

BROADWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY RESPONSE PLAN 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

The Broadwater Public Library exists to provide information, educational, cultural, and recreational material and technologies to library patrons of all ages. We strive to effectively meet the needs of our community by offering a collection of interesting reading, listening, and viewing materials, as well as helpful services to support the community's business, cultural, recreational and educational needs, along with preservation of some local historical information. We promote life-long learning and uphold the public's freedom of access to information.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Community Response Plan will cover the goals and objectives to meet the community needs for the fiscal years 2024-2028. The Library Director and Library Board will review the Community Response Plan at each August board meeting, evaluate if the goals are being met and discuss any changes needed.

METHODS

Data used in the Community Response Plan for population, demographics, education, housing, and economics was obtained from United States Census, using Broadwater NE data from the 2020 census.

https://data.census.gov/profile/Broadwater_village,_Nebraska?g=160XX00US3106470#populations-and-people.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Location

Broadwater is a village in eastern Morrill County, Nebraska located at the intersection of US 26 and NE 92. The Union Pacific Railroad runs through town and has a siding. It is located sixteen miles east of Bridgeport, the county seat of Morrill County.

Population

The population of Broadwater is 95. The median age of the population is 49.3 years compared to the state median age of 37.4 %. The percentage of the population under 19 years is 12.6 % with 3.2 % being under five years, this compares with state figures of 10.7 % and 6.49 %.

The population is 85.3% White, 17.9% Latino and 0% Asian, compared to state figures are 78.4 % White, 11.9 % Latino and 2.7 % Asian. The percentage of the population

over 65 years of age is 26.3% compared with 16.1% statewide.

Education

Broadwater data shows 13.7% have a bachelor's or higher education, while state data shows 34.7% in the same level of education. Enrollment in Kindergarten through 12th grade in Broadwater is 90%, while the state population rate is 68.5%.

Broadwater does not have a school system. School-age children in the area attend either Bridgeport Public Schools or Leyton Public schools. Bridgeport is located 16 miles west of the village, while Leyton is 22 miles southwest of Broadwater ~~and south~~. The number of students from the village enrolled in kindergarten to 12th grade is 17 91%, compared to 68.5% in the state. In 2023, Bridgeport schools initiated a Pre-school class, with 20 students. 1 student from the Broadwater area. There are three cities within 50 miles that have a community college campus, Alliance to the north, Sidney to the south, and Scottsbluff to the east west.

Income

The median household income in the village of Broadwater is \$ 54,583 while the state median is \$71,722

Employment status in Broadwater is 72.7% as compared to the state employment rate of 66.2%. Broadwater residents average travel time to work is 19.1 minutes, compared to the state average travel time of 18.8 minutes.

The percentage of Broadwater residents shown to be at or below the poverty line is 15.8% compared to a state figure of 11.2% .

Housing

The median home value in Broadwater is \$38,400, State median 265,032. There are 166 homes in Broadwater are 59 vacant houses. The number of homes occupied is 107. Median rent is \$614 and 29.4% of the residents rent. Only 9.3% of those who rent pay more than 35 percent of their income for rent. There is a high percentage of home ownership in the village with 70.6% of the population owning a home. State figures for comparison show the median home value to be far higher at \$265,032 . Median rent is \$745 with 34% of the population renting. Rent takes up over 35 percent of the income of 34.7% of the state population. Occupancy statewide is 91% with only 9% vacancy. Home ownership is at 66% in the state and 34% of residents rent.

Local Economy

The primary industry in the Broadwater area is agriculture. There are seven businesses within the Village Limits: A convenience store and gas station, diner, 2 Bed and Breakfasts, an Art Studio, a farm co-op, and a tree service. The Village also has a post office that is open four hours per day five days a week. The top occupations for Broadwater residents are Management, Service Industries and Sales.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM AND PROCESS

The Community Response Team included four Community Area Representatives, Susan Kelly and Heather Petersen. The remainder of the team included the Library Staff, Library Board Chairperson, Darlene Loomis and Village Board Chairperson, Levi Leling.

The Community response team began by reviewing the Community Survey for appropriateness. The survey was sent out in Feb 2024 and the responses received and reviewed by the Library Director. A report of the survey responses was made to the Library Board at the Mar 2024 meeting and the Director attended the Village Board meeting in April, 2024. Each of The Village Board Members were given the responses to the survey and were asked to do an evaluation and give us their assessment of community needs and where they feel the Library can be of service.

STRENGTHS RESOURCES, BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BROADWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strengths

Compared to libraries its size, our library is open more hours. Our collection size and Staff FTE are in the median for comparable libraries. Our income is above average for our peer group. Local support of the library is good with significant donations of books and movies. We have the support of the Village so are able to offer new programs and technology. Prior to the current year, our attendance at library programs has increased.

BARRIERS

Our Library is below average on staff expenditures. We are also well below average for expenditure on materials. Our annual circulation and turnover rate are average compared to our peer group. Our population has decreased significantly over the last five years. We have fewer children in our community.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OUTSIDE OF THE BROADWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Opportunities

The population of the village has declined at the time of the 2022 census. The community has a well-maintained park and a playground at the new village building.

Challenges

The Village has challenges to address abandoned houses, nuisance properties, road maintenance. This has continued to be a concern for several years. The Village board is attempting to address this issue, but progress has been limited.

Our aging population with 21.9% of the population being over 65, increases the number of residences that can claim homestead exemption and decrease the tax income.

There are few employment opportunities in the village. At least three of the village businesses have owners over sixty. This leaves the possibility of these businesses closing, further reducing local revenues.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BROADWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY TO MEET THE COMMUNITY NEEDS

Goal 1) The Library will continue to provide once per month after-school programs from September through May during the school year. The library will also continue to provide a Story Time for preschool and elementary aged children with three to four program events. We will offer a summer reading program. The Library will provide one “special” program event per school year.

Evaluation: We are currently averaging 7 students attending each of our 16 programs. We will be working to maintain this level of programming and participation.

This goal will meet the Community need for continuing child reading and providing computer use and Wi-Fi for after school lessons and homework. This also provides opportunities to be creative and help build socialization skills.

Community Need: The Community Response survey indicated the need for volunteerism in the community.

Goal 2) We are having the children paint the Village fire hydrants with their own designs. This project was suggested by the Village Clerk. Based on concerns voiced in our Community Response Survey about the need for volunteerism in the community. This will give FFA children points for Community Service.

Objective: To have a plan to gather needed supplies, make flyers to get children and adults to volunteer and set a date, coordinate areas that have hydrants needing painting and set a plan on how to achieve this goal in a timely manner.

Community Need:

Goal 3) Offer a special program to the elderly annually and increase purchases of Large Print books.

Objective: Invite a representative from the Office of Aging or a Morrill County Extension Educator or Representative to present a program at the Library once annually. Increase the purchases of Large print books to ten percent of the total purchasing budget.

Evaluation: We should reach at least two residents to meet our peer average.