

# Using Project Outcome with Summer Reading and Digital Literacy Programs to Support Partnership Development and Expand Services at a Small Library

Burnsville Public Library (BPL) is an important community anchor within the rural county it serves. BPL has used Project Outcome surveys to better understand the impact of the library's programs, and has developed new partnerships and designed new programs based on community input.

- **Library Name:** Burnsville Public Library
- **Library Location:** Braxton County, West Virginia
- **Library Size:** Very small (one building, service area: 3,700)
- **Immediate Surveys Used:** Summer Reading (Caregiver), Summer Reading (Teen/Child), Digital Learning



## Summer Reading Program Survey Results Support a New Partnership and Enhanced Programming for Children

Project Outcome surveys showed that caregivers of young participants in BPL's Summer Reading Program wanted tutoring and extra help for their children. Equipped with this information and evidence of program impact, BPL worked with the local school district to have two teachers offer tutoring at the library the following summer, for three days each week. A library staff person whose two children participated in the program shared, "[The children] work on reading, math, they get on the computer... It's really benefitting them. And some of the kids are here because they need the extra help, and some of them are here just to try to beat the summer slide. It's working very well."

BPL also started a new after-school program because surveys showed an appetite for additional programming for children. Children shared that they wanted to learn more about science and technology, so one of the after-school classes will include hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) activities.

## ■ Survey Data Helps Secure Technology Grant

Project Outcome surveys showed that a basic digital literacy skills class at the library helped adult participants feel more confident using technology and become more active email users. Participants also shared their desire for access to better technology. This feedback from Project Outcome surveys helped BPL secure a technology grant from the West Virginia Library Commission, and next fall the library's public computer lab will be upgraded and expanded.

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## ■ Factors That Supported Successful Use of Project Outcome

In a prior job in the nonprofit sector, BPL's new director gained experience in the collection and use of outcome data and was excited when she discovered Project Outcome. Since adopting Project Outcome, BPL's board has been interested in and supportive of the library's use of Project Outcome. As one board member told us, "The reason we do it is we are trying to find out the interests of the community so we can serve the community better. Any library can use it."

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## ■ What's Next?

BPL is committed to an outcomes-based approach to measuring the impact of their programs, and learning how to improve them. BPL recently included survey data in a grant request to support its new after-school program, and they discussed survey results at a recent town meeting. BPL will continue using Project Outcome to understand impact and community needs, and communicate the value of the library's programs and services with various audiences, including town council members. A library leader shared, "It seems like [town council members'] support is a little more evident since we actually have the data to back up what we're claiming, rather than just saying, 'Well, we had 80 kids here this summer...' We can say, 'Well, we had 80 kids this summer, but we also asked them what they would want to change, and this is what they said.' ...It offers some validation... it's more transparent, [now] that we actually have the data to back up what we're saying. They haven't increased our funding or anything... but they are more vocal and supportive. They have given us a couple of letters of support for different grants that we've tried to obtain. And I don't think that would've happened without... the knowledge that we are doing the outcome measures."