



ARMY LIBRARY PROGRAM SERVICE REPORT

MILITARY LIBRARIES TRAINING WORKSHOP 2021

It most certainly has not been business as usual for Army libraries since the last Military Libraries Training Workshop (MLTW) in 2019. As with other libraries in and out of government, COVID-19 has had an enduring impact on Army library operations and personnel since March 2020. However, despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Army libraries have stepped up to meet the needs of their communities and buckled down to support their missions through it all.

While many Army libraries closed their doors temporarily in 2020 due to COVID-19, they remained open for business the entire time. This is in large part due to the resilience, determination, and innovations of library personnel. Dedicated library staff across the Army sprang into action shifting their services to virtual environments, creating no-contact delivery services for physical materials, and supporting their customers without missing a beat. They worked to increase access to digital materials and found creative ways to deliver their programming and other services. As of this report, most Army libraries have reopened their facilities.

Although Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Army Library Trends & Statistics (ALTS) data was still being gathered at the time of writing this report, comparing FY19 and FY20 ALTS data shows clear signs of COVID's impact on library operations. Walk-in attendance dropped 33 percent in FY20. At the same time, virtual attendance jumped from 2.7 million to over 20 million. And despite many libraries being closed for walk-in checkouts, physical material lending actually increased in FY20. This is primarily due to an increased demand for books and other materials during the lockdown and staff establishing no-contact delivery methods such as curbside, brown bag drop-off, and mail-to-home services to ensure people still had access to library materials.

The FY20 data also indicated an obvious pivot from in-person to virtual reference support. The number of in-person reference questions answered decreased 47 percent in FY20. At the same time, virtual reference questions answered increased exponentially from 214,000 in FY19 to over 933,000 in FY20. As expected, e-resources usage increased while in-person attendance at programs dropped. As staff shifted programming online, they managed to deliver almost 2,000 virtual events accumulating over 250,000 views. The vast majority of FY20 virtual events occurred between April and September 2020.

In 2021, as part of the Army People Strategy, civilian career fields were consolidated to align similar professions for training and career management purposes. Librarians, library technicians, and technical information specialists were realigned to the Education & Information Sciences Career Field. Library personnel are now grouped with archivists, historians, museum curators, educators, and others working to support training and education across the Army.

The Army Library Program filled some key positions over the past few years. Gloria Miller is the very first command librarian for the Army Futures Command (AFC). Her position was established in 2020 to support library services across the new four-star command. Kimberly Adams is now the command librarian for the Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). Amber Collins is now the command librarian for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Glenda Lammers, who came on board just before COVID-19 hit, is now Chief of the Army's Morale, Welfare, & Recreation (MWR) Library Program.

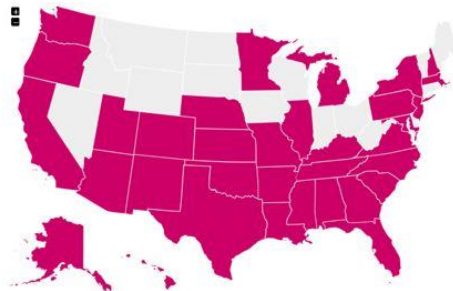
In May 2021, the Library of Congress' Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK) announced that Army won three of its four annual federal library awards. Joint Base Lewis-McChord Library System in Washington State won 2020 Large Federal Library of the Year, Barr Memorial Library at Fort Knox, Kentucky won 2020 Small Federal Library of the Year. Sharon Pemberton from the Cyber Research Center Library at Fort Gordon, Georgia won the 2020 Federal Library Technician of the Year. In June 2020, FEDLINK announced that Gabi Davis from the Rheinland Pfalz Libraries in Germany won 2019 Federal Library Technician of the Year.

There are 155 Army libraries and library program offices in 31 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Japan, South Korea, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. There are approximately 735 library personnel. Army libraries serve a population of over 1.7 million customers, including over a million service members, 330,000 civilian personnel, family members, contractors, retirees, and the public.

Army Libraries / Library Program Offices

CONUS

Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, PLUS District of Columbia & Puerto Rico



OCONUS

Europe: Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands

Pacific: Japan, South Korea



As we move into the future, I can't wait to see how Army librarians and library staff tackle new challenges and evolve their services and programs. Libraries are still standing. Some are physical, some are virtual, most are a bit of both. But the services they provide remain central and essential to the military communities they support.

Michael McNulty
Michael J. McNulty
Librarian of the Army