



Project Title: Economic Benefits and Impacts from Public Libraries in the State of Florida
Investigator(s): Dr. Charles R. McClure
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For both statewide and local planning and evaluation, identifying and describing the economic impacts and benefits from public libraries provides a range of insights that can help the State Library of Florida, government officials, and local libraries better meet the needs of their users. As public libraries continue to provide a range of services and programming for the community, a better understanding of the library's important role in economic development is critical. The goal of economic development is to increase the quality of the economic well-being of a region as a means of improving overall quality of life.

The purpose of the study is to identify and describe the economic impacts and benefits of Florida public libraries. In addition, the study will develop and test a methodology to describe taxpayers' return on investment (ROI) for supporting public libraries. To accomplish these goals, the study will have two different but related parts:

- Part I of the study will provide answers essential to a better understanding of the role of public libraries in the economic development in their local communities. This includes identifying library activities and programs to support economic development, factors that contribute to the success of public libraries' involvement in economic development and strategies for more effectiveness of public libraries in Florida in supporting economic development activities.
- Part II of the study will develop and pilot test a model that identifies factors that should be considered as library-based contributions to the local and state economic development. In addition, this part of the study will explore possible approaches and techniques to operationalize these factors such that their impacts can be measured and quantified.

The study will result in a number of products that will have a range of benefits to the State Library of Florida. The study team will provide preliminary and final reports on findings for Part I and Part II. The State Library will be given a resultant database from the survey of Florida public libraries and users. The study team will also be available either for Executive Briefing of the State Library staff or for a session with members from the policy-making community.

While public libraries provide a broad range of impacts and benefits to residents in the state of Florida, their role in supporting economic development is not well understood or described. This study will provide an important first step in documenting those impacts, describing programs and services that support economic development, and offering strategies that policymakers and the library community might use to enhance this service role.