

OCCIDENTAL LIBRARY



Service Area Map + Demographics

2000 Service Area Population: 2,149
 2025 Service Area Population: 2,591

Population by Age:

0-4 years	5%
5-19 years	16%
20-44 years	29%
45-64 years	23%
65+	28%

Population by Ethnicity:

White	88%
Black + African-American	0%
American Indian	2%
Asian	2%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%
Other	6%
Two or More Races	2%
Hispanic or Latino*	10%

Recommendations
 Strategy: Improvement
 Building Area: 3,900-4,300 sf

*The Hispanic or Latino designation reflects a cultural heritage and not an ethnic group. Therefore, this designation is reported separately from ethnicity.

Library Profile

The Occidental Library is located in an unincorporated area of Sonoma County. Its collection reflects its more rural patronage, who tend to look for gardening, country living, spirituality, and homeschooling materials.

Over two-thirds of patrons surveyed at Occidental visit other libraries, with the majority reporting that they use the Sebastopol Library.

Library Needs

Seating at Occidental is scarce, and no tables are available for work or study. Shelf space is also at a premium; materials are rotated in from other branches three times a year, and a truck brings books twice per week. Technology is limited to a single online computer that does not offer public Internet access.

Occidental patrons described their library in this way...

Liked most:	Improvements needed:
+ Location and convenience	- More books, videos
+ Friendly staff	- Longer hours
	- More large-type books

Recommendations

The Occidental Library, as at the Forestville Library, currently offers limited library services. These two “station libraries” act as access points for nearby residents to pick up and drop off materials and to browse a limited collection. Reference services, seating and many electronic resources are not available. Library usage patrons show that Forestville and Occidental take significant pressure off of the Sebastopol Regional Library. Subsequently, it is recommended that Occidental offer a broader range of service providing a more complete collection, expanded seating, greater access to electronic resources, and meeting space.

Service	Current	Future
Population served	2,149	2,591
Building size	332 sf	3,900 – 4,300 sf
Collection	3,040 vols.	10,000 – 10,000 vols.
Computers	0	5
Seats	2 seats	25 – 30 seats
Group study area	0 seats	4 seats
Storytelling space	0 seats	10 – 15 seats
Meeting room	0 seats	50 – 55 seats

The square foot per capita guideline is increased for relatively small service areas as the smaller population does not offer the economy of scale of a larger area. The larger square foot per capita supports a proper baseline of services — collection, seating, computers, etc. — adequate to meet the needs of the service area population.

Implementation

The Occidental Library is a fraction of the size needed for its small size. It is in priority Group 2. Improvements to the libraries in priority Group 1, especially the proposed new Bodega Bay Library and the expanded Sebastopol Regional Library, will also benefit residents in the Occidental service area.

The current site is leased, and as such may not be available long term. Planning should begin now with an update of library service needs and a building program by experienced professionals. From this information, a site feasibility study should be developed to identify a suitable, permanent site. These should be undertaken as part of a focused predesign study setting out project requirements, budget and schedule in detail.



Occidental Library

What residents said:

“The library is a gateway to enjoying the wide world of reading.”
survey respondent

“It’s vital — a great service to a community that prizes reading.”
survey respondent

“The library is my connection to art, literature, and entertainment.”
survey respondent