

2025 Annual Report, Contra Costa County Library Commission

Introduction

This report captures the activity of the Contra Costa County Library Commission over the past 12 months. The Library Commission, a citizen advisory body to the Board of Supervisors and the County Librarian, provides a community perspective to library policy and administration.

The Library Commission drafted a 2025 annual work plan with goals to support library services and funding, community engagement, and system collaboration. The workplan goals are to:

- Help support sustainable funding and support library programs and services to better serve all segments of our patrons,
- Collaborate with elected officials, community groups and residents to engender broad support for the library,
- Work on important issues that affect the library system or that can be assisted by the resources that the library system can provide to the community,
- Serve as an advisory committee to the County on library issues.

The detailed description of the work toward these four goals are discussed herein.

About the Commission

The Contra Costa Library Commission is appointed by local public officials:

- Eighteen members representing the cities/towns in Contra Costa County - these Commissioners are appointed by the city/town councils (excluding Richmond)
- Five members representing Contra Costa County - each Supervisor appoints one Commissioner
- One member representing the Central Labor Council
- Four Ex-Officio members representing the College District, East Bay Leadership Council, Office of Education, and the Friends Council.

The Commission meets six times a year and receives reports on library policy, administration, and operations prepared under the supervision of the County Librarian. The Commission asks questions, offers comments, and provides feedback. Additionally, individual commissioners engage with local policy makers, community groups, and patrons to support and promote their local libraries. Annually, the Commission submits a report of its activities to the Board of Supervisors and other appointing authorities.

Activity Report

The activities listed in this annual report follow the goals of the Commission's work plan, submitted with last year's annual report.

Goal 1: Help support sustainable funding and support library programs and services to better serve all segments of our patrons.

In 2024 the Library Commission convened an Ad Hoc Committee to research the state of Contra Costa County Library funding, relative to other Bay Area library systems. The Ad Hoc Committee presented their findings in January 2025. The Commission accepted done findings and fully endorsed the recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Committee

1. Explicitly acknowledge Contra Costa County Library's is the lowest funded library system per capita in the Bay Area
2. Endorse the goal of 56 fully staffed service hours per week for all full-service branches, services provided Monday through Saturday. This goal also includes fully staffed services on Sundays for at least 4 hours per week at a minimum of 6 branches equitably distributed across the county. If this goal is realized, this model will provide more impactful, equitable, and inclusive services to all Contra Costa County residents.
3. Communicate this information to their appointing authority.
 - a. Commissioners Gemmer and Sanguedolce gave a presentation of the Ad Hoc Committee findings to the City Council of Danville
 - b. Commissioner Smith shared the finding and discussed funding issues regarding the Concord Branch with the Mayor and members of the City Council.
 - c. District 3 Commissioner Fitzpatrick shared his experience with fundraising efforts from his previous role as the Oakley Commissioner with the Clayton Library Foundation.

Goal 2: Collaborate with elected officials, community groups and residents to engender broad support for the library.

In 2025, the Legislative Working Committee tracked important developments at the state and federal levels impacting libraries. Despite concerns around proposed state budget cuts to public libraries and to California Library Services Act programs, California's May budget revision maintained current funding levels, with the Library Commission noting that credit should be given to the California Library Association and its many supporters for advocating against proposed cuts to the programs.

At the federal level, the President of the United States issued an executive order in March reducing the functions of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and eliminating many of its non-statutory programs. In response to the order, attorney generals from 21 states sued to prevent the dismantling of the IMLS. A judge eventually issued an injunction, stating that it violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

Additionally, the President fired the Librarian of Congress in May and designated the Deputy Attorney General as acting head of the library. In a rare bipartisan effort, Congress pushed back on this action which they stated, "threatens the separation of powers and the integrity of the legislative branch's premier research body." In addition to serving as a law library for Congress, the Library of Congress is considered a materials repository for the entire country and is visited by 1.5 million tourists every year.

In addition to monitoring legislative developments, commissioners engage local library staff and community groups to support and promote library programs. Engagement and advocacy by individual commissioners include:

1. Vice Chair Smith reported that he had attended a "Meet the Mayor" event at the Concord Library and his conversation with the Mayor was overheard by some of the other attendees which resulted in numerous opportunities to spread the library gospel in one event.
2. Commissioner Hoisington sent a letter to her representatives in the Assembly and Congress. She also wrote a letter to the editor of the East Bay Times newspaper.

3. Commissioner Fitzpatrick lobbied for new library funding and let the other commissioners know that if Oakley Friends could generate \$1 million for their effort, then many larger library friends groups should be able to do the same.
4. Commissioner Rosekind had a meeting with Sup. Gioia about the budget. She also attended various programs at multiple libraries.
5. Commissioner DeFraga mentioned that the city of Martinez was interested in extra hours after receiving their annual letter.
6. Commissioner Lurvey met with the new WC City Council member to introduce herself and speak about the libraries.
7. Vice Chair Smith met with the Concord City Manager and Mayor to advocate for the library.
8. Commissioner Prayag and his family participated in the Clayton July 4th Parade representing the library

Goal 3: Work on important issues that affect the library system or that can be assisted by the resources that the library system can provide for the community.

1. Commissioner Prayag attended Clayton Library Foundation meetings to share information from the Commission. He joined the Foundation Communication Subcommittee to help review the marketing plan for both the foundation and the library.
2. Commissioner Hsieh supported the San Ramon Friends of the Library pop-up book sale upon the opening of the San Ramon pedestrian bridge over I-680. She also solicited donations for the Dougherty Station Library.

Goal 4: Serve as an advisory committee to the County on library issues.

In March, the County Librarian gave an update on the Self-Service Sundays Pilot at the Concord Library, a program designed to address lack of library availability on Sundays since the COVID pandemic. Usage was modest, but service was smooth and without incident. The County Librarian expressed the intent to continue the service indefinitely and identify locations for future expansion of the program. In May, the Commission requested a more detailed report on the status of the program and in July, the County Librarian presented a review of the recently completed pilot program including a survey of program participants.

Summary

Over the past 12 months, the Contra Costa County Library Commission's work included endorsing recommendations to address the County's comparatively low per-capita library funding, actively engaging elected officials and community groups to champion public library services, and monitoring state and federal policy developments affecting libraries across the country. Commissioners worked closely with local Friends groups, library staff, and policymakers to promote programs, encourage broader support for expanded service hours, and share community perspectives with County leadership. Through these efforts, the Commission worked to deliver on its goals of supporting sustainable funding, strengthening community advocacy, and advising on issues critical to the success of the library system.

Work Plan, Contra Costa County Library Commission November 2025 through October 2026

The Contra Costa County Library Commission was established by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors in March 1991. The Commission was created to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors and the County Librarian. The purposes of the Commission, according to its bylaws, are to:

- "Serve in an advisory capacity to the Board and County Librarian;
- "Provide community linkage to the County Library including, but not limited to, providing regular reports of the activities of the Commission to appointing authorities;
- "Serve as a forum for the community to express its views regarding the goals and operations of the County Library;
- "Assist the Board and the County Librarian in providing library services based on assessed public need; and
- "Develop and recommend proposals to the Board and the County Librarian for the betterment of the County Library, including, but not limited to, such efforts as insuring a stable and adequate funding level for the libraries in the County."

The bylaws also set forth specific advisory functions, denominated as duties:

- " Participate in the planning process, including the library element of the County General Plan and the Library Strategic Plan;
- "Assist in the review of County Library policies that the Commission and the County Librarian determine will improve the operations of the County Library and service to the public;
- "Perform such other tasks and undertake such other assignments as may from time to time be referred to by the Board or the County Librarian;
- "Provide reports to the Board and the County Librarian when the Commission deems such reports to be timely and appropriate."

Annually, the Commission sends a work plan to the Board of Supervisors, city and town councils, and other appointing authorities of its planned activities.

Goal 1: Help establish sustainable funding and support for library programs and services to better serve all segments of our patrons, including:

- Exploring ways of ensuring stable, equitable, and adequate public and private funding for the county library and its various branches.
- Advocating for additional funding for branch libraries for increased resources to better serve their local communities.
- Providing input to the county and county librarian on budgetary issues and items.

Goal 2: Collaborate with elected officials, community groups, and residents to engender broad support for the Library, including:

- Conducting legislative outreach at the local, state, and federal levels to advocate for libraries, the services they provide, and the allocation of resources to them. When possible, meet with legislative leaders in conjunction with other library districts.
- Taking an active role in the American Library Association and California Library Association lobbying efforts.
- Briefing appointing authorities (city/town council, Supervisor, board, or agency) periodically on Commission activities, initiatives, and library needs and seeking their advocacy or endorsement.
- Collaborating with library staff to promote library activities and services with public officials at the federal, state, and local level.
- Educating organizations and individuals at the local, county, state and national level about the value and services offered by the library.
- Encouraging collaboration between the Library Foundation of Contra Costa, community library friends and foundation groups, and commissioners by convening the Friends and Foundation Council and holding the annual Friends and Foundations Forum.

Goal 3: Inform the community of Library resources and to connect the Library to community resources:

- Understanding the needs, resources, and organizations of the local community.
- Involving the local communities in Library Commission meetings.

Goal 4: Serve as an advisory committee to the County on library issues by providing thoughtful, consistent, sound and prompt advice and counsel to the County Librarian regarding the Library's budget, the strategic plan, changes in policy impacting service and programs, and any other matters raised.

Adopted by the Commission November 20, 2025