

Racine Public Library Report for March 2026 Board Packet

Executive Director's Report - February

Prepared by Nick Demske

You know, working in a public library in 2026 is a pretty **daily rollercoaster of emotions**. There are very big highlights every day---and this report details just a fraction of those that our incredible team cranked out for this community in the last month. But there's definitely some undeniably big challenges. This has felt very clear this last month or so.

There's a teaching that says "Your joy and your pain are interdependent"---they're not separate, but they're two pieces of the same thing. I've been thinking about that a lot at the library lately. We have the incredible challenge of having so many people and organizations reaching out to us every day for help, for collaboration opportunities, for programming ideas, and it's very overwhelming--far too much to actually address. But that also means our reputation in the community is such that *everyone* wants to work with us. **We're definitely where the cool kids hang out.**

I think of other challenges like the intense patron behavior challenges we have to navigate here. **Incident reports dramatically spiked** in the last week of February and the first weeks of March. But that challenge only happens because of this incredible, visionary mission that we're fulfilling---a place that opens its doors to literally anyone of any culture, belief, background or social standing, and says "if you can abide by our rules of behavior, then this is your house, too." Another joy this challenge reflects----**more incident reports doesn't necessarily just mean more incidents**. It also means more staff members having faith in the process and doing the work they might've not been as diligent about in the past of submitting reports.

I could go on. But suffice it to say we've had abundant challenges, and yet here we are, continuing to serve the public every day and bringing joy to this community and its people---**and upgrading the quality of life for so many**. While we intimately know the challenges as staff, we are still able to navigate them in a way that allows for those who *come* to the library to exclusively get the life-giving pieces of what we offer, fortunately.

As always, we accomplished tons in the last month. One enormous piece, as Lizzie mentions in her report, was the **Annual Report** which is one of the two biggest lifts we have every year (along with the budget). Having Lizzie in her role especially, as well as **Becky**, helped make that a much less burdensome task. It will hopefully only be easier each year, as they gain experience with it annually as well. **Big thanks to Lizzie** on leading that effort for 2026!

Another highlight was that business manager **Becky, myself and PSA (and Miss Wisconsin) Willow Newell** were able to participate in the **Wisconsin Library Association's annual Library Legislative Day** at the state capitol. Since it's not a budget year, this was mostly a year for us to thank the legislators and their staff for supporting libraries well in the last budget, as well as continuing to educate them about issues and opportunities within libraries. I did

personally add in some notes about how badly **municipalities like ours are in need of more shared revenue**, though. I informed/reminded some of the legislators that **the city of Racine is facing a \$7M deficit this coming year**. And if there isn't some kind of relief provided for communities like ours facing these systemic budget challenges, then it will have to be balanced on the backs of libraries and other departments. **Becky and Willow did great in the lobbying meetings**, and people treated Willow like the celebrity that she is.

February of course also includes all of our black history month programs and initiatives. The **Black History Month Read-in** was a big hit as always, **now having celebrated 11 consecutive years**. One of our adult services librarians, **Joana, made one of the best book displays I've ever seen here**, which included photos and short bios of black community members--contemporary and historical--who had important impacts on Racine. Our PSA Keyontai helped RUSD celebrate an anniversary as well--**the 40th year anniversary of the Black Youth Achievement Awards**, which took place next door again at Memorial Hall. **Keyontai tabled for the library there**, and I was able to at least stop by (even though it was on the same day as Transit Director, Trevor Jung's, wedding :)

Despite the abundant challenges, **the library is still showing up and making great things happen day after day for this community**. Thank you all, as Trustees, for continuing to support our work in this very new and ever-changing social landscape!



Deputy Director's Report - February 2025

Prepared by Lizzie Hjelle

Projects

Much of my February was filled with preparing and finalizing the library's annual report for the Department of Public Instruction, which included a significant amount of data-gathering related to the services we provided in 2025. The good news is that this process proved to be an excellent precursor to calculating the library's 2025 ROI! Just as in 2024, I will be using annual statistics about our circulation, reference interactions, technology help, program attendance, and other services to determine the value of the services the library provided to the community in 2025.

Last year, I calculated that the Racine Public Library generated **\$13,461,263** in value to the community in 2024 based on the services we provided, which translates to a **207% return on investment** for every dollar of public funding the library received. This was a conservative calculation, utilizing the Library Value Calculator adapted for the Madison Public Library where possible or assigning value to our services at the low end of market rate. I will be using the same methodology for our 2025 ROI calculations, and I anticipate our ROI will increase as we determine methodology for valuing services we did not include in our 2024 calculations, such as home delivery services and certain services provided by the library's social worker. My hope is to have a finalized ROI calculation ready to share in April!

Department Updates

Programming staff across all departments dug into summer program planning this month, including applying for a wide variety of grants to support library programs in the coming year. Programming Librarian Emily has submitted four grant applications this year, all related to funding programs at RPL.

Continuing Education

- Deputy Director
 - 2/24 1p-3p, PLA Webinar: Responding to ICE in the Library
- All Staff
 - **37** staff attended the all-staff meeting on 2/20
 - Staff completed a total of **55** hours of continuing education in February

Social Worker's Report - February 2025

Prepared by Ashley Cedeno, Library Social Worker

The purpose of the library social worker's Februaryly report is to document and analyze the social services provided within the library setting. This report tracks key aspects of the social worker's role, ensuring accountability, identifying trends, and improving services.

Patron Interactions

Summarizes the number of interactions with patrons. "SWK" interactions include social service appointments by phone or in person, as well as interactions with local community resource organizations. "General" refers to library assistance of patrons not social service related. Starting in 2025, the distinction between the two is relayed in the below chart. Bus Passes do not count towards patron interaction totals.

Year/Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025			2026		
					SWK	General	Total	SWK	Gen	Total
January		24	56	137	68	125	193	124	186	310
February		20	71	249	69	74	143	131	167	298
March		28	129	287	66	68	134			
April		61	119	290	60	124	184			
May		34	80	215	86	65	151			
June		36	137	222	93	30	123			
July		39	111	238	95	120	215			
August		42	211	197	91	152	243			
September	6	33	159	211	177	192	369			
October	15	40	189	271	130	235	365			
November	15	52	180	201	76	70	146			
December	19	40	118	131	54	49	103			

**prior to mid-2023, non-swk interactions were not tracked*

Need/Concerns

Displays the frequency of assistance provided across categories of patron need.

Aging and Disability Resources	3
Applying for Benefits/Financial Assistance	9
Clothing/Laundry	
COVID-19	
Domestic Abuse	
Education	3
Emotional Support	8
Employment	9
Food Insecurity	4
Healthcare	2
Housing	7
Relating to Incident Report or Crisis	27
Internet/Hotspot	2
Legal	8
Mental Health	5
Re-entry Services	
Refugee/Immigration Support	
Sensory Room	7
Sexual Assault Services	
Substance Use	
Transportation (not including bus passes)	16
Veteran Services	
Library Social Work Expertise requested	
General Library Assistance (Non-swk)	167
Community Resource Fair Communication	16
Communication w/ community org	5

**General: Anything that falls under this category are interactions I have with patrons that do not relate to social services, such as assisting patrons with printing, certain reference questions, etc during desk coverage or rounds. These interactions also get reported under the general library data gathering of interactions.*

***Relating to Incident Report or Crisis: Anything that falls under this category are interactions I have with patrons that either directly result in an Incident Report, or in which I speak to a patron regarding their*

suspension, meet with a patron prior to the end of their suspension, or any other incident that occurs that may not result in an Incident report.

Bus Passes

Tracks the distribution of transportation assistance, ensuring proper allocation and identifying demand.

Total bus passes distributed this month:

Year/Month	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
January		27	0*	123	80
February		45	0	59	64
March		54	10	54	
April		72	93	77	
May		99	86	80	
June		126	81	51	
July		101	97	93	
August		111	95	83	
September	62	107	66	64	
October	72	118	132	95	
November	44	18	62	68	
December	31	0 *	83	62	

*=No bus passes available

Continued Education (CE) or Training

Documents professional development efforts, such as courses or certifications completed.

- 2/24 1p-3p, PLA Webinar: Responding to ICE in the Library

Programs

Information on programming events led by or assisted by the Library Social Worker.

- Coffee and Conversation
 - 2/26- 4 participants; Topic: What is a piece of media that has left an impact on you?
- Community Resource Fair- February 6th, 11a-2p
 - A huge success!

- 16 tabling organizations and 61 attendees

Other/Miscellaneous

Captures additional relevant activities or observations that do not fit under the other categories.

- February 3rd, 2026- Participated in a Field Supervisor Panel (1 hour)
 - Served on a panel of Field Placement Supervisors to introduce Bachelor's Junior-level Social Work students at Carthage College to what an social work internship at the library would entail.
- Significant time was spent in revising Sensory Room procedures and ensuring the Sensory Room was ready for reopening to the public. Placed new items in the room, level-set expectations of room use with staff, etc.
- Continued efforts in the **Safety Committee (SC)**-weekly meetings focused on reviewing incidents and improving library safety protocols. As safety-related concerns arise, my role as a library social worker continues to be a valuable resource in addressing these issues
 - 27 interactions related to safety and security
 - Presented a Patron Behavior Policy review during all staff meeting (along with all other Safety Committee members).
- Hosting a BSW Carthage Social Work Student- **Field Placement/Internship**- The purpose of the internship is to provide an under-grad level student with hands-on experience in a nontraditional social work setting, while learning to apply social work values in a community based environment.

- Library Social Worker to provide weekly one-hour supervision

During the month of February, supervision of the social work intern has continued to require significant time and support as the student works toward achieving their learning goals and on-site responsibilities.

Marketing Report - February 2025

Prepared by Shay King, Head of Business Development

Overview

Digital accessibility update

This month, we researched the digital accessibility requirements coming into law for government institutions (WCAG 2.1 AA) and developed a project plan for improving the library's digital accessibility. This plan focuses especially on the website and bringing inaccessible documents up to date.

Training and development

- Shared Power Podcast — Exploring Shared Leadership Models with Anisha Desai: (51 minutes) — Head of Business Development
- Responding to ICE at the Library: Real World Approaches (60 minutes) — Head of Business Development
- Teach & Learn with WiscNet: Preparing for digital ADA compliance (1 hr 18 minutes) — Head of Business Development
- All-staff meeting, Feb. 20: 2 hours (each) — Head of Business Development and Marketing and Outreach Assistant

Viewership and Engagement

Press and Advertising

In February, the library was referenced **in the media [at least 13 times](#)**.

Press highlights

- [Racine Public Library to host Digital Literacy Fair March 21](#) - Racine County Eye, Feb. 6
- [Free Tax Forms Available at Racine Public Library: VITA Services Continue Through April](#) - Racine County Eye, Feb. 13
- [Racine Public Library to Host Financial Literacy Workshop. Streaming Class Feb. 24](#) - Racine County Eye, Feb. 20
- [Racine Public Library to Offer Free Crafts, Zines and Spice Kits 2026](#) - Racine County Eye, Feb. 27
- Community updates:
 - [Anne Herman: 1947 - 2026](#) - The Journal Times, Feb. 11

Website

2026 Views & Visitors

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Views	27,193	24,185											51,378
Visitors	7,686	7,190											14,876

February's most-viewed pages

- [Home](#) - 12,092 views (down from 16,427)
- [Calendar](#) - 2,801 views (up from 2,603)
- [Library GO!](#) - 516 views (down from 542)
- [Hours & Locations](#) - 445 views (down from 538)
- [Use Your Library](#) - 248 views (down from 296)

Changes

- The Use Your Library menu page has returned to the top five most-viewed pages, bumping [The Natural Library](#) out of the top five.

Google Business Listing

- **Current rating:** 4.5 stars, 207 reviews
- **February Google profile views:** 2,417
- **February appearances in search results:** 878
- **February calls:** 420
- **February direction requests:** 735
- **February website clicks:** 2,128

Newsletter

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open rate	38.6%	30.4%										
Click rate	1.3%	.9%										
Current recipients	25,366	25,376										

To sign up for our newsletter or view previous issues, visit RacineLibrary.info/newsletters.

Social Media

Facebook

Current followers: 7,622

February views: 28,068

Instagram

Current followers: 1,578

February views: 686

TikTok

Current followers: 1,032

February views: 551

Technical Services and Circulation Activities Report - February 2025

Prepared by Chris Tobias, Circulation and Technical Services Supervisor

Circulation Report of February Activities 2026

RPL circulated a total of 32,876 in February of 2026. 30,053 items from Main and 2,823 items from the Bookmobile. January circulation was 35,134. Approximately 8,603 holds were placed and filled. 7,680 items loaned from our collection to other libraries, and 5,955 received for RPL patrons. 380 new library cards were issued during the month of February. Circulation for Home Delivery Services was 2,635 transactions in the month of February.

Consortium sorting / AMH activity:

- In February circulation staff inducted 74,459 items through the automated material handler (AMH).

Technical Services Report of February Activities 2026

In February TSD staff placed orders for 427 items and received 187 previously ordered items. A total of 534 items were cataloged and processed for the library catalog.

We experienced a delay of a month with library material fulfillment due to updated pricing with our main library vendors cataloging and processing fees. Fulfillment of these orders started at the end of February.

Digital Services and Innovation Activities Report - February 2025

Prepared by Melissa Donaldson, Head of Digital Service and Innovation

The Digital Services & Innovation team continues to support patrons through technology assistance and makerspace services, including 3D printing and laser engraving. The following comparison highlights service demand and year-over-year changes.

Technology Help Questions

In February 2026, the library addressed **1,530 technology help questions**, marking a steady increase from the **1,444 questions** handled in February 2025. This represents a **5.96% year-over-year growth** in digital service engagement, reflecting a rising community reliance on technical support and innovation services

3D Printing

In February 2026, the Innovation Lab completed 54 3D print jobs, a notable decrease from 83 in February 2025. This 34.9% year-over-year decrease is attributable to the inherent variability of makerspace usage, which often fluctuates with shifting program schedules, the complexity of active projects, and overall patron demand.

Laser Engraving

In February 2026, staff completed **26 laser-engraved projects**, a significant increase from 5 in February 2025. This **420% year-over-year increase** highlights a rapidly growing community interest in laser engraving services and broader engagement with the library's makerspace tools.

Key Takeaways

The data from February 2026 underscores a shifting landscape within the library's digital and maker services. While the steady climb in technology help requests reinforces the essential role of digital literacy support for our patrons, the record-breaking surge in laser engraving suggests a rapidly expanding awareness and adoption of our Innovation Lab equipment. Although 3D printing experienced a temporary decline, this likely reflects minor seasonal fluctuations or project-specific timing rather than a loss of interest.

Programming

In February 2026, the Digital Services and Innovation team successfully executed **8 programs**, engaging **74 participants**. These offerings continue to provide vital hands-on learning

opportunities, fostering community connection and skill-building within the library's technological ecosystem.

Program Impact

- Total Programs: 8
- Total Attendance: 74
- Average Attendance: ~9.25 per program

Technology Upgrades

In a significant move to modernize library infrastructure, the Digital Services and Innovation team successfully transitioned from on-premises timing and printing solutions to a fully **cloud-based system**.

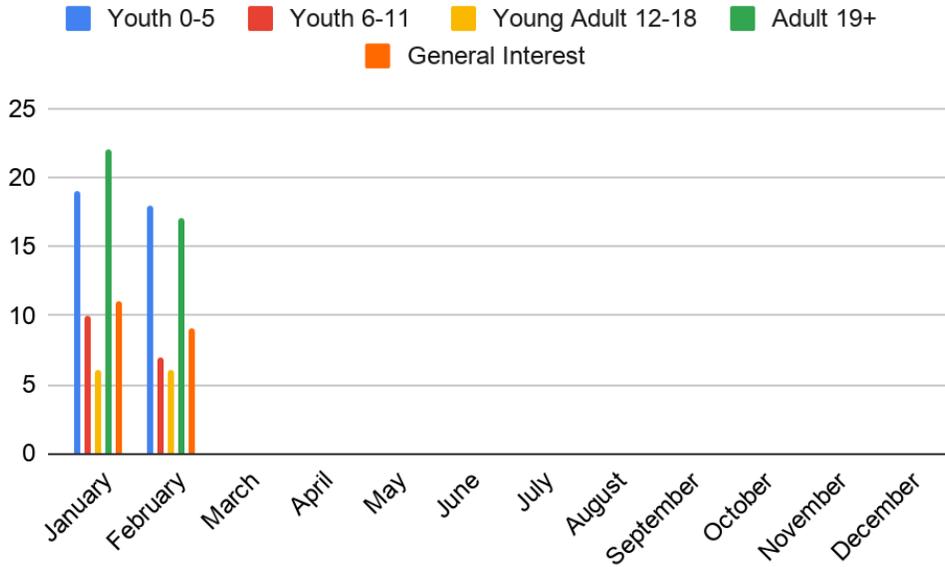
2026 Year to Date Library Services Statistics

Prepared by Chris Tobias, Matt Jerke, and Lizzie Hjelle

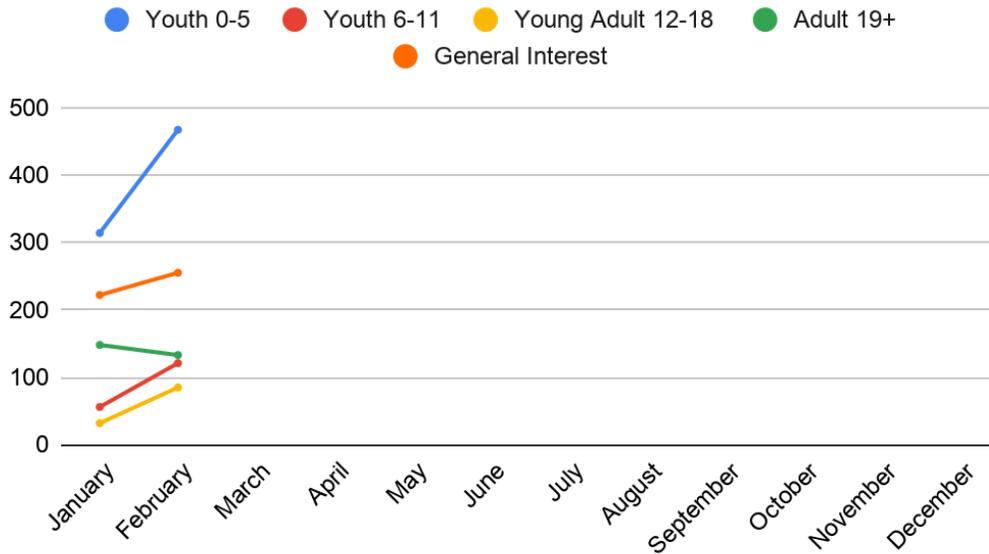
Library Programming Statistics

In January, the library hosted 68 programs attended by a total of 772 patrons.

2026 Number of Programs

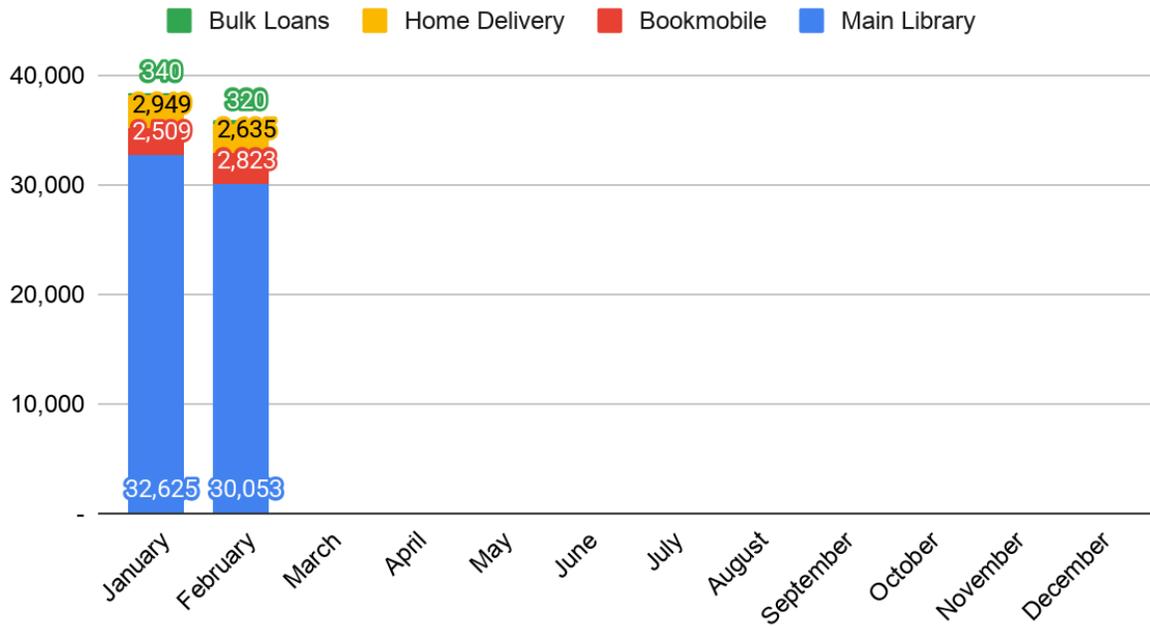


2026 Program Attendance

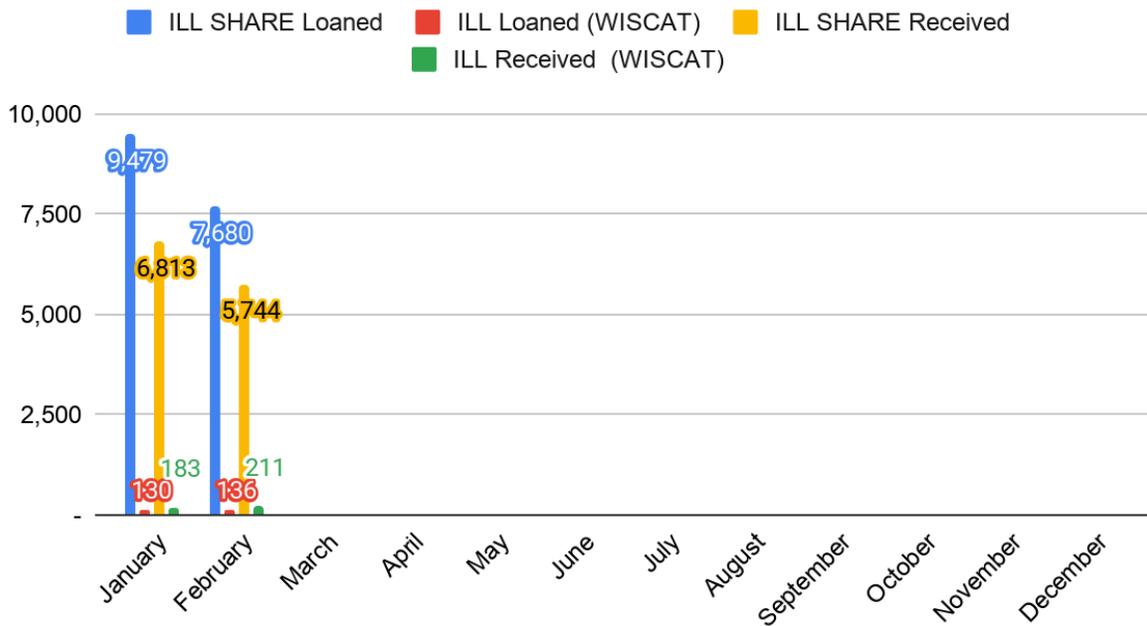


Physical Circulation Statistics

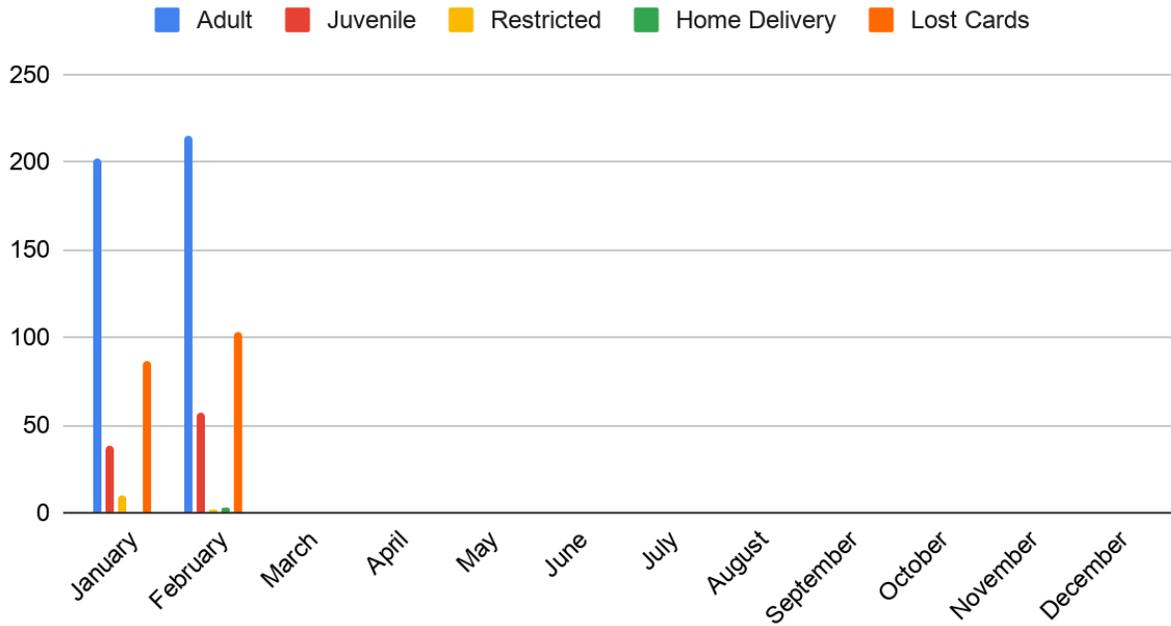
2026 Monthly Circulation



Interlibrary Loans 2026



2026 Library Cards Issued



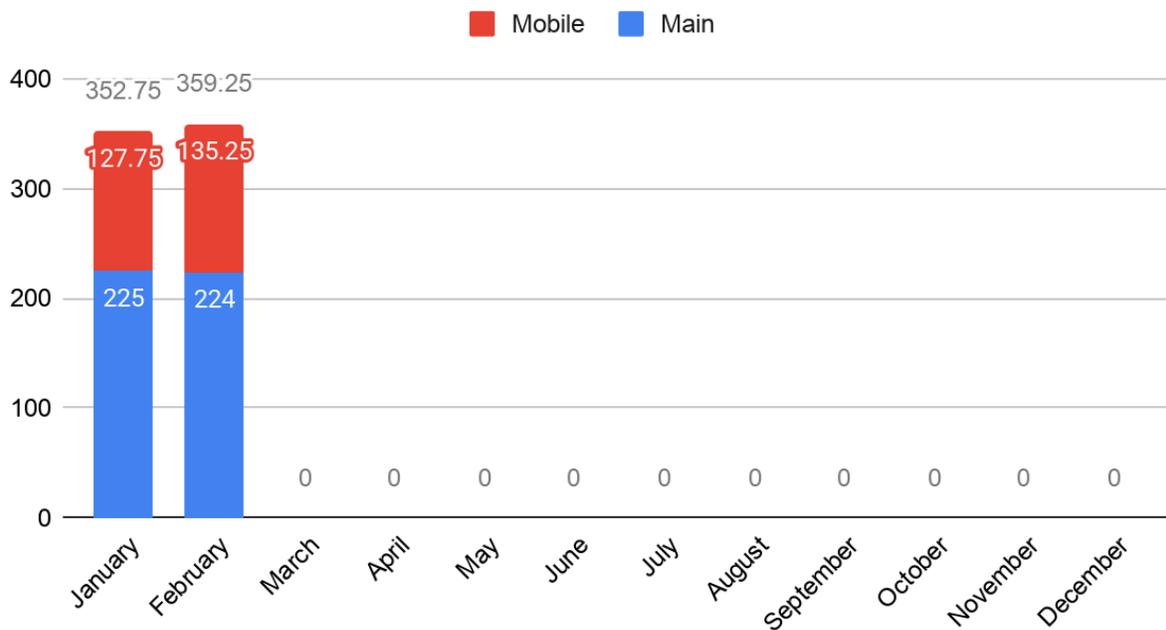
February Circulation by Municipality

Main		Bookmobile	
GTPLATTEVC	7	KNKENOSHAC	10
KNKENOSHAC	185	KNSOMERSV	10
KNPLEASPRV	2	MICUDAHYC	2
KNSALEMLKV	1	RACALDONV	640
KNSOMERSV	20	RAELMWOODV	5
KNTWINLAKV	8	RAMOUNTPLV	1,026
MIBAYSIDEV	15	RANORTHBYV	39
MIMILWAUKC	11	RARACINEC	684
MIOAKCREEC	5	RARAYMONDV	18
ONMINOCQUT	9	RASTURTEVV	136
RABURLINGC	57	RAUNIONGRV	3
RABURLINGT	2	RAWINDPOIV	250
RACALDONV	6,185	Total	2,823
RAELMWOODV	103		
RAMOUNTPLV	5,062		
RANORTHBYV	100		
RARACINEC	16,351		

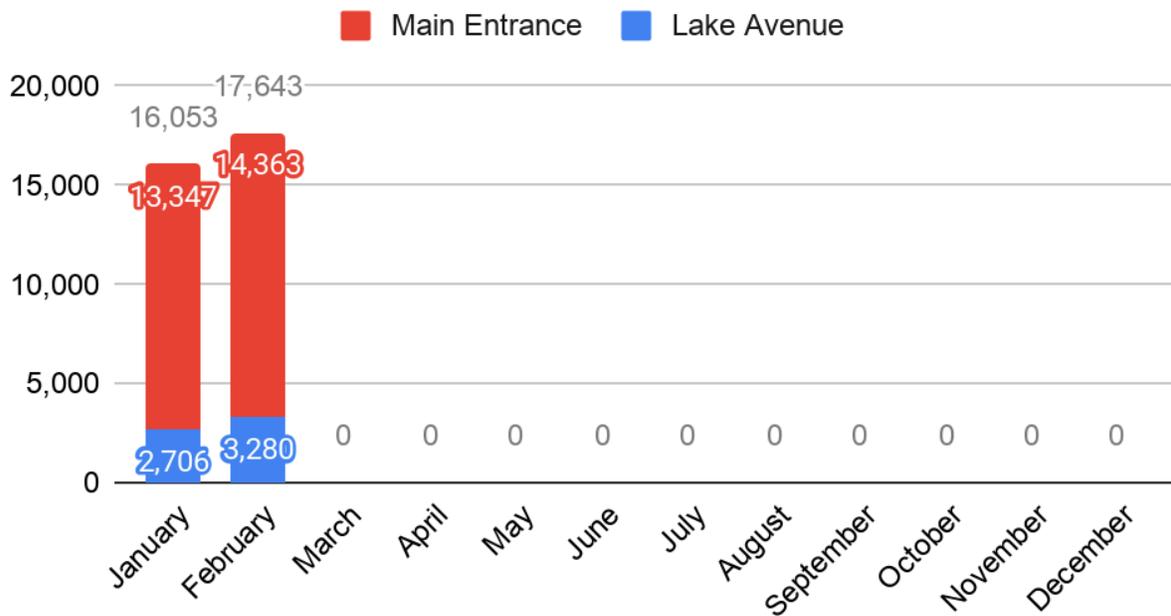
RARAYMONDV	398	
RAROCHESTV	35	
RASTURTEVV	369	
RAUNIONGRV	77	
RAWATERFOT	1	
RAWATERFOV	8	
RAWINDPOIV	963	
RAYORKVILV	20	
RKBELOITC	2	
WKMUKWONAV	1	
WPWAUPACAC	10	
WWEASTTRYV	11	
WWGENOACYV	3	
	32	
Total	30,053	

Building Usage Statistics

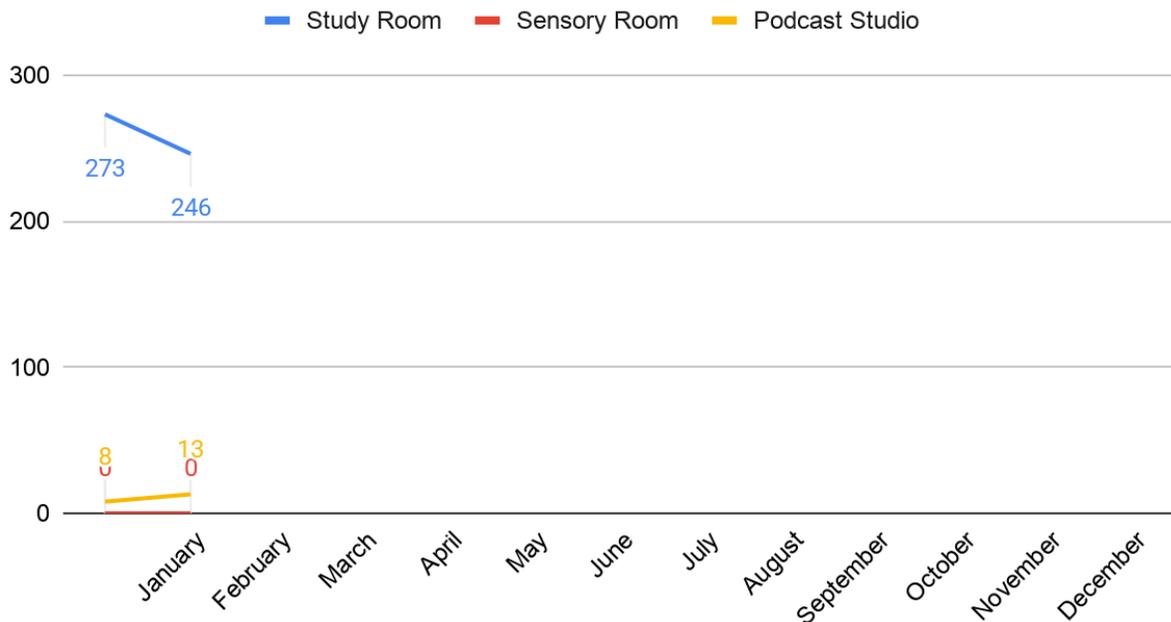
Hours Open 2026



People Counter 2026



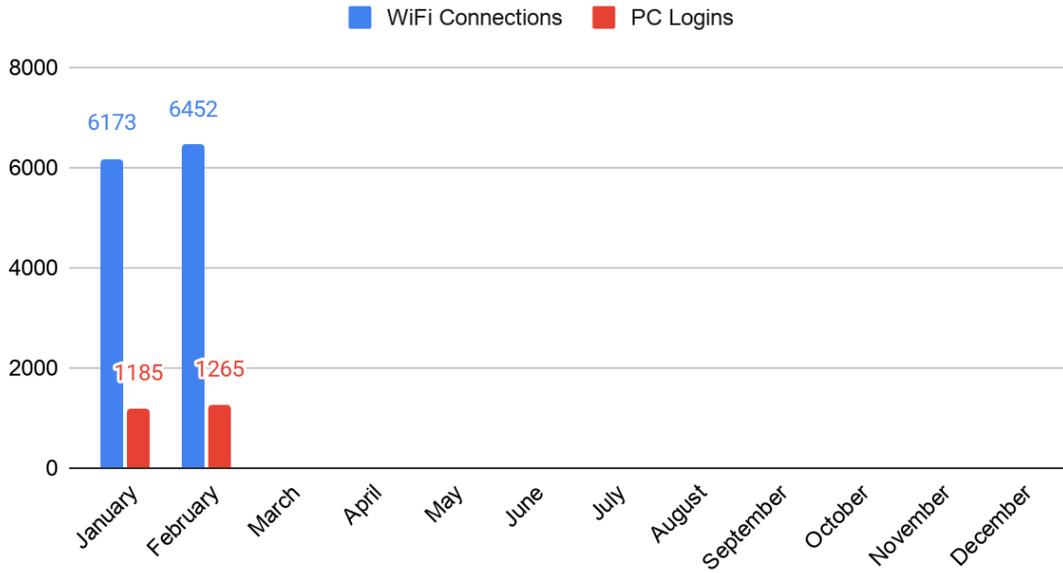
Public Room Use 2026



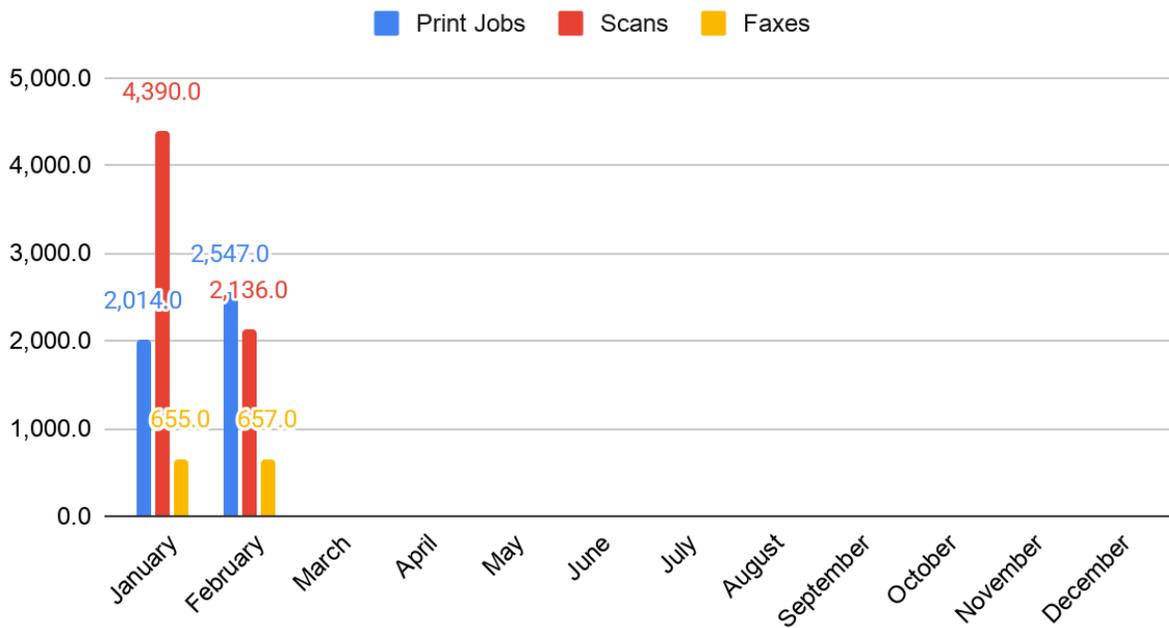
*Sensory Room was closed for maintenance August 2025 through March 2026

Technology Statistics

WiFi Connections & PC Logins 2026

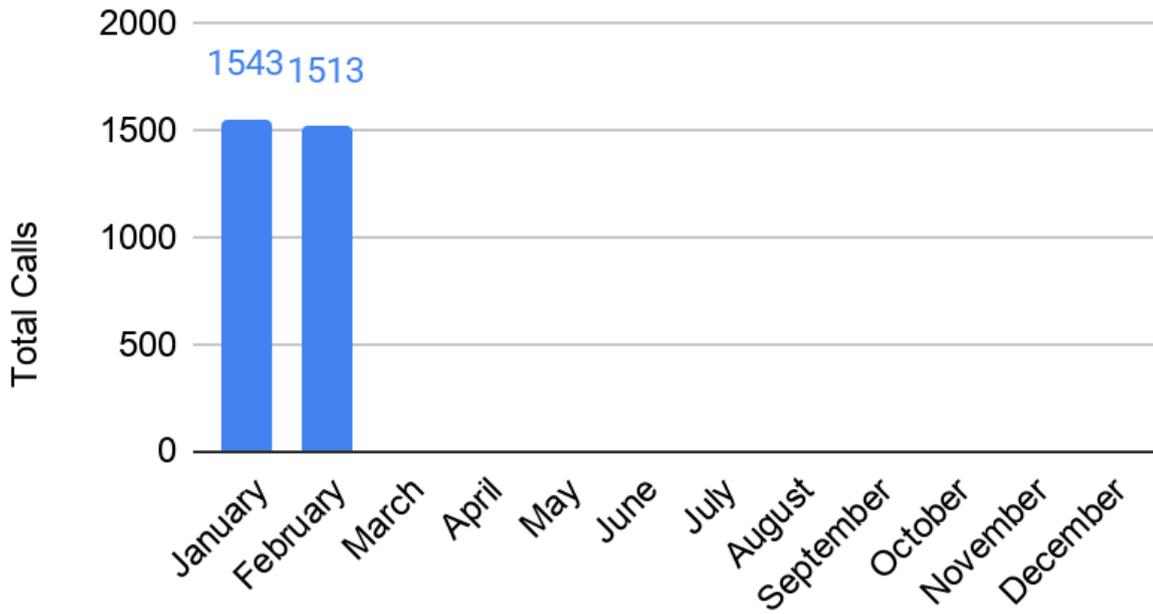


Printing, Scanning, & Faxing 2026

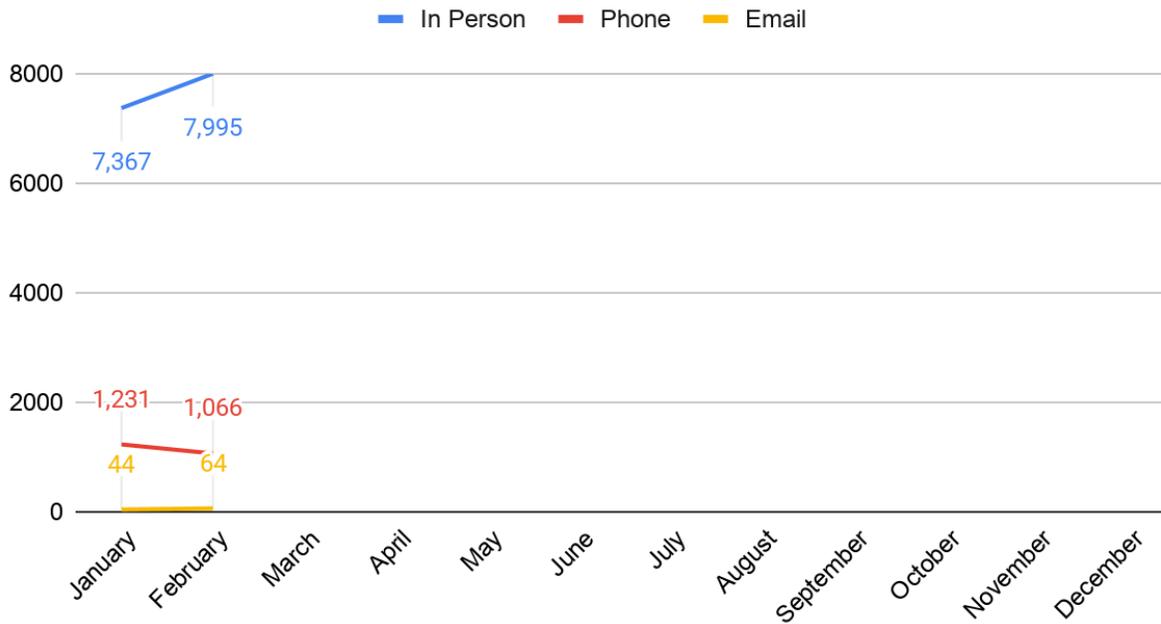


Reference Statistics

2026 Call Center : Number of Calls

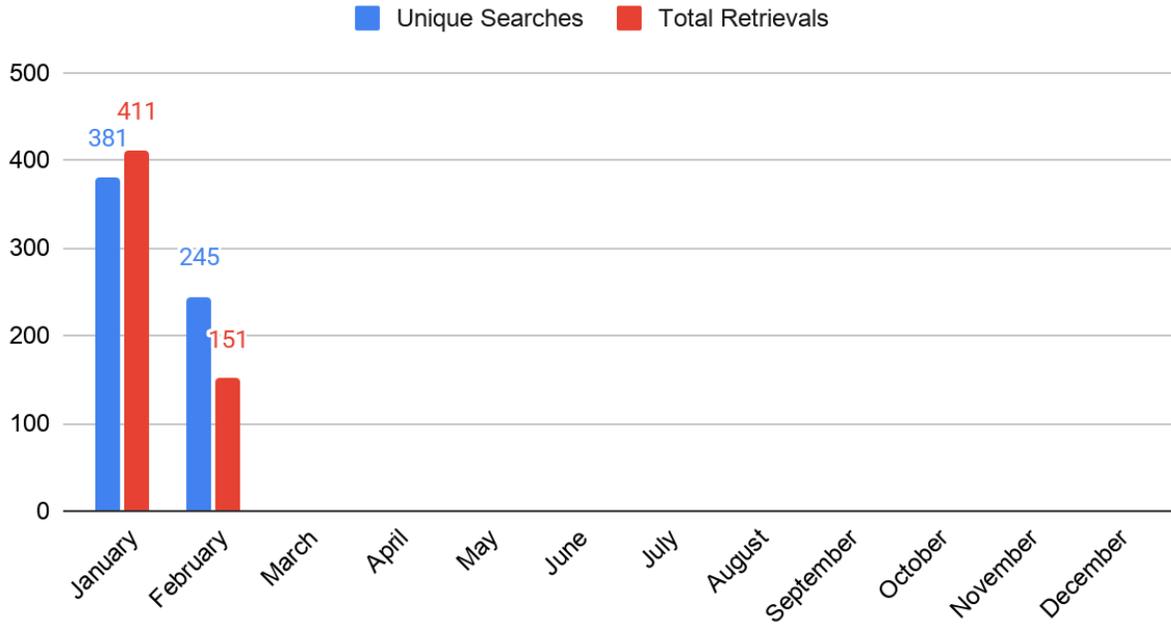


2026 Reference Interactions

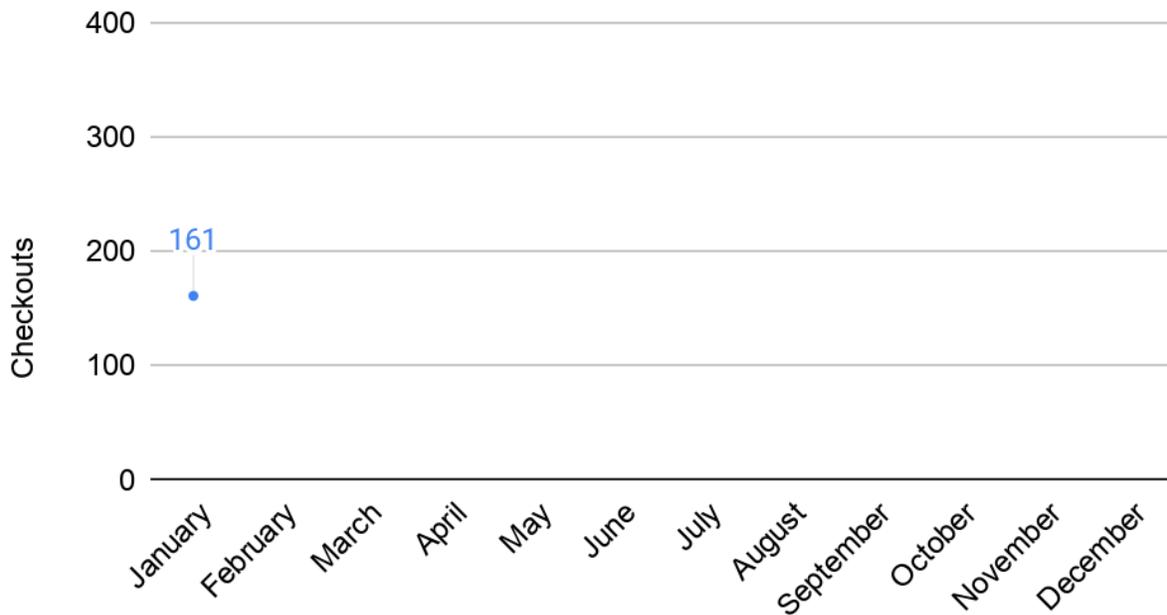


Digital Resource Usage Statistics

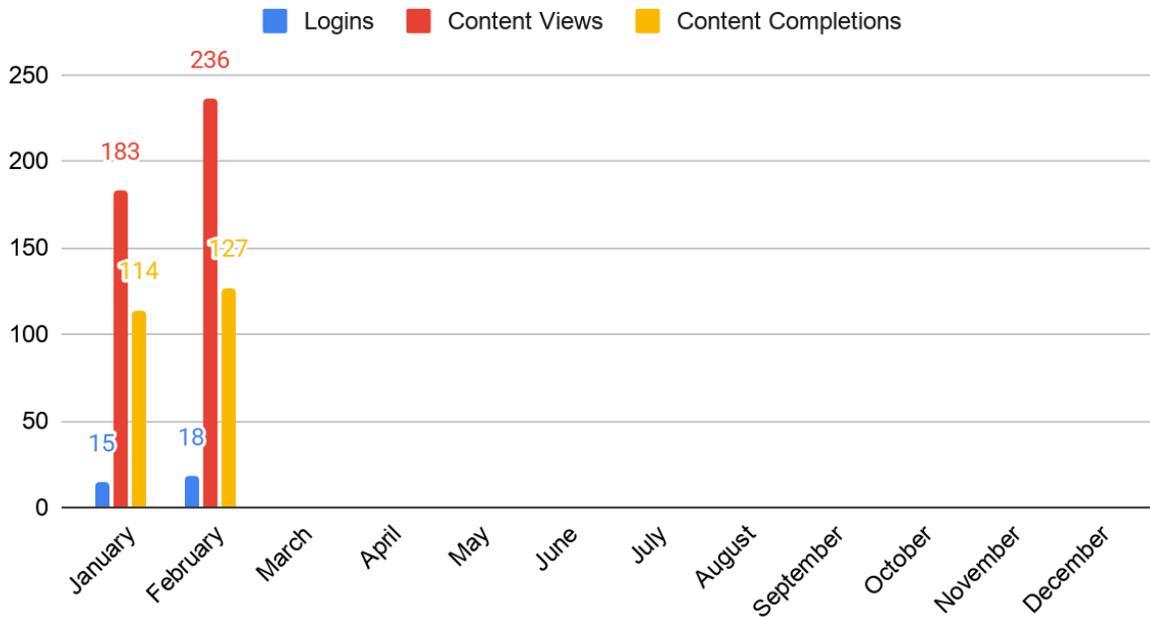
Ancestry Usage 2026



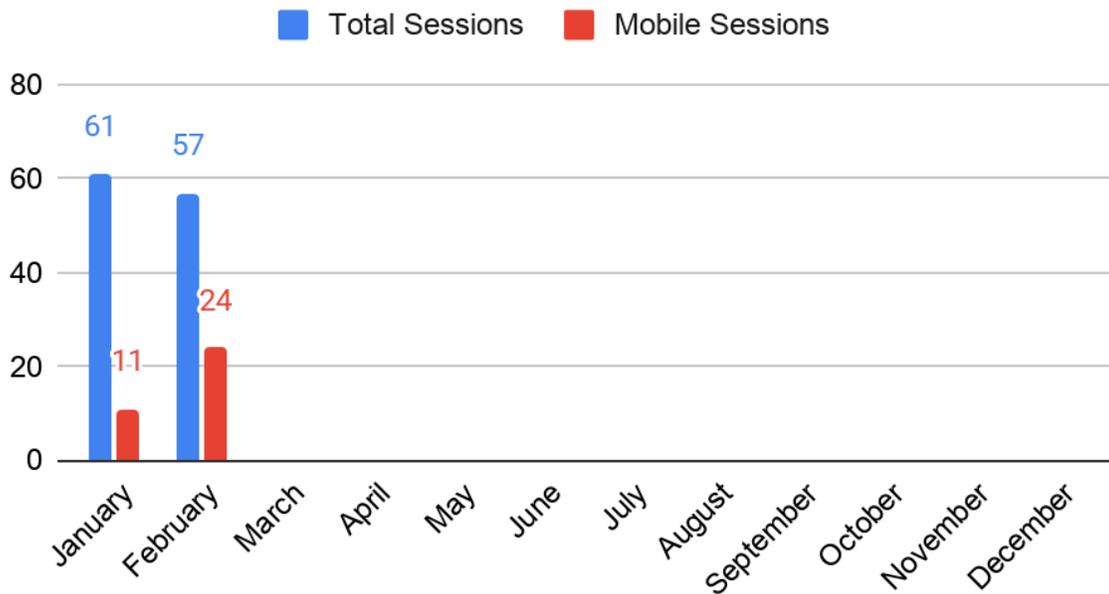
Comics Plus Checkouts 2026



LinkedIn Learning 2026



Mango Languages 2026



Overdrive (Libby) Downloads 2026

