



Metropolitan  
LIBRARY SYSTEM

2020 Annual Report



# Metropolitan Library System Commissioners | FY 2019 - 2020

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## OUR MISSION

Connecting our diverse communities with resources and experiences to educate and enrich lives.

## OUR VALUES:

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

People First

Innovation

Integrity

Respect











## From the Director

The Metropolitan Library System brings information and communities together. Since its inception in 1965, the library has played an essential role in addressing the information needs of Oklahoma County by providing free and open access to information that educates and enriches community members, creating greater opportunity for all in the community.

In 2019-20, we had a very dynamic and productive year of community interactions and service provision. The year began with the library adopting a new mission statement and core values of equity, diversity and inclusion; innovation; integrity; people first; and respect. Annual transactions of library visitors and materials circulation were on pace to be one of the best we've had to date.

The new and expanded Bethany Library opened and several other facilities received needed upgrades to improve access and service delivery. We saw enormous growth of electronic resources like downloadable audiobooks, movie access and other digital information resources, which only increased over the course of the year.

However, the year was greatly changed in March 2020 by the coronavirus and its impact on community life. The virus presented many safety and service challenges to staffing and service delivery, driving the library to be more innovative and adaptive in its approach to service to the community while keeping staff as safe as possible. We responded to virus challenges by introducing service and staffing innovations like curbside services, digital programming, expanded electronic resources and staff telework.

With all the challenges facing communities, there is little doubt that libraries are more important than ever in this increasingly information-dependent world. The past year has demonstrated our libraries' remarkable role in bringing Oklahoma County's communities together through information as we did with the Black Lives Matter movement. We are so thankful for supporters like you, who believe in our mission, values and efforts that make it possible for us to help so many in the community.

Larry Nash White  
Interim Executive Director





# What's New in FY20

## Bethany Library Opening

The Bethany Library made waves as it opened its doors on Nov. 16, 2019, and became the first library in Oklahoma County to feature a makerspace. Nearly 7,400 people walked through the door on opening day to get a glimpse of the premiere space spotlighting production software, 3D printers and 3D modeling software, and to see firsthand the numerous other amenities provided by the brand new 23,000-square-foot library.

"Our community has enjoyed the new building with several study spaces, more computers, additional library activities and lots of civic engagement with the Bethany City Council meetings happening at the library," Bethany Library Manager Rondia Banks said, noting the COVID-19 pandemic caused Metropolitan Library locations to close to the public in March 2020.

Without customers on-site, library staff excelled at rethinking library engagement for programming, like the library's popular "Rocket Readers" initiative in which children read to volunteers at the library. Taking the program to the web, staff found a new customer base and reached students as far away as California, Banks said.

"We even learned how to check out a book with our new Tumblebooks online resource, share our screen and read together in a virtual world."

**7,400**  
visitors on opening day

The brand new library in Bethany is  
**23,000**  
square feet

## Brainfuse Online Services

Free tutoring and career counseling services are now just a click away! This year we launched Brainfuse online services, which includes Help Now, Job Now and Vet Now. Each service is designed to help our customers plan for their future at any stage of life.

- Help Now offers services tailored to students, including live online tutoring, virtual study rooms, an online writing lab and more. After significant changes to the way students interact and learn, we saw a 68% spike in usage from January to April of 2020.
- Job Now helps customers create a customized roadmap to their dream job. It can help them decide on a career path and help them land a job thanks to live interview coaching and a resume lab.
- Vet Now connects veterans to resources that help them and their families navigate civilian life. Those resources include live job coaching, a resume lab and Veteran Navigators, who connect veterans to benefits and other helpful information.







*Bethany Library*





# Engagement & Program Services

## Summer Reading

Completely online Summer  
Reading — total readers:

**7,706**

Total completions:



(54% of readers)

Total minutes read:

**7,432,494**



Total points earned:

**7,613,004**

Average points  
per reader:

**988**







“We learned how to share our screen  
and read together in a virtual world.”

- Rondia Banks, Bethany Library Manager



# Online Programming

This year we looked to virtual methods of interacting with our customers and their families, including Zoom and social media platforms. Thanks to our team of tech-savvy librarians across Oklahoma County, we hosted hundreds of pre-recorded and live library programs entirely online. Those included storytimes, author talks, yoga, book clubs, tai chi, virtual teen hangouts, arts and crafts and many others. Despite these challenging times, we also managed to continue working with community partners to offer a virtual experience for large-scale programs like Neighborhood Arts and collaborative programs with the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, the OSU Extension office and Science Museum Oklahoma.

We've also continued to offer our beloved Children Reading to Dogs program virtually. Children join an online Zoom session and break out into virtual rooms with a therapy dog and a library staff member to work on their reading. The model for the virtual version of the program was featured in several library publications and received national attention.

"The pandemic gave us an opportunity to reach our customers in new and exciting ways, and even gain new customers and online followers as a result of our efforts," said Kellie Delaney, digital services and strategy manager. "Through this experience, we've learned our virtual spaces are just as important as our physical ones and we will continue to provide virtual experiences going forward to help meet people where they are."

## Total Author Visits: 6

**Wendelin Van Draanen**

*Children and teen author, (in-person at The Village Library in March 2020)*

**Ellen Crosby and Megan Miranda**

*Thrillers and Mysteries, (virtual)*

**Rebecca Balcárcel**

*Pura Belpré honor winner, (virtual)*

**Jennifer L. Armentrout, Caleb Roehrig and Tracy Wolff**

*YA paranormal (virtual)*

**Jen Deluca, Alisha Rai and Alexandria Bellefleur**

*Romance (virtual)*

**Aimee Agresti, Krysten Kusek Lewis and Bryn Greenwood**

*Fiction (virtual)*



[View the author interviews here!](#)





## The pandemic shifted our programming efforts from in-person to virtual.

Librarians across the system contributed to fun and engaging programs and activities during the second half of the fiscal year. The virtual programming was so popular, we plan on continuing it even once we are out of the pandemic and back to full-service libraries.

Some of our new virtual programming included activities like STEM Saturdays, puppet programs, online storytimes, crafts, how-to's and our popular book reviews and discussions. We even started hosting health and wellness classes like Silver Sneakers and Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL), as well as healthy eating and cooking classes by the OSU Extension Office. Of course, storytimes and early childhood programs such as Mother Goose on the Loose were the mainstay of our virtual programming.

This summer we even had our Neighborhood Arts performances all online with a combination of pre-recorded and live sessions. The always engaging Lucas Ross and the fun, foot-stomping Sugar Free Allstars continued to be highlights during the Arts Council Oklahoma City and Metro Library live streams.



During the pandemic, we also tried something new called "take-home kits." Take-home kits are activities that customers register for and pick up. Some of these went along with online videos and activities. Over 5,000 take-home kits were distributed for both early childhood and adult activities. Popular kits included DIY, crafts, STEM and cultural activities.

Each year, our Library looks to expand our bilingual events, celebrate the beauty of cultural heritage and have insightful community discussions about American history and current events involving race and diversity in our country. Programs that reflected our commitment to diversity and inclusion this year included the Historically Speaking series, which included topics about Indigenous fashion and cultures as well as Chicano communities, history programs like the PBS film screenings of "The African Americans," and presentations like Black Towns Coast to Coast. We hosted a Noche de Cuentos series celebrating the power of storytelling and Hispanic heritage with stories read in Spanish by the author, Xavier Garza. We look forward to more opportunities in the coming year to expand our programs reflecting the rich cultural diversity in our community.

# 1,553

early childhood programs

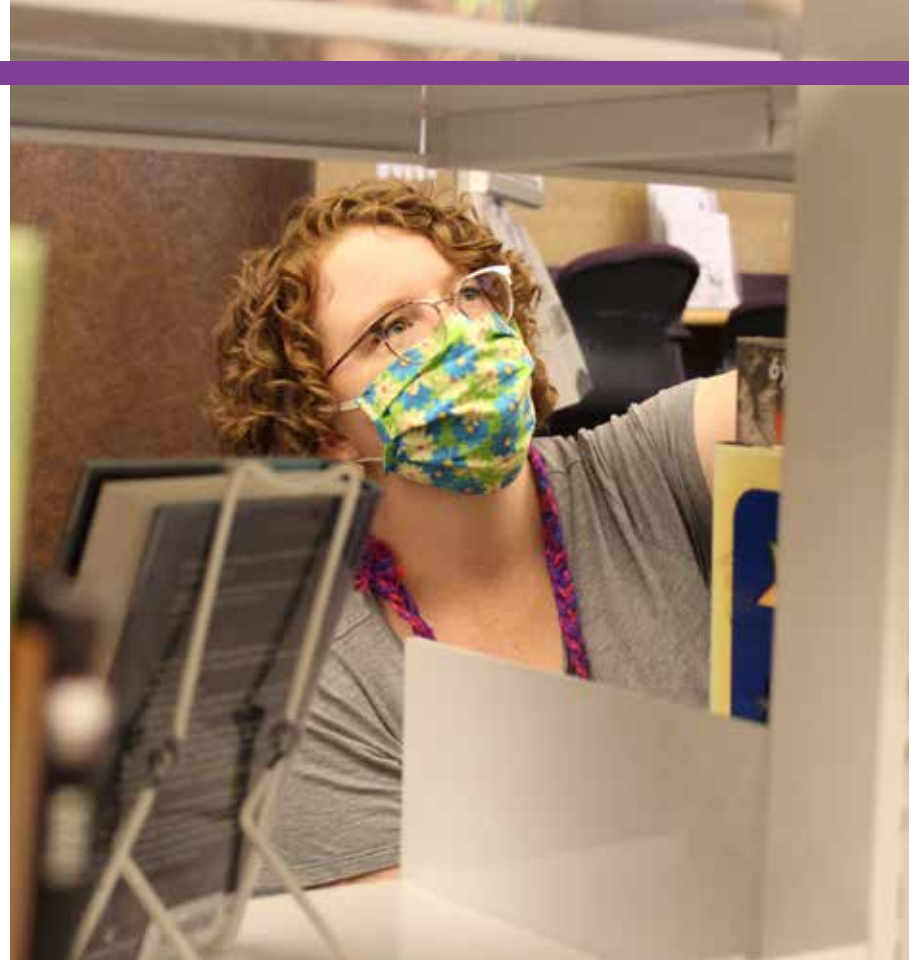
# 5,206

take home kits distributed



[View the Neighborhood Arts performances here!](#)









“

Booksale 2020 was the most  
successful sale to date; we are thrilled!

- Beth Toland, Metropolitan Library System Commissioner

”





# Partnerships



## Friends of the Metropolitan Library System

The Friends of the Library remains one of our most visible and important partnerships. This year, the Friends had a record number of 2,638 members.

The Friends held their most successful booksale in Friends history with \$297,900 in sales. With 1,101 volunteers who gave a total of 8,115 hours over 10 days to ensure the success of the sale, half of the volunteers were new Friends volunteers. Throughout the year to prepare for the sale, organizers spent

more than 14,000 hours sorting and processing over 1 million items. They granted almost \$200,000 to the Metropolitan Library System in FY20. Funds were used to provide summer reading prizes and incentives, upgraded meeting spaces and customer furniture at multiple locations, scholarships for staff, equipment and technology for mobile makerspaces, and equipment for robotics and coding programming.





## Volunteers for the Metropolitan Library System

In FY20, volunteers gave over 10,510 hours, providing additional support for library programs and events. Volunteers helped at various programs such as Homework Help, Rocket Readers and Reading Help for Kids. Our Children Reading to Dogs volunteer program received accolades from state organizations and received national TV and news recognition. This year, volunteers also transcribed oral history interviews to add to a searchable online resource.

Besides the Friends of the Library booksale, one of the largest volunteer activities is the annual Summer Reading program. During the summer of 2019, summer teen volunteers helped over 30,000 customers sign up for the Summer Reading program.



## Library Endowment Trust

The Library Endowment Trust is an important partner that raises the majority of its money during an annual fundraising dinner called Literary Voices. This year, the Trust hosted author Kristin Hannah for Literary Voices and netted more than \$130,000 to help grow the endowment. Funds from the Trust are granted to the Library for the purchase of books and materials as well as program and event services at libraries throughout the system. Additionally, the Trust granted \$950,000 to the Belle Isle Renovation project. This grant was made possible by a planned gift from the estate of Gordon E. and LaVerne Taylor.



FY20 Friends of the Library Book Sales:

**\$297,900**

Volunteers provided

**442**

hours of Homework  
Help at five of our  
library locations

**\$133,500**

netted by the 2019 Literary  
Voices fundraising dinner







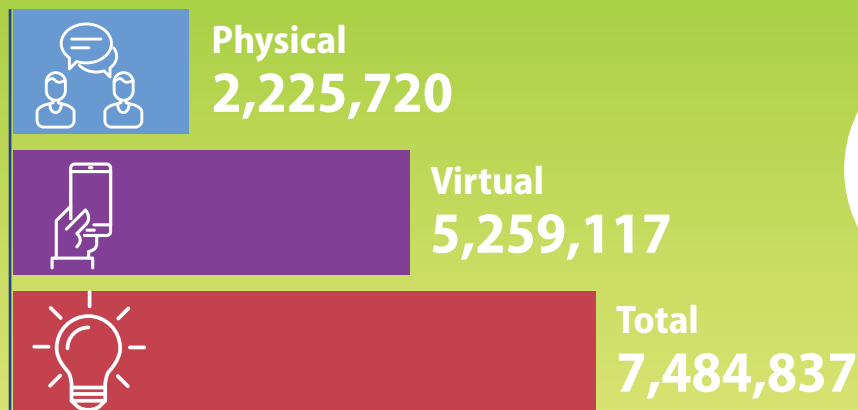


# By the Numbers

	FYE 2020		FYE 2019	
Revenue:				
Property Taxes	\$39,459,366	96.4%	\$38,090,730	95.6%
Collections on Fines and Copy Services	464,457	1.1%	609,262	1.5%
Gifts and Grants	208,169	0.5%	318,846	0.8%
State Revenue	236,276	0.6%	194,893	0.5%
Investment Income, Net	470,296	1.1%	515,472	1.3%
Gain on Disposals	2,450	0.0%	2,305	0.0%
Other	74,090	0.2%	119,856	0.3%
Total Revenue	40,915,104	100.0%	39,851,364	100.0%
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	25,095,191	66.4%	24,836,324	66.1%
Contractual Services	4,751,572	12.6%	4,368,480	11.6%
Commodities	879,643	2.3%	1,132,232	3.0%
Capital Outlays	7,079,582	18.7%	7,249,360	19.3%
Total Expenditures	37,805,988	100.0%	37,586,396	100.0%
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$3,109,116		\$2,264,968	



## Library visits:



Virtual Checkouts:  
OverDrive,  
hoopla, Kanopy



hoopla®

Checkouts: 99,456

kanopy

Kanopy movies  
streamed: 38,666



Total checkouts  
(Physical and virtual):

5,352,278

Total number of programs: 5,115

Program attendance: 86,104

22,844

Social media  
interactions

New library card  
account holders:

36,916



Total e-book &  
e-audiobook  
checkouts:

2,274,788

e-book  
checkouts:  
1,277,455

e-audiobook  
checkouts:  
997,333

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# What's to Come

## Belle Isle Library Opening

The Belle Isle Library, known to many as the “Millennium Falcon,” is currently undergoing an extensive remodel, launching the 1960s style library into the future.

While the building will still look similar to the iconic spaceship, the redesigned library will certainly delight customers with some major upgrades that make it a more business-, family- and tech-friendly space.

“So many of our Belle Isle families have commented about how excited they are to have a renovated library in their neighborhood,” said Lindsey Bryan, manager of the Belle Isle Library.

The renovation will add 14,000 square feet to the library, creating a much larger meeting area, five new study rooms, a children’s room, a large teen space, expanded restrooms and a makerspace. In addition, the library will add new furniture, more computers and more parking. The library is slated for re-opening in early 2022.

“So many customers who’ve visited our temporary space have driven by the original location and they’re so excited to see progress being made,” Bryan said. “They’ve asked a lot of questions about the renovation and specifically are excited to find out when it will open to the public.”

## Del City Library Opening

While Del City Library staff eagerly await the opening of their new location in March 2021, they also reflect on the storied history of their branch. Del City’s first library opened in 1961 in a two-bedroom home owned by the city, then joined the Metropolitan Library System in 1965. And now, it’s set to open its brand new 16,000-foot location at the former site of AMF Sunny Lanes Bowling, adding another twist to an already interesting history.

“I’ve heard a ton of fun stories about how that building was such a big part of the community,” said Angel Suhrstedt, manager of the Del City Library.

With staff bowling shirts and bowling-themed giveaway items, the event will pay homage to Sunny Lanes and will draw members of the community for socially distanced tours and other creative events to keep customers safe from COVID-19.

“We’re bringing all sorts of wonderful resources: 30 public computers, much larger teen and children’s dedicated spaces, a covered patio for children’s events, private study rooms our customers can use as well as our own spaces for programs and events,” Suhrstedt said. “We’re looking forward to being a gathering space for our community as well as a reason for folks throughout the metro area to visit Del City.”

## Curbside Pickup

Maintaining normalcy while also caring for the safety of our customers and staff has been of the utmost importance to us this year. Our curbside services have allowed us to serve our customers and provide access to the information and entertainment they need during this challenging time. Library materials are held in a 96-hour quarantine for sanitary purposes and staff wear gloves while handling and bagging materials for customers to pick up. Some libraries have also implemented bonus book bags. Parents can call their local library, tell the librarian a theme and reading level for their children and our librarians will put together a bag of books and movies with content curated just for them.

We’ve received positive feedback from customers using our curbside service and we recognize this service could benefit our customers’ busy lifestyles even after we transition back to our full-service options. We look forward to implementing permanent curbside services at all our library locations in 2021.





## Metro Checkout App

Looking to improve the customer experience and continue our popular curbside service, the Library will launch the Metro Checkout app in January 2021. The free, easy-to-use app allows curbside customers to check into their library upon arrival. Customers can enter the description of their car, what spot they're parked in and information about bonus bags or take home kits they expect to pick up, and Library staff will drop those items off to them. The app, available for download now in your app store, allows customers to retrieve holds for members of their family who have separate library card accounts.



[View our calendar of upcoming events here!](#)

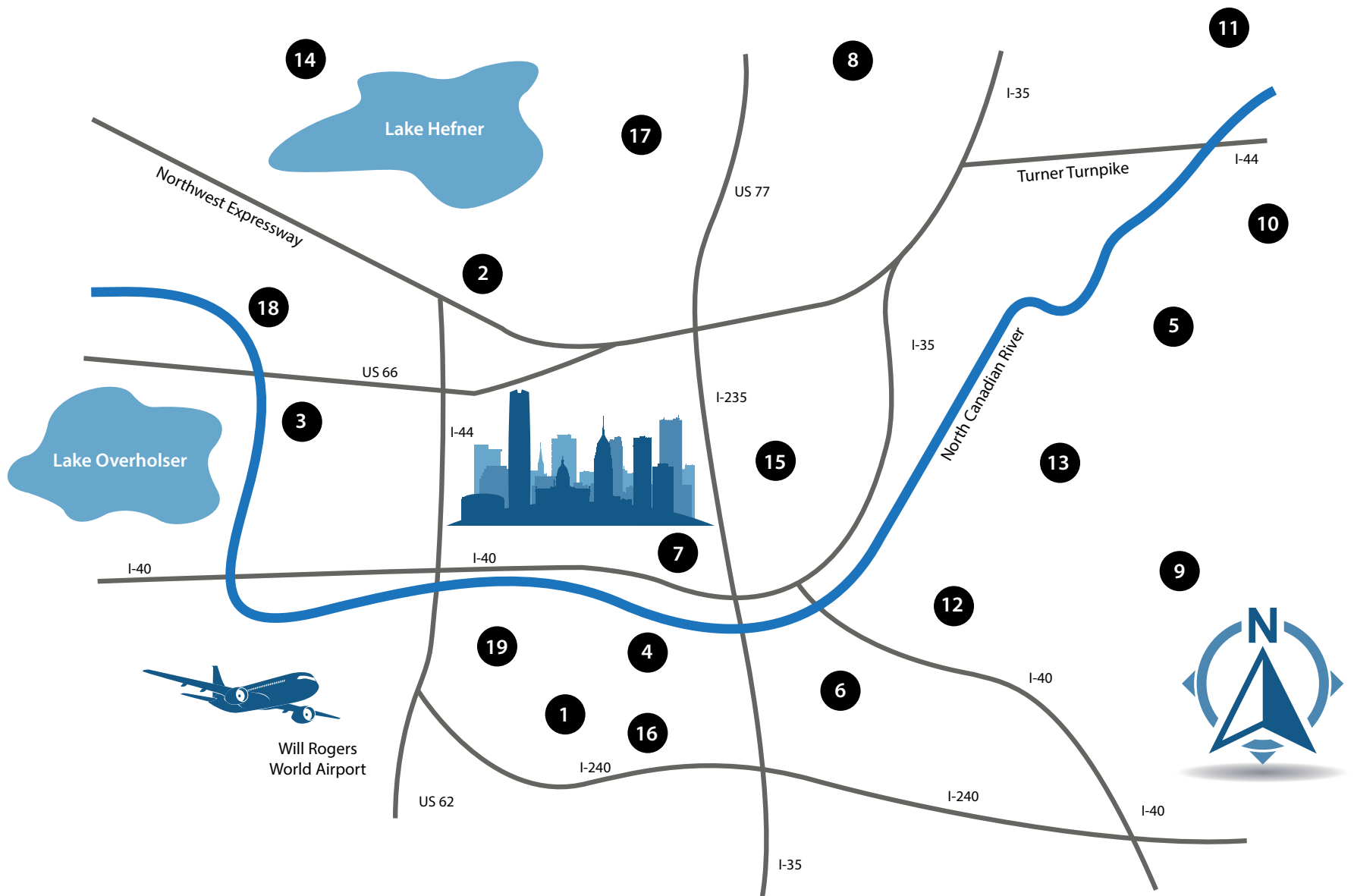
## Metropolitan Library Locations

1	ALMONTE LIBRARY	2914 SW 59th, Oklahoma City	606-3575
2	BELLE ISLE LIBRARY	3621 NW Expressway, Oklahoma City ((Temporary location)	843-9601
3	BETHANY LIBRARY	6700 NW 35th Street, Bethany	789-8363
4	CAPITOL HILL LIBRARY	327 SW 27th, Oklahoma City	634-6308
5	CHOCTAW LIBRARY	2525 Muzzy Street, Choctaw	390-8418
6	DEL CITY LIBRARY	4509 SE 15th, Del City	672-1377
7	DOWNTOWN LIBRARY	300 Park Ave., Oklahoma City	231-8650
8	EDMOND LIBRARY	10 S. Boulevard, Edmond	341-9282
9	HARRAH LIBRARY	1930 N. Church Avenue, Harrah	454-2001
10	JONES LIBRARY	9295 Willa Way, Jones	399-5471
11	LUTHER LIBRARY	310 NE 3rd, Luther	277-9967
12	MIDWEST CITY LIBRARY	8143 E. Reno, Midwest City	732-4828
13	NICOMA PARK LIBRARY	2240 Overholser, Nicoma Park	769-9452
14	NORTHWEST LIBRARY	5600 NW 122nd, Oklahoma City	606-3580
15	RALPH ELLISON LIBRARY	2000 NE 23rd, Oklahoma City	424-1437
16	SOUTHERN OAKS LIBRARY	6900 S. Walker, Oklahoma City	631-4468
17	THE VILLAGE LIBRARY	10307 N. Pennsylvania Ave., The Village	755-0710
18	WARR ACRES LIBRARY	5901 NW 63rd, Warr Acres	721-2616
19	WRIGHT LIBRARY	2101 Exchange, Oklahoma City	235-5035



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