



LIBRARY AS THE COMMUNITY'S WELCOME CENTER

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One of the most important dynamics for the long term health of a community is how well it can incorporate newcomers, especially those who do not have an existing social network to tap into. People move to rural areas for a number of reasons, such as: to escape city life, because they married into it, to take care of an aging parent, to be taken care of by an adult child, for a job, or simply because they passed through once and fell in love.

Very commonly, the library is the first place they go in the short term for information and entertainment, and in the long term to meet people and learn more about what is really going on in town (because rural towns may look sleepy when you're driving through, but there is always a lot happening). This puts libraries in an important dual role: de facto welcome center, and social connection matchmaker.

What is in this tool?

This tool provides a series of considerations to help you see the library as a newcomer would. And to build resources that support them learning to make their way in their new town.

IN THEIR WORDS

"About the newcomers coming to the library: I think it's one of the library's most important functions since we're undergoing such rapid demographic change in this part of the county that people don't really know why they're so attracted to this area. And if they come to the library we have an opportunity to teach them something about what's going on here why this is such a culturally rich place."

-- Mimi,
interview #7-3-02

LIBRARY VISITOR FIRST IMPRESSIONS CHECKLIST

Entrance

- Parking clearly marked
- Entrance clearly marked
- Hours posted and visible
- Book drop visible
- Lobby uncluttered
- Community board up-to-date and well-organized
- Circulation desk visible from entrance
- Other: _____

Stacks

- Areas clearly labeled
- Shelves/aisles clearly labeled
- Intuitive flow to shelves
- Books organized and nice on the shelves
- Other: _____

Circulation Desk

- Someone available to provide quality customer service
- Desk uncluttered
- Behind the desk well organized
- Services posted
- Other: _____

General

- General areas clearly marked
- Signage for the bathrooms



<input type="checkbox"/>	Signage for the public computers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seating areas clear of clutter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signage for copier and/or printers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children's area with age-appropriate furniture
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book displays and/or book suggestions available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

Staff

<input type="checkbox"/>	Friendly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

NEW COMMUNITY MEMBER CHECKLIST

First impressions are key! Giving an interested visitor or new resident some of your time and making them feel welcome goes a long way in creating long lasting relationships. The following is a checklist of ideas for you to consider when someone comes by the library and takes an interest in becoming a library card holder. Asking appropriate questions and answering their questions are also, as always, part of the job.

Inside the Library

<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce yourself and other nearby staff; give them your business card
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share the library's brochure, highlighting hours, online offerings, services, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide them with a library card registration form and indicate the requirements, if any, to apply for a library card
<input type="checkbox"/>	Give a general tour of the library, highlighting how the collection is organized.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share a booklist or show the location of local/regional interest items, historical archives, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Point out the community bulletin board and/or community flyers, brochures, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Welcome them to upcoming library programs and community events
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

Beyond the Library

Always have a welcome packet ready to hand to newcomers to town! Be sure to update it at least yearly. Below write down some ideas of the things your library should have in its welcome packet.

	Utilities and services: _____
	Shopping options: _____
	Restaurants: _____
	Banks: _____
	Churches: _____
	Access free wifi: _____
	Brief history of the area including any key dates: _____
	Local maps: _____
	Transportation options: _____
	Overview of how local government operates and key office holders: _____
	Other: _____