



Denver Public Library
Jen Morris
Marketing & Communications Manager
O. 720-865-2044
C. 720-454-9261
jmorris@denverlibrary.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Denver Public Library Gathers Feedback from Community

Denver, CO – June 15, 2011 – The Denver Public Library held six Community Budget meetings between May 23 and June 6 to raise awareness of the Library’s current budget shortfall, inform the public of possible long-term funding solutions and gather community feedback.

About 200 people attended the meetings, and according to City Librarian, Shirley Amore, *“The public showed strong support for the Library, and are very interested in finding ways to create a sustainable source of funding for the future. It was quite apparent that the community loves our services and understands how important the Library is to their neighborhood and to the city of Denver.”*

Meeting Format

The meetings were held five evenings and one Saturday morning, at the Central Library, Woodbury, Park Hill, Green Valley Ranch, Ross-University Hills, and Hadley branches. Each meeting began with City Librarian Shirley Amore reviewing the Library’s recent funding history, followed by a staff member from the City of Denver Budget & Management Office presenting information about the overall picture of Denver’s financial challenges. A Library Commissioner then reviewed the Commission’s position on minimum service standards, options to meet the 2012 budget, and future funding options. This is outlined in the Commission’s White Paper released on April 20 and can be found on the Library’s website: http://www.denverlibrary.org/files/DPL_Whitepaper_April_2011.pdf. And finally, Jamie LaRue, Director of Douglas County Library District, or Eloise May, Director of Arapahoe Library District, gave a brief overview about library districts. (<http://www.denverlibrary.org/library-district>)

After the formal presentation period, attendees gathered in small groups to discuss their ideas about the three funding options presented (*see Appendix A – Denver Public Library Funding Options chart*) and list suggestions for short-term and long-term budget strategies.

What we heard from the Community

Common themes emerged regarding short-term budget solutions, including using more volunteers, selling books on Amazon, charging fees for library cards or “premium services,” centralizing reference services, and finding private sources of funding. The majority favored reducing hours and materials budgets, while others said their preference would be to close branches, should the Library be required to meet the \$2.5 million budget reduction target.

Regarding long-term solutions, the majority of participants who shared their preference for funding supported forming a library district. Those who were opposed commented that they

did not want to separate from the city or raise new taxes. Those in favor wanted a more secure and steady source of funds for the Library to allow for better long-range planning and improved customer service. There were very few that expressed that they wanted the Library to stay the “status quo,” and remain within the City’s budget without a dedicated income source.

Next Steps

The Library will continue to work closely with the City's current and new administration on both short-term and long-term funding solutions, and will keep the public informed of any new developments. If anyone from the public was unable to attend a meeting or has further thoughts, they are encouraged to email the Denver Public Library at dplcommunity@denverlibrary.org.

The meeting at the Hadley Branch Library was recorded by Channel 8, which will air at the following times: June 23, 9 p.m., June 25, 8 p.m.

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About Denver Public Library

Founded in 1889, the Denver Public Library (DPL) is a vital community resource—free and open to all. With 24 locations, the Library connects Denver residents to information, ideas and experiences that enrich their lives and strengthens our community. The Library plays an important role in advancing reading and literacy from birth through adulthood and is a key link in developing a knowledgeable, productive workforce and fostering economic development.