



Maricopa County Library District

2023-2024 Winter Reading Program

Summary and Report

Overview

We have reached ten years of Winter Reading at the [Maricopa County Library District](#) (MCLD). The library district is proud to share the results of our 2023-2024 Winter Reading Program for Adults. From December 11, 2023- February 11, 2024 our 15 branches ¹encouraged more than 2,000 adult participants to experience the joy of reading and engaging with their library. The Winter Reading Program invites participants to earn points through logging minutes read and completing online challenges using The Great Reading Adventure software. Using this software, we tracked achievements, awarded digital badges, and implemented custom content geared towards the participating adult age group's needs and interests in our diverse library communities.

This year we forewent a specific theme for the Winter Reading Program and focused on creating a simplified Winter Reading Program "brand" that will continue each year. The goal with this change is to create more recognition and excitement around participating in the program each year. Participants were challenged to reach 500 points over 9 weeks by reading and completing challenges. Each minute read was worth 1 point while challenges were worth, on average, an additional 10 to 20 points. Participants were also encouraged to continue reading past their personal goal to contribute to the county wide minute goal of 2 million minutes read which we surpassed before the end of the program.

Each library was encouraged to book an event presented by a local performer or organization in support of the Winter Reading Program. The online portion of the reading program continued to connect MCLD libraries to their communities at home by sharing library resources and programming presented in the digital environment.

Our partnership with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is still on hiatus until they are able to get the staff and infrastructure in place to support it. We hope to bring the program back to the county jails in Winter of 2024-2025.

2023-2024 Program Goals

Our Winter Reading Program goals continue to be:

- Foster lifelong learning and library engagement for adults.
- Address the literacy needs of adults within Maricopa County.

¹ The City of Surprise has taken over the running of their three libraries.

We made progress on these goals based on the success of the objectives set and increased our participation numbers by registering 17% more participants over last year.

Objectives that contributed to our success this year include: simplifying the program to create a recognizable brand used each year, and connecting participants to literacy resources and information through information sharing on the Winter Reading Program platform.

Overall Statistics

2,066 participants registered for the Maricopa County Library District 2023-2024 Winter Reading Program. During the 9 weeks of the program:

- Participants read 2,476,063 minutes
- Participants earned 2,507,263 points
- Participants completed 2,080 challenges
- 60% or 1,245 participants achieved 500 points, the goal of the program

An increase in achiever rate could be attributed to the inclusion of a prize at the 500-point milestone. This partnership is outlined below in the 'Incentive' section of this document.

The following table shows this year's statistics broken out by branch:

2024							
Branch	Participants	Points	Badges	Challenges	Minutes Read	Achievers	% Achievers
AG	9	7,463	56	1	7,443	5	56%
RO	75	173,831	745	71	172,831	55	73%
EM	61	56,509	524	82	55,319	37	61%
FA	47	117,201	573	59	116,321	39	83%
FH	101	230,151	910	87	228,831	71	70%
GB	24	19,178	193	43	18,498	11	46%
GL	244	360,289	2,068	291	355,889	145	59%
GU	37	63,272	391	49	62,532	29	78%
LP	125	174,529	1,086	127	172,559	82	66%
NV	141	182,894	1,230	172	180,324	92	65%
PE	155	257,833	1,441	219	254,673	101	65%
QC	237	162,103	1,708	181	159,303	127	54%
SE	520	416,558	3,931	471	409,578	281	54%
SC	151	161,415	1,206	94	159,995	90	60%
WT	139	124,037	1,106	133	12,1967	80	58%
Totals	2,066	2,507,263	17,168	2,080	2,476,063	1245	60%

This table shows the last five years of Winter Reading Program starting in 2020 when we moved from tracking books read to minutes read:

Winter Reading	Participants	Points	Badges	Challenges	Minutes Read	Achievers	% Achievers
2020	2,079	2,064,496	8,841	1,135	5,175,228	1,001	48%
2021	1,550	1,626,531	9,878	982	1,611,511	786	51%
2022	1,468	1,597,493	9,173	519	1,590,573	758	52%
2023	1,754	2,018,587	12,054	1,729	1,986,597	875	50%
2024	2,066	2,507,263	17,168	2,080	2,476,063	1245	60%

The following table shows the year over year comparison to illustrate participant growth from 2023 to 2024.

Branch	2023	2024	Difference	% + or -
AG	2	9	7	350%
EM	31	61	30	97%
FA	42	47	5	12%
FH	68	101	33	49%
GB	16	24	8	50%
GL	153	244	91	59%
GU	35	37	2	6%
LP	88	125	37	42%
NV	91	141	50	55%
PE	136	155	19	14%
QC	212	237	25	12%
RO	68	75	7	10%
SE	453	520	67	15%
SC	83	151	68	82%
WT	78	139	61	78%
Totals	1,754²	2,066	312	18%

Incentives

This year we re-established a past partnership with Camelback-Ranch in Glendale, a spring training baseball field. They offered each participant who reached 500 points one spring

² This number reflects Asante, Hollyhock and Northwest libraries' numbers in 2023 but they have been removed from this table as the City of Surprise took over their operation in 2023.

training ticket to select games. About 10% of those who finished the program, reaching 500 points by February 11, claimed their ticket.

Participants were also asked to read and log at least 60 minutes each week to be automatically entered into the weekly prize drawings. Each week we offered a tote bag filled with an assortment MCLD branded items and a book, *I Love my Library* car sun shades, and Harkins prize packs with two free movie admissions, popcorns and sodas. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation also donated 9 day passes, enough for one drawing per week.

Partnerships

MCLD continued our partnerships with valley organizations committed to adult literacy: Gateway Community College, Rio Salado College Adult Education, Arizona Department of Education, and Maricopa County Adult Probation. These organizations shared information about the Winter Reading Program and we provide information about their adult literacy efforts on our Winter Reading Program site.

Game Content

The 2024 Winter Reading Program continued to make all software features in both English and Spanish as well as prize information, social media posts, emails and marketing.

We used the carousels to feature books that were recommended by library staff and program participants, highlight our digital databases, and interesting challenges created by branch staff.

Staff created challenges that asked participants to read books and complete activities to challenge themselves and learn something new. For each challenge completed participants earned additional points toward their point goal. To increase engagement with participants and staff, each branch was asked to collaboratively create a branch Challenge to be entered into the Branch Challenge Competition. Staff were then encouraged to promote their branch challenge throughout the program and the branch with the challenge that had the most completions would win. Encouraging the creation of interesting challenges and making it a friendly competition increased our challenge completion by 20%.

To keep engagement up for the whole nine weeks of the program, we set a county wide minute goal. Even as participants reached their 500-minute goal, staff encouraged them to continue reading and logging their minutes into the program to help the county reach 2 million

minutes read. The goal was reached before the end of the program and surpassed it with 2.4 million minutes read.

Participants wanted the title of the books they were reading connected to specific minute entries. Now, if a participant enters in a book title when they record their minutes read, this title will appear next to their entry in the history tab. One entry might read: 2/11/2024 Read 60 minutes- Little Women.

Customer Survey

Typically, only participants who complete the program, reaching 500 points, would receive a link to our survey. To ensure the program meets the needs and expectations of all of our participants the survey was made available on their dashboards a couple weeks before the end of the program.

- 69% of respondents visit the library at least monthly
- 57% of respondents participated for the first time this year
- 97% of respondents found the online program easy to use
- 97% of respondents plan to participate again next year

We always ask participants, on average, how often they visit the library. Based on the responses this year it looks like providing the survey on the dashboard captured new respondents. Those who use the library at least monthly fell from 75% to 69% and those who primarily use the digital resources got a 3% bump showing that those who don't come into our buildings often are still finding this program. Respondents continue to find the program easy to navigate and will return to participate next year. The majority of respondents were happy to participate in something happening in their community and getting credit for reading they likely would be doing anyway.

Conclusion

With 2,066 participants, this year's Winter Reading Program saw the most participants registered since 2019/2020 when the program reached its peak participation before the pandemic. Each year participants compare the more complex Summer Reading

Program with this simplified version for adults only. The Winter Reading Program was designed to engage adults with a simpler program to make it sustainable for staff and to differentiate it from the summer program, but we still strive to meet the expectations we can. With the inclusion of a milestone prize at 500 points we saw growth in our achiever rate which went from 50% to 60%. The challenges and the county wide minute goal were pushed to encourage the more avid readers to try new books or activities and to continue logging minutes for the whole nine weeks.

While the number of survey respondents that said they would participate again fell back down from 99% to 97%, those who will be back next year like the chance to win prizes, to hold themselves accountable by tracking their reading, and find new materials and resources at the library to engage with. We will continue to leverage the drawing prizes, reading goals and challenges to continue to keep the adults who participate in this program are engaged.

Acknowledgments

The Winter Reading Program is made possible through the collaborative efforts of Maricopa County Library District staff and community partners. We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for making the 2024 program a success.

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