

Sheila de la Guerra *Public Comment*

From: Margaret Smith Crocco <margaret.crocco@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2026 11:42 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Cecilia Kimberlin; Margaret Smith Crocco
Subject: Funding for County Libraries
Attachments: SBPL Value of Services 2025-2026 (2).pdf

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April 12, 2026

Dear County Supervisors:

This morning's *Noozhawk* article highlighted the projected budget deficit facing Santa Barbara County. You have the difficult challenge of balancing the budget while managing services for all residents of our wonderful county.

We write as members of the Santa Barbara Public Library (SBPL) Advisory Board to urge you to keep the cuts to the county libraries to a minimum. Due to the fiscal exigencies, our libraries currently are facing a 4% budget reduction. Per-capita county library funding is already quite lean, and a 4% cut means real reductions in services, staffing, and access. Further cuts would be terribly damaging.

Libraries provide essential social services – and the demand for library services continues to grow, especially as other providers of social services face budgetary constraints. Libraries provide core public infrastructure that undergirds education, workforce and economic development, as well as community stability and growth.

A recent analysis of the “return on investment-ROI” of the Santa Barbara Public Library (see attached document) demonstrates that SBPL returns more than \$25 million in value on a \$7.5 million investment. We are confident that similar analyses of other libraries in Santa Barbara County would confirm strong ROI's. Libraries are one of the most trusted and efficient public investments we have.

Hundreds of testimonials gathered by SBPL in February 2026 reported stories of how our libraries meet the needs of everyone, regardless of age, income or background, whether it's through story times and reading programs for children, ESL classes for non-native English speakers, or resume development for individuals seeking work, to name just a few.

In short, libraries are high-performing systems. Draconian cuts would simply shift the burden to other, often more expensive, social services. We urge the County to protect library funding from further reductions, given its role as a critical social, educational and economic driver.

Thank you for all that you do for Santa Barbara County.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Crocco, Chair, Santa Barbara Library Advisory Board

Cecelia Kimberlin Harris, Vice-Chair, Santa Barbara Library Advisory Board

SANTA BARBARA PUBLIC LIBRARY

VALUE OF SERVICES IN 2025

The best investment is in our Library. For an investment of \$7.5 Million the Santa Barbara Public Library returned a **value of more than \$25 Million!**

SPENT: \$7,593,650.79

VALUE RECEIVED: \$25,565,132.77

	QTY	MATERIALS*	LABOR*	VALUE
BOOKS CHECKED OUT	254,871	\$6,065,929.80	\$6,065,929.80	\$10,577,146.50
PERIODICALS CHECKED OUT	1,098	\$6,588.00	\$6,588.00	\$24,309.72
DVD/ VHS CHECKED OUT	25,489	\$114,700.50	\$114,700.50	\$565,855.80
BOOKS ON CD CHECKED OUT	1,052	\$11,014.44	\$11,014.44	\$29,634.84
PLAYAWAYS CHECKED OUT	309	\$3,235.23	\$3,235.23	\$8,704.53
EBOOKS CHECKED OUT	115,930	\$1,449,125.00	\$2,099,492.30	\$3,548,617.30
AUDIOBOOKS	142,876	\$3,000,396.00	\$2,587,484.36	\$5,587,880.36
DIGITAL MAGAZINES CHECKED OUT	36,746	\$220,476.00	\$665,470.06	\$885,946.06
MOVIES STREAMED	35,568	\$142,272.00	\$629,553.60	\$771,825.60
MUSIC DOWNLOADS	2,093	\$2,072.07	\$34,660.08	\$36,732.15
REFERENCES QUESTIONS	26,471	\$220,591.67	\$220,591.67	\$926,837.95
COMPUTER USE (HOURS)	25,642	\$461,558.34	\$752,852.94	\$1,214,411.28
WI-FI USE (HOURS)	149,362	\$298,724.00	\$1,608,628.74	\$1,907,352.74
HOTSPOTS (DAYS)	521	\$7,815.00	\$265.71	\$8,080.71
MEETING ROOM RESERVATIONS	98	\$4,900.00	\$3,166.38	\$8,066.38
CHILDREN PROGRAMS ATTENDANCE	17,643	\$352,860.00	\$499,296.90	\$852,156.90
YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS ATTENDANCE	1,937	\$29,055.00	\$54,817.10	\$83,872.10
ADULT PROGRAMS ATTENDANCE	4,391	\$87,820.00	\$124,265.30	\$212,085.30
BOOKMOBILE STOPS	743	\$199,406.34	\$13,151.10	\$212,557.44
ADULT LITERACY TUTOR HOURS	1,702	\$85,100.00	\$48,166.60	\$133,266.60
CHILDREN'S LITERACY TUTOR HOURS	514	\$25,700.00	\$14,546.20	\$40,246.20
TOTAL		\$12,789,339.39	\$15,557,877.00	\$25,565,132.77

**MATERIALS CALCULATED BASED ON LOCAL SERVICES AND SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STUDIES.
LABOR VALUE CALCULATED BASED ON SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY TRUE VALUE CALCULATOR