reported reflect August to December 2015). Data are aggregated across all four branches and are current as of December 31, 2017. Library patrons could access multiple services and programs; percentages show the proportion of services/programs used or attended by patrons regardless of whether they had used other services/attended another program previously.

Types of services include staff assistance through 1) answering reference questions; 2) help with database searches; 3) help with job seeking; or 4) referring ESL or literacy materials/programs; and services with no staff assistance needed, such as 5) in-library use (e.g., browsing library materials, studying, reading materials, using personal computer devices in the library); and 6) computer use (i.e., using public access computer stations within library). ESL and literacy referrals made up less than 1% of services annually, therefore are not reported in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Types of Services, by CY
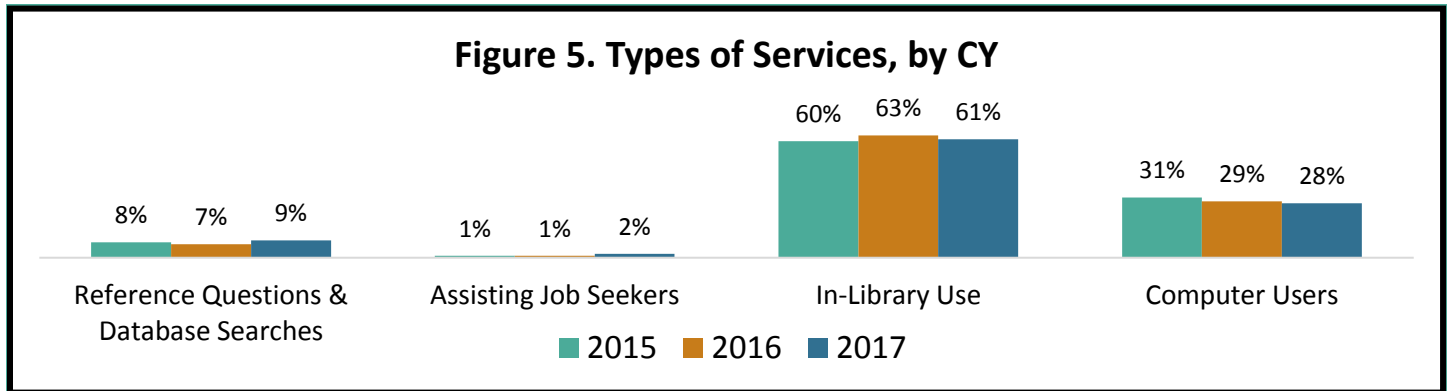
Key Highlights

- The most frequently utilized services among members or patrons were consistently in-library and computer use.
- Reference questions, database searches, and assisting job seekers made up around 10% of services annually.

Figure 6. Library Programs Offered, by Intended Age Group and CY
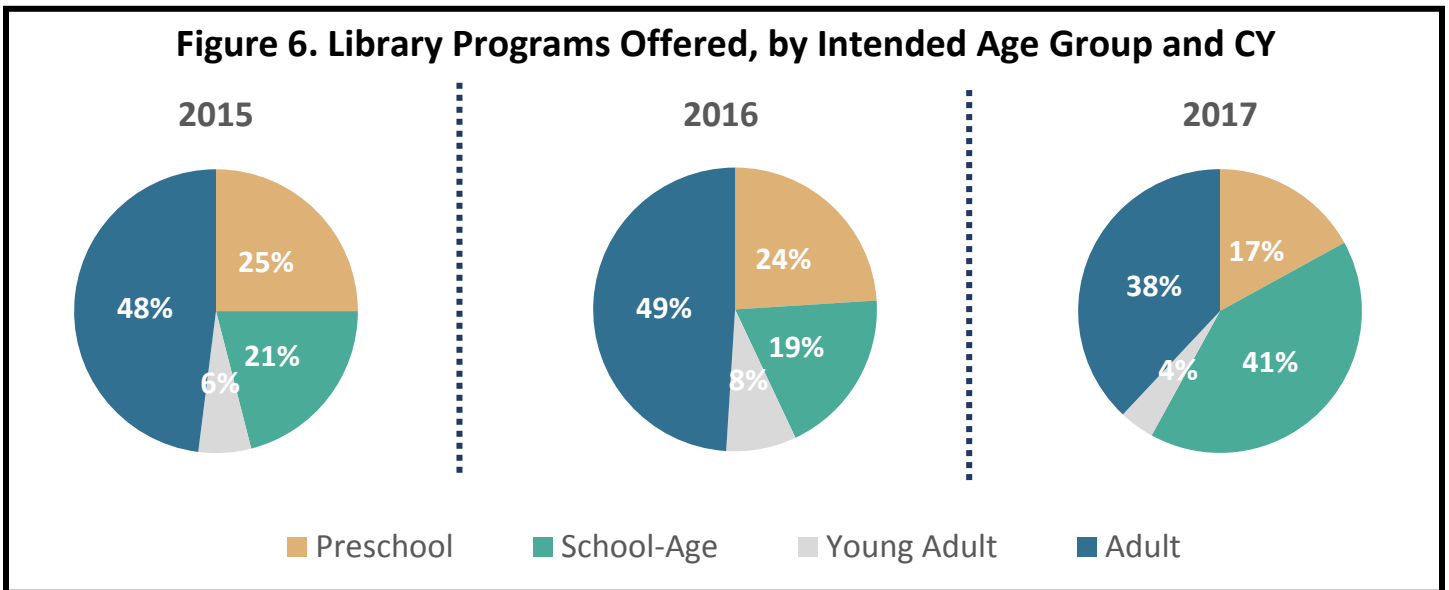
Key Highlights

- CYs 2015 and 2016 focused heavily on offering adult programming, with nearly 50% existing for adults.
- In CY 2017, the library switched the focus of programming to school-aged children, offering two in five (41%) programs to these ages.

Calipatria Library Branch Usage

Membership & Circulation

From calendar year (CY) 2015 to 2017, the number of active members doubled (i.e., 310 in 2015 to 631 in 2017). Circulation data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reported reflect August to December 2015. Data current as of December 31, 2017. Juvenile print materials (i.e., age 12 and younger) were most commonly circulated each CY.

Figure 7. Proportion of Active Membership by Age, CY 2015-2017

	Adult	Young adult (15-17)	Juvenile (6-14)	Preschool (0-5)
2015 (n=310)	67%	6%	25%	2%
2016 (n=429)	66%	4%	28%	2%
2017 (n=631)	58%	4%	33%	5%
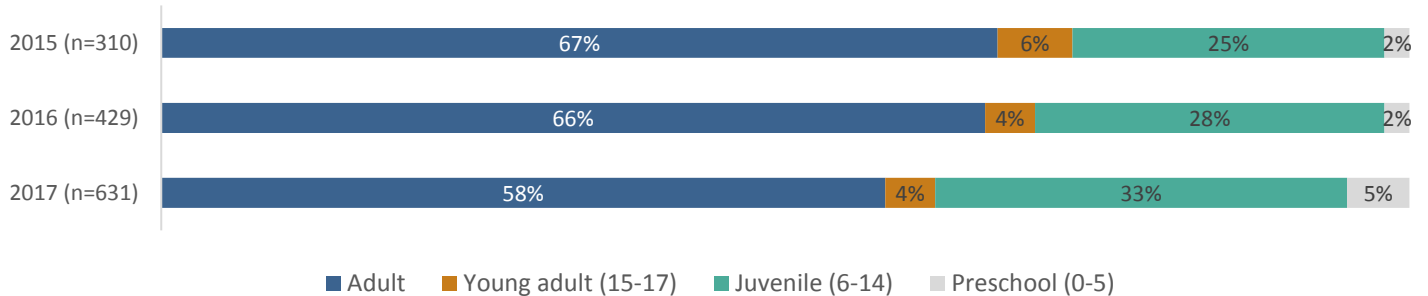
Figure 8. Circulation of Materials by Material Type, by CY

Material Type	2015	2016	2017
Adult	29%	22%	13%
Juvenile	44%	57%	57%
Young Adult	15%	8%	7%
Non-English	1%	2%	2%
Non-Print	10%	11%	21%

Patrons & Computer Users

The number of patrons who visited the Calipatria library branch decreased slightly from 2016 to 2017. Data were not available for all of CY 2015, thus only the last two CYs are reported.

A total of 16,610 patrons visited in 2016.

A total of 13,892 patrons visited in 2017.

On average, the months of January, May, and October saw the highest number of patrons.

On average, the months of February, August, and December saw the lowest number of patrons.

In 2016, there were 6,665 people who used library computer stations.

In 2017, there were 5,407 people who used library computer stations.

On average, the months of June, July, and August saw the highest number of computer users.

On average, the months of April, September, and November saw the lowest number of computer users.

Services & Programs

Figure 9 shows the types of services offered at the Calipatria branch; services such as ESL and literacy referrals and assisting job seekers made up less than 1% of services annually and therefore are not reported.

Figure 9. Types of Services, by CY

Reference Questions & Database Searches: 6% (2015), 5% (2016), 5% (2017)
In-Library Use: 50% (2015), 63% (2016), 60% (2017)
Computer Users: 43% (2015), 32% (2016), 35% (2017)

■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017

Figure 10. Library Programs Offered, by Intended Age Group and CY

2015
32% Adult, 27% Preschool, 27% School-Age, 14% Young Adult

2016
27% Adult, 27% Preschool, 16% Young Adult, 30% School-Age

2017
12% Young Adult, 33% Preschool, 56% School-Age

■ Preschool ■ School-Age ■ Young Adult ■ Adult

Each month of 2016, an average of:

- **15 people attended preschool programs**
- **74 people attended school-aged programs**
- **13 people attended young adult programs**
- **21 people attended adult programs**

Each month of 2017, an average of:

- **29 people attended preschool programs**
- **46 people attended school-aged programs**
- **5 people attended young adult programs**
- **12 people attended adult programs**

Highest & Lowest Hours of Usage

The Calipatria branch currently operates an average of 8 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Across calendar years 2016 and 2017, the highest proportion of patrons and computer users (combined) visited between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m., when programming is generally offered. The lowest hours of usage was observed between 5 and 7 p.m.

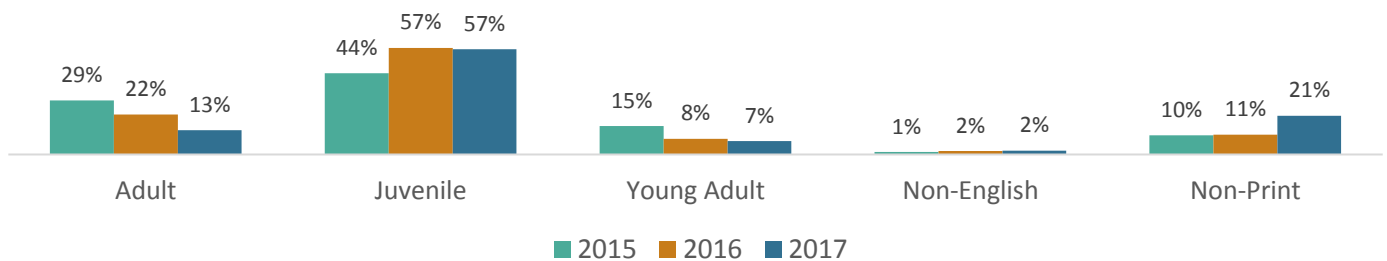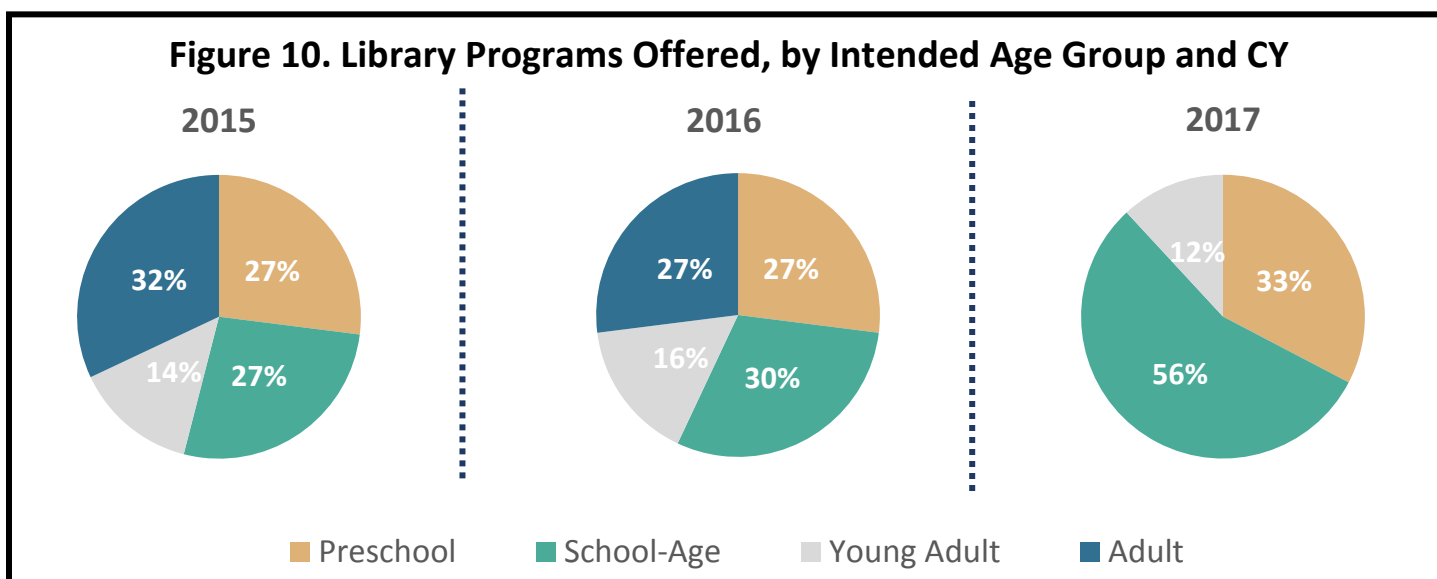| Hours of Operation	2016		2017	
	Patrons	**Computer Users**	**Patrons**	**Computer Users**
9 a.m. to 11 a.m.	19%	18%	17%	18%
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	13%	16%	12%	15%
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	21%	18%	26%	21%
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.	37%	34%	35%	35%
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.	10%	14%	10%	11%

Heber Library Branch Usage

Membership & Circulation

From calendar year (CY) 2015 to 2017, the number of active members nearly tripled (i.e., 176 in 2015 to 509 in 2017). Circulation data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reported reflect August to December 2015. Data current as of December 31, 2017. Juvenile print materials (i.e., age 12 and younger) were most commonly circulated each CY.

Figure 11. Proportion of Active Membership by Age, CY 2015-2017

Year	Adult	Young adult (15-17)	Juvenile (6-14)	Preschool (0-5)
2015 (n=176)	57%	5%	3%	35%
2016 (n=349)	59%	4%	4%	32%
2017 (n=509)	54%	4%	8%	34%

Legend: ■ Adult ■ Young adult (15-17) ■ Juvenile (6-14) ■ Preschool (0-5)
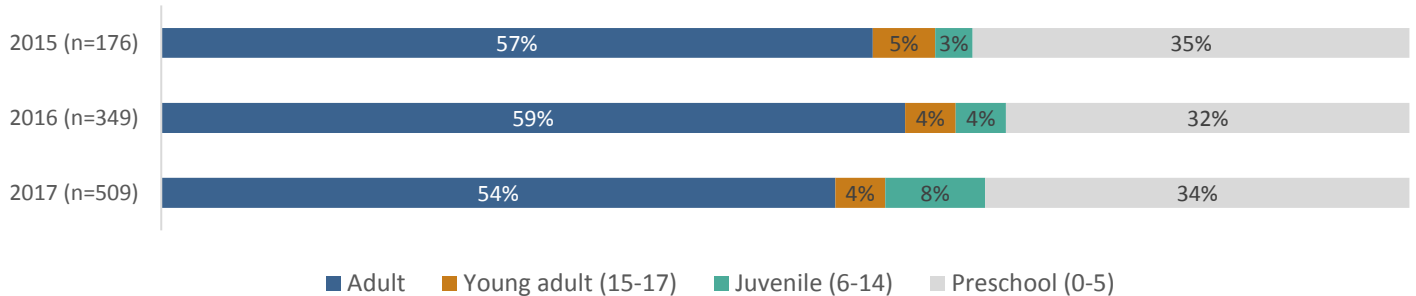
Figure 12. Circulation of Materials by Material Type, by CY

Material Type	2015	2016	2017
Adult	29%	22%	13%
Juvenile	44%	57%	57%
Young Adult	15%	8%	7%
Non-English	1%	2%	2%
Non-Print	10%	11%	21%

Legend: ■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017

Patrons & Computer Users

The number of patrons who visited the Heber library branch decreased slightly from 2016 to 2017. Data were not available for all of CY 2015, thus only the last two CYs are reported.

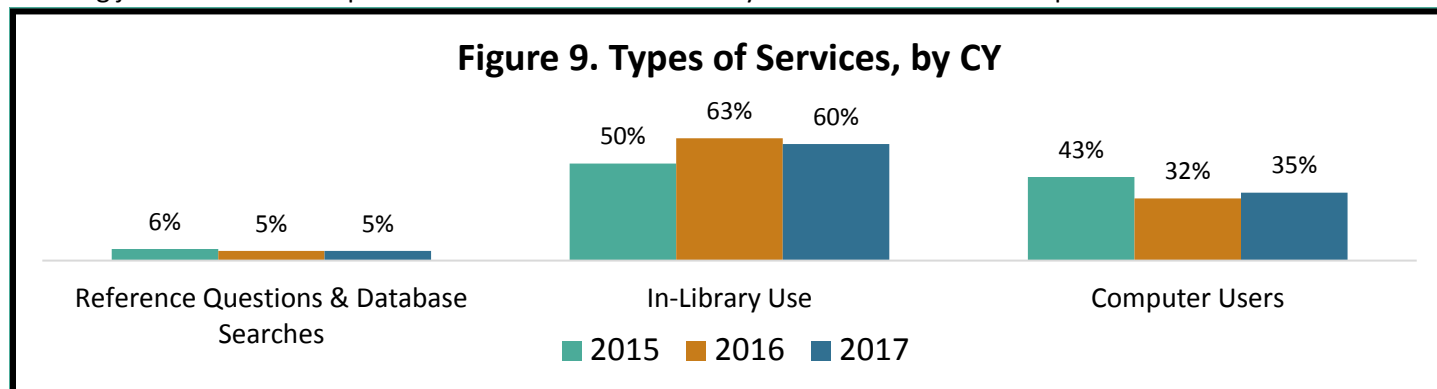|		
A total of 8,063 patrons visited in 2016. A total of 5,500 patrons visited in 2017.	On average, the months of April, June, and October saw the highest number of patrons.	On average, the months of July, August, and September saw the lowest number of patrons.
In 2016, there were 1,440 people who used library computer stations. In 2017, there were 660 people who used library computer stations.	On average, the months of March, April, and October saw the highest number of computer users.	On average, the months of August, November, and December saw the lowest number of computer users.

Services & Programs

Figure 13. Types of Services, by CY

	2015	2016	2017
Reference Questions & Database Searches	7%	5%	6%
Assisting Job Seekers	1%	0%	0%
ESL and Literacy Referrals	2%	0%	3%
In-Library Use	78%	74%	74%
Computer Users	12%	21%	17%

Figure 14. Library Programs Offered, by Intended Age Group and CY

2015

Preschool 25%, Young Adult 17%, School-Age 58%

2016

Preschool 30%, School-Age 28%, Young Adult 10%, Adult 32%

2017

Preschool 18%, Adult 17%, School-Age 65%

Legend: ■ Preschool ■ School-Age ■ Young Adult ■ Adult

Each month of 2016, an average of:

- 24 people attended preschool programs
- 87 people attended school-aged programs
- 3 people attended young adult programs
- 8 people attended adult programs

Each month of 2017, an average of:

- 35 people attended preschool programs
- 42 people attended school-aged programs
- 12 people attended adult programs

Highest & Lowest Hours of Usage

The Heber branch currently operates an average of 8 hours per day, three days per week. Across calendar years 2016 and 2017, the highest proportion of patrons and computer users (combined) visited between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m., when programming is generally offered. The lowest proportion of patrons and computer users combined was observed between 1 and 3 p.m. in 2016 and 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. in 2017.

Hours of Operation	2016		2017	
	Patrons	Computer Users	Patrons	Computer Users
9 a.m. to 11 a.m.	17%	18%	20%	20%
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	12%	19%	14%	10%
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	11%	11%	11%	24%
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.	30%	33%	25%	32%
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.	30%	19%	30%	14%

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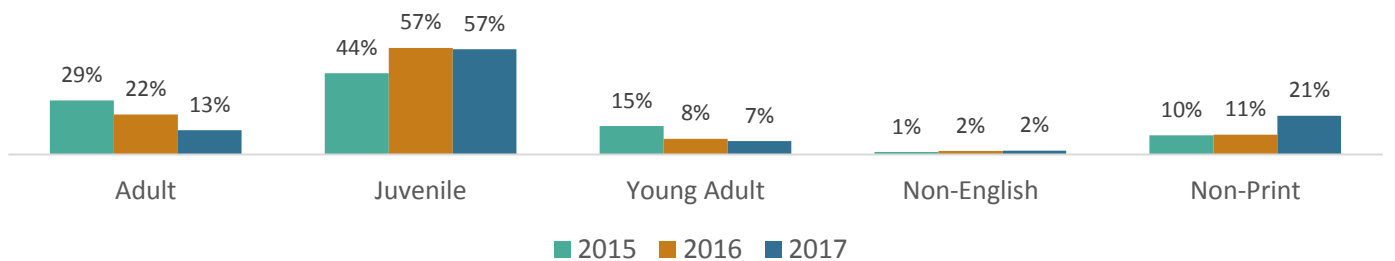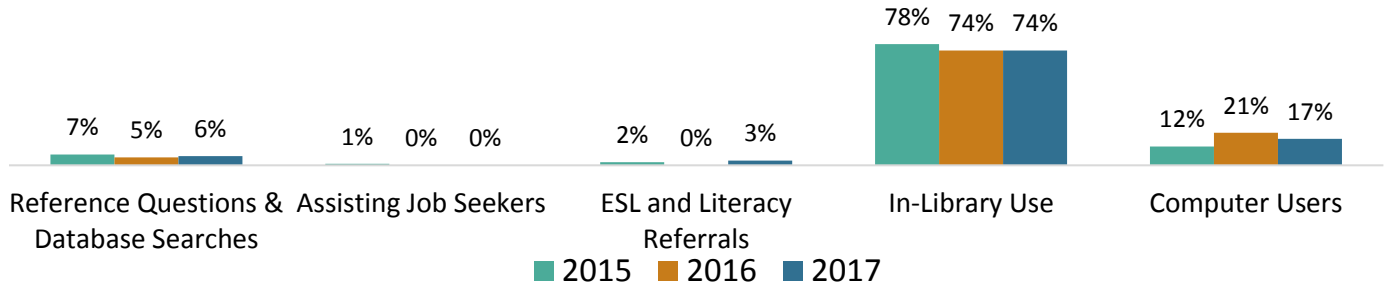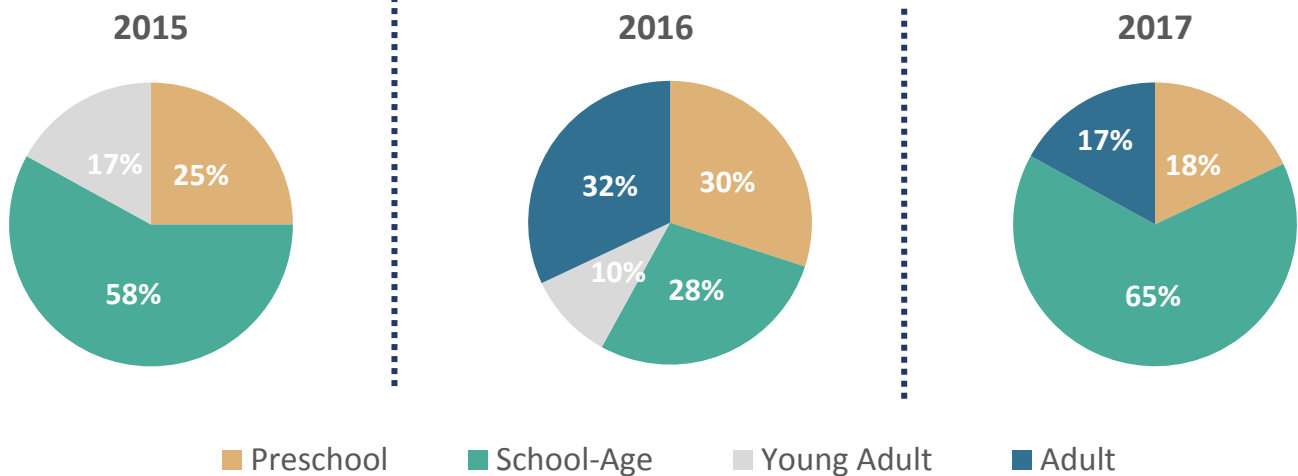Research & Consulting
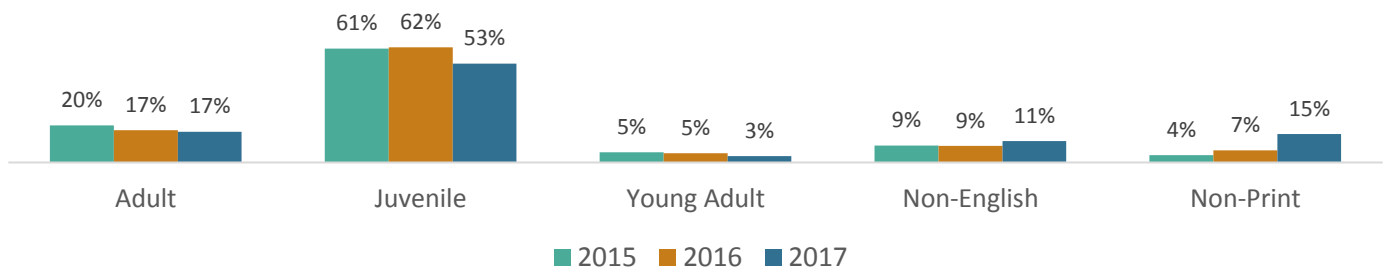
Holtville Library Branch Usage

Membership & Circulation

From calendar year (CY) 2015 to 2017, the number of active members increased (i.e., 845 in 2015 to 1,276 in 2017). Circulation data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reported reflect August to December 2015. Data current as of December 31, 2017. Juvenile print materials (i.e., age 12 and younger) were most commonly circulated each CY.

Figure 15. Proportion of Active Membership by Age, CY 2015-2017

Year	Adult	Young adult (15-17)	Juvenile (6-14)	Preschool (0-5)
2015 (n=845)	68%	3%	5%	24%
2016 (n=979)	68%	3%	5%	24%
2017 (n=1,276)	66%	3%	7%	25%
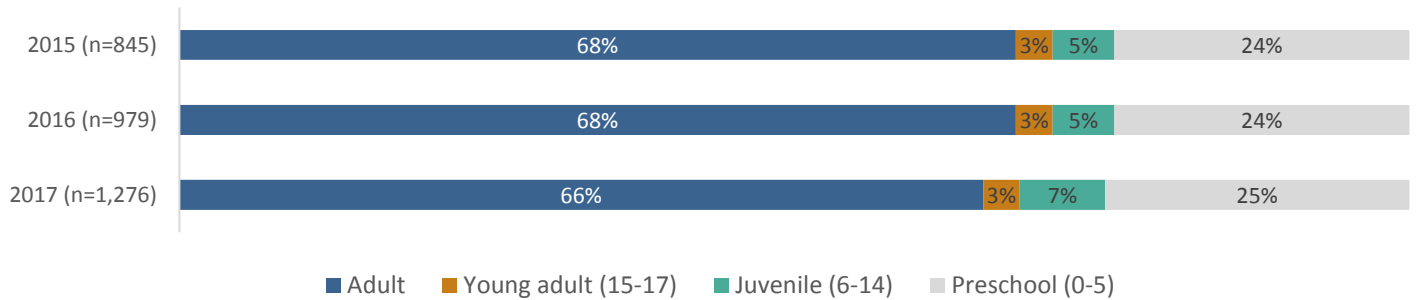
Figure 16. Circulation of Materials by Material Type, by CY

Material	2015	2016	2017
Adult	20%	17%	17%
Juvenile	61%	62%	53%
Young Adult	5%	5%	3%
Non-English	9%	9%	11%
Non-Print	4%	7%	15%

Patrons & Computer Users

The number of patrons who visited the Holtville library branch decreased slightly from 2016 to 2017. Data were not available for all of CY 2015, thus only the last two CYs are reported.

A total of 17,967 patrons visited in 2016.

A total of 16,294 patrons visited in 2017.

On average, the months of March, June, and October saw the highest number of patrons.

On average, the months of April, May, and August saw the lowest number of patrons.
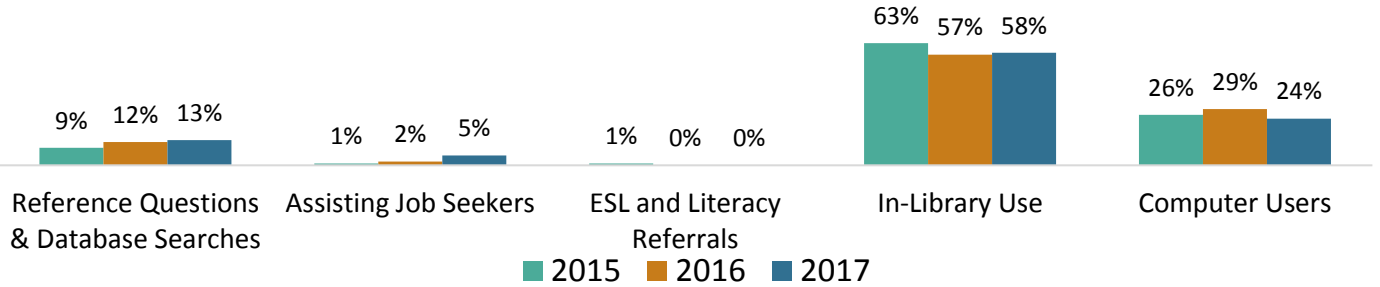
In 2016, there were 5,560 people who used library computer stations.

In 2017, there were 3,691 people who used library computer stations.

On average, the months of January, March, and September saw the highest number of computer users.
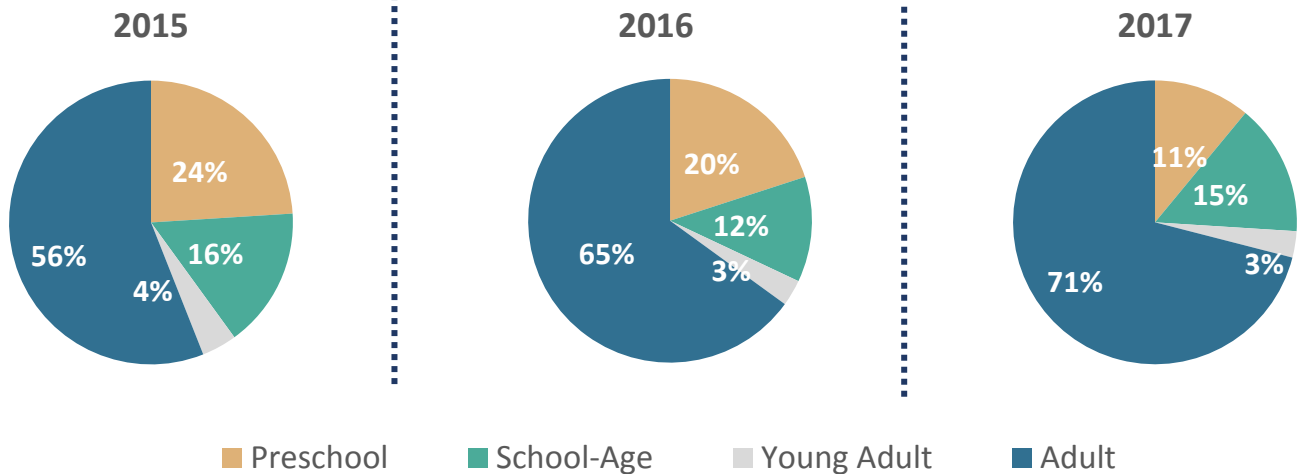
On average, the months of July, August, and December saw the lowest number of computer users.

Services & Programs

Figure 17. Types of Services, by CY

	2015	2016	2017
Reference Questions & Database Searches	9%	12%	13%
Assisting Job Seekers	1%	2%	5%
ESL and Literacy Referrals	1%	0%	0%
In-Library Use	63%	57%	58%
Computer Users	26%	29%	24%

Figure 18. Library Programs Offered, by Intended Age Group and CY

2015

24% Preschool, 16% School-Age, 4% Young Adult, 56% Adult

2016

20% Preschool, 12% School-Age, 3% Young Adult, 65% Adult

2017

11% Preschool, 15% School-Age, 3% Young Adult, 71% Adult

Legend: Preschool | School-Age | Young Adult | Adult

Each month of 2016, an average of:

- 28 people attended preschool programs
- 50 people attended school-aged programs
- 4 people attended young adult programs
- 73 people attended adult programs

Each month of 2017, an average of:

- 23 people attended preschool programs
- 31 people attended school-aged programs
- 3 people attended young adult programs
- 112 people attended adult programs

Highest & Lowest Hours of Usage

The Holtville branch currently operates an average of 8 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Across calendar years 2016 and 2017, the highest proportion of patrons and computer users (combined) visited between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m., when programming is generally offered. The lowest hours of usage was observed between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Hours of Operation	2016		2017	
	Patrons	Computer Users	Patrons	Computer Users
9 a.m. to 11 a.m.	19%	20%	19%	21%
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	8%	12%	10%	14%
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	26%	28%	27%	27%
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.	32%	28%	31%	28%
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.	15%	12%	13%	10%

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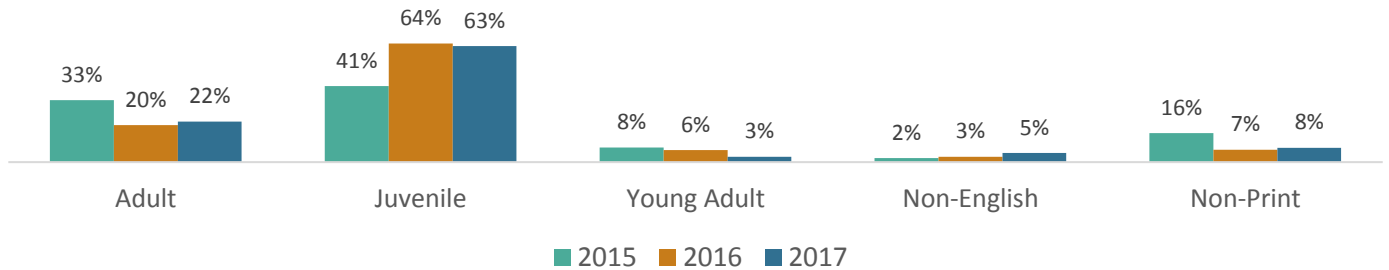
Salton City Library Branch Usage

Membership & Circulation

From calendar year (CY) 2015 to 2017, the number of active members more than doubled (i.e., 71 in 2015 to 217 in 2017). Circulation data are limited within CY 2015; thus, percentages reported reflect August to December 2015. Data current as of December 31, 2017. Juvenile print materials (i.e., age 12 and younger) were most commonly circulated each CY.

Figure 19. Proportion of Active Membership by Age, CY 2015-2017

	Adult	Young adult (15-17)	Juvenile (6-14)	Preschool (0-5)
2015 (n=71)	93%	3%		4%
2016 (n=164)	90%	2%	1%	7%
2017 (n=217)	89%	2%	1%	8%
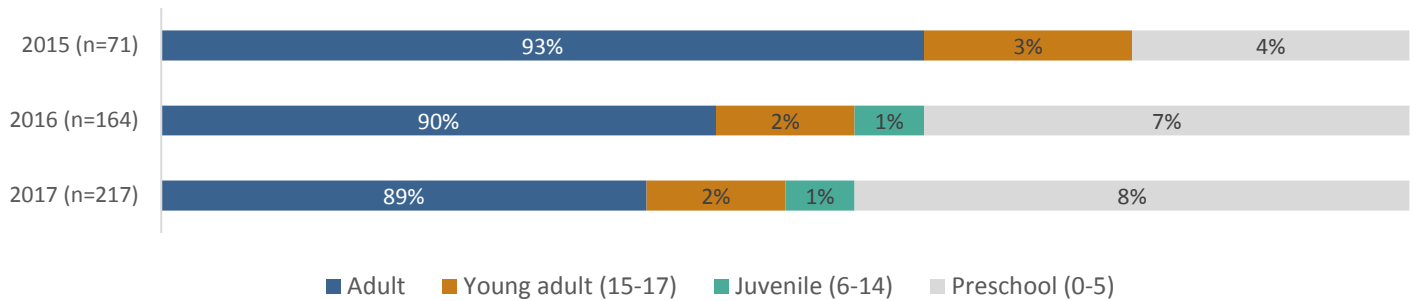
Figure 20. Circulation of Materials by Material Type, by CY

	Adult	Juvenile	Young Adult	Non-English	Non-Print
2015	33%	41%	8%	2%	16%
2016	20%	64%	6%	3%	7%
2017	22%	63%	3%	5%	8%

Patrons & Computer Users

The number of patrons who visited the Salton City library branch slightly increased from 2016 to 2017. Data were not available for all of CY 2015, thus only the last two CYs are reported.

A total of 2,736 patrons visited in 2016.

A total of 3,236 patrons visited in 2017.

On average, the months of February, October, and November saw the highest number of patrons.

On average, the months of July, September, and December saw the lowest number of patrons.

In 2016, there were 702 people who used library computer stations.

In 2017, there were 1,068 people who used library computer stations.
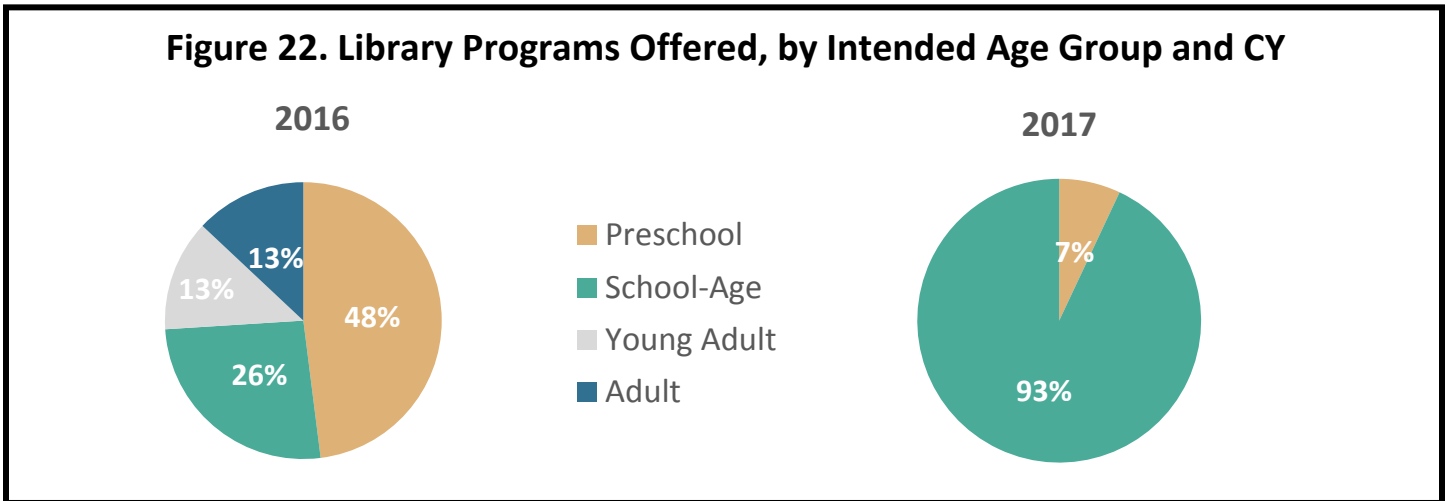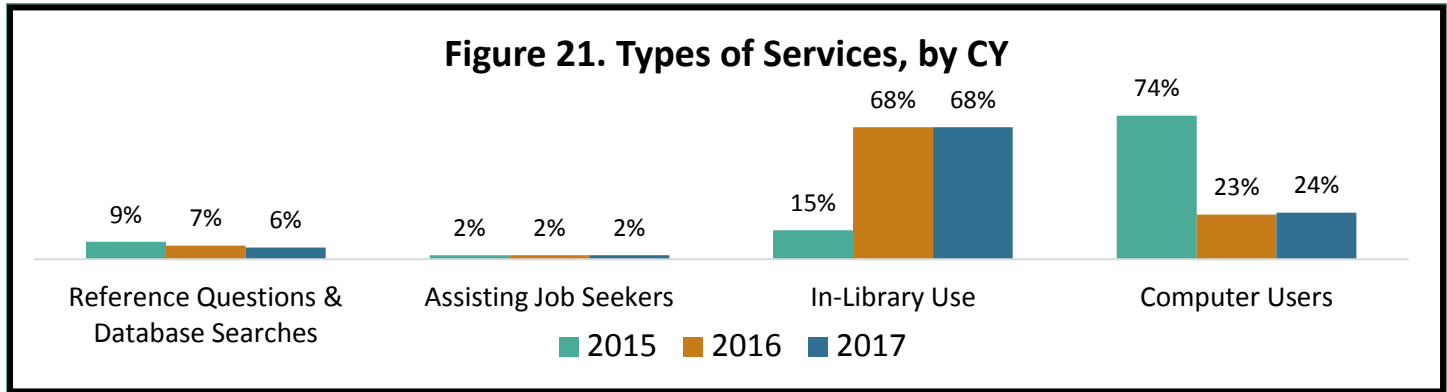
On average, the months of May, October, and November saw the highest number of computer users.

On average, the months of February, April, and July saw the lowest number of computer users.

Services & Programs

Figure 21 shows the types of services offered at the Salton City branch; services such as ESL and literacy referrals made up less than 1% of services annually and therefore are not reported.

Figure 21. Types of Services, by CY

	2015	2016	2017
Reference Questions & Database Searches	9%	7%	6%
Assisting Job Seekers	2%	2%	2%
In-Library Use	15%	68%	68%
Computer Users	74%	23%	24%

Figure 22. Library Programs Offered, by Intended Age Group and CY

2016
- Preschool 48%
- School-Age 26%
- Young Adult 13%
- Adult 13%

2017
- Preschool 7%
- School-Age 93%

Each month of 2016, an average of:
- 17 people attended preschool programs
- 16 people attended school-aged programs
- 9 people attended young adult programs
- 2 people attended adult programs

Each month of 2017, an average of:
- 4 people attended preschool programs
- 25 people attended school-aged programs

Highest & Lowest Hours of Usage

The Salton City branch currently operates an average of 5 hours per day, Tuesday through Thursday. Across calendar years 2016 and 2017, Salton City had the highest proportion of patrons and computer users (combined) between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m., when programming is generally offered. The lowest proportion of patrons and computer users combined was observed between 5 and 7 p.m. in 2016 and 1 and 3 p.m. in 2017.

Hours of Operation	2016		2017	
	Patrons	**Computer Users**	**Patrons**	**Computer Users**
9 a.m. to 11 a.m.	20%	26%	23%	23%
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	13%	18%	16%	18%
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	16%	24%	15%	16%
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.	36%	26%	30%	25%
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.	15%	6%	16%	18%