



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield County  
Program Title: Targeted Outreach: A Data-Informed Library Strategy  
Program Category: Customer Service & Community Outreach Category

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# Targeted Outreach: A Data-Informed Library Strategy

2025 Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award  
Submission: Customer Service & Community Outreach Category

## Executive Summary

Chesterfield Public Library used innovative data sources to identify and prioritize delivery of public services to a community not previously reached through traditional outreach efforts.

The library's Analytics team worked with county technology and planning departments to leverage U.S. Census and satellite mapping data alongside internal library data. The goal was to better understand communities with low library engagement and tailor outreach accordingly. The data revealed significant transportation and language barriers that prevented access to library services.

Based on these findings, the library designed and launched a tailored outreach program featuring a regular pop-up library within the community, bilingual story times, and other services and events delivered directly within the community. This initiative resulted in a 47% increase in library card signups and a 41% increase in checkouts—indicators that the library successfully engaged a previously disconnected population. This data-driven, community-centered approach offers a replicable model to extend the reach of public services.

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## The Challenge

Chesterfield County has the fourth largest population in the state and spans 424 square miles, including rural, suburban, and exurban communities. Chesterfield Public Library's 10 locations serve neighborhoods with varying demographics, economic conditions, primary languages and transportation access.

This geographic and population diversity presents challenges in delivering in demand public services. Many residents in areas with low library cardholder rates struggle to reach library locations and are unaware of the wide range of public services that the library offers to them. At the same time, library staff must identify service gaps and which communities most need outreach efforts.

The library provides many useful services beyond free books, such as job search assistance, early literacy support, Wi-Fi hot spots and harm reduction tools. Residents typically must visit a library building to access these resources. What if, instead, the library brings its services to the community? First, the library needed to identify the communities who need them most.

## The Criteria

Chesterfield Public Library's outreach team adopted an innovative, proactive approach to identify priority communities that lack access to the library services available to them and partnered with the YMCA to learn more about their needs and jointly deliver community programs that are typically available at library locations.

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## **Innovation**

To identify high-priority populations within Chesterfield, the Analytics teams combined publicly available U.S. Census data and ArcGIS satellite maps with internal library data. They identified communities with low library cardholder rates and low access to computers, which signal people who are not benefitting from library services.

Based on the data, library staff selected the Greenleigh Mobile Home Community to target outreach efforts and deliver library services. Greenleigh has 513 homes where 90% of residents speak primarily Spanish. The community's property manager reported that most of the residents are families with multiple children who are school age or younger. Through conversations with the local YMCA, it became clear that residents have limited transportation on weekdays, making it difficult for them to get to the library and limited awareness of the library services available to them. Greenleigh is sandwiched between an interstate and a busy highway, 3.7 miles from the nearest library location, isolated by a lack of transportation and substantial language barriers.

## **Partnership**

Members of the library's Analytics team partnered with Chesterfield County's Information Systems Technology and Planning departments to leverage the U.S. Census data and satellite maps and identify where library outreach could have the greatest impact. This effort aligned with the county's broader push for data-driven decision-making.

Next, the library worked with the local YMCA to understand the challenges that this community faces, such as limited transportation on weekdays and low awareness of the library and its services. The library also collaborated with the YMCA to provide outreach activities within

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the community, including bilingual story time sessions, resource fairs, seasonal events and activities and community meetings. The YMCA invited the library to participate in its afterschool programs as well. These touchpoints allowed the library to become a familiar and trusted presence in the Greenleigh community.

### **A Model for Other Localities**

This replicable approach used publicly available data that enables any library or county system to cost-effectively extend library services to difficult to reach communities, significantly enhancing community engagement and inclusion. Through this data-driven, community-centric targeted outreach program, Chesterfield Public Library has addressed both physical access barriers and cultural considerations to deliver library services.



*The pop-up library in a trailer at the Greenleigh Mobile Home Community.*

## **The Implementation**

Using the data, library staff developed an outreach campaign, starting by forging a relationship with Greenleigh's management and residents to demonstrate the value of the library. Seeking to connect residents with a variety of useful, effective library services to help develop early literacy, staff brought 48 outreach events to Greenleigh in 2023-2024.

Staff launched a quarterly pop-up library with 400 books in English and Spanish at a central community trailer. Materials were selected for all ages and reading levels, from picture books to



adult fiction and non-fiction. Returns are easy with a book return bin in the community and late fees are waived to reduce participation barriers.

In addition to lending materials, library staff collaborated with the local YMCA and other external organizations to organize a variety of events and additional services, including resource fairs, social events, afterschool programs, community meetings and Hispanic Heritage Month recognition and celebration. These events fostered both learning and community connection.

### **Finance and Staff**

This initiative is highly cost-effective. Staff time accounted for the majority of expenses, totaling 200 to 250 hours over two years. Administrative staff developed their U.S. Census data and satellite mapping skills while librarians and outreach staff coordinated with community partners and residents, selected materials for the pop-up library, and led programs and events. Printing costs for program guides and promotional materials totaled \$1,300.



*Chesterfield Public Library staff distribute information about library services at a resource fair in the Greenleigh community.*

## The Results

This successful outreach approach resulted in a 47% increase in library card registration in Greenleigh, which is the key indicator of success for a library. Checkouts increased by 41% from the previous two-year period, with 400 books borrowed during 2023-2024.

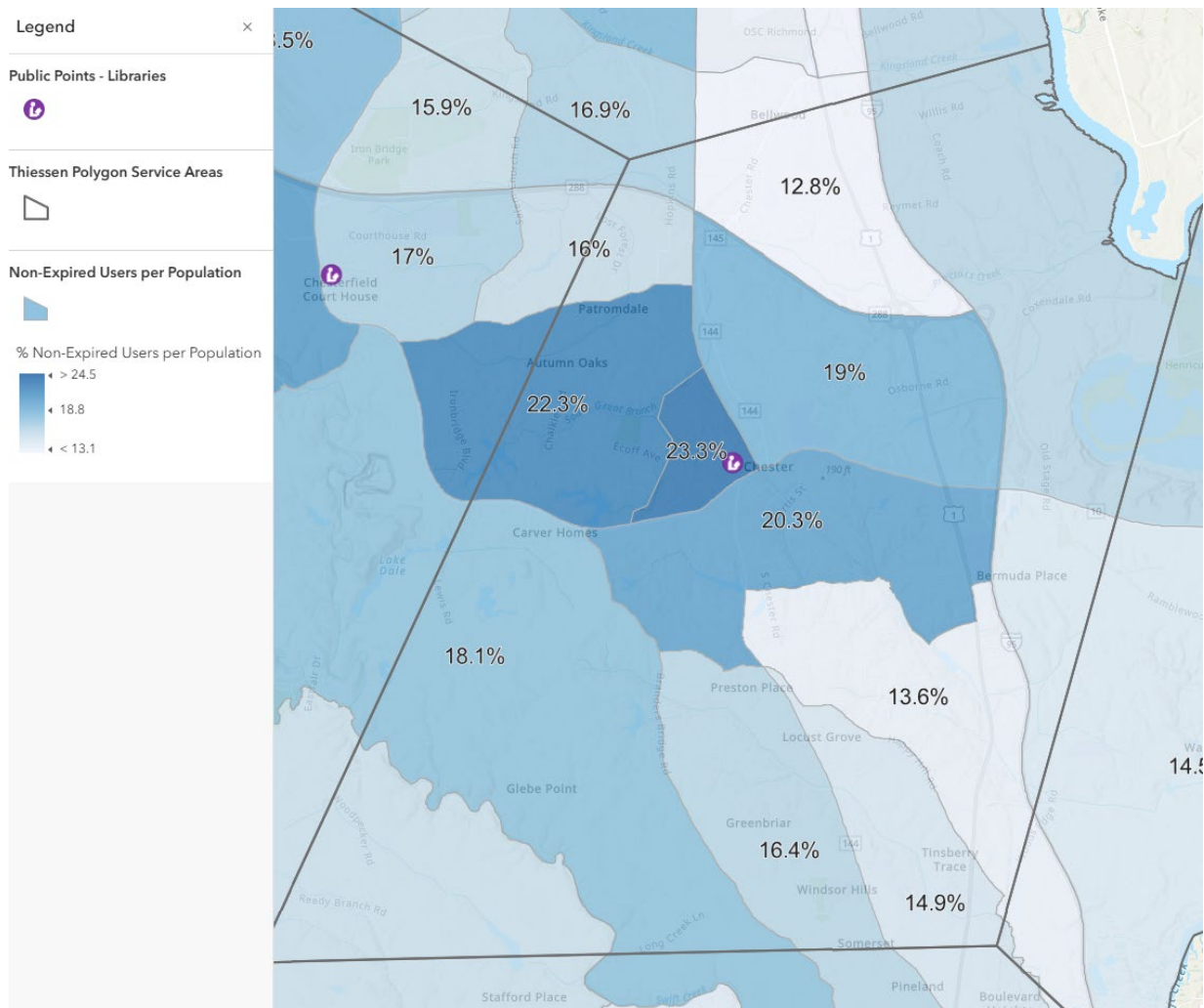
Beyond quantitative metrics, the program has fostered meaningful community connections. Greenleigh residents now recognize library staff at community events and in public settings, often greeting staff members by name, reflecting growing trust and connection. More Spanish-speaking community members began to regularly visit the nearest library location, where bilingual staff are engaging more deeply with visitors.

The pop-up library model proved especially effective by removing transportation and cost barriers, offering a sustainable way to reach residents where they are. The library's inclusive and responsive approach created lasting community impact.

Partnerships amplified the library's impact. Collaboration with the YMCA and other community organizations created multiple touchpoints to engage Greenleigh residents and helped embed library services into the fabric of community life.

Through this innovative, data-informed initiative, Chesterfield Public Library not only increased access to public services but also built community trust and engagement. This targeted outreach approach demonstrates a replicable model that addresses both physical access and cultural barriers to strengthen the community as a whole, advancing the library's mission to enhance the lives of our citizens by providing tools for a lifetime of learning.

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Above: This map shows which geographic areas have low library cardholder rates. Greenleigh Mobile Home Community is located in the area on this map with a 13.6% non-expired users per population.



Left: A child from the Greenleigh Mobile Home Community proudly shows off her paper craft, made possible by the Chesterfield Public Library outreach team.