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### **State Library Releases Study Showing \$2.4 Billion in Economic Benefits from Texas Public Libraries**

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) has released a study showing that in 2011 the economic benefit from Texas public libraries totaled an astounding \$2.407 billion, while collectively the libraries cost less than \$0.545 billion. The return on investment was thus \$4.42 for each dollar invested.

The study was prepared for TSLAC by the [Bureau of Business Research at the University of Texas at Austin](#) and is available at [www.tsl.state.tx.us/roi](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/roi) for immediate review and dissemination. Highlights include financial statistics, a survey of Texas public library directors, and case studies.

“This study demonstrates what we’ve been sure of for some time – public libraries positively impact local economies, whether it’s a small rural town or one of Texas’ great cities,” said Edward Seidenberg, Interim Director and Librarian of TSLAC. “Even in a challenging economic climate, Texas public libraries can be counted on to deliver resources and services with real value, to say nothing of their positive contributions to the quality of life in communities.”

The study draws largely on two quantitative analyses: one of Texas public libraries as business and organizational entities and the other of services rendered.

The business analysis found that libraries produced \$1.043 billion in local economic activity. The service analysis examined the circulation of books and other media; access to public computers and the Internet; educational programs; and other services that produced an estimated total of \$1.364 billion. Combining the two analyses yielded an economic benefit of \$2.407 billion.

“While the identifiable economic benefits are significant,” [the study states](#), “public libraries’ economic impacts are far greater than we can estimate as many economic benefits are difficult to quantify.”

Case studies were therefore developed to capture specific libraries’ activities with business organizations and assistance to self-employed individuals, small businesses, entrepreneurs and employers. Many of the profiled libraries played a significant role for job seekers, job training and workforce development. Others showed creative service approaches and collaborations with Chambers of Commerce.

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*Preserving yesterday,  
informing today,  
inspiring tomorrow.*

Altogether the case studies document the widespread, unmeasured economic impacts of public libraries of all sizes in Texas.

Although the study quantifies a positive return on investment in a single year (2011), there is reason to believe in a steady, if not upward, trajectory in the years to come.

“In terms of library services, there is no reason to think that the ROI figure of \$4.42 will decline appreciably,” said Dr. James Jarrett, the study’s principal investigator at the Bureau of Business Research.

“If anything, the figure might increase as there are improvements in measuring some services (e.g. periodicals and books used solely within a library), as additional services are included (e.g. value of tutoring provided by private individuals in library facilities or a location for youngsters to do their homework after school), and as some monetary values are estimated for benefits obtained from library training programs.”

[Texas Public Libraries: Economic Benefits and Return on Investment](#) was funded with Library Services and Technology Act funds administered by TSLAC through a grant from the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#).

For inquiries regarding research methodology, contact Dr. James Jarrett at the Bureau of Business Research: [jj@ic2.utexas.edu](mailto:jj@ic2.utexas.edu)

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#### **ABOUT THE TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION**

*Formed in 1909, TSLAC is committed to giving Texans access to information and programs they can use to improve their lives and communities. We provide historical and genealogical search assistance, federal and state government documents, electronic research and library services to all Texans, including those who are unable to read standard print material because of physical or reading disabilities. For more information, visit [www.tsl.state.tx.us](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us)*

#### **ABOUT THE BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH, IC2 INSTITUTE, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

*The Bureau of Business Research was established in 1926 to provide small business owners and policymakers with applied economic research and data to strengthen the state’s business environment. The IC<sup>2</sup> Institute was established in 1977 with the vision that science and technology are resources for economic development and enterprise growth. For more information, visit [www.ic2.utexas.edu/bbr](http://www.ic2.utexas.edu/bbr)*