AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

Library Operations Management

April 30, 2024   Audit No. 2406

WHAT WE FOUND

An increase in hold fulfillment times and returns of lost items are potentially associated to patrons keeping materials longer in the absence of late fees. However, performance metrics to evaluate the results of Fine Free program and other initiatives had not been established and data for assessing the programs is limited.

- Hold requests taking more than 90 days to fulfill have doubled between FY 2018/19 and FY 2022/23, and auto-waived charges for items returned after being marked "lost" have more than doubled.
- Auto-renewals may be contributing to longer checkouts, but data on duration of checkouts and other metrics is impacted by routine deletions of inactive item and patron records.

Strategies to increase visitors and library use could also improve the Library's revenues and operating budget, and stronger asset management controls are needed to protect library assets.

- Library revenues decreased by about 30% between FY 2018/19 and FY 2022/23. Increasing library visits could improve certain revenues such as library shop and facility rental fees.
- Controls over removal and disposition of library materials are needed, as well as periodic inventory verifications.

Further developing its staffing model to include staffing basic operational needs could allow the Library to better evaluate its service efficiency, including its ability to resume its pre-pandemic operating hours.

Staffing analysis to determine optimal staffing needs, including identifying its key functions and the time spent performing them, has not been conducted. Authorized staffing hours are similar to pre-pandemic levels, but branches are open fewer hours.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

We recommend the Library:

- Identify key metrics for evaluating program outcomes and work with Library system provider to identify reliable reporting of performance data. Further evaluate the impact of autorenewals.
- Evaluate strategies to increase branch use, improve accountability for removed items, and perform periodic inventories.
- Further develop its staffing model and evaluate optimal branch operating hours.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Library management agreed with the recommendations and provided an action plan for addressing them.

Page 1