

**The Seattle Public Library**  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
**11:00 a.m. Thursday, August 28, 2025**

Washington Mutual Foundation Meeting Room 1, Level 4  
1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104

**Remote Listen Line:**

Dial: 213-282-4570 / Phone conference ID: 949 549 591#

**Watch Live:**

<https://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting>

Meeting ID: 273 055 410 514 0 / Passcode: da7yb6jm

- To provide public comment in person at the Central Library, sign up in the meeting room.
  - To provide public comment remotely, join meeting with link above and enter your full name in Q&A.
  - To submit public comment in writing, email 24-hours in advance of the meeting: [library.board@spl.org](mailto:library.board@spl.org).
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**Agenda**

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. CONSENT

1. Minutes of July 31, 2025 Regular Library Board Meeting

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

1. Chief Librarian Report
2. System Report
  - a. ILS RFP Update – Charles Wesley, Library Technology Officer

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2025 Levy Report
2. January through June 2025 Summary Report on Foundation Funded Projects
3. Resolution Directing Library Staff to Prepare a 2026 Library Levy Renewal Package
4. Union Report
5. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
6. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: Sept. 25, 2025

*(For more information, call Laura Gentry, head of the Communications Office, at 206-915-9028.)*

## **Unapproved Board Minutes**

Board of Trustees Meeting

The Seattle Public Library

July 31, 2025

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on July 31, 2025. Library Board President W. Tali Hairston called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Vice President Yazmin Mehdi and Trustees Ron Chew, Carmen Bendixen, and Faith Pettis were in attendance. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as published; the motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was accepted via email, in person at the Central Library, and online in the remote meeting. One public comment was received via email from Miguel del Aguilla regarding the Central Library environment.

### **CONSENT**

It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda as published; the motion carried unanimously.

### **CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT**

#### **Chief Librarian Report**

Director of Institutional and Strategic Advancement Rick Sheridan said Chief Librarian Tom Fay would be joining the meeting late due to a meeting with Congressional Representative Kim Schrier, and would answer questions regarding the Chief Librarian's Report at that time.

#### **Systems Reports**

##### *Fine Free Report*

Circulation Services Manager Bo Kinney said he was pleased to discuss the elimination of overdue fines and its impacts. Mr. Kinney said a little more than five years ago, as part of the 2019 Library levy, the Library eliminated daily overdue fines for materials that were returned late. He said the levy was passed overwhelmingly by Seattle voters and went into effect January 2, 2020. He said the Library wanted to eliminate late fines for several reasons. He said, despite long ingrained assumptions, late fines do not have much of an impact on when people return their library materials, and they impose a financial penalty for using the Library, which creates a barrier to access for many community members. He said with the increasing use of electronic materials, fines are not a predictable source of revenue, so replacing that revenue as part of the Library Levy was important.

Mr. Kinney said when the Library eliminated overdue fines, it immediately restored access for 18,000 patrons whose accounts had had been blocked because they had returned overdue items but still had unpaid fines on their account. He said these blocked or suspended Library patron accounts were prevented from borrowing materials, and when fines were eliminated, the number of suspended patron accounts was cut in half from ten percent of active users to about five percent. He said the five percent number has stayed stable for the past five years.

Mr. Kinney said in the past five years, the pandemic and ensuing changes to open hours and staffing, and most recently the ransomware attack have all had an impact on patrons' use of the Library and

their ability to return materials on time. He said, however, return rates, percentage of overdue items, and hold wait times have all stayed very stable since the elimination of overdue fines. He said there have been many reports on statistics and numbers, but he wanted to point out that this change made the Library more welcoming and easier for patrons to use, which ultimately makes the Library more accessible for the community. He said the Library is now celebrating its fine-free fifth anniversary, and Digital Communications Strategist Elisa Murray wrote a blog post at the beginning of the year to celebrate this milestone.

Mr. Kinney said in 2025 the Library is still seeing a lot of positive effects. He said the Library still has a much lower rate of suspended accounts. He said if a patron's account does get suspended because they have an overdue item, it is much easier to resolve. He said the patron only needs to return the item, and they don't have to deal with the extra steps and barrier of paying overdue fines.

He said one significant change has been a massive increase in the number of long overdue items that are eventually returned after the Library has deemed the item lost and charged a patron replacement fee. Mr. Kinney said previously, overdue fines were a disincentive to return late items because even after returning the item, the patron was stuck with fines. He said now that patrons must simply return the item, it is much easier to work with the Library to clear their account. Mr. Kinney encouraged the Board to read the blog post on the Shelf Talk blog if they hadn't already. He said the post includes quotes from Library patrons who shared their stories of how this change has been impactful in their lives. He said the Library has heard many stories about how not having to worry about late fines has made borrowing books from the Library less stressful and more accessible, and it takes away the shame of returning late books. He said patrons shared feeling grateful, joyful, and proud of the city for making this change.

Mr. Kinney said eliminating fines is part of a broader effort to make the Library more accessible and welcoming. He said SPL has made it easier for patrons to get help if they lose an item and can't pay the fee, it has stopped referring patrons to a collections agency if they are unable to pay, and it has rewritten patron notifications to make them clearer and more welcoming. He said the Library has made it easier for patrons to use a preferred name in their Library account, has eliminated fees for Interlibrary Loans, has made it possible for new patrons to sign up for cards online, and has added 24/7 hold pickup lockers at seven branches. He said SPL is also implementing an Uncollectable Patron Account Debt Procedure which will restore access for thousands of patrons with old charges. Mr. Kinney said those are just examples related to patron accounts and borrowing physical materials that support the Strategic Plan goal of making the Library easier to use and more accessible.

Mr. Kinney said in the first half of 2025, the Library is seeing more active users than ever. He said, as of July 1, more than 400,000 active borrowers have used their card for something in the last three years, and 300,000 active users have used their card in the last one year. He said those are the highest numbers on record as far back as the Library has been tracking this trend since 2012. He said this shows impacts, including dips in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, and a small impact in mid-2024 due to the cyberattack. He said the numbers show that usage rates have rebounded since the pandemic and have actually risen above the pre-pandemic rates. Mr. Kinney said the Library also saw a record number of new Library card sign-ups as of July 1, which shows the long-term payoff of eliminating fines and making all of these changes for greater accessibility.

Mr. Kinney shared a quote from a patron who said, "No late fines has made me feel more empowered and connected to my local library." Mr. Kinney thanked the Library for an economically just and inclusive policy, and for the opportunity to share this very positive report.

Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen thanked Mr. Kinney for the uplifting report. She asked if the number of new Library card sign-ups includes sign-ups through the Books Unbanned program.

Mr. Kinney said it did not, and it would be a higher number with those added in. Mr. Kinney said Books Unbanned should be included in the list of things SPL has done in the past couple of years to make the Library more accessible. He said improving Library access ties into intellectual freedom and access to books and reading.

Library Board Vice President Yazmin Mehdi thanked Mr. Kinney for his presentation. She asked a question regarding his June 2025 meeting presentation regarding the Write-off of Uncollectible Patron Account Debt Procedure. Executive Assistant Amy Lawson said Administrative Services Director Rob Gannon had to step out of the meeting temporarily, but he would follow up with Ms. Mehdi following the meeting.

Mr. Sheridan offered kudos to Mr. Kinney and the Circulation Services Team. He said it was based on their recommendation and analysis work in advance of the 2019 levy that this item was included as an element of that levy. He said the team's predictions in terms of benefits to patrons and unlocking blocked patron accounts have proven true. He said the material returns rates have not been impacted and the change has been very beneficial to many of patrons for whom fines were a deterrent to using the Library. Ms. Mehdi asked if restoration of access to 18,000 patron accounts through fine elimination combined with restoration of access to 10,000 patron accounts through clearing uncollectible debt means that the Library is below 5% of inaccessible accounts. Mr. Kinney said the uncollectible debt change is in the process of being implemented and will have a large impact. He said he would follow up with detail and numbers in a future meeting after the implementation of that change. Ms. Mehdi said the reduction of inaccessible accounts is remarkable.

Library Board Trustee Ron Chew thanked Mr. Kinney for the report. He said, as a child, he lost a library book and stayed away from the library for a couple of years because he didn't want to tell his parents what he had done. He said that scenario may be the same for some children of immigrant parents and others who aren't familiar with using the library. He said perhaps there is an opportunity for the Foundation to raise some additional money related to uncollected fines. Mr. Kinney thanked Mr. Chew for his story and said the Library hears similar stories regularly. He said this change is celebratory. He said the Library has made a lot of great changes and needs to continuously share the information with new patrons so they are aware of how accessible the Library is to use. Mr. Kinney said the Library partners with the Foundation for its Fresh Start program in which the Foundation has paid charges for young adults ages 12 to 26 who are not able to pay their charges. He said the Library is looking at ways to strengthen that program and maybe do even more. He said the Foundation can be a partner both in financial support and working with other supporters in the community to get the message out. Mr. Chew said he knows from working within the immigrant communities, people can be fearful of public agencies, such as medical agencies, where information sharing can deter their use of the services. He said there is a chilling effect that cuts across a number of arenas connected with the government, which may encompass the Library. He said it is important to be mindful of that chilling effect and its impact on access.

Mr. Hairston welcomed Executive Director and Chief Librarian Tom Fay who had joined the meeting, and asked for an opportunity to address questions about the Chief Librarian Report. Ms. Mehdi said the new Library Environment and Security Services Manager sounds wonderful and asked where that position sits within the Security division. Mr. Fay said the new position will be the manager over Security will report directly to Mr. Gannon. Ms. Mehdi said she noticed a mention of the Washington Center for the Book, which used to be housed at SPL before moving under the State Library. She asked what impacts it may face, given the cuts to the State Library. Mr. Fay said he will do some research and follow up with her.

Mr. Fay thanked Mr. Sheridan for filling in for him at the beginning of the meeting today and the duration of last month's meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS

### **Ethics and Open Public Meetings Act Training**

Gary Smith, Director of the Government Affairs section of the City Attorney's Office, said the Government Affairs Section is the point of advice for all of the City's boards and commissions on general municipal law. He said one of the topics within their scope is the Open Public Meetings Act. Mr. Smith said the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) is a state law to promote transparency in government. He said meetings of the governing bodies of the city, which includes the City Council and all city boards and commissions, are required to be open to the public under the OPMA. He said the OPMA mandates training within 90 days of assuming the position or a refresher training every four years. Mr. Smith said, as assigned under state law, all boards and commissions exist to aid the conduct of the people's business. He said actions are to be taken openly and deliberations conducted openly. He said people of the state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies with which serve them.

Mr. Smith said some relatively new provisions of the OPMA focus on the requirement to receive public comment. He said that requirement is met by the opportunity to provide written public comments. He said public comment does not need to be taken in an oral format, which is a relatively new provision of the OPMA.

Mr. Smith said in addition to the importance of training and familiarity with the OPMA to ensure compliance, potential consequences for violating the OPMA include a loss of public trust, a public relations issue, and concern that a governing body may have done something outside of the public view. He said, from a legal perspective, any ordinance, resolution or action that is taken by the Board in violation of the OPMA could be declared null and void by a court of law if there was a challenge and a finding that the OPMA was violated. He said this can include discussions that violated the OPMA as well, which could result in a drastic court remedy. Mr. Smith said OPMA violations can serve as a basis to remove a member of a board or committee from that governing body. He said this is primarily the case for elected officials, but demonstrates the importance to comply with the OPMA. He said there is also a provision that a court could impose individual civil penalties on members of a governing body that knowingly violate the OPMA if there was a charge and finding. He said there is also a potential for civil penalties, which has not been seen assessed in a reported case, but is an indication of the importance of compliance.

Mr. Smith said the requirement for a meeting to be open to the public applies to meetings that have two components: the first being that there is a gathering of a quorum or majority of the board, and the second that a quorum of the board is involved in a discussion with the collective intent to conduct City business. He said the OPMA does not concern trustees speaking to one another individually, and the OPMA is not implicated if board members are attending a social event and there is no board business discussed. He said it is important to note that a meeting does not require the physical presence of board members and could take place over telephone, e-mail or video conference. He reiterated that the two prerequisites for the OPMA are that there is a quorum of the Board and a collective intent to conduct board business.

Mr. Smith said e-mail discussions amongst a majority of the board members would implicate the OPMA if the majority was discussing board business over e-mail. He said a meeting takes place when there is the transaction of official business of the board which includes the receipt of testimony, deliberations, and discussions. He said the OPMA applies to the final action or votes of the board as well as the discussions and deliberations amongst the majority that lead up to a board action, all of which must take place in an open setting. Mr. Smith said a final vote or decision on a matter always has to take place in an open meeting.

Mr. Smith said executive sessions are closed sessions that are justified under the OPMA. He said even if an executive session is justified, any final action must occur during the open portion of a meeting.

Mr. Smith said regular meetings are held in accordance with a fixed schedule that the Board has adopted. He said the agenda must be posted 24 hours in advance of the meeting, but there are no restrictions on modifying the agenda subsequently. He said the Board can also hold a special meeting in compliance with the OPMA which is not on the Board's regular schedule, and can be called by the presiding officer or a majority of the members. He said the distinction between a special meeting and a regular meeting is that the agenda must be posted at least 24 hours in advance, but the final disposition on any matters may not be taken at a special meeting unless that matter was identified on the agenda that was published and noticed for the special meeting. He said the Board must make sure the agenda for a special meeting is broad enough to encompass any intended discussions or actions.

Regarding the concept of rolling or serial meetings, Mr. Smith said the OPMA is concerned when there is the collective intent amongst a majority of the Board to conduct board business which may apply outside of the physical presence of the members, and also if all of the members are not engaged contemporaneously in a discussion. He said, for example, if on a five-member board, two members discuss an issue and there is an agreement that one of those members will speak to other board members to secure votes for the matter, that activity could constitute a rolling or serial meeting, which implicates the OPMA. Mr. Smith said the OPMA is not concerned with all one-on-one communications, but does apply when there is the collective intent of the Board to come to a decision and secure the votes outside of an open meeting.

Mr. Smith said his office is always available to provide guidance to help board members to act in compliance with the OPMA. Mr. Smith said it is perfectly acceptable for less than a quorum to discuss and work an issue outside of an open meeting, and to develop a proposal so long as it is presented to the full board for action. He said this is a common practice amongst boards and commissions and the City Council.

Mr. Smith said the passive receipt of information amongst a majority of the Board is allowed under the OPMA. He said an executive assistant distributing materials to the full Board is acceptable even though a quorum of the Board is implicated because it is passive receipt of that information, and board members are not acting on it. He said he would caution board members about replying-all to an email that is copied to the full board, as a reply-all could be considered the collective intent to conduct Board business outside of an open meeting. Mr. Smith said using a staff member to distribute material is often safer and keeps the Board members removed from communication with the other members.

Regarding meeting formats, Mr. Smith said it is completely within the terms of the OPMA for any or all Board members to attend meetings remotely, which was an amendment that was adopted post-pandemic. He said, however, there must always be a physical location for the meeting where a member of the public can attend and observe the meeting if they so choose. Mr. Smith said the Board cannot require any certain conditions for public attendance at a meeting. He said the Board may request that members of the public use a sign-in sheet, but that or any other requirements are not allowed under the OPMA with the exception of generally applicable restrictions or regulations, such as the masking mandate during the pandemic.

Regarding public comment, Mr. Smith said there is a requirement that the Board receive public comment at regular meetings, which is satisfied if there is the opportunity for written public comment; he said it does not have to be oral public comment. He said – referring to a previous conversation that included how to deal with potential meeting interruptions that may occur during oral public comment – that other legal concerns may be implicated when oral public comment is provided.

Mr. Smith said executive sessions are opportunities for a majority of the Board to meet in closed sessions. He said executive sessions must be pursuant to specific justification set forth in the OPMA itself. He said common allowances are a review of the performance of a public employee, or to receive legal advice. He said to call an executive session, the presiding officer must state the purpose and tie it to the OPMA's stated justification, and announce the time it will take. Mr. Smith said closed sessions are slightly distinct from executive sessions and are not applicable to every board or commission. He said closed sessions apply when there are quasi-judicial proceedings, such as collective bargaining sessions. He said the OPMA doesn't apply to closed sessions.

Mr. Smith said there is a state law requirement for minutes. He said staff manages minutes and ensures that they are sufficiently in compliance with the OPMA.

Mr. Smith said, in closing, there are five takeaways. He said the primary purpose of the OPMA is to promote transparency and trust in local and state government. He said OPMA training is important and required and the Library Board is in compliance after today's training. He said it is important to know the difference between a regular and special meeting, to be aware of what constitutes a rolling or serial meeting, and to be aware of how to lawfully use technology and email. Mr. Smith said he is always available as the point of contact for general municipal advice.

Executive Director of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Wayne Barnett said his agency's role is to administer and enforce the Ethics Code. He said the Ethics Code guarantees the public some measure of good government. He said his role is to do trainings and give advice, and also to do enforcement through investigating allegations and deciding what to do with them. Mr. Barnett said a main point in the Ethics Code is to ensure that board members personally, and their family members, are not involved in official business. He said the other point is to ensure that board members do not use their position for their private benefit or to advance a personal interest that is not the City's interest. He said, for example, the Board should not recommend to the Chief Librarian that he hire someone in particular, because the Board is the Chief Librarian's hiring authority. He said board members must be conscious about how actions would look to a reasonable person. Mr. Barnett said the Ethics Code also deals with gifts. He said if a gift could be interpreted as intended to influence a board member's official actions, it is not allowable. He said, for example, if a board member is invited to a Mariners game to discuss Library business, the board member can go to the game, but they need to pay their own way.

Mr. Barnett said his agency also administers the Elections Code. He said for ballot measures, the Library and Library Board must ensure they are not using their resources to promote a ballot measure. He said, for example, board members should not recommend to the Chief Librarian that he put things in the Library that promote a particular levy. Mr. Barnett said the Library and Board also shouldn't be perceived as promoting or opposing candidates. He said a few years ago, the Library hosted a candidate forum that only included the three candidates who had a legitimate chance at winning the election. He said that because the Library is a public agency, it must ensure it is not in any way limiting voter choices. He said a complaint was received from a candidate who was not included in the event, and the Commission found in the candidate's favor, as all candidates need to be invited. Mr. Barnett said Library Board members could call him with any questions. Mr. Fay said he greatly appreciates the guidance of Mr. Smith and Mr. Barnett through a number of sometimes sticky questions, and the executive assistant can help connect them with Board members.

### **Library Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy**

Administrative Services Director Rob Gannon said the Library presented a draft policy for the Board's consideration at their June 2025 meeting. He said staff have been continuing to review the policy and socialize it internally. He said Strategic Technology Advisor Jim Loter has been the principal Library resource building and stewarding this policy. Mr. Loter said the Board reviewed the

draft last month, and this month's packet contains a memo that covers non-consequential changes made to the draft, mostly to clarify language and correct some areas of responsibility.

Mr. Loter said artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have become widely available and popular in the last few years. He said AI presents new and novel risks and controversies that may conflict at times with the Library's values, commitments to staff and the public, and with legal and regulatory obligations. He said the policy was developed, filtered through those lenses, to establish the groundwork for future efforts to develop procedures and guidelines that cover the acquisition and use of technologies at SPL. He said the primary component of that is the formation of an AI Governance Committee composed of Library staff members to advise leadership on AI technology issues.

Mr. Chew said, through his involvement with AARP, he was involved in a recent discussion about their AI policies which centered around the environmental impact of data centers that have enormous energy requirements and are having a disproportionate impact on communities of color. He asked if SPL has thoughts about those effects as it considers the use of AI. Mr. Loter said that is a primary concern of his as well. He said the Library's proposed policy directs that the AI Governance Committee will be tasked with developing standards around environmental impact as a part of the criteria for approving a technology for adoption. He said he and Library Technology Officer Charles Wesley have had discussions with an organization they are hoping can help guide SPL to benchmarks and data regarding environmental use and other factors for the major technology platforms and language models. He said he hopes the AI Governance Committee can develop responsible standards and guidelines to inform decisions about which technologies to approve. He said environmental and sustainability benchmarks exist, and there is both academic and industrial research available. He said data can be challenging to come by, as it is not necessarily shared by the companies transparently, but the Library is looking to reliable sources of information to help guide decision-making. Mr. Chew said he was astonished by the impacts and thanked Mr. Loter for keeping it under consideration.

Mr. Fay said it will be an important piece to consider because the Library does not want to do something that provides a very small net gain for what the impact could be on the environment. He said the City is thinking of these impacts as well, particularly as some of the larger service providers are located in this region. Ms. Mehdi said she read that, in trying to train AI, there had been a recommendation to use the words 'please' and 'thank you', but using the words 'please' and 'thank you' generates more impact environmentally. She said the ethical considerations are large and she appreciates SPL taking the environmental impact into account.

Ms. Mehdi asked how SPL can help patrons understand how AI can be problematic. She said when patrons use the Library's public computers, to some extent they are already accessing AI and having an impact. She said a very concerning issue is that AI will 'hallucinate' or make up data. She said she thinks SPL can help people to understand how to look for that. She asked if SPL is considering related programming. Mr. Loter said he is in conversation with Community Engagement and Economic Development Managing Librarian Kristina Darnell about this and other related topics. He said Ms. Darnell is connected with the organization he mentioned earlier. He said their teams are considering the role of the Library in the community to help residents understand the impacts of AI technology, how to recognize it when it's being used, and some potential risks in using it. He said he has had some conversations at national levels about libraries being fact checkers of AI due to hallucinations or biases in data. Ms. Mehdi suggested a public service message on public computers letting people know that if they are using AI to do research, the librarians present can help them fact check.

Library Board President Tali Hairston said he was interested in the prohibited uses section due to his background in higher education where that was an initial focus to prevent uses that were deceptive or harmful. He asked if SPL has thoroughly vetted the prohibitive uses of AI and its applications that might affect dissemination of misleading information or deceptive content, and if the Library will



eliminate the uses that are harmful and promote incorrect information to society. Mr. Loter said that is the Library's intent and he believes they have. He said this is a new and evolving technology. He said the policy directs that usage guidelines and standards will be derived out of the policy, and that these can change and evolve to address emerging issues much more rapidly than a policy can. He said the policy includes broad prohibitions with regard to using the technology, and under those categories, as usage expands and more is learned, there will be good mechanisms with the AI Governance Committee to address more issues as they emerge. He said it is not the intent to start from a point of focusing on prohibited uses and not leave room to allow AI where it makes sense, but the team also wants to ensure SPL is a responsible steward of everything, including the truth.

Library Technology Officer Charles Wesley said the policy represents an approach the Library will apply to other areas of technology where there will be ethical or moral dilemmas the Library will have to face with a combination of policy and governance. He said the governing body is intended to be the place where these dilemmas can be brought and recommendations or decisions can be made, and also where there will be an opportunity for there to be continued evaluation of the tool to approve its procurement, as well as to govern how it is used in practice, and to ensure that it is being used in the way in which it was initially proposed. He said if corrective guidance is needed, that body will be empowered with being able to independently make that judgment, or to escalate an issue to leadership for a decision. He said because this will be an evolving landscape, the governance is just as important as the policy itself. He said the policy can be adapted or changed as needed.

Mr. Wesley said the Governance Committee will assist in watching what laws are changing at the federal, state, and local levels that may impact the policy. He said the committee will be the first tier to look at those issues to ensure the policy is responsive to the realities of other legal matters within the country. He said there hasn't yet been precedent on some of these tools and some of the potential bad outcomes, and one that starts to change, the laws will change.

Library Board Trustee Faith Pettis said she thinks the policy is great and well-rounded, and shows that the team has thought through issues. She said she asked at the last meeting for a little more detail about the Governance Committee which she realized is still being discussed and developed. She said while the Governance Committee is internal to the Library, it can also benefit from outside experts, and SPL is fortunate to be in a region where AI is being developed and has people on the cutting edge. She said she wants the Library to look current impacts under this policy, as well as what could be coming that the Library will need to be responsive to. She said the policy needs to be able to adjust to how AI is used now and how it may be used in the future. She said the danger is that it's moving so quickly it may pass this policy, and new developments may throw the Library for a loop. Ms. Pettis said as the Library develops the Governance Committee, it should think about how to bring in people that are very knowledgeable about what's coming to benefit the Library. Mr. Loter thanked her for the great suggestion.

Ms. Mehdi said it would be beneficial to include people who are developing AI, as well as people who are thinking about how AI affects civil liberties and the potential misuse of AI going forward. She said when she worked for Congresswoman Jayapal, she was part of a committee that the Port of Seattle convened around the use of biometric data in the airport. She said members of airlines and cruise lines were talking about the efficacy of using facial recognition to load planes and load cruise ships, but without having the ACLU and some government people there, they may not have heard about issues such as facial recognition systems not being 100% accurate and being trained on primarily white faces. She said she agrees with Ms. Pettis that having outside participants who may share more objective opinions may be helpful. Ms. Mehdi said she is very interested in the makeup of the AI Governance Committee and she would appreciate a report on their work, which could be informative to patrons as well as the Board.

Mr. Fay said he agreed and there will be more information coming to the Board on this topic. He said he is trying to make sure that SPL is involved in discussions at a national level. He said there are plans to pull together a convening in the fall at the University of Washington to include public libraries and the Digital Public Library. He said the hope is to look at approaches from ethics, saving democracy, civil literacy issues, etc. He said starting those discussions with libraries involved will be key to bringing folks in, even as occasional guests, to the Governance Committee as SPL constantly refreshes its knowledge about where AI is going.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Library Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy as published; the motion carried unanimously.

### **Union Report**

President of AFSCME Local 2083 Jessica Lucas thanked the Board for their work and said her written report stands for this month. She said she will be absent from the meeting next month and will try to have another union leadership person or Executive Board member attend in her place.

### **Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates**

Ms. Bendixen said the Foundation Board met in July. She said Foundation fundraising is at \$2.5 million, which is about 76% of their total goal for the year. She said the Foundation Board received an informative presentation from NWP Consulting regarding expectations and timelines for a potential 2026 levy. She said the Foundation Board had a goal of 1,000 membership sign-ups for the Public Library Action Network (PLAN) for library advocacy, and there are now 1,034 members. She said several Foundation Board members attended the International Public Library Fundraising Conference in June, and they gave presentations on their experience and insights from the conference. Ms. Bendixen said the Foundation is working on their Strategic Plan, and had a work session on their values during the July meeting. She said they are doing community listening sessions this summer and early fall. She said Foundation Board members delivered “Fun in the Sun” buckets to all SPL branches with treats and activities in appreciation of Library staff.

Ms. Mehdi encouraged board members to sign up for PLAN. She said the group is careful not to inundate members with messages, and noted that trustees should approach City Council members about issues together, as opposed to separately. She said the Friends Board is doing a great job of recruiting new members and had seven potential new board members attend their July meeting. She said the Friends gave out 5,291 books in June at public events including Rainbow City, Juneteenth, Pride, and the Books for Teachers program. She said the Friends’ Georgetown location is great and has lots of different kinds of books available. She said the Friends’ print-on-demand T-shirt test has been completed with cute Friends designs, including “Library Friends with Library Benefits” artwork, which will be available to the general public, with a discount for members. Ms. Mehdi said the FriendShop has been closed on Sundays since the pandemic, but they have been experimenting with re-opening, and their next test day will be the Sunday before Labor Day.

### **Updates from Library Board Members**

Ms. Pettis said she enjoyed the opportunity to attend the American Library Association conference in Philadelphia, and she thanked the Library and the Foundation for the opportunity. She said from the opening plenary session with the Mayor of Philadelphia all the way through sessions with Governor Gretchen Whitmer, former Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden, and author and activist George Takei, it was very inspirational to see and hear this library community. She said she gravitated toward legal-focused sessions, including some on freedom of expression, censorship, and library advocacy. She said there were very educational sessions, and the most impactful part for her was conversations about how to navigate the turbulent times and challenges that libraries face around the country. She said she is grateful for the Seattle community and local support, which is very different from places elsewhere, and underscores the importance of libraries as anchors that do many different things in

their communities. She said, it feels like SPL is ahead of the curve and is doing many things that others are trying to come up to speed on. Ms. Pettis offered kudos to The Seattle Public Library. She said the highlight of the conference for her was hearing from Dr. Carla Hayden, and that Dr. Hayden's optimism in the face of all that she has been through was very inspiring.

Trustee Ron Chew said the conference was the first opportunity he had to meet Ms. Pettis in person. He thanked Mr. Fay for his leadership and the opportunity to get together with some of the Library and Foundation attendees. He said the work being done at SPL is held in high regard within the profession and that Mr. Fay's name comes up frequently. Mr. Chew said he has learned a lot at conferences, including how to be a better board member. He said he has also been involved in two other conferences in Seattle in the past two weeks – the OCA Asian Pacific Advocates' national conference, and the Asian American Journalist Association conference – and he said that visits to the Central Library have been a highlight of many of their experiences in town.

Mr. Fay thanked Mr. Chew for his kind words. Mr. Fay said he represents 700 staff doing great work, and he is grateful for the work of the staff and the Board's leadership. With regard to Ms. Pettis' comments, Mr. Fay said libraries across the country have different challenges, and SPL is fortunate to have an engaged Board that is working through policies and asking great questions. He said not all boards work that well and are so committed, and he hopes it is the work of all involved at SPL that is celebrated across the country, including the work of the team members who are doing that work every single day.

#### ADJOURN

Library Board President Tali Hairston adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.



# The Seattle Public Library

**Date:** August 28, 2025  
**To:** Library Board of Trustees  
**From:** Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian  
**Re:** August 2025 Chief Librarian's Report

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1. On August 11, Library Foundation CEO Brian Lawrence; SHKS Principal Architects David Strauss, Matt Inpanbutr and Pia Westen; Foundation staff members, and I gave a tour of the University Branch seismic retrofit project to U.S. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) to survey the renovations and discuss the improvements Library patrons can expect when the branch reopens in late 2026. The Library is deeply grateful for Rep. Jayapal's support of the University Branch project which will include a seismic retrofit, an electric HVAC system and elevator, new ADA-accessible paths and entryways, additional study rooms, and more. This project is made possible by funding from the 2019 Library Levy, with additional funding provided by a Congressional procurement secured by Rep. Jayapal and by grants from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Program and the Washington State Department of Commerce.
2. On August 18, I attended a gathering of the UW Libraries/SPL Summer High School Internship students at the Allen Library on the UW Seattle Campus. Along with Lake City Branch Teen Librarian Nancy Garrett and Youth & Family Learning Services Program Manager Shelley Mastalerz, UW Libraries Dean Simon Neame and I welcomed interns to the program, which is an opportunity for paid high school interns from diverse backgrounds to learn about college admissions, college experiences, fields of study, and potential careers in librarianship. The program is funded through the Seattle Public Library Foundation.
3. The Library is kicking off a citywide survey to better understand community needs and interests. The survey will run Aug. 25 through Sept. 24 and will be available in print and online, and translated into Spanish, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Vietnamese, Amharic and Somali. It has been mailed to 15,000 households, and the Library's community engagement consultant Olympic Research and Strategy is offering participants a chance to win one of 20 \$50 VISA gift cards. The survey is one part of a year-long, multifaceted community engagement effort and follows workshops held in the spring at the Beacon Hill, Capitol Hill, and Greenwood branches with more than 30 community-based organizations. The Library also conducted creative passive engagement activities at 14 locations in May and June. Findings from the full community engagement effort will be analyzed to help inform decision making as the Library moves through the 2024-2033 Strategic Plan.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:

- a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; Foundation Gratiuesday donor cultivation and Library support event; Three Presidents Meeting.
- b. Standing Meetings: Compensation Committee; Senior Management Team; E-Team; Monthly Managers meeting; Union/Leadership meetings; Foundation CEO/Chief Librarian bi-monthly meetings.
- c. Library Meetings, Talks, Interviews and Visits: Metro area library director meetings; Statewide public library directors meeting; monthly meeting with King County Library Executive Director; University Branch visit with Congresswoman Jayapal; UW Libraries High School Summer Internship visit.
- d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: Mayor's Cabinet meeting; Mayor's Emergency Executive Board Cyber Security Exercise.

## Human Resources Recruitment, Development & Employee Engagement August 12.2025

With contributions from HR Manager Shawna Dennard, Sr. HR Generalist Lorele Canono, and HR Business Partner Danika Mowery. Compiled and edited by HR Director Brian Sharkey.

*In the second half of 2025 the SPL Human Resources (HR) team focuses on hiring the best and brightest from a multitude of high-volume recruitments. Staff are recognized for their excellent work through the annual award celebrations and All Staff Day. We kick off a new endeavor with Wellness Wednesdays in alignment with the SPL Strategic Plan priorities. This brief report will highlight some of the key achievements in the last several months of hard work.*

### Recruitment

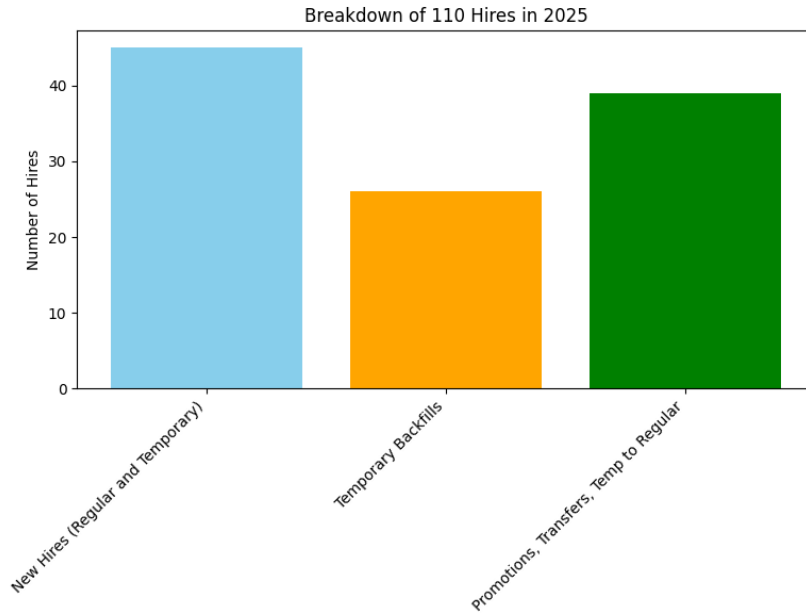
#### Staffing Breakdown for 2025

The recruitment team continues its commitment to ensuring that the Library maintains the minimum staffing levels required to keep operations running and branches open. We have efficiently filled several of our baseline positions—particularly Library Associate roles—by advertising multiple vacancies with the same classification on one posting. This strategy creates a larger candidate pool and casts a wider net for future temporary backfill needs.

Several new positions have been filled, including the **Library Environment and Security Services Manager** and **Cyber Security Analyst** roles. A highly anticipated recruitment for the **African American Collection Curator/Adult Services Librarian** was conducted in the spring, and our new colleague will be joining us in September. The hiring process for the **Director of Inclusion and Belonging** is in its final stages, with finalist interviews scheduled for the week of August 11. We hope to make a final hiring decision shortly thereafter.

The graph below shows the distribution of 110 hires across three categories as of August 2025:

1. New hires (both regular and temporary)
2. Temporary backfills for regular position vacancies
3. Promotions, transfers, or staff that went from temporary to regular positions.



Classifications of hiring exceptions filled in 2025 or onboarding this month:

- Cyber Security Analyst (*new*)
- Library Environment & Security Services Manager (*new*)
- IT Program/Project Manager (*new*)
- African American Collection Curator, Adult Services Librarian
- Business Analyst & Policy Advisor
- Library Associate II
- Library Associate IV
- Library Technician II
- Library Technician III
- Communications Specialist
- Branch Operations Manager
- Page
- Sr. Systems Analyst I
- Building Maintenance Worker
- Sr. Financial Analyst/Accountant
- Facilities Manager
- Finance Analyst/Assistant
- Custodian
- Delivery Driver I
- Delivery Driver II
- HR Specialist – Benefits & Leaves
- HR Generalist – ADA Coordinator
- Lead Recruiter
- Floating Library Associate IIs
- Floating Library Associate IVs
- Building Maintenance Support Lead
- Building Engineer
- Security Officers
- Catalog Librarian
- Teen Services Librarian
- AMH System Operator
- AMH Lead Operator

### Upcoming/In Progress Recruitments:

- Director of Inclusion & Belonging
- Events Services Manager
- Seattle Room Collection Curator, Adult Services Librarian
- Mid-City East Regional Manager
- Community Engagement & Economic Development Entrepreneur
- HR Associate – Recruitment
- HR Associate – Employee and Labor Relations
- Lead Page
- Intermittent LA2
- Intermittent LA4
- Teen Services Librarian (DTH and UNI)
- Security Officer
- Branch LA2s and LA4s

Five new hires are already scheduled for start dates in September!

## Development & Employee Engagement

### 2025 All Staff Day – Employee Recognition Awards

Promoting a culture of recognition is a core component of the Employee Engagement Committee (EEC), particularly highlighted through the annual **Employee Recognition Awards** presented at All Staff Day. There are seven (7) awards for individuals and two (2) awards for work teams. The EEC received a total of 136 nominations on behalf of 84 unique employees/groups representing half of our 61 total departments. The EEC diligently reviewed each nomination to determine award recipients and arranged for certificates & plaques to be presented by Chief Librarian, Tom Fay on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Winners this year included:

#### **Awards for Individuals:**

- Customer Service: **Addisalem Wordofa** (Custodian, Central Library)
- Diversity and Inclusion: **Mynique Adams** (Librarian, Douglass-Truth Branch)
- Hunter Maxwell Becker Brown: **Michelle Tong** (Library Associate IV, University Branch)
- Internal Organizational Values: **Ryan Clark** (Library Associate I, Greenwood Branch)
- Librarian Excellence: **Ann Ferguson** (Librarian, Central Library)
- Managerial Excellence: **Kate Sellers** (Managing Librarian, Central Library)
- Rising Star: **Kaila Cena** (Enterprise Applications Analyst, Central Library)

#### **Awards for Work Teams:**

- Customer Service Team: **Intermittent Staff – Library Associate I's, Library Associate II's, Library Associate IV's, & Librarians** (all locations)
- Working Smart Team: **All Ability Group - Robin Rousu, Erin Moehring, Ryan Dahlquist, Bridget Nickol, Michelle Tong, Ren Olson**



## **Voluntary Staff Reads Program**

The EEC kicked off an inaugural system-wide, voluntary program called “Staff Reads”, inspired by the patron-facing program, “Seattle Reads”, which encourages all employees to read and discuss the same book. The 2025 Staff Reads selection was “Mutual Aid” by Dean Spade. Unlimited e-audiobook copies were made available to staff and free, physical copies of the book were distributed at All Staff Day for interested participants. Over 130 copies of the book were distributed to participating staff. Facilitated discussions and engagement with author Dean Spade are scheduled for October 2025.

## **National Library Workers Day**

This year *National Library Workers Day* was observed on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025. To recognize the hard work of our staff, the Union, Library Management, and EEC annually join forces and budgets to shower employees with celebratory food and drinks. The EEC manages the ordering, organizing, and distribution of these items. Over 100 snack boxes, 40+ Kraft Mac & Cheese Cup boxes, and a variety of LaCroix Sparkling Water were thoughtfully circulated to multiple levels of the Central Library, delivered to all 26 library branches, with the addition of several boxes and refreshments sent to the Maintenance & Operations Center (MOC) in Georgetown for our hardworking Materials Distribution staff.

## **Wellness Wednesdays**

In support of the Library’s [2024-2033 Strategic Plan](#), the Library’s HR team has been working to develop a holistic wellness program that supports the wellbeing of Library staff. We are kicking off that effort on August 6. With help from SPL’s Communications team, we will provide ongoing monthly updates with an emphasis on showcasing helpful wellness resources that are available to Library Staff.

On the first Wednesday of every month – “Wellness Wednesdays” – we will spotlight a variety of wellness resources. For our first Wellness Wednesday, we are excited to announce two tools you can use to navigate all of the resources available to you:

- **One-pager: Wellness Resources at SPL:** A new, printable one-pager that provides a high-level overview of available resources for Library employees. These resources include everything from Teladoc and 24/7 nurse consultations to smoking cessation, weight management, maternity support programs, and more.
- **SharePoint page: Health and Wellness at the Library:** A [newly updated page](#) on our staff intranet HR site that outlines available resources as outlined above in more detail. This page also includes upcoming City-sponsored HR events. We will continue to grow this site as new resources become available.



# The Seattle Public Library

**Date:** August 28, 2025

**To:** Library Board of Trustees

**From:** Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian  
Rick Sheridan, Director of Institutional and Strategic Advancement  
Jessica Smith, Strategy and Policy Advisor  
Elisa Murray, Digital Communications Strategist  
Jan Oscherwitz, Library Levy Administrator  
David Christensen, Business Analyst and Policy Advisor

**Re:** **Second Quarter 2025 Levy Report**

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## Background

We have entered our sixth year of our seven-year \$219.1 million 2019 Library Levy. This report, which covers activities and spending for the second quarter of 2025, continues the series of ongoing updates for the Library's leadership team and board of trustees to document implementation of the levy priorities and accomplishments. It describes the way the Library has responded to changes in how our patrons use the Library and how we are using levy resources.

Continuing the effort we started with the Q1 2025 report, we are shifting toward a more visually oriented and reader-friendly format to make this document more accessible to the public. We welcome your feedback and suggestions as we continue to streamline this report.

## Q2 Highlights

The 2019 Library Levy provides 38% of the Library's revised total 2025 budget of \$142.2 million. The Library spent \$14.7 million of the revised 2025 levy budget of \$54.5 million, or 27% through Q2. Much of the lag in spending budget authority is associated with multi-year projects in the major maintenance and technology capital program. This report also provides information on the remaining \$0.9 million of budget authority from the 2012 Library Levy.

In its 2019 levy proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how levy proceeds would be used to maintain and enhance Library services in the areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children's Programming and Maintenance. Highlights from Q2 by investment category include the following:

### **Hours and Access: We promised to access to Library services when patrons need them**

Our libraries continued to operate on the schedule we established on January 29, 2025. This new schedule increased hours across the system above 2019 levels and ensured all locations not under construction were open at least six days a week. The new schedule will remain in place throughout 2025. Although a citywide hiring freeze continues to affect our capacity, our new schedule has proved stable, with only five unexpected closures in Q2. In addition to more open hours, the Library also offers 24/7 access to holds at pickup lockers at seven library locations.

The Library is also taking steps to improve the patron experience. In April, we launched a new simplified library card sign-up application form in five languages. In June, we saw the highest monthly total of library card sign-ups on record.

Our social services team, which includes a levy-funded community resource specialist for youth and young adults, continues to connect patrons to lifeline resources and community. In partnership with Public Health-Seattle King County, the Library began distributing free lifesaving supplies of naloxone at all SPL locations, providing over 1,500 boxes of nasal naloxone and 200 packets of fentanyl test strips to the community.

**Collections: We promised a robust collection of books and materials**

We added 26,500 copies of digital titles in Q2. We also added 31 titles and 5,300 copies to Peak Picks, our popular no-wait physical collection, and continued to acquire and digitize photographs for our local history collections.

**Technology and Access: We promised to improve computer and online services**

In April 2025, we launched a new mobile Library app, which is designed to increase access to the Library system, enhance the online patron experience and attract new audiences. Since its launch, the app has been downloaded more than 12,000 times on Apple and Android devices. We also issued an RFP for a new ILS vendor. Our new cybersecurity analyst is leading the development of a more mature cyber security program at the Library.

**Children's Programming: We promised to add more programming for children ages 0-5.**

The levy directly funds Kaleidoscope Play and Learns, drop-in neighborhood-based play groups facilitated by trained community members for children between the ages of birth to 5. The Library currently offers weekly Play and Learn programs in four languages. In Q2 2025, around 80 sessions were held at the Beacon Hill, Columbia, Delridge, Lake City, NewHolly, Rainier Beach, and South Park branches. The Library also offered 250 story times at 20+branches in Q2.

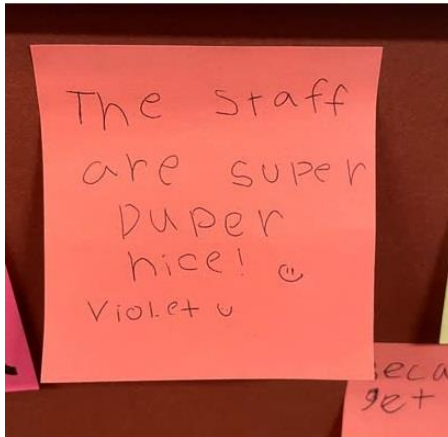
**Maintenance: We promised to maintain buildings for the next generation**

In late January, the University Branch closed for renovation and seismic retrofit. The levy-funded project will retrofit the branch to improve safety in the event of an earthquake, add a new electric HVAC system, update the interior to increase accessibility, and preserve the historic building for future generations.

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**Action required/requested:** Board review and consideration of the 2025 Q2 Levy Report for approval at the August Library Board meeting.

Q2 2025  
The Seattle Public Library  
**LEVY REPORT**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Q2 2025

### Levy background

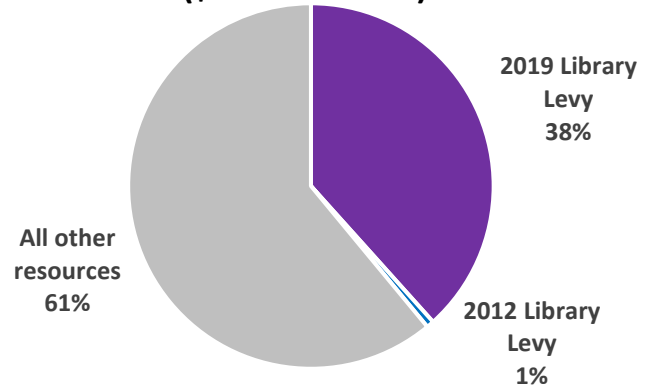
In August 2019, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved (76%) a seven-year, \$219.1 million property tax levy to maintain and enhance Library services from 2020 through 2026, renewing a seven-year, \$122.6 million levy that expired at the end of 2019.

This is the sixth year of the levy. In 2025, the 2019 Levy accounts for \$54.5 million (38.3%) of the Library's total revised budget of \$142.2 million. The 2012 Levy provides \$0.9 million (0.7 %). Other sources of funding include the City's general fund, state and federal grants, private funds, and Library fund balance.

As part of its 2019 proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year levy period. This report, which covers levy activities and spending for Q2 2025, continues the series of [quarterly updates](#) the Library has provided for the Board of Trustees and the public since 2013.

Beyond renewing 2012 Levy commitments, the 2019 Levy provides support for additional open hours; elimination of overdue fines; improved collections and technology; safe, clean, and well-maintained buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and Library strategic planning. Levy funding supports a quarter of all positions at the Library, including 35% of children and teen service librarian positions.

**2025 Library Revised Budget  
(\$142.2 Million)**



### Did you know?

The Levy supports a **quarter of all positions** at the Library, including 35% of children and teen service librarian positions.

### Q2 2025 Highlights

During the second quarter of 2025, we saw strong usage of Library services and progress on fulfilling our levy promises. We continue to grapple with challenges that have emerged in 2025. A turbulent national political landscape is creating uncertainty for many in our community. With these changes at the national level, local funding support becomes more important than ever.

**Stable open hours:** The expansion of open hours that began in Q1 continued in Q2, ensuring all locations were open at least six days a week. Thirteen locations are open seven days a week, and all locations are open for at least one weekend day. The new schedule will remain in place throughout 2025. Although a hiring freeze continues to affect staffing capacity, our new schedule has proved stable, with only five unexpected closures in Q2.



**University Branch renovation breaks ground:** A substantial [levy-funded renovation](#) is underway at the historically landmarked University Branch, which temporarily closed for construction in January. The project includes a seismic retrofit and the installation of an electric HVAC system.

**Distribution of life-saving supplies:** In partnership with Public Health - Seattle & King County, the Library began distributing free life-saving supplies of naloxone and other overdose prevention supplies at all Library locations.

**Strategic plan progress:** In late 2024, we launched the Library's newly adopted [10-year Strategic Plan](#), an effort funded by the levy. The new plan seeks to build the community's sense of belonging, increase our resiliency, and improve community outcomes.

Library staff are hard at work implementing the first phase of the plan. Seven projects that support literacy, enrichment, and empowerment are on track for successful completion, including developing and launching a mobile app; and increasing Special Collection digital asset management and preservation. Five projects with impacts on buildings, technology, and sustainability are also in progress or complete, including procuring and implementing a new integrated library system. We look forward to sharing a more detailed update on strategic plan implementation in a future levy report.

“We envision The Seattle Public Library as the **central hub of an equitable and connected city** where knowledge flourishes, and **people find inspiration and a sense of belonging.**”

- The Library's Strategic Plan



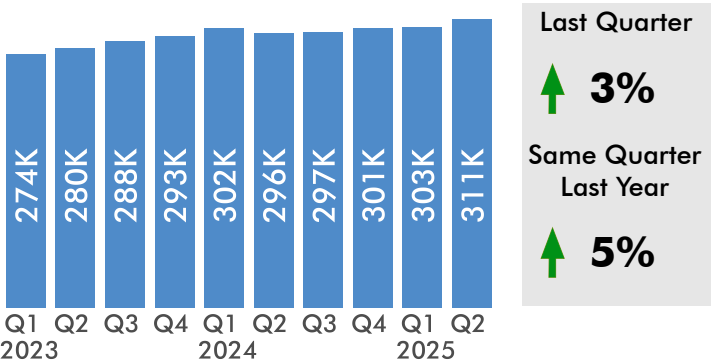
LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS AND ACCESS



IN FOCUS: Quarterly Usage Trends

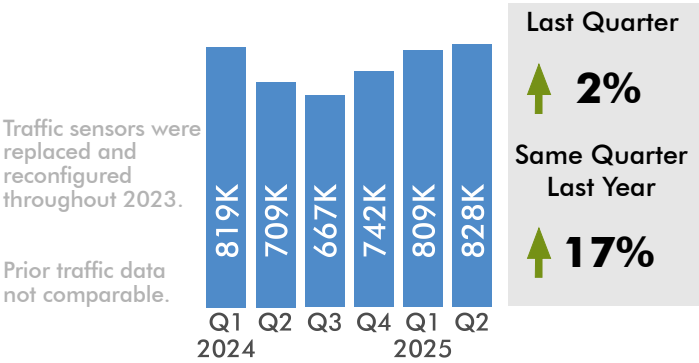
Active Library Users

Patrons who checked out materials or logged in to use a Library resource in the last 12 months



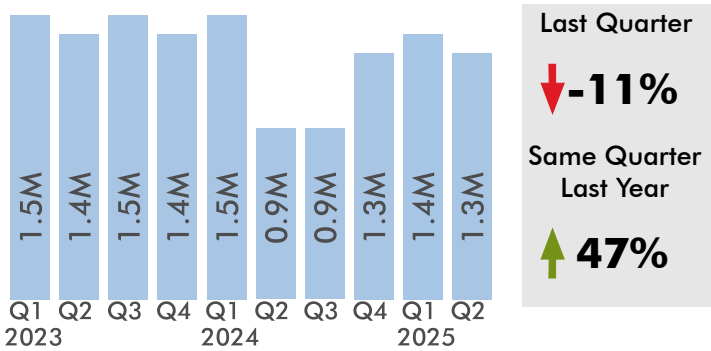
In-Person Visits

Number of in-person visits



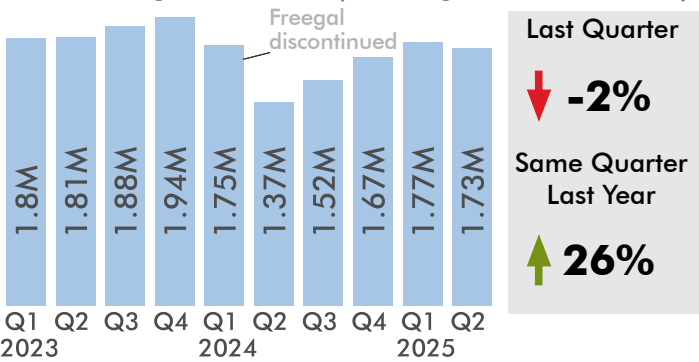
Physical Checkouts

Number of physical checkouts (including renewals)



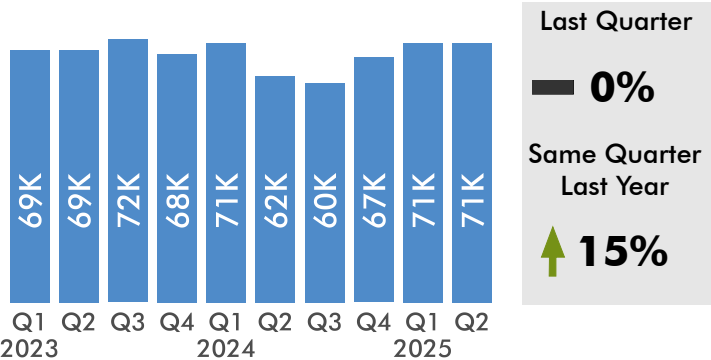
Digital Checkouts

Number of digital checkouts (including streams and views)



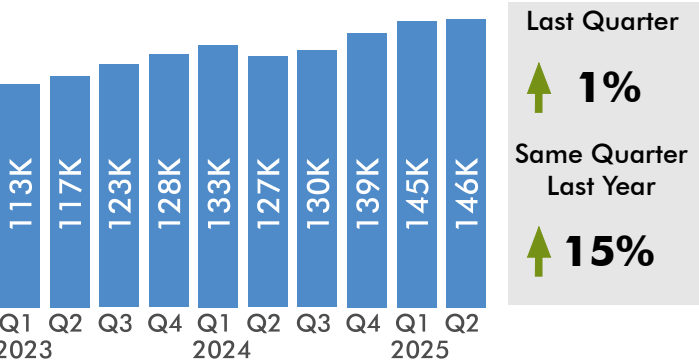
Borrowers - Physical

Number of patrons who borrowed physical materials



Borrowers - Digital

Number of patrons who borrowed digital materials



A ransomware outage significantly disrupted borrowing and overall library use from May to September 2024.

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS & ACCESS

### Maintaining expanded open hours and increasing access

The 2019 Levy provides \$16.5 million in 2025 for investment in Hours and Access to support operating hours at our 27 libraries; community access to Library learning programs and services; and citywide community outreach and engagement. Many elements of this levy category relate to increasing access to Library resources. We achieve this in several ways, including eliminating late fees, adding open hours, and creating new access points, such as holds pick-up lockers. Total levy spending through Q2 2025 for the Hours and Access category was \$7.3 million.

The 2019 Levy promised expanded hours above 2019 levels, which increases community access to Library collections, information services, computers, printers, programming, and public spaces. In the five years since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have navigated many challenges in restoring and expanding hours. In late January 2025, we implemented a new schedule that increased hours across the system and ensured all locations were open at least six days a week. (See Appendix 1.)

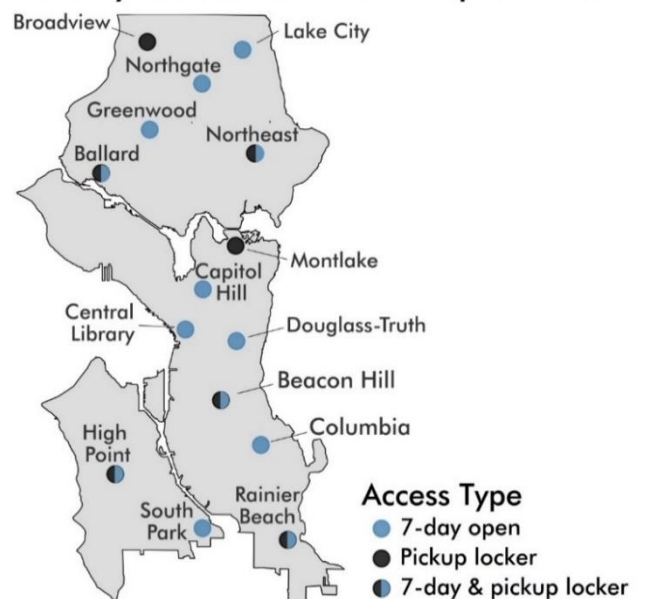
Since late January, all locations not currently closed for renovations are open at least six days a week, and 13 are open seven days a week. Each Library location is open on at least one weekend day. We've also had few unexpected closures or delayed openings – only five in Q2.

**Expanding access by improving systems:** In June 2025, the Library board approved a new administrative procedure to clear unpaid fees that are more than three years old from all Library accounts.

The Library charges patrons for lost or damaged materials. Most of these charges are paid promptly, but some remain unpaid and, after three years, are considered uncollectible debt. The new procedure aligns with standard accounting practices and improves database management by removing tens of thousands of outdated accounts. Patrons who have had their accounts cleared can reapply for a Library card, but as is the case for all Library patrons, borrowed materials must be returned within 14 days past due date to maintain account access.

This change will take effect in Q3, and builds on other changes we have made in recent years, such as eliminating overdue fines, to expand access and improve efficiency of our systems.

#### 7-Day Branches and Pickup Lockers





In Q2, we also went through the process of verifying addresses for active Library cardholders. This will help us make sure that eligible patrons receive access to library items more quickly and smooth our transition to a new Integrated Library System (see page 12).

**New library card application:** On April 1, we launched improved online Library Card Application forms, which are available in five languages. The redesigned application process features a simplified user interface, improved mobile responsiveness, and clearer instructions. The form is available at [www.spl.org/Card](http://www.spl.org/Card). In Q2, more than 20,000 people successfully used the new form to sign up for a full or provisional Library card. In June, 7,400 people signed up, the highest monthly total of new patron signups on record.



### Take a card ...

In June 2025, more than 7,400 people signed up for new cards, the **highest monthly total of new patron signups on record!**

## Programs and services

In Q2 2025, the Library offered more than 1,200 programs at its 27 locations and in the community. Because the levy funds much of our staffing, many of these programs could not happen without that funding. Most programs are supported by The Seattle Public Library Foundation, which funds Museum Pass, author events and summer programs, and many other programs.

**Museum Pass restored:** In Q2 2025, we reinstituted the Museum Pass program, once again offering cardholders free access to a wide range of local museums and cultural institutions. Patrons can reserve a pass online at [www.spl.org/MuseumPass](http://www.spl.org/MuseumPass). To support equitable access, we created program pages and advertised this service in six languages.

**Meeting rooms used more than 2,000 times:** The Levy supports the use of community meeting spaces, which are free at all neighborhood branches that have them, and available for a modest fee at the Central Library downtown. In Q2, meeting rooms were used more than 2,000 times by community nonprofits, public agencies, elected officials, school groups, book clubs, and other community members.

**Literacy and learning:** Almost 250 story times and around 80 Play and Learn sessions were held in Q1. We continued to offer Homework Help at nine branches through mid-June; and launched our annual Summer of Learning program on June 16 with a theme of "Reading, Learning, Growing Is for Everyone!"

**Author and community programs:** The Central Library hosted 61 public events, including two months of programming for Seattle Reads; job search programs; and "Where and When We Find Ourselves," an interactive day of art and performance by local Black history keepers and artists. We also launched a summer series with the KUOW Book Club.



U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón, whose book was the 2025 Seattle Reads selection, visited Seattle in May.

## Social Services: Connecting patrons to resources and community

Our Social Services team includes a Social Services librarian, a senior community resource specialist, and a levy-funded community resource specialist who focuses on youth and young adults up to age 26.

This team provides expertise to the Library on social service resources, coordinates with other providers, supports staff across the system in de-escalation and trauma-informed practices, and assists patrons in need.

Here are some highlights of their work in Q2:

**Referrals and resources:** In Q2, the Social Services team recorded 128 interactions, 91 of which involved referral to an external organization.

**Life-saving overdose prevention supplies:** Through a key partnership with Public Health - Seattle & King County, the Library began distributing free naloxone and other overdose prevention supplies to patrons at all locations. In Q2, patrons picked up 1,588 boxes of nasal naloxone and 200 packets of fentanyl test strips. In collaboration with partners, the Library held three overdose prevention education programs at the Capitol Hill, Lake City, and Beacon Hill branches.

**Mobile food pantries:** We partnered with branches to bring the FareStart Mobile Market to the NewHolly Branch weekly, and FamilyWorks Mobile Pantry to the Broadview Branch twice a month. More than 30 community members routinely stop by each of these events.



### Top Social Services referral requests

- Emergency shelter
- Health care
- Day centers / hygiene
- Outreach
- Crisis intervention

### ID Day at the Ballard Branch:

Approximately 30 patrons obtained ID cards at our first "ID Day" at the Ballard Branch with DSHS, DOL2Go, and REACH. One patron said that having all the services in one place saved them two months of waiting!

**Drop-in sessions with REACH:** We worked with REACH to hold 21 events at the Capitol Hill and Rainier Beach branches in Q2, assisting over 150 unhoused patrons. REACH's behavioral health specialist connects patrons to resources and provides supportive listening and motivational interviewing.

**Central Library gatherings:** We held five Coffee and Conversations events, with close to 50 people at each event; and more than 400 patrons attended 12 Crafternoons. Our team regularly attended Young Adult Drop-in programs at the Central Library's Teen Center to connect youth with services and resources.

## Ensuring that library spaces are safe and welcoming

**Community Use Agreement approved by Board:** At a special board meeting on May 27, the Library Board of Trustees voted to adopt a new Community Use Agreement (CUA), effective August 1, which replaces the Library's Rules of Conduct as official policy regarding appropriate behavior within and use of Library spaces.

This was a multi-year process that engaged dozens of staff and community members and aimed to address inequitable enforcement or impacts of our rules on patrons of color, younger patrons, patrons with accessibility needs, and patrons experiencing homelessness. After a comprehensive implementation and training process, the Library will officially transition to the CUA on Aug. 1.

**Building our Security Services team.** The Security Services unit oversees the security of Library buildings and public spaces to provide patrons and staff a welcoming and safe environment. The team is nearly fully staffed with a total of 22 officers, three of whom joined the Library during Q2. The team can now support branch needs with greater flexibility, including adding patrols at locations with a higher number of security incidents.

In Q2, the Security team piloted the deployment of a dedicated officer at the Capitol Hill Branch. Posting a dedicated officer at a branch can support improved response time and help build relationships with regular patrons at that location. This approach may be expanded to other locations later this year.

**Environment and Security Services manager:** The Security Services unit will soon be led by the newly created Library Environment and Security Services manager position, which is a strategic plan priority. This position will conduct a formal assessment of security effectiveness, which will identify the best opportunities for making our spaces more safe and welcoming.



### Community voices

"I love that the Library ... is one of the places you can exist for free, and receive tons of helpful resources. Everyone is welcome and treated with dignity & respect."  
- SPL patron

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: COLLECTIONS

### Building robust collections

The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintain and expand the Library's collection of physical and digital materials. The levy includes funding for e-books, e-audiobooks, streaming services, the Peak Picks collection, and the acquisition and digitization of local history materials.

In 2025, the 2019 Levy provides \$6.4 million for Collections, including \$5.5 million for books and materials, or 55% of the Library's books and materials budget. Total levy spending through Q2 2025 for the Collections category was \$3.1 million.

Here are highlights of our collections work in Q2 2025.

**Digital book checkouts and spending stable:** The number of patrons accessing digital books (e-books and e-audiobooks), and the number of digital book checkouts remained about the same as in Q1. We purchased 26,500 copies of digital titles in Q2.

We continued to monitor spending on digital books to make sure that the [measures](#) we took in 2024 to manage e-book spending were effective. While we haven't seen a reduction in our average high-demand costs in 2025 (the cost of buying multiple copies of the most popular digital books), compared to 2024, projections indicate those costs are lower than what we would have spent without those measures. Our budget for high-demand spending is on track, which helps us invest in a broad and diverse e-collection.

Books Unbanned, which allows youth ages 13 to 26 across the country to check out digital books for free, continued to grow, with 7,000 Books Unbanned cardholders and 88,000 digital checkouts in Q2. Books Unbanned is privately funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation.



#### Community voices

“Audio e-books are the best! With so many distractions in daily life ... listening to audio e-books while commuting or doing dishes has enabled me to keep up with my desired reading list.”

– SPL patron

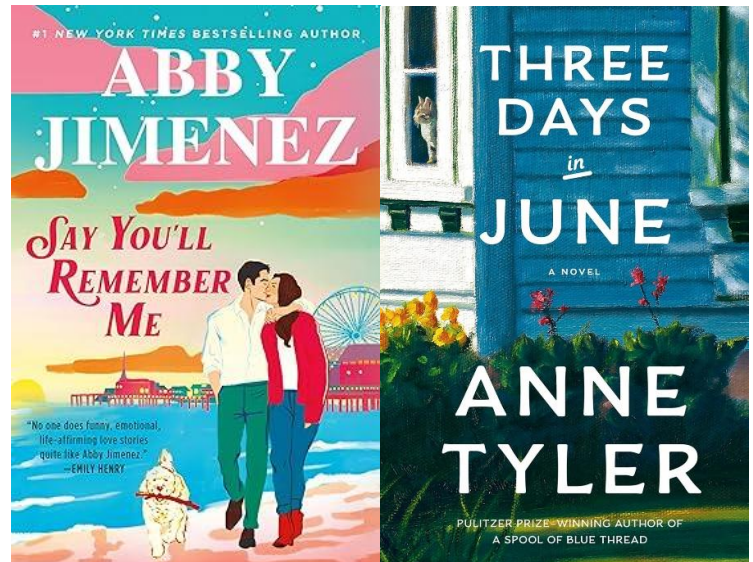


**Expanding language access:** In Q2, Levy funds were used to increase the Library's World Languages digital book collections in OverDrive, spanning 11 languages. Highlights of the additions included popular graphic novels by Raina Telgemeier, Dav Pilkey, Kayla Miller, and Gale Galligan.

**New York Times use grows:** New York Times digital usage continued to increase, with a growth of 16% compared to Q1 2025, and a 100% increase from the same quarter in 2024. Use of both the Kanopy and Hoopla streaming services saw slight declines compared to Q1 2025, while Flipster magazines usage decreased by 18%.

**Peak Picks popularity:** In April our Peak Picks no-holds, no-wait collection of high-interest titles added 31 titles and nearly 5,300 copies. The most popular Peak Picks title was Anne Tyler's "Three Days in June," followed by Abby Jimenez's romance "Say You'll Remember Me."

**Seattle Reads copies:** We provided hundreds of physical copies of the Seattle Reads selection, "You Are Here," through the general collection, Peak Picks, uncatalogued books, and unlimited access to the digital editions.



## Local history collections

The [Seattle Room](#), located at the Central Library, provides in-person access to treasured local history items, including local manuscripts, menus, photos, postcards, books, and more. Our digital Seattle Room collections make Seattle history easier to access for students, researchers, historians, and others. The Seattle Room curator and Special Collections digital librarian positions are both funded by the levy.

In Q2, we had 145 research appointments, and we added 715 items to the Seattle Room collections.

A highlight was the acquisition of a small but important archive of material documenting Seattle's response to the AIDS epidemic



Artifacts from the Seattle AIDS epidemic collection.

between 1983 and 1994. The collection includes pamphlets, buttons, fliers, letters, meeting agendas, and petitions from local organizations, such as the Northwest AIDS Foundation, Seattle AIDS Committee, the Dorian Group, and Seattle Pride.

Another notable acquisition was a rare circa 1890 concertina (fan-folded) [Album of Seattle, Wash.](#), which includes panoramic views of the city along with images depicting commercial and residential buildings as well as views of the salmon, lumber and hop-picking industries. Only Yale and the New York Public Library are listed with cataloged holdings of this item.

## Seattle Room Digital Collections

This quarter, almost 13,000 people visited the digital collections with 17,000 sessions and more than 100,000 pageviews.

We added [three interesting business directories](#) to our [Seattle Sawdust Collection](#), which include hundreds of pages describing early Seattle companies. These directories are especially helpful to researchers because they provide hard-to-find photographs of business interiors and the business proprietors themselves.



Of special interest in some of the directories are descriptions of Seattle businesses owned by women or Japanese and Chinese entrepreneurs. A directory called [Seattle of To-Day](#) included interior photos of Madame Killean's dress shop; she is described as a "designer extraordinaire" of gowns, opera cloaks, and hats in the Parisian style.

We also continued to add to our [Marine Digest Collection](#), including 119 newly digitized issues from May 1957 to August 1959, which brought the total number of issues to over 1,800.

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TECHNOLOGY

### Keeping our technology up to date

The 2019 Levy promised dedicated funding for digital equity offerings, updated infrastructure for public internet access, updated technology for acquisition and circulation, and continued maintenance and upgrading of public technologies and the spl.org website. The levy funds \$2.8 million of operating expenses related to technology and online services in 2025 and \$4.4 million of unspent technology capital budget authority from prior years. Total levy spending through Q2 2025 for the technology operating expenses was \$1 million.

#### Digital equity and the HotSpot program

The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for our [HotSpot program](#), which provides internet access through our general collection and through focused outreach with community organizations.

The Library's 850 Wi-Fi hot spots in the general collection were checked out 1,580 times in Q2 2025.

The Library's outreach team continued to make and service long-term loans from its inventory of 250 hot spots to partners who reach Seattle residents most impacted by the digital divide.

The outreach team made 19 new hot spot loans in Q2. Around two-thirds of the outreach hot spots were on loan at some point during the quarter to 12 partners. (Some were temporarily out of service because of a switch to a new internet service provider and model.)

Library staff visited outreach hotspot partner sites, such as tent cities and community gathering spaces, to meet new participants and reconnect with familiar faces. Popular topics of conversation included youth-centered programming, resources for speakers of languages other than English, informal gatherings with creative elements, employment workshops, books, and, of course, internet access.

#### Community voices

"If it weren't for this hotspot, I would not be able to get anything done. With it, I have been able to enroll in school, attend classes, and look for jobs."

– Participant in South Seattle College's Justice Involved Solutions



## Maintaining access to technology and improving cybersecurity

**ILS project progress:** The 2019 Levy included \$4 million to support the replacement of the existing Integrated Library System (ILS), which is the central digital platform allowing libraries to manage collections materials, checkouts, patron accounts, and other essential library services. In Q2, the team issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) specifying the requirements and priorities for a new ILS. We expect to select an ILS vendor by the end of the year and fully implement the new ILS by the end of 2026.

**Mobile app launched:** In April 2025, we launched a new mobile Library app, which is designed to increase access to the Library system, enhance the online patron experience and attract new audiences. Since its launch, the app has been downloaded more than 12,000 times on Apple and Android devices. (See page 13 for more information on the mobile app.)

### Computers, printing and ScanEZ:

Q2 saw strong use of the Library's technology resources. More than 18,000 patrons used public computers, booking 98,000 hours of computer time, and 28,000 patrons printed about 527,000 pages at our 27 locations. Our patrons scanned about 115,000 pages, using our free ScanEZ machines.

**Cybersecurity program:** A new cybersecurity analyst is leading the development of a more mature cybersecurity program at the Library. Priorities for this year include developing and optimizing the security measures added after the 2024 ransomware attack on the Library, driving continuous improvement in our practices, and driving creation of policies and procedures to ensure the Library remains well-protected.

### What is an integrated library system (ILS)?

"An ILS is the core computer system and database that drives most of what the Library does. It's essentially the central nervous system and electronic brain of the Library."

- Jim Loter, ILS project lead



A Green Lake Branch patron helps her son use a computer.



# The Library in your pocket: New mobile app

In April 2025, after a lengthy development process, the Library launched a mobile app that aims to increase access, enhance the online patron experience, and attract new audiences.

Input from the community was crucial at every step. Focus group conversations and survey responses **from more than 3,000 people** helped us prioritize features to make the app inclusive, accessible, and useful. We continue to make improvements toward those goals.

Download and learn more at:

[www.spl.org/App](http://www.spl.org/App).



**seattlepubliclibrary** Edited • 17w

📱 The SPL mobile app is here!

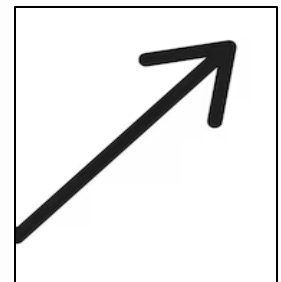
It's a National Library Week surprise!  
Download the app for your Apple devices (Android coming soon) to...

🔍 Search our catalog, borrow books and explore the Library

💳 Add your Library card to your digital wallet

😊 Scan books to check them out right from phone  
And more!

Our app is currently in a Beta testing phase. Tell us what you think at the link in our bio.



Since the launch, the mobile app has been downloaded **more than 12,000 times** on Apple and Android devices.

## What app users are saying



"I love the app so far! It's very user friendly and easy to navigate."



"The app has so many neat features! I like that you can save the card to Apple wallet, check out in the app, reserve a meeting room."



"Absolutely loving the app!!! Completely and genuinely THRILLED to be able to check out items with the app itself."

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUPPORTING CHILDREN

### Expanding early learning options for children

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children, ages birth to 5, providing about \$476,000 to support this effort in 2025. Total levy spending through Q2 2025 for supporting children was \$109,000.

The levy directly funds Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, a drop-in neighborhood-based play group program that provide opportunities for young children and caregivers to gather in community spaces and participate in quality early learning experiences. Early childhood educators and trained community members facilitate weekly 90-minute sessions for children between the ages of birth to 5.

In partnership with community organizations, the Library currently offers weekly Play and Learn programs in four languages and at seven locations. In Q2 2025, around 80 sessions with total attendance of 1,900 were held at the Beacon Hill, Columbia, Delridge, Lake City, NewHolly, Rainier Beach, and South Park branches. Almost 250 story times were also held during the second quarter. SPL's commitment to Kaleidoscope Play & Learn and other high-impact early learning programs is a reflection of the broader institutional value of providing literacy and language opportunities for all.



A Play & Learn session at the Beacon Hill Branch.

#### What Play and Learn participants and partners say

"It is a **wonderful structure and play time** close to the community and we can make connections with other grandparents, families, and children." - Play & Learn family

"The instructors and class environment **make us feel included and belonged**. We feel safe and respected." – Play & Learn family

"It's so **fantastic for me to witness how quickly children learn** when they are exposed early on to experiences that ... stimulate early childhood learning." – Villa Comunitaria facilitator

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

### Protecting our investments

The 2019 Levy provides \$7.9 million in 2025 budget authority and \$13 million in carryforward authority for major maintenance, \$8 million of which is allocated to seismic retrofit work. The 2012 levy provided an additional \$232,000 in remaining carryforward authority, most of which is committed to projects in their final phases. In Q2 of 2025, the Library spent \$1.55 million in 2019 levy funds on major maintenance and seismic retrofit work, for a total of \$1.77 million so far this year. An additional \$6.97 million has been committed or encumbered so far this year.

### Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

**University Branch renovation:** In late January, the University Branch closed for a seismic retrofit and other major renovations. The demolition phase of the project continued throughout Q2. This project comprises a comprehensive upgrade to this landmarked building while preserving its historic character. In addition to the seismic retrofit, the building will have a modern, electric HVAC system installed, expected to reduce our carbon emissions by 20-30 metric tons per year; accessibility improvements including a regraded parking lot, new ADA pathways and entrance; new elevator and accessible restrooms; and a modernized interior. The University Branch is expected to reopen in late 2026.



The University Branch renovation is in the demolition phase.

**Plans for climate-friendly air conditioning:** The University Branch is one of five Library locations to receive partial funding for HVAC installations through a \$5.2 million Hazard Mitigation Grant awarded by FEMA in 2024. The Columbia, Fremont, Queen Anne, and West Seattle branches will also have HVAC systems installed, and high-level architectural designs for these four branch projects continued in Q2. HVAC installations at the Fremont and Queen Anne branches are tentatively expected to begin in early 2026. But, as FEMA funding will not cover the entire cost of these projects, timing for installation is contingent upon supplemental funding.

When these projects are complete, all 27 Library locations will have air conditioning and be able to serve as cooling centers. Green Lake Branch staff and patrons are enjoying their first summer of air conditioning after the branch's seismic retrofit and renovations were completed.



**Other projects:** The Capitol Hill Branch HVAC/electrification project continued to await final adjustments in Q2. Also in Q2, the evaluation, inspection and design phase of the Greenwood Branch roof repair project neared completion, with construction expected to begin in Q3.

## **Routine maintenance: keeping facilities and grounds clean and safe**

In Q2 2025, our Facilities team responded to over 3,000 individual work orders to ensure the Library's 27 locations remained safe, welcoming, and fully operational for the roughly 800,000 patrons who visited during that time. Over 1,200 work orders were for regularly scheduled maintenance and upkeep across the Library system. Over 1,800 were unscheduled requests by staff in response to issues arising at one or more locations.

22% of staff requests were categorized as "Emergency," "Urgent," or "High Priority," requiring swift coordination and response. Facilities staff repaired or replaced malfunctioning HVAC systems, broken sump pumps and drainage pipes, exterior doors and security gates, shattered windows, and more. Janitorial/custodial staff responded to approximately 250 work orders relating to issues with restrooms, waste or other biohazards; 100 requests for pressure washing branch exteriors or deep cleaning interiors; and 70 instances of vandalism involving graffiti.

Every day, our Facilities and Janitorial/Custodial teams handle new challenges effectively. They are essential to maintaining the regular operations of the Library and providing safe and positive experiences to patrons.



The Capitol Hill HVAC project is almost complete.

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## **Risks, opportunities and the path ahead**

Here is a quick preview of next quarter's report:

- Phase 1 implementation of the Library's new 10-year Strategic Plan
  - Community workshops and public survey to inform future service levels
  - Transition to the new Community Use Agreement (CUA)
  - Progress in upgrading our Integrated Library System (ILS)
  - Following the City's revenue outlook
  - Continuing to navigate funding uncertainty
-

## Q2 2025 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounts for \$54.5 million (38.3%) of the Library's total revised 2025 budget of \$142.2 million. The 2012 levy accounts for \$932,000 (0.7%). The Library spent \$14.7 million from the 2019 Levy and \$0.4 million from the 2012 Levy through Q2. Underspending was largely due to delays in implementing major maintenance and technology capital programs.

Spending tables below show the Library's 2025 Operations Plan budget plus encumbrances and unspent budget authority from prior years in the revised budget columns. Carryover budget authority of \$17.6 million from the 2019 Levy and \$232,000 from the 2012 Levy is designated for spending in 2025. The revised 2025 budget also includes an additional appropriation of \$700,000 in remaining funds from the 2012 Levy.

2019 Levy	Operations Plan	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditures	Remaining	% Spent
Hours & Access	16,450,000	16,496,931	7,292,636	9,204,294	44%
Providing Books & Materials	6,412,000	6,397,268	3,091,199	3,306,069	48%
Technology & Online Services	2,821,000	2,810,696	1,032,593	1,778,103	37%
Literacy & Early Learning	454,000	476,955	108,953	368,002	23%
Building & Facility Support	2,034,000	2,132,522	925,239	1,207,283	43%
Administration	723,000	722,929	301,612	421,318	42%
Major Maintenance	7,989,000	21,068,351	1,772,943	19,295,408	8%
Capital IT Infrastructure	-	4,418,334	160,685	4,257,649	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$36,883,000</b>	<b>\$54,523,987</b>	<b>\$14,685,860</b>	<b>\$39,838,127</b>	<b>27%</b>

Includes \$144k in operating carry-forward and \$17.5M in capital carry-forward budget authority

2012 Levy	Operations Plan	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditures	Remaining	% Spent
Providing Books & Materials	-	700,000	350,000	350,000	50%
Major Maintenance	-	232,961	9,482	223,479	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$932,961</b>	<b>\$359,482</b>	<b>\$573,479</b>	<b>39%</b>

Includes \$700k one-time support for books and materials and \$232k in capital carry-forward budget authority

## Appendix 1. Scheduled weekly hours in 2025 compared to 2019 baseline

Location	2019	Jun 19, 2024 – Sept. 24, 2024	Sep 25, 2024 – Jan. 28, 2025	Current schedule as of Jan. 29, 2025 <i>green=above 2019 yellow=same as 2019 red=below 2019</i>
Ballard Branch	60	62	62	62
Beacon Hill Branch	60	56	56	56
Broadview Branch	60	54	54	54
Capitol Hill Branch	60	60	60	60
Central Library	62	62	62	62
Columbia Branch	60	48	56	56
Delridge Branch	39	48	48	48
Douglass-Truth Branch	60	62	60	60
Fremont Branch	39	40	40	48
Green Lake Branch	39	CLOSED	48	48
Greenwood Branch	60	62	62	62
High Point Branch	46	58	56	56
International District/Chinatown Branch	46	46	48	48
Lake City Branch	60	54	62	62
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch	39	32	40	48
Magnolia Branch	39	40	40	48
Montlake Branch	39	37	40	48
NewHolly Branch	39	40	48	48
Northeast Branch	60	48	48	60
Northgate Branch	60	40	48	58
Queen Anne Branch	39	40	40	48
Rainier Beach Branch	60	56	56	56
South Park Branch	46	62	58	58
Southwest Branch	60	48	48	48
University Branch	46	40	40	CLOSED
Wallingford Branch	39	40	40	48
West Seattle Branch	60	48	48	48
<b>Total Weekly Hours</b>	1377	1283	1368	1398
<b>% of 2019 baseline</b>		<b>93%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>102%</b>



# The Seattle Public Library

Date: August 1, 2025

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees  
The Seattle Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian  
Rick Sheridan, Director, Institutional and Strategic Advancement  
Kiersten Nelson, Community Partnerships & Government Relations Manager

**Subject: January through June 2025 Summary Report on Foundation Funded Projects**

Through June 30, The Seattle Public Library has expended 34% of the Foundation's 2025 grant award. (When the encumbered expenses are factored in, funds that are committed but not yet disbursed, spending is at 43% of the grant award.) This progress is on par with spending over the past several years, thus we are pleased with our progress towards maximizing the grant from The Seattle Public Library Foundation. This memo summarizes spending progress as of June 2025 by funding priority.

## Spending Summary -- 2025 Foundation Grant Award

Funding Priority	Revised 2025 Award	2025 Spending	Balance Remaining
Providing Books & Materials	\$2,128,005	\$896,690	\$1,231,315
Hours & Access	\$740,029	\$231,826	\$508,203
Technology & Online Services	\$490,598	\$299,072	\$191,526
Early Learning & Literacy	\$440,050	\$110,424	\$329,626
Capital <sup>1</sup>	\$269,269	\$27,852	\$241,417
Administrative Support	\$414,000	\$141,360	\$272,640
Branch Restricted Donations	\$114,026	\$39,159	\$74,867
Labor	\$1,261,405	\$380,512	\$880,893
Outside Grants (Carnegie, DPLA, IMLS)	\$567,052	\$65,009	\$502,043
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,424,434</b>	<b>\$2,191,904</b>	<b>\$4,232,530<sup>2</sup></b>

Funding priorities in most areas are spending at rates typical for this point of the year. Staff and leadership continue to work diligently to spend funds for programs and support the community needs in a timely manner. Several programs are near or at full allocation of funds including Seattle

<sup>1</sup>Alternatively categorized as "Major Maintenance (CIP)" or "Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment", Capital more broadly encapsulates this budget line

<sup>2</sup> Balance remaining after encumbrances: \$3,618,249.

Reads, Raising A Reader, Public Computing, Art Inventory, DPLA Digital Equity Grant, Tutor.com, and Summer of Learning Book purchases.

Seattle Reads completed another successful year with this year's selection a book of poetry; and Global Reading Challenge enjoyed strong youth engagement, expending the majority of program funds by the end of the second quarter. Upon seeing the success of branch-based programming in 2024, the Foundation set aside \$90,000 for branch specific programming in 2025. Many of the events that will pull directly from this fund are set to occur during the summer and fall, including end of summer events at branches across the system.

As the new year began, it became apparent that government budgets for the state and city would need to fill some large gaps. This budget shortfall has made the Foundation's resources even more vital as staff support a concerned community through programmatic efforts like Books Unbanned, English for Work, and World Story Time. Despite controversy at the federal level, The Seattle Public Library has been mostly spared the drastic cuts to the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), with our most recent reimbursement being received on our Teen Mental Health grant that concludes this summer leaving nearly \$22,000 left to be reimbursed on a total \$500,000 grant.

In other encouraging funding news, in June The Seattle Public Library announced a partnership with the Carnegie Foundation awarding \$450,000 in grant funding for various ESOL programs over the next two years. Please note that this amount will be spent between 2025-2027.

The Seattle Public Library notes several specific areas of underspend year-to-date: Teen/Young Adult Programming, Museum Passes, Team Read, the Bullitt Lecture Series, and Global Reading Challenge book payments.

With around thirty percent of the Teen/Young Adult Program funds allocated, staff plan to increase spending during the summer and into fall. Museum Pass underspend results from the previous platform vendor abruptly shutting down at the end of 2024. A new platform was identified, but competing priorities for IT delayed the system rolling out until the beginning of June. The Bullitt Lecture Series spending will pick up in Q3, while invoicing delays for Global Reading Challenge book purchases show as extremely underspent but is not the case.

It must also be noted that issues between codes in the City's Workday system and the Library will result in an estimated \$250,000 of labor costs being corrected and appropriately charged back to the Foundation by the end of the third quarter.

Capital projects expended the last of grant funding for the HVAC projects and is moving forward on funding for furniture, fixtures, and building updates. IT expects the full Microsoft Licensing award to be expended by the end of the year and have already spent the entirety of the public computing budget.

Library leadership will continue to push for the full and responsible expenditure of these Foundation resources and anticipates a spend rate in excess of 90 percent for 2025.

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**Action Required/Requested:** No action requested.





# The Seattle Public Library

**Date:** August 28, 2025

**To:** Library Board of Trustees

**From:** Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian  
Rick Sheridan, Director of Institutional and Strategic Advancement  
Jessica Smith, Strategy and Performance Advisor  
Jan Oscherwitz, Library Levy Administrator

**Re:** Resolution directing Library staff to prepare a 2026 Library Levy renewal package

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Since 2013, The Seattle Public Library has relied on levy lid lifts to support its operations and maintain its capital investments. In 2012, Seattle voters passed a seven-year, \$123 million Library ballot measure to restore core Library services drastically cut during the Great Recession. In 2019, voters approved a \$219 million levy renewal, continuing the 2012 investments and providing additional funding for new and expanded services.

The 2019 levy, which represents 29% of the Library's total adopted operating budget in 2025, and also provides nearly all of the Library's baseline major maintenance budget, expires at the end of 2026. If this levy is not renewed, the Library will face a major funding gap, which would significantly impact current levels of service and the Library's ability to maintain its buildings.

To address this potential funding gap, the Library recommends that the Library Board of Trustees, which has financial oversight over Library operations, direct the Executive Director and Chief Librarian, and Library staff to prepare for a 2026 levy renewal.

The attached resolution directs Library leadership and staff to work with the Mayor of Seattle and the Seattle City Council to develop a levy renewal package for voter consideration. It is anticipated that the Mayor will submit a levy renewal proposal for Council action in early 2026.

Over the past year, Library staff have been developing a levy baseline, incorporating guiding principles for investments from the Library's recently adopted 2024-2033 Strategic Plan, and engaging the public through workshops, onsite feedback opportunities, and a recently launched public survey to better understand community needs for programs, services, and spaces. When the public survey results are finalized this fall, the Library will be able to incorporate community priorities into a levy renewal package. Results of the survey will be shared with the Board in November.

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**Action required/requested:** Library Board consideration and approval for proceeding with planning for a Library Levy renewal proposal at the August 2025 meeting.

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION expressing The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees' intent to direct Library staff to proceed with planning a levy renewal package to replace the 2019 Library levy for consideration by Seattle voters in 2026.

WHEREAS, The Seattle Public Library (Library) was established in 1890 and, since that time, has served as a free and trusted source of information and a community gathering place for residents of Seattle and the region; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved the Libraries for All bond measure, which made Library services more accessible by supporting the construction of four branch libraries in communities without library service, the replacement or renovation of 22 existing branches, and the development of a new downtown Central Library; and

WHEREAS, the Library provides residents with access to an array of free services and programming, including access to physical and digital books and other materials for all ages and viewpoints, computer and job search classes, adult tutoring, English language learning resources, tax preparation help, and readings by world-renowned authors; and

WHEREAS, the Library is an important partner in the education of Seattle's youth through crucial literacy programs, including story times for children and families, homework help for students, summer learning activities, teen spaces and activities, partnerships with teachers and schools, and other important educational resources and services; and

WHEREAS, the Library serves as a vital community resource that helps bridge the digital divide by providing free access to computers and the internet, affordable printing services, and knowledgeable staff who assist patrons in using new and emerging technologies; and

WHEREAS, the Library's Mobile Services bring books and other materials to children, seniors, and other residents who may lack the mobility to access their neighborhood library; and

WHEREAS, the Library's Social Services team connects patrons to library resources, as well as community resources, such as medical care, transportation services, mental health services, job resources, and more; and

WHEREAS, in November 2024, the Library Board adopted a 10-year Strategic Plan to guide investments in Library services over the next decade to bring people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and empower community through the values of care, connection, and learning; and

WHEREAS, the Library is guided by the principles of equity and intellectual freedom as it serves and supports the right to read and to access opportunities for everyone in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, the Library is committed to strengthening a sense of belonging for community members by providing safe and welcoming physical spaces, diverse collections and programs, and other services that support literacy, enrichment, and empowerment for all; and

WHEREAS, the Library acts as a good steward of public funding and strives to be a resilient and fiscally responsible organization; and

WHEREAS, the Library works hard to maintain and improve buildings, technology, and sustainability practices for its 27 buildings, many of which were constructed or renovated through the 1998 Libraries for All bond measure; and

WHEREAS, the Library's reliance on the City of Seattle's General Fund makes it susceptible to the variability of and demands on this revenue source; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Library, Seattle City Council, and Mayor of Seattle identified a property tax levy lid lift as the revenue source that could most feasibly be used in combination with the City's General Fund and Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) support; and

WHEREAS, in August 2012, 62% of Seattle voters approved a \$123 million, 7-year property tax levy to restore and expand funding for Library services and programs; and

WHEREAS, in August 2019, 76% of Seattle voters approved a replacement \$219.1 million, 7-year property tax levy to restore and expand funding for Library services and programs; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Library levy provides approximately 29% of the city's operating appropriation to the Library; and

WHEREAS, the Library's capital budget is primarily supported by the Library Levy, supplemented by REET revenues; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Library Levy ends December 31, 2026, and the loss of this funding source would have a significantly detrimental impact on core Library services and programs, and the Library's ability to maintain capital investments made during the Libraries for All program; and

WHEREAS, the Library is committed to engaging key stakeholders and the community in the development of a levy renewal package; and

WHEREAS, in May and June 2025, the Library held service design workshops with community members and programming partners to hear directly about their needs for Library services; and

WHEREAS, in Spring 2025, the Library also gathered public input about the importance of Library programs, spaces, and services through onsite feedback opportunities at 14 Library locations and four outreach events, with multiple engagements in English and Spanish; and

WHEREAS the Library used these findings to develop a public survey, available in English and translated into six other languages, to understand Seattle residents’ current and future needs and interests for library services through the life of the 2024-2033 Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS, in August 2025, the Library launched a public survey, and the results from this survey will help inform the development of a 2026 levy renewal package this fall; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Administrative Code and the City Charter authorizes the Library Board to oversee the Library’s annual operating and capital budgets; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board recognizes the need for sustained revenue to support, maintain, and improve core Library services, understands the current constraints on the City’s General Fund and REET revenues and, therefore, supports renewing a property tax levy lid lift that would continue providing the Library with a revenue source that could be used in combination with General Fund and REET; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

1. The Board recognizes that a strong library system supports the economic, educational, and cultural vitality of the city and helps foster an informed and engaged community; and
2. Libraries are anchor institutions in Seattle neighborhoods; and
3. Stable funding is needed if the Library is to continue providing the operating hours, physical and digital collections, services, technology, and programs that are needed and valued by Seattle residents; and
4. Stable funding is also needed to preserve the capital investments in Library buildings that were supported by the 1998 Libraries for All bond measure, and the 2012 and 2019 levies; and
5. The Board authorizes the Executive Director and Chief Librarian to work with the Mayor of Seattle and their staff to draft a proposed levy package for consideration by the Seattle City Council in 2026; and
6. The Board is committed to a collaborative process with the Mayor and City Council to identify the appropriate level of financial support needed in a renewal package.

ADOPTED by the Board of Trustees of The Seattle Public Library this \_\_\_\_ day of August 2025.

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W. Tali Hairston, Ph.D., President

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Yazmin Mehdi, Vice President

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Ron Chew, Trustee

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Carmen Bendixen, Trustee

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Faith Pettis, Trustee



# The Seattle Public Library

**Date:** August 28, 2025  
**To:** Library Board of Trustees  
**From:** Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083  
**Re:** **August Union Report**

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We are looking forward to another year of Fixed Schedules and hope to have positive outcomes in our upcoming negotiations around 2026 implementation. Staff are very relieved to have reliable schedules with fixed days off and evenings.

Unfortunately, staffing levels are still low, recently resulting in closures of branch locations on July 20<sup>th</sup>, August 16<sup>th</sup> and August 17<sup>th</sup>, as well as Central service desks for hours at a time in the last few weeks. Staff are doing more with less staffing support, causing burnout and health repercussions and leading to more leave and accommodation requests. As more staff ask for hours reductions because of stress and health, the Library has less capacity to grant those, forcing those staff to make decisions that cause more stress. Examples are: using sick leave and vacation days to lessen their work hours, taking a demotion, taking a longer leave, or leaving the library all together. It is a vicious cycle that we are feeling intimately in all of our work. Locations are consistently running with minimum staffing levels, especially on weekends, which impedes workflow and opportunities for outreach.

Accommodations and Leaves are not part of the Union's purview, but the ramifications affect our members. We help members navigate the process with HR and are seeing more denials of what seem like reasonable accommodations. We can't talk about why they are no longer reasonable as it would put others' privacy at risk, so folks end up confused and upset.

All of this is to say that we need more staff so that we can continue to provide excellent service to our communities. Unhealthy, unhappy staff are not efficient or motivated. I hope progress can be made in approving the hiring of more staff throughout the library. Especially considering the recent perceived costs associated with restructuring of management into higher positions and hiring of a Director of Inclusion and Belonging.

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**Action required/requested:** Informational only.



The Seattle Public Library

## NEWS RELEASES

Date	Title
31-Jul-25	<a href="#">Magic, Music and Museums: August Kids and Family Programs at The Seattle Public Library</a>
7-Jul-25	<a href="#">Take a Summer StoryWalk® in Magnolia Featuring Indigenous Stories</a>



The Seattle Public Library  
**MEDIA COVERAGE**

Organization	Date	Headline	Details
<a href="#">KUOW</a>	30-Jul-25	Art: Zines Are A Treasure Trove Of Humanity's Obsessions	"We mentioned these zine-specific experiences in this episode of Meet Me Here...The Seattle Public Library's zine collection at the Central Library (open on Saturdays)"
<a href="#">NW Asian Weekly</a>	29-Jul-25	Seattle's Kim Fu on writing, working, and walking the city	"Kim Fu discusses her book "Lesser Known Monsters of the 21st Century" with Katie Campbell on July 30 at the Central Library, 1000 4th Avenue in downtown Seattle."
<a href="#">West Seattle Blog</a>	28-Jul-25	Here's what's up in West Seattle on your midsummer Monday	Promoting 2 events at the Southwest Branch: Healthy & Wealthy Teens and Family Storytime
<a href="#">West Seattle Blog</a>	21-Jul-25	Comedy, story time, more for your West Seattle Monday!	Promoting 2 events at the Southwest Branch: Healthy & Wealthy Teens and Family Storytime
<a href="#">Parkways - Seattle Parks and Recreation</a>	16-Jul-25	Get Out on the Water (without your own boat!)	Mentions the Center for Wooden Boats and the Library's Museum Pass program, which allows one adult and up to three other people to use one of the Museum's historic row boats on Lake Union for one hour for free.
<a href="#">The Seattle Times</a>	16-Jul-25	6 titles for summer Book Bingo inspiration	"The Seattle Public Library loves to promote books and reading. This column, submitted by the library, is a space to share reading and book trends from a librarian's perspective. You can find these titles at the library by visiting spl.org and searching the catalog."

<a href="#">Seattle's Child</a>	16-Jul-25	WPZ & SPL celebrate families and individuals with disabilities	"The Woodland Park Zoo and Seattle Public Library are inviting families and individuals with disabilities to celebrate Disability Pride Month at the Woodland Park Rose Garden this month. During the two-hour event on July 27, kids and adults of all abilities can participate in free inclusive activities, from a performance by Coast Salish Stories to an oral story time with ASL interpretation to a zoo-facilitated animal experience to a story stroll in the location's Sensory Garden."
<a href="#">The Seattle Times</a>	15-Jul-25	Seattle heat wave: How to keep cool with highs in the 90s	"Head to the library and read a book while cooling down: The Central Library and 21 branches of the Seattle Public Library all have air conditioning..."
<a href="#">West Seattle Blog</a>	14-Jul-25	Here's what's happening on your West Seattle Monday	Promoting 2 events at the Southwest Branch: Healthy & Wealthy Teens and Family Storytime
<a href="#">KUOW</a>	14-Jul-25	Seattle author Kim Fu sees you and all your anxieties in this story collection	"The KUOW Book Club is continuing its summer reading series with Seattle Public Library this month."
<a href="#">Cascade PBS</a>	14-Jul-25	Seattle Public Library gets \$450K to boost English-language classes	"On June 10, the Carnegie Corporation announced its decision to award \$450,000 to the Seattle Public Library to support and expand its English-language learning programs. The library currently offers English-language and digital-skills classes, "Conversation Circles" and adult tutoring, all of which will be expanded using the grant funds."
<a href="#">Seattle's Child</a>	09-Jul-25	Local experts share a summer reading list for kids	"Looking for even more inspiration? Combine this summer reading list for kids with Seattle Public Library's Book Bingo challenge — it's a fun, prize-filled way to help your young reader stay excited about books all season long."
<a href="#">KUOW</a>	02-Jul-25	Summer book club continues with an imaginative collection of speculative fiction	"This pick isn't new; it came out in 2022. But honestly, I didn't know Fu was local until Stesha Brandon at SPL told me."



<a href="#">KOMO</a>	02-Jul-25	Seattle libraries offer Narcan, fentanyl test strips to combat overdose epidemic	"When it comes to the fentanyl crisis, the Seattle Public Library is pairing education with action by offering naloxone kits to help reverse overdoses."
<a href="#">Queen Anne &amp; Magnolia News</a>	01-Jul-25	Read, learn and grow with The Seattle Public Library's 106th summer of learning	Library's press release reprinted