



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Southern Maryland
Regional Library Association, Inc.
ADVANCING LIBRARY EXCELLENCE

Fiscal Year **HIGHLIGHTS**

Waived more than **\$1 million** in customer fines
to meet the Building Lifelong Learners Act

Managed the transition
to **virtual staff training**

Provided **expanded tuition
reimbursement**
for public library workers

Administered nearly **\$61,000**
in federal relief funding

Prepared for implementation of
radio frequency identification
of all library materials

Letter from the CEO

Southern Maryland's public libraries' response to the unprecedented pressures of the pandemic demonstrates how important they are to the community. Throughout the past year and beyond, our libraries served their communities despite closures and service disruptions that rocked many institutions. Southern Marylanders could still rely on their public libraries. It is a testament to the resiliency and dedication of the region's library staff.

The Southern Maryland Regional Library Association is proud of its partnership with Calvert Library, Charles County Public Library, and St. Mary's County Library, now more than ever. We are also proud of our work to position the libraries for greater success as we look forward to a post-pandemic world.

New Leadership

I joined SMRLA as its new CEO in October 2020 and found an organization that had adapted quickly and decisively to a new landscape. I experienced SMRLA's essential role while previously working for Charles County Public Library in various capacities. My return to the region as SMRLA's CEO further deepened my appreciation for the part we play in the Southern Maryland community.

My goal for the first year has been to closely study SMRLA's operations and connect with regional library staff, elected officials and other community leaders. With a new strategic plan in place, I kept our organization focused on our vision to Advance Library Excellence. My predecessor established SMRLA as an organization dedicated to outstanding customer service and innovating and collaborating with our partners. I especially thank interim CEO and Head of Information and Access Services Susan Grant for her steady leadership as interim director and the support of Office Manager & HR Generalist Debra Phetteplace during the transition period.

Operational Transition

In fiscal year 2021 we restarted regular operations following the pandemic shutdown. Our staff returned to the office under a new normal as we safely ramped up our operations with modified schedules and new procedures for the safe handling and distribution of library materials. We also moved to online methods for staff training with regional access to Niche Academy tutorial videos and hybrid training using platforms like Zoom and Slack.

New federal COVID-19 economic relief helped meet other public library priorities. SMRLA administered nearly \$61,000 in relief funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act, most of which was spent in fiscal year 2021. The funds went to personal protective equipment staff and customers; hotspots and internet service; online and outdoor programming equipment and software; and signage.

Additionally, we joined Maryland's other regional libraries to secure grant funding through the federal American Rescue Plan Act that provided \$18,000 for an in-depth study of St. Mary's County Library facilities.



SMRLA CEO
Ashley Teagle

While library branches carefully began to reopen, we refocused our promotional efforts to highlight digital services. A two-month regional campaign publicizing audiobooks led to a 25% increase in downloads compared to the same period of the previous year. To encourage digital connectivity to library services, we conducted outreach promoting each library system's mobile apps. These services helped patrons stay connected to their public libraries.

Sustaining Momentum

Though the pandemic altered many of our operations, we continued our efforts to improve services and advance our strategic goals. Maryland's Building Lifelong Learners Act took effect in March, and one major result was to make all public library accounts for minors in the state fine-free by July 1, 2021. To help comply with the law, SMRLA created a new patron code in the integrated library system and developed an under-18 card enabling minors to borrow fine-

free from all three public library systems. Across the region, more than 29,000 patrons avoided an estimated \$857,000 in fines and bills.

In support of regional library staff, we updated our Professional Development Reimbursement Policy to extend beyond reimbursement for master's in library science studies. The new policy covers additional educational opportunities. It applies to any degree program, certification or college coursework that supports the public library's organizational goals, such as staff development, succession planning, or the staff member's professional library goals. Each fiscal year SMRLA provides up to \$10,000 per county for professional development reimbursement.

For SMRLA staff, we implemented a new system allowing them to access their pay stubs electronically. We also moved to bolster our research and data gathering capabilities by creating the Digital Resources Analyst position. Approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2021, the position was filled in August 2021.

Finally, we began planning the deployment of radio frequency identification, or RFID, to the region's public library materials. The project will bring this technology to Calvert Library and St. Mary's County Library; Charles County Public Library has already adopted the system but received additional equipment to supplement their existing hardware. We dedicated more than \$220,000 to RFID in the fiscal year 2021 budget. The effort, set to be completed in fall 2021, will speed up customer transactions, make materials handling more efficient and simplify library inventory control.

Advancing Library Excellence

This is just a snapshot of our progress in fiscal year 2021. There is so much more our staff does each day to support Southern Maryland's public libraries and their patrons. Our commitment to SMRLA's vision, and to our community, remains strong. It is a privilege to lead this organization forward as we pursue our mission to advance library excellence.

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

REVENUES

State of Maryland Appropriations	\$ 3,130,754
Grants	\$ 28,655
Delivery	
College of Southern Maryland	\$ 750
St. Mary's College	\$ 750
Utilities – St. Mary's	\$ 27,618
Interest	\$ 4,173
Total Revenues	\$ 3,192,710

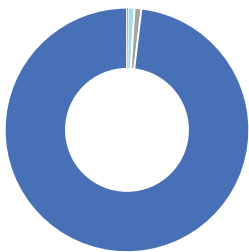
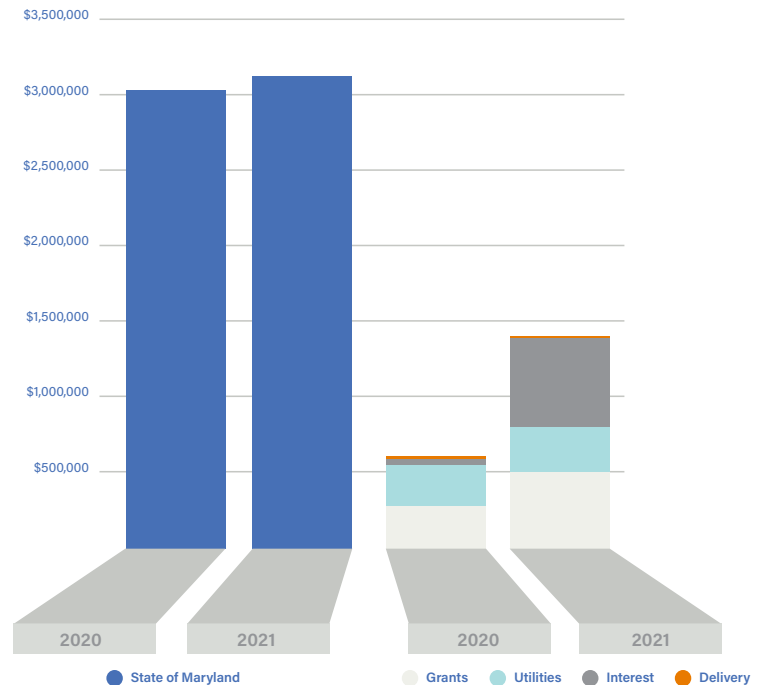
EXPENDITURES

Administrative Expenses	\$ 1,337,633
Customer Support	\$ 396,663
Customer Services	\$ 1,340,578
Total Expenditures	\$3,074,874

EXCESS of REVENUES over EXPENDITURES

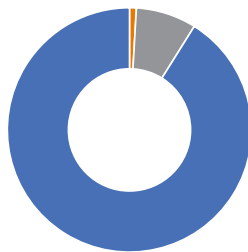
\$ 117,836

REVENUES



REVENUE SOURCES

- State Revenues
- Operating & Capital Grants & Contributions
- Charges for Services
- Earnings on Investments



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

- Library Services
- Operations & Maintenance
- Grant Projects

EXPENDITURES



2021 Year in Review



3,791,304
online resource
page views



20,952 items
borrowed and loaned



54,429
items
cataloged and
processed

2,918 hours of
training completed
by **8,761**
participants



64,916
digital records
added



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Southern Maryland
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37600 New Market Road Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
301-884-0436 www.smrla.org