# **City and Suburban Libraries Compared**

Louis F. Sander (412) 367-1376 Louis@Sander.com

Using compilations of official statistics, this paper provides detailed comparisons of service and funding levels at suburban libraries and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, as of January, 2000. The comparisons show that the suburban libraries give a higher volume of service at far less cost to the public.

#### **ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

Allegheny County covers 730 square miles, and is organized into 130 municipalities with a total population of 1.3 million people. 1

Library service is available at 70 locations countywide, operated by 48 independent libraries.<sup>2</sup> All but five of them participate in a state aid program that supplements the local funding of libraries that meet certain standards of service.

Public library funding from all sources is about \$39 million per year, or \$30 per capita. Total paid employment in all the libraries is 926 full-time equivalents.

#### LIBRARY SERVICE OVERVIEW

Each year, the county's libraries make about 7 million loans from a total collection of 4 million cataloged items. Any county resident can get any library service at any library in the county, almost always at no charge.

The county's largest library is Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP), which operates 19 library locations, all in the City of Pittsburgh. It also operates three bookmobiles.

Outside the city are 47 suburban libraries, operating 51 library locations in 50 different municipalities.

The 47 suburban libraries provide 58% of the county's public library lending service. In doing so, they directly serve

62% of the county's population,<sup>3</sup> have

56% of the county's registered cardholders, own

50% of the county's collection of cataloged items, and employ only

37% of the county's paid library staff.

CLP provides 42% of the county's public library lending service. In doing so, it directly serves

28% of the county's population,3 has

44% of the county's registered cardholders, owns

50% of the county's collection of cataloged items, and employs

63% of the county's paid library staff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For a complete list of municipalities with areas, populations, and associated public libraries, see Appendix 1 on page 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For a complete list of libraries and the municipalities they serve, see Appendix 2 on page 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 10% of the county's population is not directly served by any library.

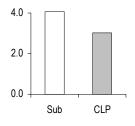
#### SERVICE DETAIL, SUBURBAN LIBRARIES vs. CLP

As noted above, the suburban libraries provide a higher volume of service to a significantly larger population than does the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and with a significantly smaller staff. Northland Public Library, the largest suburban institution, provides more lending service than CLP's Main Library in Oakland. On other criteria as well, the suburbans outperform CLP. The picture can be seen by looking more closely at these measures of library service:

Items Lent
Population Served
Number of Cardholders
Collection Size

This section compares CLP and the suburban libraries on those four basic measurements. Unless otherwise indicated, all figures are from 1997-98 Pennsylvania Library Statistics,<sup>4</sup> the most recent edition of the standard work in the field. Here are the detailed comparisons:

#### **Items Lent**



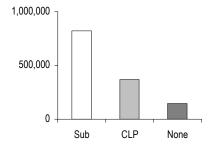
Suburban Libraries 4.1 million items 58% CLP Libraries 3.0 million items 42% County Total 7.1 million items

The number of items lent per year, or *circulation*, is the most important measure of library activity. Generally speaking, the greater a library's circulation, the greater the service it provides. Though libraries do more than just circulate materials,

the other activity is much more difficult to measure and compare. As stated in *A Plan for Library Service in Allegheny County,*<sup>5</sup> "Admittedly, circulation is not the sole measure of a library's activity, but it is one that has a fair degree of reliability given libraries' long history of monitoring this basic activity."

It should be noted that CLP circulates an additional 0.7 million items in a state-funded Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, serving all of Pennsylvania from Harrisburg westward. Because of their special nature and separate funding, these items are not included here.

### **Population Served**



 Suburban Libraries
 834,000
 62%

 CLP Libraries
 370,000
 28%

 No Local Library
 132,000
 10%

 County Total
 1,336,000

Each library is officially associated with one or more of the county's 130 municipalities. The populations of those municipalities constitute the library's "population served," one of the basic measures used in

evaluating and comparing libraries. This report assigns populations served based on 1990 cen-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> March, 1999. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries. Available at no charge from Commonwealth Libraries, P.O. Box 1601, Harrisburg, PA 17015, (717) 783-5745.

May, 1996. This \$50,000 consultant's report was commissioned by the leadership of the Allegheny County Library Association to be a plan for library service in the county. It contains a wealth of useful data about the county and its libraries. Unfortunately, many of its conclusions do not follow from that data, and seem to have been made to support the agenda of the Allegheny County Library Association.

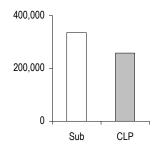
sus figures and on the presence of funding or operating agreements between the libraries and the municipalities. Other reports sometimes assign populations in different and potentially misleading ways. We believe our population assignments are accurate, soundly based, and particularly useful for understanding library service in Allegheny County. Appendix 2 provides the underlying detail, and accounts for the library status of every person and municipality in the county. A summary appears below:

	Munici-		Square
Directly Served By	palities	Population	Miles
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	1	369,879	55
One of 42 suburban State-Aided libraries	94	813,805	560
One of 5 suburban Non-State-Aided libraries	4	20,328	31
Libraries in other counties	2	533	<1
No library	29	131,904	83
Total	130	1,336,449	730

Note that some municipalities are not directly served by any library. About a fifth of them, with about a tenth of the county's population and land area, have no library funding or operating agreements of any kind. Their residents receive free library service from CLP and the 47 suburban libraries.

Regardless of its population served, any public library will provide any of its services to any county resident, almost always at no charge. Though many libraries provide a significant amount of lending to these "nonresident borrowers," population served is a useful measure because it is the population that includes the library's most likely users. With the exception of CLP and a very few others, it is also the population that provides primary funding and control of the library. In CLP's case, the City of Pittsburgh provides only token funding of its library; the balance of the "municipal" funding responsibility was transferred to the Allegheny Regional Asset District (ARAD) in 1995. Control of CLP rests in a 29-member board that includes a number of city and county officials.

#### **Number of Cardholders**



 Suburban Libraries
 335,000
 56%

 CLP Libraries
 259,000
 44%

 County Total
 594,000

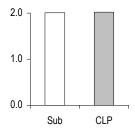
These are the people who are registered to borrow items from a library. Historically, libraries kept their own records of borrowers, but since the mid-1990s, many suburban libraries have moved them to an Electronic Information System (EIN) oper-

ated by CLP. For these institutions, the assignment of cardholders to libraries has become somewhat confused, with CLP showing unexplained increases, and suburban libraries showing similar decreases. This is troubling to many observers, because suburban libraries are paid for loans to nonresident borrowers, and there is an incentive for their residents to "migrate" their cards illegitimately to CLP or other libraries.

3 .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Reports from Commonwealth Libraries, for example, are highly authoritative overall, but often make artificial population assignments based on technical requirements of the state aid program. In *Pennsylvania Library Statistics*, municipalities that do not operate a library are "assigned" to CLP by default, even though they have no official or practical connection with CLP. In *Summary of State Aid to Public Libraries*, municipalities that have experienced large population loss are "credited" with their former populations.

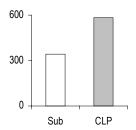
# **Collection Size**



Suburban Libraries 2.0 million cataloged items 50% CLP Libraries 2.0 million cataloged items 50% County Total 4.0 million cataloged items

This is the number of items that the library owns and has listed in its catalog. A library's primary mission is to make these items available to the public, mainly by lending them to cardholders.

### Paid Staff



Suburban Libraries 343 FTE's 37% CLP Libraries 583 FTE's 63% County Total 926 FTE's

Salaries and benefits are the largest item in any library budget. Large libraries tend to have more staff in positions that do not serve the public. (FTE stands for *Full Time Equivalent*. One full-time librarian or two half-time librarians = one FTE).

# **Local Municipal Funding**



Suburban Libraries \$7.10 million 100% CLP Libraries \$0.04 million 0% County Total \$7.14 million

This is the funding that public libraries receive from their sponsoring municipalities. Funding from ARAD is covered in the section below.

Except for a token \$40,000 annual payment, the City of Pittsburgh has abandoned all funding of its library. Suburban municipalities and school districts continue to fund their libraries at a level somewhat higher than ARAD. The funding figures used here are based on reports from the Allegheny County Library Association and the Allegheny Regional Asset District. Suburban figures include unspecified and unaudited cash values of in-kind services provided to some libraries by their municipalities, records of which are kept by CLP and not disclosed in public reports.

# **ARAD Funding**



Suburban Libraries \$5.45 million 26% CLP Libraries \$15.20 million 74% County Total \$20.65 million

This shows the budgeted Allegheny Regional Asset District funding of libraries for the year 2000. Through the year 2004, ARAD is committed to funding the suburbans at no less than \$5.0 million/year, and CLP at no less than \$11.9 million/year. In spite of

its lower service level, CLP's ARAD funding has increased faster than that of the suburban libraries. For the year 2000, ARAD will fund CLP at 127% of its minimum commitment, while it will fund the suburbans at only 109% of minimum.

### **Appendix 1 – Allegheny County Municipalities**

This is a complete list of the county's 130 municipalities, showing the public library that provides direct service to each of them. 29 municipalities with a total population of 131,904 do not receive service directly from any public library, but their residents have free borrowing privileges at any State-Aided library in Pennsylvania.

	Municipality	Population	Sq. Mi.	Public Library
	Aleppo Township	1,246		Sewickley Public Library
2.	Aspinwall Borough	2,880		Lauri Ann West Memorial Library
3.	Avalon Borough	5,784	0.60	Avalon Public Library
4.	Baldwin Borough	21,923	5.44	Baldwin Borough Public Library
5.	Baldwin Township	2,479		None
6.	Bell Acres Borough	1,436	5.36	Sewickley Public Library
7.	Bellevue Borough	9,126	0.98	Andrew Bayne Memorial Library
	Ben Avon Borough	2,096		None
	Ben Avon Heights Borough	373		None
	Bethel Park Municipality	33,823		Bethel Park Public Library
	Blawnox Borough	1,626		Lauri Ann West Memorial Library
	Brackenridge Borough	3,784		Community Library of Allegheny Valley
	Braddock Borough	4,682		Braddock Carnegie Library
	Braddock Hills Borough	2,026		C. C. Mellor Memorial Library
	Bradford Woods Borough	1,329		Northland Public Library
	Brentwood Borough	10,823		Brentwood Library
	Bridgeville Borough	5,445		Bridgeville Public Library
	Carnegie Borough	9,278		Andrew Carnegie Free Library
	Castle Shannon Borough	9,135		Community Library of Castle Shannon
	Chalfant Borough	959		Braddock Carnegie Library
	Cheswick Borough	1,971		Springdale Free Public Library
	Churchill Borough	3,883		C. C. Mellor Memorial Library
	Clairton City	9,656		Clairton Public Library
	Collier Township	4,841	12.78	
	Coraopolis Borough	6,747		Coraopolis Memorial Library
	Crafton Borough	7,188		Crafton Public Library
	Crescent Township	2,490		None
	Dormont Borough	9,772		Dormont Public Library
	Dravosburg Borough	2,377		Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
	Duquesne City	8,525		None
	East Deer Township	1,558	2.15	Community Library of Allegheny Valley
	East McKeesport Borough	2,678		None
	East Pittsburgh Borough	2,160		Braddock Carnegie Library
	Edgewood Borough	3,581		C. C. Mellor Memorial Library
	Edgeworth Borough	1,670		Sewickley Public Library
	Elizabeth Borough	1,610		Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
	Elizabeth Township	14,712		Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
	Emsworth Borough	2,892		Emsworth Library
	Etna Borough Fawn Township	4,200 2,712		None
	Findlay Township	4,500		Community Library of Allegheny Valley
	Forest Hills Borough	7,335		Western Allegheny Community Library C. C. Mellor Memorial Library
	Forward Township	3,877		Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
	Fox Chapel Borough	5,319		Lauri Ann West Memorial Library
	Franklin Park Borough	10,109		Northland Public Library
	Frazer Township	1,388		Community Library of Allegheny Valley
	Glassport Borough	5,582		Samuel A. Weiss Community Library
	Glenfield Borough	201		Sewickley Public Library
	Green Tree Borough	4,905		Green Tree Public Library
	Hampton Township	15,568		Hampton Community Library
	Harmar Township	3,144		Springdale Free Public Library
	Harrison Township	11,763		Community Library of Allegheny Valley
	Haysville Borough	100		Sewickley Public Library
	Heidelberg Borough	1,238		None
J <del>-1</del> .	ricidensely bolodyli	1,230	0.20	INOTIC

EE	Hamastand Dansunk	4.470	0.00	Companie Library of Hamsottand
	Homestead Borough	4,179		Carnegie Library of Homestead
	Indiana Township	6,024		Lauri Ann West Memorial Library
	Ingram Borough Jefferson Hills Borough	3,901 9,533	0.46	Jefferson Hills Public Library
	Kennedy Township	7,265	5.29	
	Kilbuck Township	890	2.54	
	Leet Township	1,731		Sewickley Public Library
	Leetsdale Borough	1,387		Sewickley Public Library
	Liberty Borough	2,744	1.46	
	Lincoln Borough	1,187	5.02	
	Marshall Township	4,010		Northland Public Library
	McCandless, Town of	28,781		Northland Public Library
	McDonald Borough	443		McDonald Library (Washington Co.)
	McKees Rocks Borough	7,691		F. O. R. Sto-Rox Library
	McKeesport City	26,016		Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
	Millvale Borough	4,341	0.68	
	Monroeville Municipality	29,169	19.54	Monroeville Public Library
72.	Moon Township	19,631		Moon Township Public Library
73.	Mount Lebanon Municipality	33,362		Mount Lebanon Public Library
74.	Mount Oliver Borough	4,160	0.32	None
75.	Munhall Borough	13,158	2.36	Carnegie Library of Homestead
	Neville Township	1,273	1.62	Coraopolis Memorial Library
	North Braddock Borough	7,036		Braddock Carnegie Library
	North Fayette Township	9,537		Western Allegheny Community Library
	North Versailles Township	12,302		North Versailles Public Library
	Oakdale Borough	1,752		Western Allegheny Community Library
	Oakmont Borough	6,961		Oakmont Carnegie Library
	O'Hara Township	9,096		Lauri Ann West Memorial Library
	Ohio Township	2,459		None
	Osborne Borough	565		Sewickley Public Library
	Penn Hills Municipality	51,479	19.08	Penn Hills Library
	Pennsbury Village Borough	774	0.08	
	Pine Township	4,048	17.12	Northern Tier Regional Library
	Pitcairn Borough	4,087		Monroeville Public Library
	Pittsburgh City	369,879		Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
	Pleasant Hills Borough	8,884 25,609		Pleasant Hills Public Library
	Plum Borough Port Vue Borough	4,641		Plum Borough Community Library None
	Rankin Borough	2,503		Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale
	Reserve Township	3,866	1.98	
	Richland Township	8,600		Northern Tier Regional Library
	Robinson Township	10,830	15.49	·
	Ross Township	33,482		Northland Public Library
	Rosslyn Farms Borough	483		Rosslyn Farms Community Library
	Scott Township	17,118	3.75	
	Sewickley Borough	4,134		Sewickley Public Library
	Sewickley Heights Borough	984		Sewickley Public Library
	Sewickley Hills Borough	622		Sewickley Public Library
	Shaler Township	30,533		Township of Shaler North Hills Library
	Sharpsburg Borough	3,781		Lauri Ann West Memorial Library
	South Fayette Township	10,329		South Fayette Township Library
	South Park Township	14,292		South Park Township Library
	South Versailles Township	515	0.85	Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
108.	Springdale Borough	3,992	0.99	Springdale Free Public Library
	Springdale Township	1,777		Springdale Free Public Library
	Stowe Township	7,681		F. O. R. Sto-Rox Library
	Swissvale Borough	10,637	1.16	Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale
	Tarentum Borough	5,674		Community Library of Allegheny Valley
	Thornburg Borough	461		None
	Trafford Borough	90		Trafford Library (Westmoreland Co.)
	Turtle Creek Borough	6,556		Braddock Carnegie Library
	Upper St. Clair Township	19,692		Upper St. Clair Township Library
117.	Verona Borough	3,260	0.53	None

118.	Versailles Borough	1,821	0.49	Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
119.	Wall Borough	853	0.48	None
120.	West Deer Township	11,371	28.65	West Deer Public Library
121.	West Elizabeth Borough	634	0.25	None
	West Homestead Borough	2,495	0.82	Carnegie Library of Homestead
	West Mifflin Borough	23,644	14.35	None
	West View Borough	7,734		None
125.	Whitaker Borough	1,416	0.26	Carnegie Library of Homestead
	White Oak Borough	8,761		Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport
127.	Whitehall Borough	14,451	3.19	Whitehall Public Library
128.	Wilkins Township	7,585	2.75	C. C. Mellor Memorial Library
129.	Wilkinsburg Borough	21,080	2.09	Wilkinsburg Public Library
130.	Wilmerding Borough	2,222	0.48	None

### **Appendix 2 – Allegheny County Public Libraries**

This is a complete list of the county's 48 independent public libraries, showing details of the population served by each. Populations are assigned on the basis of 1990 federal census figures, and on the presence of funding or operating agreements between the libraries and the municipalities. No library is assigned any population that it does not actually serve.

The county's five non-state-aided libraries appear at the end of the list. Emsworth, Glenshaw and Samuel A. Weiss are important in the culture and/or history of their municipalities and the region; Rosslyn farms and West Deer represent the early efforts of citizens to create libraries in their communities.

Two other libraries, in Baldwin Township and Ohio Township, have closed since the advent of the Allegheny County Library Association. Both cited the policies of the Association as important factors in their closing.

•		Population		Municipal	% of
	Library	Served	Municipality	Population	Total
1.	Andrew Bayne Memorial Library	9,126	Bellevue Borough	9,126	100%
	Andrew Carnegie Free Library		Carnegie Borough	9,278	
3.	Avalon Public Library	5,784	Avalon Borough	5,784	100%
4.	Baldwin Borough Public Library	21,923	Baldwin Borough	21,923	100%
	Bethel Park Public Library		Bethel Park Municipality	33,823	100%
6.	Braddock Carnegie Library	21,393	Braddock Borough	4,682	22%
	- ,		Chalfant Borough	959	4%
			East Pittsburgh Borough	2,160	10%
			North Braddock Borough	7,036	33%
			Turtle Creek Borough	6,556	31%
7.	Brentwood Library		Brentwood Borough	10,823	100%
8.	Bridgeville Public Library		Bridgeville Borough	5,445	100%
9.	C. C. Mellor Memorial Library	24,410	Braddock Hills Borough	2,026	8%
			Churchill Borough	3,883	16%
			Edgewood Borough	3,581	15%
			Forest Hills Borough	7,335	30%
			Wilkins Township	7,585	31%
10.	Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport	59,689	Dravosburg Borough	2,377	4%
			Elizabeth Borough	1,610	3%
			Elizabeth Township	14,712	25%
			Forward Township	3,877	6%
			McKeesport City	26,016	44%
			South Versailles Township	515	1%
			Versailles Borough	1,821	3%
			White Oak Borough	8,761	15%
11.	Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale	13,140	Rankin Borough	2,503	19%
			Swissvale Borough	10,637	81%
12.	Carnegie Library of Homestead	21,248	Homestead Borough	4,179	20%
			Munhall Borough	13,158	62%
			West Homestead Borough	2,495	12%
			Whitaker Borough	1,416	
	Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh		Pittsburgh City	369,879	100%
	Clairton Public Library		Clairton City	9,656	100%
15.	Community Library of Allegheny Valley	26,879	Brackenridge Borough	3,784	14%
			East Deer Township	1,558	6%
			Fawn Township	2,712	10%
			Frazer Township	1,388	5%
			Harrison Township	11,763	44%
			Tarentum Borough	5,674	21%
	Community Library of Castle Shannon		Castle Shannon Borough	9,135	100%
17.	Coraopolis Memorial Library	8,020	Coraopolis Borough	6,747	84%
			Neville Township	1,273	16%
	Crafton Public Library		Crafton Borough	7,188	100%
	Dormont Public Library		Dormont Borough	9,772	100%
20.	F. O. R. Sto-Rox Library	15,372	McKees Rocks Borough	7,691	50%

			Stowe Township	7,681	50%
21.	Green Tree Public Library	4,905	Green Tree Borough	4,905	100%
22.	Hampton Community Library	15,568	Hampton Township	15,568	100%
	Jefferson Hills Public Library		Jefferson Hills Borough	9,533	100%
24.	Lauri Ann West Memorial Library	28,726	Aspinwall Borough	2,880	10%
			Blawnox Borough	1,626	6%
			Fox Chapel Borough	5,319	19%
			Indiana Township	6,024	21%
			O'Hara Township	9,096	32%
			Sharpsburg Borough	3,781	13%
25.	Monroeville Public Library	33,256	Monroeville Municipality	29,169	88%
26	Moon Township Public Library	10.621	Pitcairn Borough	4,087 19,631	12% 100%
	Mount Lebanon Public Library		Moon Township		
			Mount Lebanon Municipality	33,362	
	North Versailles Public Library		North Versailles Township	12,302	100%
29.	Northern Tier Regional Library	12,648	Pine Township	4,048	32%
20	Northland Public Library	77 711	Richland Township Bradford Woods Borough	8,600 1,329	68% 2%
30.	Northand Public Library	17,711	Franklin Park Borough	10,109	13%
			Marshall Township	4,010	5%
			McCandless, Town of	28,781	37%
			Ross Township	33,482	43%
31	Oakmont Carnegie Library	6 961	Oakmont Borough	6,961	100%
	Penn Hills Library		Penn Hills Municipality	51,479	100%
	Pleasant Hills Public Library		Pleasant Hills Borough	8,884	100%
	Plum Borough Community Library		Plum Borough	25,609	100%
	Sewickley Public Library		Aleppo Township	1,246	9%
00.	Cowlondy Fubile Elbrary	11,070	Bell Acres Borough	1,436	10%
			Edgeworth Borough	1,670	12%
			Glenfield Borough	201	1%
			Haysville Borough	100	1%
			Leet Township	1,731	12%
			Leetsdale Borough	1,387	10%
			Osborne Borough	565	4%
			Sewickley Borough	4,134	29%
			Sewickley Heights Borough	984	7%
	1		Sewickley Hills Borough	622	4%
	Shaler North Hills Library		Shaler Township <sup>1</sup>	30,533	100%
	South Fayette Township Library		South Fayette Township	10,329	100%
	South Park Township Library		South Park Township	14,292	100%
39.	Springdale Free Public Library	10,884	Cheswick Borough	1,971	18%
			Harmar Township	3,144	29%
			Springdale Borough Springdale Township	3,992 1,777	37% 16%
40	Upper St. Clair Township Library	10.602	Upper St. Clair Township	19,692	100%
	Western Allegheny Community Library		Findlay Township	4,500	29%
41.	Western Allegheny Community Library	15,769	North Fayette Township	9,537	60%
			Oakdale Borough	1,752	11%
42	Whitehall Public Library	14 451	Whitehall Borough	14,451	100%
	Wilkinsburg Public Library		Wilkinsburg Borough	21,080	100%
	Emsworth Library <sup>2</sup>		Emsworth Borough	2,892	100%
	Glenshaw Public Library <sup>1, 2</sup>		Shaler Township <sup>1</sup>	2,002	n/a
	Rosslyn Farms Community Library <sup>2</sup>		Rosslyn Farms Borough	483	100%
	Samuel A. Weiss Community Library <sup>2</sup>		Glassport Borough	5,582	100%
	West Deer Public Library <sup>2</sup>		West Deer Township	11,371	100%
.5.	11 COL DOOL 1 GOILO LIDIGITY	11,011	TOOL DOOL TOWNSHIP	11,011	10070

### NOTES:

- Shaler Township is served by two libraries: state-aided Shaler North Hills Library and non-state-aided Glenshaw Public Library. We arbitrarily assign all of Shaler Township's population to Shaler North Hills Library, since it is by far the larger of the two.
   This is one of the county's Non-State Aided libraries.