

# Countywide Library Support, 2006-2026

## Summary Report for the Library Board

### Executive summary

**Overall finding:** Countywide support for the Baker County Library District has strengthened since 2006, rising from 58.5% to 70.4% yes support. The long-term trend is positive, but the 2016 peak has not been repeated; support has stabilized near 70% in the two most recent elections.

2006 yes support <b>58.5%</b>	2026 yes support <b>70.4%</b>	Net change, 2006 to 2026 <b>+11.8 pp</b>
Peak support <b>83.1% in 2016</b>	Change since peak <b>-12.7 pp</b>	Most recent change <b>+0.7 pp from 2021 to 2026</b>

### Countywide trend

The long-term pattern has three distinct phases: a baseline majority in 2006, a strong rise through 2016, and then a reset to a lower but still solid support level in 2021 and 2026.

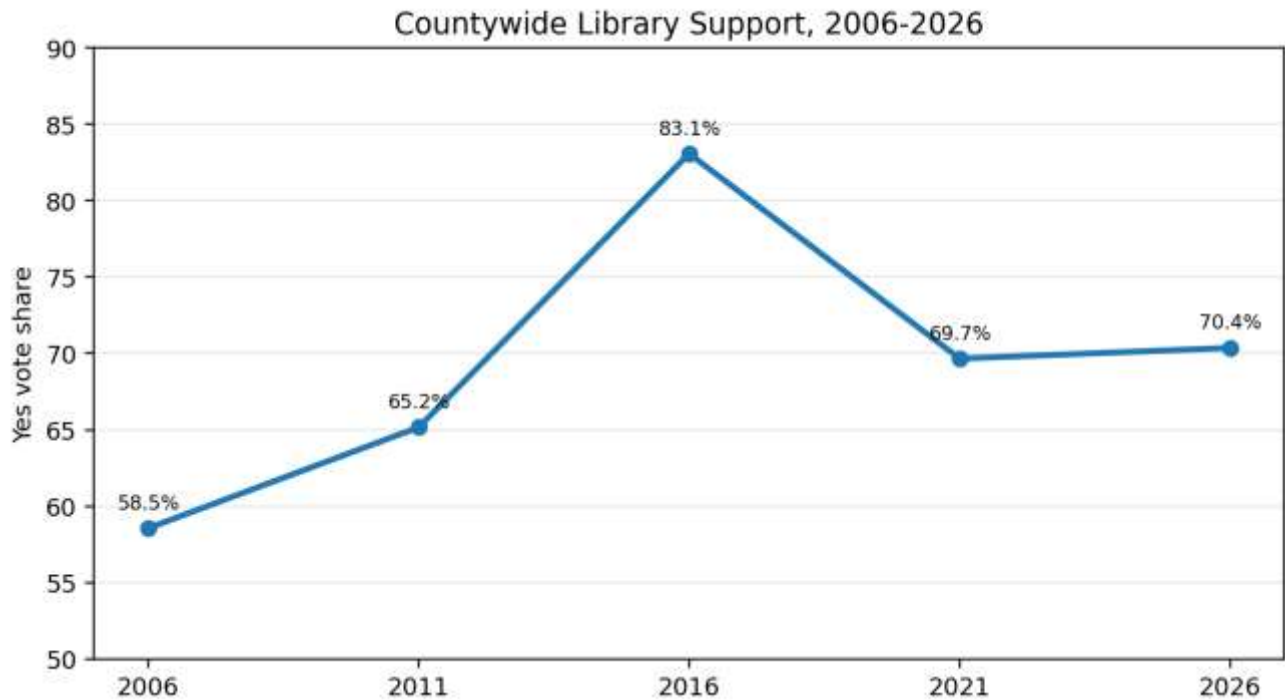


Figure 1. Yes vote share by election year, calculated as yes votes divided by yes plus no votes.

Year	Yes votes	No votes	Votes cast	Yes support	Change from previous
2006	4,263	3,018	7,281	58.5%	Baseline
2011	3,129	1,673	4,802	65.2%	+6.6 pp
2016	4,609	939	5,548	83.1%	+17.9 pp
2021	3,951	1,721	5,672	69.7%	-13.4 pp
2026	4,322	1,821	6,143	70.4%	+0.7 pp

## What changed over time

- Support grew by 11.8 percentage points from 2006 to 2026, moving from a modest majority to a durable supermajority-level result near 70%.
- The strongest countywide result was 2016, when yes support reached 83.1%. That election stands out as an unusually high point rather than the current baseline.
- After the 2016 peak, support fell by 13.4 percentage points in 2021. The 2026 result recovered slightly, rising 0.7 percentage points from 2021, which suggests stabilization rather than renewed rapid growth.
- The yes vote total in 2026 was 4,322, nearly the same as 2006. The change in support percentage is driven largely by a lower no vote total than in 2006 and a smaller vote-cast total overall.

## Turnout and vote-count context

- Votes cast in the library contest were highest in 2006 at 7,281 and lowest in 2011 at 4,802. The 2026 contest drew 6,143 yes/no votes, above the 2011, 2016, and 2021 totals but below 2006.
- No votes declined from 3,018 in 2006 to 1,821 in 2026, a decrease of 1,197 votes. This is the clearest numerical indicator that opposition has softened since 2006.
- Yes votes increased from 4,263 in 2006 to 4,322 in 2026. While the raw yes vote count is only slightly higher than 2006, the share of voters supporting the library is substantially higher.

## Board-level interpretation

- The library enters future levy conversations with a strong countywide base: every election in the period passed with majority support, and four of five results exceeded 65%.
- The 2016 result should be treated as a high-water mark. A realistic current planning assumption is support near 70%, not above 80%.
- The post-2016 decline shows that support cannot be taken for granted. Continued public communication about library value, fiscal stewardship, and district-wide benefits remains important.
- Because 2026 support was essentially flat compared with 2021, the immediate strategic goal should be maintaining and broadening the existing coalition rather than assuming automatic growth.

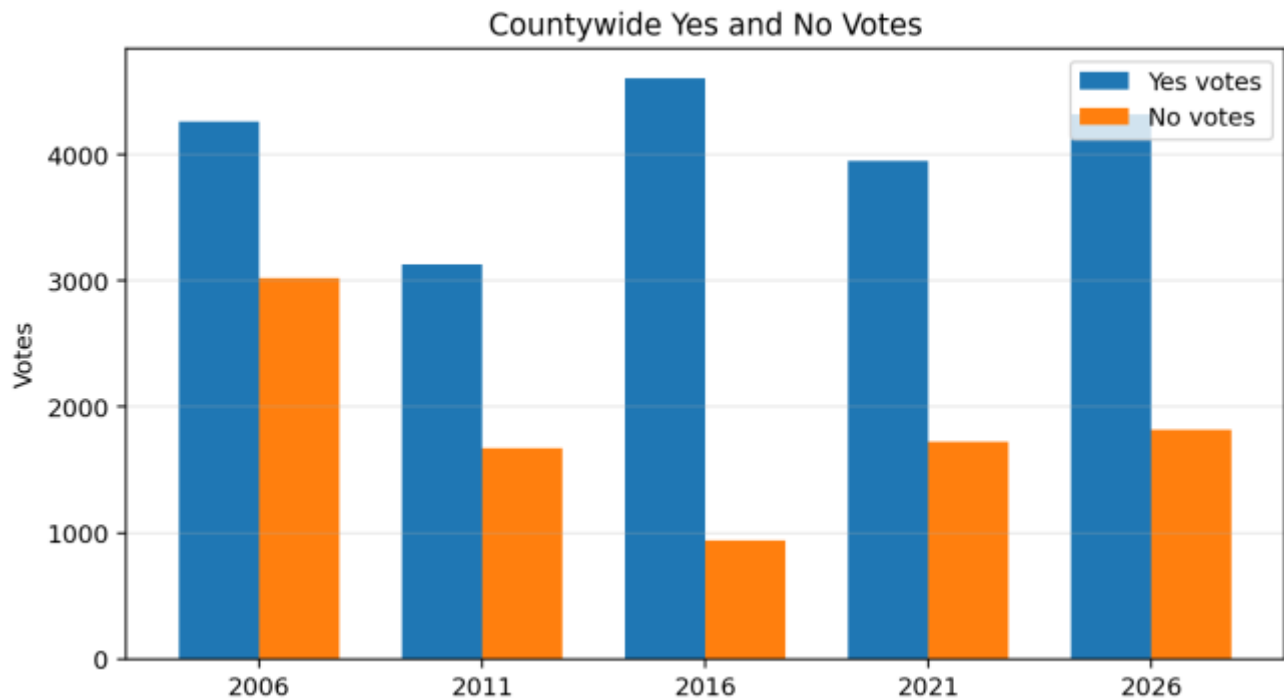


Figure 2. Countywide yes and no vote counts by election year.

## Key takeaways for the Library Board

- 1. The long-term trend is positive.** Countywide support increased by 11.8 percentage points over twenty years, from 58.5% to 70.4%.
- 2. The current baseline is strong but not at the 2016 peak.** The 2026 result remains high, but it is 12.7 points below the 2016 high of 83.1%.
- 3. Opposition is lower than in 2006.** No votes dropped from 3,018 in 2006 to 1,821 in 2026, even as support remained above 70% in the most recent election.
- 4. Voter confidence should continue to be cultivated.** Recent results indicate stability near 70%, so ongoing engagement, clear messaging, and accountability reporting will be important for future renewals.

## Suggested board talking points

- County voters have consistently supported the library district over the last twenty years.
- The 2026 result confirms that support remains broad, with more than seven in ten yes/no voters supporting the measure.
- The 2016 result was exceptional; 2021 and 2026 suggest a more realistic present-day support level of roughly 70%.
- Future public communication should reinforce the library's countywide value and demonstrate responsible use of public funds.

## Methodology and source notes

**Calculation method:** Support percentages are calculated as yes votes divided by total yes plus no votes. Undervotes and overvotes are excluded from the support percentage because they are not yes/no votes cast on the measure.

**Source:** Election-history workbook provided by Baker County Library District, including 2006 summary results and 2011, 2016, 2021, and 2026 countywide election results. The 2026 sheet identifies the contest as Measure 1-135, Baker County Library District, May 19, 2026 Primary Election.