



# The Library's Role in Serving Communities

## Advancing literacy for all ages

Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Fredericksburg are considered “higher literacy” with less than 20% of their adult populations aged 16+ scoring a level 1 or lower on the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies ([PIAAC](#)). However, more than 20% (22.4%) of Westmoreland County adults aged 16+ scored level 1 or lower on the same assessment, making that county one of the less literate in the state. Low literacy impacts all aspects of communities, from unemployment to health to poverty.

CRRL provides access to over 2 and a half million books, audiobooks, and movies covering a variety of interests and reading levels. Lack of access to books and other educational materials is the biggest barrier to increasing literacy, underscoring the importance of free public libraries, such as CRRL. A 2020 Gallup study suggests that improving adult literacy in the United States to a 6th-grade level could generate an additional \$2.2 trillion in income for the country.

### Percentages of area adults who have low literacy:

- Fredericksburg - 19.2%
- Spotsylvania - 17.9%
- Stafford - 13.8%
- Westmoreland - 22.4%



# Educational support for children under 5

Children under the age of 5 account for nearly 6% of the total population of CRRL's service area. Access to early literacy is a proven indicator of long-term academic achievement, and yet the cost of preschool is prohibitive to a large number of families.

For children learning to read, experiencing print books is critical for a variety of reasons. Reading physical books creates a more immersive experience because children use a variety of senses, making that learning more complete. Reading physical books also helps children develop their fine motor skills as they practice opening and closing the book and turning pages. Studies have found that when reading a print book to a child, parents talked to the children more than when reading an eBook, and children, in turn, responded to them more. These reading and talking experiences with parents promote language development and literacy, as well as social-emotional development. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting electronics use with small children, but print books can be offered and experienced with no time restrictions.

CRRL provides early literacy services through [Grow a Reader classes](#) at the library's branches and through [Library on the Go - Grow a Reader presentations](#) at area Head Start classes, preschools, and daycares, reaching more than 33,000 children and their caregivers each year. CRRL also promotes and supports early literacy through the [1,000 Books Before Kindergarten](#) initiative, which has had 99 children complete the challenge, with 893 currently participating.

## Number of children under age 5:

- Fredericksburg - 1,841 (6.36% of total population)
- Spotsylvania - 8,365 (5.59% of total population)
- Stafford - 9,811 (5.93% of total population)
- Westmoreland - 912 (4.80% of total population)



## Information for all through internet (broadband) access

The Commonwealth of Virginia has identified expanding broadband coverage as a key priority. While gains have been made, service remains limited in rural areas across the state. In CRRL's service area, this includes communities in Spotsylvania and Westmoreland counties. In areas with full broadband coverage, access is still unavailable to some residents for economic reasons.

CRRL partners with Spotsylvania County to offer two satellite library locations in the most rural areas of the county--the Livingston ([Belmont](#)) and Berkeley ([Partlow](#)) districts. The satellite locations offer wifi, computers, and printing; as well as holds pickup and additional library services. In Westmoreland County, CRRL launched a new [Library on the Go van](#) (funded through grants and donations) in September 2025 to bring library services--including wifi, hotspots, and computers--countywide.

### Local broadband coverage ([commonwealth-connection.com](#))

- Fredericksburg - 100%
- Spotsylvania - 93%
- Stafford - 99%
- Westmoreland - 91%

## Educational support for homeschool families

Since the pandemic, the localities served by CRRL have seen a 36% increase in the number of children being homeschooled.

To meet this growing demand, CRRL provides Homeschool Open House events for families in the fall and spring, where families can connect with library staff to discover how CRRL supports their needs. Resources and services for homeschool families include the [Classroom Carryout](#) service; [Teacher's Place](#) web portal; access to [meeting rooms and study rooms](#); CRRL's [Good Reads](#) age-level lists, as well as other curated recommended reading lists; [online tutoring](#) through HelpNow; and online databases, such as [Britannica Library](#) / [Britannica Library: Children](#) and [Gale in Context: Elementary](#).



### **Number of homeschool families 2025-2026:**

- Fredericksburg - 122 (11% increase)
- Spotsylvania - 1,428 (35% increase)
- Stafford - 1,414 (38% increase)
- Westmoreland - 102 (67% increase/ 2024-2025 data)

## **Support for adults 65+**

The population of CRRL's service area is aging, with adults 65+ making up more than 14% of the total population. In Westmoreland, over 28% of the population is over age 65.

To meet the needs of older adults, CRRL offers a wide range of services and events. CRRL's Library on the Go vehicle conducts [Lobby Stops](#), a mobile library service that visits 18 assisted-living and retirement communities, twice per month. A second Library on the Go van serving [Westmoreland County](#) launched in September 2025. For adults with dementia and their caregivers, CRRL offers [Memory Cafés](#) and [Alzheimer's caregiver support groups](#). To enhance physical well-being, CRRL offers [chair yoga](#), [tai chi](#), a [music and movement](#) class, and other gentle exercise classes. For education and entertainment, CRRL provides in-person and online classes on fraud prevention, hospice, history, gardening, and other topics; job skills and technology training on demand; as well as [book groups](#), games, movies, and crafting events to foster social connectedness.

### **Number of adults age 65 or older:**

- Fredericksburg - 3,400 (11.75% of total population)
- Spotsylvania - 23,454 (15.68% of total population)
- Stafford - 19,491 (11.78% of total population)
- Westmoreland - 5,335 (28.06% of total population)

