

CITY OF SANTA MARIA
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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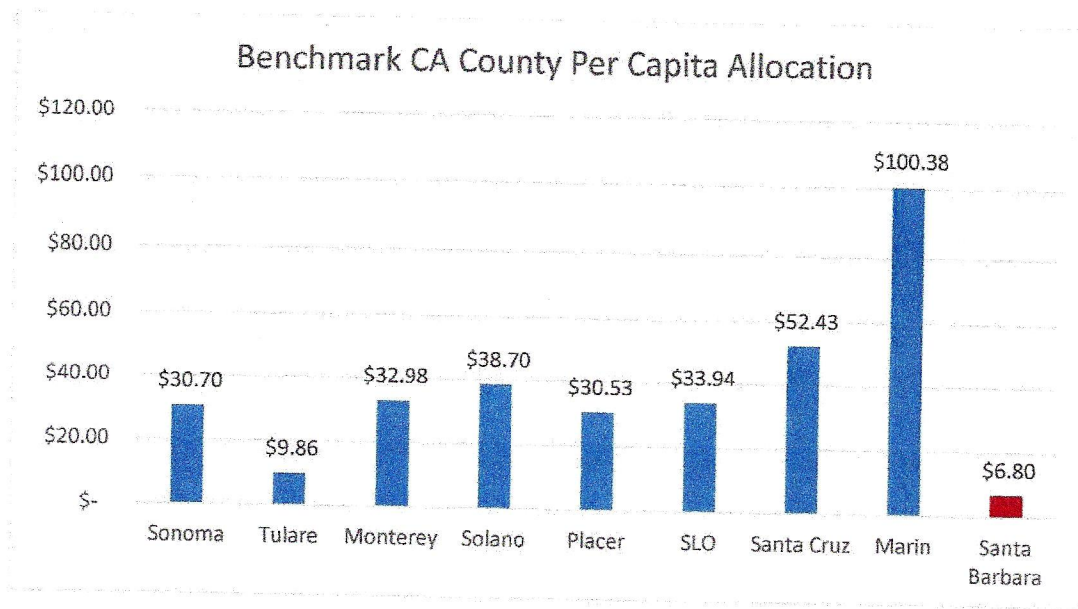
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara 93101

Dear Chair Lavagnino and Supervisors Adam, Carbajal, Farr, and Wolf,

Without increased funding for operations and staffing, Santa Barbara County Libraries face significant service level reductions. As community centers for the County's many cities and unincorporated areas, we are struggling to maintain open hours and popular programs. Increased minimum wages and COLAs negotiated in our jurisdictions have increased the cost of staffing county and city libraries yet our library budgets have decreased since the restoration of a previous 15% reduction (.92 per capita) granted in 2013-14.

In addition to staffing increases, some of our county libraries (Orcutt and Guadalupe) are located in privately owned rented space that continue to increase in cost each year when owners assess a CPI adjustment. Those increases combined with higher costs of goods and materials, utilities and other operational expenses have placed the libraries in a very vulnerable position. We have rich resources for the public, but do not have adequate funds to keep the doors open adequate hours for the public to access them.

The Santa Barbara County per capita allocation has been inadequate for many years and well below comparable benchmark counties for 2012-13 including Sonoma (30.67), Tulare (9.86), Monterey (32.98), Solano (38.70), Placer (30.53), SLO (33.94), Santa Cruz (52.43) and Marin (100.38). In 2012-13, Santa Barbara County (5.98) had the fourth lowest county or district library expenditure per capita after Lassen District (\$4.16), Yuba County (4.31), and Madera County (5.92). The average of all benchmark counties for 2012-13 was \$41.19 per capita. The average for all libraries in California for 2012-13 was \$47.13 per capita and yet our county per capita currently stands at \$6.87 for 2014-15. If the library fund is maintained status quo for 2015-16, the per capita will decrease to \$6.80.



Please consider making libraries a higher priority and raising our allotment to at least half the amount of the benchmark counties. \$20.30 per capita for 2015-16 would be a tremendous help. Even doubling the current allotment would be a move in the right direction for a vital public service that enriches lives, promotes literacy and benefits students, adults, seniors, and our workforce. The current allocation of \$6.87 per capita for Santa Barbara County Libraries is not sustainable and will not support adequate service levels.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

M. Housel

Mary Housel
City Librarian Zone 3
Santa Maria

Jessica Cadiente

Jessica Cadiente
Library Director Zone 2
Lompoc

Irene Macias

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Library Director Zone 1
Santa Barbara