

FAQs on the Simi Valley Library

Why did the City of Simi Valley withdraw from the Ventura County Free Library System?

Historically, the City Council has always had the opportunity available to withdraw from the Ventura County Library System if it believed that better library services could be independently provided. With the passage of AB 438, which took effect on January 1, 2012, the ability for the City to objectively evaluate its options and potentially choose to withdraw from the County Library System in the future have been significantly impacted. By withdrawing from the County System at this time, the City is preserving its options for providing the Library services that best meet the needs of the community.

Was the City unhappy with the Library services that the County has provided?

Not at all. The County has provided excellent Library service to our community. However, there is a concern whether the County will be able to continue to provide a financial subsidy to fund the Library and, if not, the level to which services and hours in the Simi Valley Library might be impacted in the future.

Now that the City is no longer a part of the Ventura County Library System, is it still free to borrow materials?

Yes, there is no cost to borrow materials from the Library, nor will there be in the future.

Now that the City has withdrawn from the County Library System, will the Simi Valley Library close?

No. The Library will remain open for, at minimum, the same number of hours, and continue to operate the same programs and services that patrons currently enjoy.

Will the Library be “privatized”?

No. The Simi Valley Library will remain a public library with the City directly responsible for providing Library services to the community. The City has an agreement with the County of Ventura for the County to operate the Library through June 30, 2012, and the City is currently seeking proposals for a long-term contract from both public entities and private library operators. Once proposals are received, they will be evaluated, along with the option of the City itself operating the Library. Should the City choose a contractor for the day-to-day operation of the Simi Valley Public Library, the City will retain responsibility and oversight for Library policy, programs, and services. Possible contractor options include the County of Ventura, another municipal library, or a company that provides library administrative services.

If a contract option is not selected by the City Council, the City does have the option of providing staffing through City employees.

If the City hires a contractor to conduct the day-to-day operation of the Simi Valley Public Library, will the contractor censor the information available to patrons of the Library?

No. The City will set the policy for book purchases and all other operational services, such as hours of operation, staffing levels, and programs.

What will happen to the Library staff now that the City has withdrawn from the County Library System?

The City has become responsible for providing Library services to the community and will determine what type of contractual arrangement it will have for the day-to-day operations of the Library. The City has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Library services and has included a requirement that all County Library staff assigned to the Simi Valley Library be considered for any opportunities available in the Library.

Will I be able to borrow books from other libraries?

Yes, the City will ensure that patrons continue to have access to at least the same number of materials that they currently do, and that they would be provided at least as timely as they are now.

I use the Library because I don't have a computer at home. Will there still be computers and Internet access available?

Yes. All services currently offered at the Library will continue.

Will I still be able to purchase books from the Friends of the Library bookstore in the Library?

Definitely. The Friends of the Library is a valued partner of the Simi Valley Library, and they will continue to have a bookstore inside the Library.

If I donate money to the Simi Valley Public Library, will it go to a private company?

No, any donated funds will be administered by the City of Simi Valley for the benefit of the Simi Valley Public Library. Funding can also be donated to the Simi Valley Friends of the Library.