

MERCER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM EARNS TENTH PRESTIGIOUS FIVE-STAR RATING

Statement by Mercer County Library Director Ellen O’Shea Brown

It is with great pleasure that I announce that [Mercer County Library System](#) has again been named a Star Library by *Library Journal*, in its tenth edition of the [Library Journal Index of Public Library Service](#). The LJ Index rates U.S. public libraries based on selected per capita output measures. The 2017 LJ Index derived data released by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for FY15.

In this index, 7,409 public libraries qualified to be rated. Out of that number, there were 259 Star Libraries, each receiving 3-, 4- or 5-star designations.

The selected criteria included circulation, e-circulation, library visits, program attendance, and public internet computer use. These were measured within a library’s expenditure category.

Mercer County Library System falls in to the \$10m–\$29.9m category. In 2015 our budget was \$13,788,568, so even though we were on the lower end of the budget category, we were still the *only* library in New Jersey in our budget category to receive a 5-star designation.

In the \$10–\$29.9M expenditure range there were 30 libraries that were designated as star libraries; MCLS was ranked #7.

Across all budget categories there were six New Jersey libraries to receive a star designation:

\$10M–\$29.9M Budget Category:

- 1) MCLS, 5 stars
- 2) Somerset County Library System, 3 stars

\$1M – \$4.9M Budget Category:

- 3) Avalon Free Public Library, 5 stars
- 4) Bernardsville Public Library, 5 stars
- 5) Princeton Public Library, 4 stars
- 6) Ocean City Free Public Library, 3 stars

Our ability to maintain our 5–star designation is a direct reflection on the commitment of staff across all departments of the library system to provide engaging and dynamic programming, excellent patron service, well–informed assistance, and eclectic collection development. Our public appreciates that our facilities are clean and orderly, and amazed that they receive library materials in sometimes just hours after it is received. We work hard to ensure that we get our patrons what they need, when they need it. We have honed an efficient and capable administrative team, talented IT staff members, and knowledgeable instructors.

Without a team effort our tenth star–designation would not be possible.