The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
11:00 a.m. Thursday, July 31, 2025

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

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-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.

Agenda

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. CONSENT
    1. Minutes of June 26, 2025 Regular Library Board Meeting
    2. June 2025 Finance Report

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT
    1. Chief Librarian Report
    2. System Report
        a. Fine Free Report – Bo Kinney, Circulation Services Manager

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS
    1. Ethics and Open Public Meetings Act Training
    2. Library Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy
    3. Union Report
    4. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
    5. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: Aug. 28, 2025

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

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on June 26, 2025. Library Board President W. Tali Hairston called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Vice President Yazmin Mehdi and Trustees Carmen Bendixen and Faith Pettis were in attendance. Trustee Ron Chew was unable to attend. 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. There was no public comment.

CONSENT

Library Board Trustee Yazmin Mehdi said on page 14 of the meeting packet, the May 2025 Finance Report contains a reference to a footnote regarding revenue related to space rentals, yet a footnote does not appear on the page. She asked for staff follow up and clarification regarding the footnote.

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 represented Executive Director/Chief Librarian Tom Fay in the meeting. Mr. Sheridan said Mr. Fay sends his regrets for being unable to attend the meeting due to an altered airline flight time. He said Mr. Fay was enroute to the American Library Association Conference in Philadelphia. Mr. Sheridan said Mr. Fay would be happy to answer any questions from the trustees regarding the written Chief Librarian Report at the next formal Library Board meeting.

Systems Reports
Strategic Plan 2025 Midpoint Report
Mr. Sheridan said in November of 2024, the Library Board approved a ten-year Strategic Plan that will guide Library operations to improve its work in support of the Community and staff. He said a commitment was made to provide the Board with regular updates about progress made against the plan, and he introduced Strategy and Policy Advisor Jessica Smith. Ms. Smith said she would provide a high-level overview of marketing and communications, timeline and review process, a brief metric, and some project status updates.

With regard to marketing and communications, Ms. Smith said multilingual rack cards would be updated at the end of the year to include achievements as well as what is happening now and next. She said the web page is translated into four prioritized languages, and the Impact Area pages will be updated at least twice a year as work progresses, including links to programs and deliverables as appropriate. She said an advertising push will feature web page updates which are

translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, and simplified and traditional Chinese. She said the advertising will be part of a Strategic Marketing and Advertising Plan that includes quarterly ad buys in standard locations, including in ethnic media such as Daybreak Star Radio, Vietnamese News, El Rey, Seattle Chinese times, the Stranger, Seattle Times, Seattle Medium and more.

Ms. Smith said the first quarterly review has been completed. She said there was not capacity to launch all of the projects at once, so the Library has undertaken a phased approach to reviewing project plans. She said five rounds of reviews happened monthly, January through May, and a sixth round of presentations will occur in July for the two remaining projects to review. She said as the Senior Management Team (SMT) reviews project plans, project owners and sponsors received a "Ready to Proceed" letter from her as well as recommendations or feedback from SMT. She said projects at this stage were asked to provide a one- to two-page, high-level status report that will be used to aid in planning around conflicts with resources or time as project move forward. Ms. Smith said all of the projects that were launched were asked to provide updates in the quarterly template, and she shared a visual screenshot of the status report layout. She said the status report includes a brief update on quarterly impacts to budget, challenges, risks, opportunities, and a short narrative update. Ms. Smith said this method provides consistent reporting across all projects and across the system, with the information entered into the same place for easy tracking.

Ms. Smith said lessons learned in the first quarterly review process include the need for a longer review session to allow for meaningful discussions and attention to details, as well as clearer expectation-setting for the level of detail necessary for the updates. She said the process is ongoing and iterative and the teams are learning as they go. She said the Library has done a good job of getting quarterly reports in, and there are many projects that are moving forward successfully. Ms. Smith said another lesson learned was in the structuring of project sponsors and owners. She said the SMT identified projects that would benefit from changes to sponsor and owner assignment, and realigned them in some projects for more efficient and effective coordination. She said, as of July 1, four projects will have simplified assignments, and an implementation coordinator will be assigned to assist with two projects.

Ms. Smith showed a visual to illustrate the metric for this month's update: project status by impact area. She said she has been reviewing a "Red, Yellow, Green" tracking update for all projects with the E-Team on a bi-weekly basis to review how the projects are advancing toward their goals for the different impact areas and transformational states. Ms. Smith said the impact areas are Funding, Capacity, Building Technology, and Sustainability, which are all within the transformational state of Organizational Resilience. She said the impact areas of Literacy, Enrichment, and Empowerment are within the transformational state of Community Belonging. Ms. Smith said most of the projects are currently in "green" status, with five projects in "yellow" status. She said projects may stay in yellow status to ensure they stay top of mind and continue to receive regular discussion, but they need a lot of resources and coordination to move forward.

Ms. Smith said in the Community Belonging impact for Literacy, there is exciting work happening. She said the *'SPL Story Squad'* project's goal is to provide Title 1 public school students in grades two through four more access to Library materials, and this project is on track for pilot implementation at Bailey-Gazert Elementary School. She said the SPL Marketing and Online Services team supported the Story Squad rebranding for the project which is a great opportunity to strengthen the Library's relationship with Seattle Public Schools. Ms. Smith said another Community Belonging project for Empowerment is a *'Programming Standards and Quarterly Calendar.'* She said the goal of this project is to develop and provide programming that helps people build confidence and skills to achieve their life goals. She said this project is an opportunity to integrate programming with displays, annual observances, and heritage months without adding additional budget needs. She said this project was launched at the end of the quarter, and an internal project request form was created to aid in coordination across the system.

Ms. Smith said she would share about two projects in the Buildings, Technology and Sustainability impact. Regarding the project '*New Library App in 2025*,' she said the app is currently in BETA and is available in iOS and Android. She said next steps include optimization and translation into additional languages, with an opportunity to add more tools in the future. She said the app could be released in the app stores in translated languages as soon as next week. Ms. Smith said the project '*Hire a cybersecurity specialist and create a cybersecurity program to improve the Library's cybersecurity posture,*' is underway. She said a full-time, permanent cybersecurity analyst was hired in January 2025, and the Library has significantly increased investment in cybersecurity infrastructure to improve its defensive capabilities and decrease response time to emerging threats and incidents. Ms. Smith said there is a lot of great work going on behind the scenes that may not necessarily be seen.

Ms. Smith showed a slide providing status updates of six projects that are currently in progress. She said these are examples of projects that are in progress, and nothing is needed or in the way for them to proceed. She said she placed a star next to the '*Books Unbanned*' project because there had been a shift in project sponsorship and ownership. Ms. Smith showed a slide providing status updates of three projects which require the new Artificial Intelligence and Technology Acquisition policies for the projects to be fully realized. She said she placed a star next to the '*Scheduling Software*' project because it is critical for the Library to have a solid understanding and baseline for AI technology, and while the scheduling software will largely impact Library Programs and Services, it may impact other work areas in the future. She said it is a big project.

Ms. Smith showed a slide providing status updates of two projects for which an implementation coordinator role will be created. She said the '*2026 Levy Library Spaces and Programming Evaluation and Coordination*' project is a very big project with many staff and members of SMT involved. She said the ownership and sponsorship for the project has been simplified, and an implementation coordinator will be brought on to help with scheduling meetings, tracking down information and reports, and assisting with administrative and project management work. She said the same situation exists for the '*Cross-divisional Service Level Guidelines*' project.

Ms. Smith showed a slide providing status updates for four projects that need staff capacity and/or a new hire to proceed. Regarding the project, '*Hire Director of Inclusion and Belonging and establish new office,*' she said the position has been posted and many resumes are being reviewed. She said there is still work to be done to establish that new office. She said the same is true for the project, '*Security and Emergency management Manager*' and the project '*Security Audit*' will come along with that new hire. Regarding the '*Early Literacy*' project, she said the Library is waiting for the successful launch of Story Squad in the fall to reactivate staff around the Early Literacy project, as both projects require many of the same staff members.

Library Board Trustee Yazmin Mehdi thanked Ms. Smith for the presentation and the level of detail that is being tracked for a tremendous amount of work. She said the granularity is helpful to the Board, and asked what level of detail is being shared with the public. She said the public should have some transparency around the work happening as a result of the investment of time put into the strategic plan. She said the Library's implementation of the Strategic Plan is critical to the story that will be shared with the public about why supporting the levy is so important. She said there will be a need to succinctly convey what the Library is doing with current resources and what a new levy will allow the Library to do moving forward. Ms. Mehdi also said she felt that hiring positions is a milestone, but that the goal is much bigger, in that the Library is much better protected against cyber threats. She said she would like to translate the hiring of these positions into actual transformation of the organization.

Mr. Sheridan said a lot of effort, time, and resources are going into the tracking, and the Library does want the public to be aware of the progress made against the plan. He said there are some areas that will be obvious, for example deeper and wider programming available. He said SPL

will need to do a good job of communicating and marketing its efforts to ensure that the public is aware of behind-the-scenes activities like cybersecurity work. He said the Library will have more robust electronic security due to this hire and the program being built out, but the public will not see that. He said the public will also not be aware of the security supervisor role that is nearly hired; however, the Library will need to do a careful job of making sure that people are aware of the effort and the outcome, and how that is having an impact on making their system better. Mr. Sheridan said in the project plan for the security supervisor role, there are a couple of key things called out that the hire needs to do immediately. He said for the director of inclusion and belonging, there will be a work plan set up for that person and office, and the Board will see more detail on that in the future.

Library Board Trustee Faith Pettis said she appreciates the breakdown and tracking of the Strategic Plan. She said she has seen many organizations spend a lot of time developing a plan but not tracking it until several years later when they need to rush to recreate what they've accomplished. She thanked the Library for this very deliberate and thoughtful work.

Mr. Hairston asked Ms. Smith what is bringing joy to her and her team around the implementation. He asked what has been motivating or inspiring as they have met some of the challenges. Ms. Smith said she loves to solve problems. She said it is rewarding to figure out what might be causing a project to stick and how it can be moved forward successfully. She said she works with a strong team of good thought partners, and there is a lot of good information to share within the organization, which brings her joy. She said there is a sense that 'we're all in this together' and there is a lot of ownership for the plan, with people working together to identify opportunities and move elements forward in a specific order. Mr. Hairston said, regarding the public-facing narrative of the work, when staff find the work to be joyful, inspiring, and motivating, it is easier to share those stories. He suggested the team could think about that angle in the next update as well.

Referring to the staff reports contained in the meeting packet, Ms. Mehdi said she wanted to recognize Southeast Regional Manager Richard Counsil's beautiful description of the work happening in the Southeast Region, as well as Southwest Regional Manager Hayden Bass' report on the seed library and mindful doodling. Ms. Mehdi said she very much appreciates the written reports, though the Board doesn't always get to talk about them.

NEW BUSINESS

Write-off of Uncollectible Patron Account Debt Procedure
Mr. Gannon said, before addressing this item, he would like to turn attention back to the page in question in the May 2025 Finance Report included in the Consent Agenda. Mr. Gannon said the Finance Team reports that the reference to a letter B was in error and should have been deleted. He said there was not a missing footnote in the Finance Report. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to clarify.

Moving on to the Write-Off of Uncollectible Patron Account Debt Procedure, Mr. Gannon said this issue has been worked on for many years, and the effort represents very thorough work done by Circulation Manager Bo Kinney and many people throughout the Library. Mr. Gannon said no Board action is requested, but it is an important topic, and the Board and public should be aware of how it is handled. Mr. Hairston asked about the approval process for the topic. Mr. Gannon said this is an Administrative Procedure that is approved by the Chief Librarian. He said it has been thoroughly vetted inside the organization and was reviewed by divisional units and the Senior Management Team prior to Chief Librarian approval.

Circulation Manager Bo Kinney said his role includes developing and implementing procedures around access to the Library's collection, including lending practices and patron account management. He said the new procedure guides management of uncollectible patron accounts, or charges that are in the patron database also known as the Integrated Library System (ILS). Mr.

Kinney said when a patron borrows a book or other physical item from the Library, they are expected to return that item when it is due. He said if items are returned late, the Library does not charge overdue fines. However, he said when an item is two weeks overdue, the patron's account is suspended from checking out additional items. He said items not returned after one month are considered lost, and a replacement fee is charged. He said patrons have several options for resolving a lost item replacement fee including returning the item, which happens most frequently, or paying a replacement charge. Mr. Kinney said for patrons who are not able to return the item nor pay the fee, there is also a process where the patron may request a waiver, and the Library will assess the situation and may grant a fee waiver in exceptional circumstances. Mr. Kinney said while most account charges are resolved through one of those three methods relatively quickly, there are some account charges that never get resolved and remain noted in the ILS, which is what this procedure is intended to address.

Mr. Kinney said after three years have lapsed, it is very unlikely that the charges will ever be paid. He said the new procedure sets out the process for resolving these accounts. He said when three years have passed, the Library will consider charges to be uncollectible and will clear them from the patron account in the ILS. He said the two scenarios possible at this point are: (1) the patron's account is inactive, meaning the patron's Library card has not been used for three years, at which time the Library will delete the account from the system using the standard inactive account deletion process; and (2) the account is still active, meaning the patron has been using their Library card for other activities such as using Library computers, in which case the account will remain active and the charges will be cleared. Mr. Kinney said for the latter, the patron will regain full account access and be able to check out materials again.

Mr. Kinney said that implementing the new procedure has a few big benefits for the Library, the first being that patron account financial management practices are brought more in line with standard financial accounting practices. He said, secondly, the procedure improves patron access by restoring borrowing privileges for patrons who may have been unable to pay their charges after a three-year period has passed. Finally, he said the procedure will improve database management and will reduce the complexity of the upcoming ILS migration by having a process to clear up outdated charges and inactive patron accounts from the system.

Mr. Kinney said today's meeting packet contains the written procedure which has been approved and signed by the Chief Librarian. He said there is also a memo in the packet that provides additional context as well as information about related practices and a sample billing notice. He said these activities support the Library's goal of belonging and access.

Mr. Hairston asked if there is a metric associated with this in terms of impact on current numbers. Mr. Kinney said the most important metric is that there are nearly 10,000 patron accounts that are in the category where the account is still actively being used for other things, but they don't have borrowing privileges because of old charges. He said there are thousands of patrons who will conceivably have their borrowing privileges restored. He said after three years, it is unlikely that charges will be paid or the items will be returned, but the Library will be able to welcome patrons back to full borrowing privileges. He said there are also a large number of inactive accounts that can be cleared from the system.

Ms. Mehdi said the data regarding 10,000 active accoutns without borrowing privileges is helpful. She said she thinks it makes sense to clear out uncollectible debts. She said by restoring borrowing privileges, there is essentially no penalty, and she asked if there is a way to flag the accounts so that if it happens again, that data can be useful. She also asked the number of inactive accounts that will be deleted. Mr. Kinney said he would like to state for the record that there is a penalty in that the patron lost borrowing privileges from two weeks after the item was due through a three-year period. He said patrons with accounts that have remained active have already been penalized for the past three years or more by not having access to check out materials. Mr.

Kinney said while the unpaid charges will be cleared from the account, that information will still be retained in the account history where it is visible to staff. He said if there is a long-term pattern, it would be visible to staff as they review the accounting. Mr. Kinney said he did not have a total number of inactive accounts.

Mr. Gannon said he wanted to make a balancing point to this discussion that in the context of this procedure, this is not true debt that the Library has; he said this is debt within the Library's patron accounts. Mr. Gannon said there is no account receivable due, and there is no formal write-off procedure in the Library's Finance and Accounting team. He said, even so, the procedure has been carefully reviewed by the Library's Finance team, and it is in line with good accounting practices across the City. He said he wanted to make the distinction that the Library is not foregoing revenue or writing off debt in a formal sense. He said this is about restoring access at the appropriate time for patrons who have stale patron account debt that is registered in the Library's system. Mr. Gannon said the Library is not writing off debt formally.

Library Use of Artificial Intelligence Draft Policy
Strategic Technology Advisor Jim Loter said Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being discussed actively in the world today. He said AI has been around for a long time, but recent advances in technology have made it a pressing issue in need of policy guidance. He said, as of about 2023, AI technologies have become widely available, accessible, and popular through tools such as ChatGPT and additional tools that are currently being incorporated into Microsoft, Google, Amazon and other popular technology. Mr. Loter said the rapid emergency of the technology into the consumer space has introduced new risks and controversies, some of which may conflict with the Library's values, commitments made to the staff and public, and legal and regulatory obligations. He said these risks and concerns are the basis of the analysis that led to the draft policy in today's meeting packet. Mr. Loter said that successful, responsible, and safe use of AI tools requires specialized guidance, training, and development, which are also issues the Library needs to address beyond this policy.

Mr. Loter said the policy being developed will direct how Library staff may acquire, access, and use AI technologies as they conduct Library business. He said there is a commitment to do this work in the Library's Strategic Plan. He said the Library will also develop necessary and related procedures and methods that will be used to evaluate AI technologies for Library use, and will ensure that they align with SPL values, objectives, and obligations. He said the Library will need to develop a training program for staff to obtain skills to use the approved technologies in a responsible and safe manner. He said SPL is part of, and can become more involved in, a large network of partner organizations that include the City of Seattle and other surrounding organizations in the region and nationally. Mr. Loter said he believes the Library has an obligation to educate the public about the responsible use of AI technologies, both in terms of what the Library is doing as an institution, and in what the public needs to learn about in using the technology. He said it would be similar to how the Library previously approached educating the public about social media, and the Internet before that.

Mr. Loter said it is difficult to define AI. He said the term has specific meanings within computer science, but has largely been adopted by marketing teams in large technology companies to mean something completely different. He said, for example, Generative AI, which has recently emerged, is often used synonymously with the term AI. Mr. Loter said AI is a technology that makes predictions, recommendations, and decisions based on an automated analysis of data. He said AI is used in photo apps on smart phones, in which one can search for pictures of cats without first needing to label the photos. He said AI is used to provide recommendations on Netflix or Amazon. He said AI is being used to find patterns between similar kinds of activities in a workplace setting, such as in screening job applicants. He said the term AI also includes more controversial uses, such as facial recognition and behavior prediction. Mr. Loter said Generative AI

is a subset of general AI found in applications such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini. He said it is fairly new and is driving much of the recent attention to artificial intelligence. He said critically generated AI creates new content, and does not simply act on or process existing data, which is an important distinction.

Mr. Loter said, in developing the draft policy, the Library has considered some of the major concerns addressed through other organizational policies, or that have been part of various state, legislative, and regulatory efforts around AI guidance and control. He said he previously worked at the City of Seattle where he led the development of the City's AI policies a couple of years ago, working closely with University of Washington researchers and members of local artificial intelligence organizations and research institutions. He said the City has also been part of a broader municipal government coalition centered in San Jose that has contributed a lot of thinking and research to the subject. Mr. Loter said of the dozen or more AI policy concerns, the Library is focusing specifically on seven which represent specific risks to the mission and institution of public libraries in general, and SPL specifically, as determined by a review of library literature as well as positions SPL has taken in the past on related topics such as data privacy and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Loter said accuracy is a chief concern and risk in the use of AI and generative AI technology. He said the goal of tools like ChatGPT is to generate plausible sounding content, not to verify its truth. He said, as a result, AI may produce content that sounds reasonable, but may be inaccurate. He said the term "hallucination" is used when AI such as ChatGPT produces output that includes information that is made-up. He said the technology behind generative AI is not designed to differentiate what is true and what is not. He said a SPL policy consideration is to ensure that AI output is reviewed by staff for accuracy, and that the tools themselves go through a rigorous evaluation process to benchmark their level of accuracy. Mr. Loter said this is among the processes and procedures that are yet to be developed collaboratively with stakeholders at SPL, incorporating materials from the Gov AI coalition and the City of Seattle. He said the policy will direct that the Library will do that work and proceed in that manner. Mr. Loter said accuracy and information literacy is a core principle of libraries, so this is a key risk for the Library to manage.

Mr. Loter said AI systems are trained using existing data that tends to be culturally and linguistically biased, and those biases can be replicated or reinforced in the outputs produced. He said, similar to accuracy, the Library's policy will direct Library staff to evaluate outputs using training and other available methods, such as unconscious bias training and the City's Race and Social Justice program. Mr. Loter said in reviewing for accuracy and cultural and linguistic bias, the Library must also ensure that the desired gains in productivity through the use of AI is not offset or obliterated by the work necessary to ensure the tools are producing acceptable outputs.

Mr. Loter said accountability is a key issue the policy will address. He said having a policy demonstrates the Library's commitment to being accountable and responsible in the use of AI. He said the policy will reflect that Library staff are accountable for anything that is published under the Library's name and for decisions made by the Library. He said the focus on accountability is complicated because AI systems tend to be opaque, and their internal operations and the data they rely on are considered proprietary. He said training and development of new procedures may be required for staff to be responsible, accountable parties to the use of these technologies.

Mr. Loter said privacy is another major concern. He said SPL has long been committed to protect and promote the freedom and privacy of intellectual inquiry. He said the Library treats data about certain library activities as confidential, while generative AI operates by incorporating data into its training model for use in other unrelated contexts. He said Library use of AI must be sensitive and mindful of these risks.

Mr. Loter said environmental impact is also a key consideration for the use of AI tools. He said as AI technologies continue to grow, demand is rising, which means an increased demand for electricity and water usage to power and cool the data centers. He said the Library has a commitment to sustainability in the design and efficiency of its buildings, and the City of Seattle also has environmental commitments and performance standards. He said this value should be reflected in the use of the AI technologies.

Mr. Loter said the policy will also highlight considerations regarding intellectual property. He said, earlier this week, a legal case was settled that concluded that AI's use of certain copyrighted materials does constitute fair use. Mr. Loter said he expects the decision to be challenged, but it is currently an open question as to the ways in which AI may use copyright protected content in its training data. He said the Library must be very mindful of its value of intellectual freedom and intellectual property when using AI technologies.

Mr. Loter said AI technologies are marketed as enabling efficiencies in their use in recruitment and other HR related functions. He said the Library will be developing policy positions regarding the use of AI in recruitment, hiring, and other decision-making processes to ensure fair and equitable treatment in those areas.

Mr. Loter said the draft AI policy covers the concerns described and is presented for the Library Board's consideration and approval later this year. He said, following approval of the policy, the Library will collaborate with local and national organizations and other resources to develop frameworks for evaluating AI use at SPL, and approving acceptable uses, so that the Library can use these tools in a safe and responsible way. He said the effort will include training programs help staff use the technology in ways that are consistent with Library policy and principles.

Ms. Pettis said she is interested in the Governance Committee that will be established in connection with this policy and asked for more information. Mr. Loter said details of the Governance Committee are not fully developed, but it will need a representative body within SPL to advise on some of the evaluation procedures and processes that will be used. He said the main functions of the committee will be to operationalize the policy direction, to make decisions about which technologies meet the Library's criteria and standards for adoption, and to review any disputes or issues that arise with material that may be generated or published by AI. He said there will be a committee of staff in the Library who are responsible for that. Ms. Pettis said, rather than internal, she was thinking a committee would potentially be external with experts in the industry. Mr. Loter said it is intended to be an internal governance committee within the Library.

Ms. Pettis said AI is such a fast-moving area that it might be worth thinking about how to involve people who are working in that area to help continue to provide input. She said she believes that as important as this policy is to have, it may also be outdated within a year, based on how fast things are moving. Mr. Loter said Ms. Pettis is correct, and the Library is in regular contact with the Responsible AI Program folks at the City as well as stakeholders assisted to develop that policy. He said events, panels, and conferences on AI are ubiquitous. He said he attended one last week at Seattle University in which a demonstration broke out and disrupted the event. He said there are many resources in the area the Library can draw from. He said the use of AI is not without controversy, and the Library must be mindful of that.

Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen thanked Mr. Loter for the presentation. She asked if the trustees may also get a copy of the presentation for clarity. Mr. Loter said he would work with Executive Assistant Amy Lawson to get the presentation sent to the Board.

Ms. Mehdi thanked Mr. Loter for the presentation and pointed out a missing word in bullet point three of item A on page two of the draft policy. Ms. Mehdi said it makes sense for the Library to take some of its lead from the City. She said when she was working at the City, she was on the

Data Processing Advisory Council whose task was to pre-vet certain new IT. She said it makes sense to take some lead from the City, as they will be managing AI impacts across the City. She asked if the American Library Association or Urban Libraries Council were also thinking about AI through the lens of libraries and if SPL was engaging with them. Mr. Loter said he was surprised to not find much information from those organizations about this topic. He said when reviewing this week's ALA conference program, he did note that there were a couple of panels, and he intends to reach out to those presenters after the conference. Mr. Loter said ALA used to have a Library Information Technology association called LITA that he thought would be a natural fit for this conversation; however, LITA is no longer supported by ALA. He said, given everything else happening in the world right now, maybe this topic has not risen to the top of the list for ALA policy considerations, but he would continue to monitor that and reach out to the conference presenters.

Ms. Mehdi said having some AI tech professionals will be very important if there is not library-specific assistance around how the Library uses or AI or allows it to be used. She said the way she read the policy is that it is particularly about the use of generative AI which is being used to create new content. She asked, since AI is everywhere and not just in generative AI technologies, if there is a plan to give staff examples of how and when the policy applies. She said when she does an online search, her search engine immediately adds Copilot at the top, and she asked if using that is okay. She said that level of example might be useful for the Board members to understand, but also for staff to know when they can and cannot use different iterations of AI. Mr. Loter said Ms. Mehdi had a good point, and said the issue is complex. He said retrieval augmented generation, or the kind of AI that is utilized in search engines, is a combination of searching as well as generating, and those results can be very inaccurate. He said, in the past, libraries had to train their staff on how to use the internet and early versions of search engines to evaluate results and determine what was coming from verifiable sources. He said the larger cultural context is the role that the Library serves for its patrons. He said as the Library develops processes and methods to evaluate AI technologies, it will look at daily tools such as search engines and tools like Microsoft Office or Adobe Acrobat. He said AI or AI-like technologies are being incorporated into everyday tools, and not necessarily separate products to be purchased. He said the Library's AI policy does skew in the direction of generative AI because that area appears to be where the largest and most concerning risks exist. He said traditional, standard AI, which is used even to influence or make decisions, will also be incorporated into the evaluation frameworks.

Ms. Mehdi said, regarding the Library's role in educating the public, that having a service area full of public computer users is an opportunity to educate people who are using the internet and AI about the tremendous amount of natural resources required for AI to just pop up answers. She said that is a role the Library is well suited to play, and she appreciates that the team is thinking about it. Mr. Loter said he plans to work very closely with Library staff to determine what kind of programming makes sense in this area. Mr. Hairston thanked Mr. Loter for the presentation and the Board for a lively discussion. He said he looks forward to more conversation as it is a dynamic and organic experience right now.

Union Report
President of AFSCME Local 2083 Jessica Lucas said she will be absent next month and will try to send a substitute. she would allow her written report to stand, but in the theme of a question asked by Ms. Mehdi in the last meeting, she wanted to talk about what is giving Library staff joy, despite some of their challenges. Ms. Lucas said a job well done brings Library staff to work and keeps them happy in the work they do. She said they find joy in helping the public to access resources, material, and information in clean buildings and predictable conditions; sharing joy and reading support; and supporting the community with fun and informational programs and outreach. She said all Library staff, public-facing and behind-the-scenes, contribute to the Library

being a welcoming and supportive space. Ms. Mehdi said she would like to give credit where it was due, and said it had been Mr. Hairston who had asked about joy that the last meeting.

Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
Mr. Hairston said he believed there was not a meeting of the Friends Board this month, which Ms. Lawson confirmed. Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen said the Foundation Board kicked off their strategic planning effort at their last meeting. She said the Foundation Board is on track for fundraising, at about $1.7 million, which is just over 50% of their goal for the year. She said the grand total is $1.9 million, including estate and in-kind gifts. She said the Foundation Board will be doing a fundraising event on September 19, partnering with the Special Collections Division at the Central Library, and more information is forthcoming. Ms. Bendixen said the strategic planning consultant Laura Pierce worked with the Foundation Board to ensure the Foundation mission, vision, and values are in line with the Library's. she said they put together a planning committee that is meeting monthly and drafting a constituent listening plan.

Updates from Library Board Members
Mr. Hairston wished the trustees going to the American Library Association Conference an enjoyable time. He said he would be nearby in Washington, D.C. where his group is the facilitating organizer for the Physics and Astronomers Faculty Teaching Institute at the American Institute of Physics for five days.

<div align="center">ADJOURN</div>

Library Board President Tali Hairston adjourned the meeting at 12:21 p.m

The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

|	
Date:	July 31, 2025
To:	The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees
From:	Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services Nicholas Merkner, Head of Finance and Accounting
Subject:	**June 2025 Financial Reporting**

Overview

Overall, the Library has expended **46%** of its operating budget with **50%** of the year elapsed. This is in line with the prior year when the Library had expended **46%** of the operating budget (excluding retroactive Annual Wage Increase payments). Total expenditures at the end of the month were $46 million.

The chart below provides a high level overview of year-to-date spending by budget group, and also helps to illustrate relative sizes within the Library's operating budget.

YTD Spending vs. Budget (% Spent)
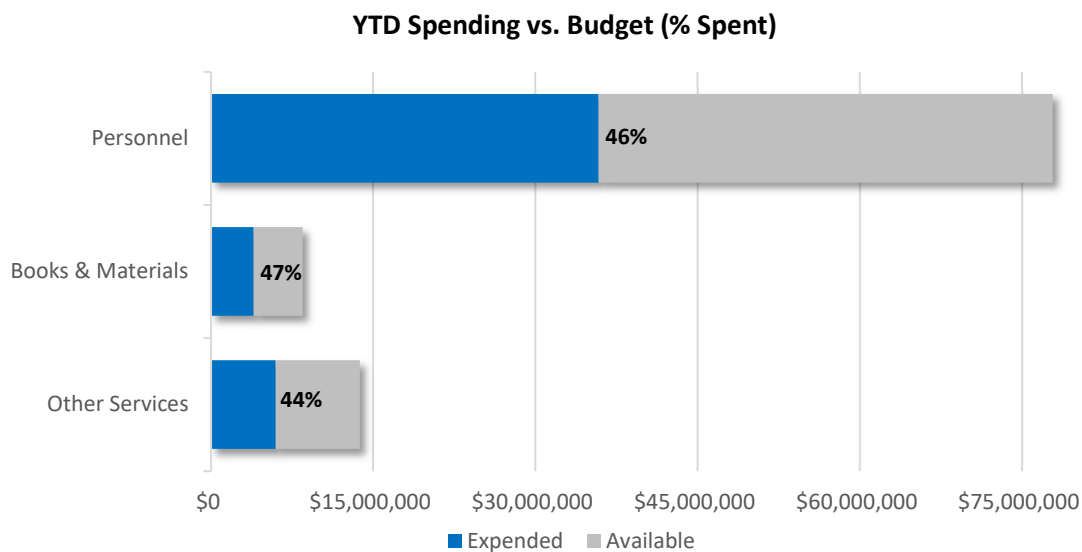
Personnel Services

Personnel costs represent the largest category of expenses at the Library and make up 78% of the revised operating budget. As of this report there have been **twelve pay periods processed**—as such we expect 45% of the personnel budget to be expended. Spending is on target at **46%.**

Non-Personnel Services
The largest individual category of expenditures within the non-personnel budget is related to library books and materials—this category represents 8% of the revised operating budget. Spending is as expected at **47%**.

Other services which represent 14% of the adopted budget—and include equipment, services, and supplies—are **44%** expended. Within this category, there is $1.2 million associated with prior year grants, contracts, and other ongoing bodies of work that had budget authority continue into 2025. These amounts are reflected as part of the attached Expenditure Control report.

Revenues
Library generated revenues during the month of June were $64,000, with total year-to-date collections at **$376,000**—representing a 44% collected rate. As noted during previous months, the Library has yet to restore access for digital payment acceptance related to lost material fees—this has contributed to a $23,000 decrease in total revenue collection when compared to the same period in 2024. We anticipate that once this functionality for patrons has returned, revenues will realign in this category through the remainder of the year.

Action Requested: Library Board consideration of June 2025 Operating Budget financial reporting for approval at July 31, 2025 meeting. Comments or feedback are welcome.

Expenditure Control for June 2025

Amounts in $1,000s	Revised Budget*	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages	50,740	3,847	23,194	46%	27,546
Benefits	27,105	2,125	12,655	47%	14,450
Personnel Services Sub-Total	**$77,845**	**$5,972**	**$35,849**	**46%**	**$41,997**
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,483	675	3,953	47%	4,530
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	**$8,483**	**$675**	**$3,953**	**47%**	**$4,530**
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,305	276	1,656	50%	1,649
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,686	68	508	30%	1,178
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	304	34	173	57%	131
Operating Supplies	606	95	271	45%	335
Other Expenses	666	24	364	55%	302
Other Maintenance	916	143	489	53%	427
Phone, Wireless & Internet	507	31	147	29%	361
Professional Services	523	88	184	35%	339
Software	934	96	438	47%	496
Staff Training & Travel	180	2	21	12%	159
Vehicle Costs	358	32	170	47%	188
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	2,093	177	1,093	52%	1,000
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,293	33	486	38%	806
Facilities - Garage Debt Service	404	-	8	2% (A)	397
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	**$13,775**	**$1,100**	**$6,007**	**44%**	**$7,768**
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	**$100,103**	**$7,747**	**$45,808**	**46%**	**$54,295**

Footnotes:

* Includes $1.2M related to prior year encumbrances and grant carry-forward

 (A) The City will post Garage Debt Service chargeback in Q4

Revenue Control for June 2025

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	120,000	6,179	37,418	31% (A)
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	377,000	30,482	179,340	48%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	100,000	10,927	70,311	70%
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	177,000	11,813	62,253	35%
Book Sale Consignment	85,000	4,093	26,016	31%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	3,000	196	943	31%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES	**$862,000**	**$63,688**	**$376,281**	**44%**

Footnotes:

 (A) Library lost material fees have not been collectible via electronic payment since the cybersecurity breach in May 2024

The Seattle Public Library

Date:	July 31, 2025
To:	Library Board of Trustees
From:	Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Re:	July 2025 Chief Librarian's Report

1. June 26-30, I traveled to Philadelphia for the American Library Association Annual Conference, along with trustees Carmen Bendixen, Faith Pettis, and Ron Chew, as well as several Library staff members. As usual, ALA put on a robust conference with ample opportunities for learning and engagement among the many thousands of library professionals who participate. This year's program continued to focus on matters of deep interest to libraries, including critical information on the developing challenges of book banning, rescinded funding, and the rapid growth and adoption of artificial intelligence technologies.

2. On July 9, I met with State Librarian Sara Jones and Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) Director Danielle Miller at WTBBL to discuss the library's plan for operations with reduced funding. The Seattle Public Library, The Seattle Public Library Foundation, and a number of libraries around the state are actively working on potential partnered solutions to sustain the program until appropriate state funding is restored.

3. In keeping with the commitment made in the Strategic Plan, the Library has hired a Library Environment and Security Services Manager who will join the Security team beginning August 4. This new role will oversee the security of Library buildings and public spaces to provide patrons and staff a welcoming and safe environment, as well as overseeing the Library's security supervisor and team of security officers. This role also includes the lead responsibility in the Library's development of a comprehensive security assessment. The successful candidate, Andrea "Andee" Walton, has a rich and varied career history including service in the US Marine Corps, the Human Services Commission for the City of Tacoma, and the Port Orchard Police Department. We look forward to sharing more about this work and introducing Andee later this summer.

4. As I shared in a recent email, the Library is excited to announce that updated versions of the new Library app were submitted to the app stores to be made available to patrons in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Traditional and Simplified Chinese. This was one of our core accessibility and equity commitments, and represents a major milestone for the project. Multilingual posters and rack cards have been distributed to branches now, and multilingual versions of the App Web page are live on our website. The app was downloaded more than 12,000 times during the BETA period and we are excited to offer this new platform for placing holds, checking out materials, and managing accounts. Huge congratulations and thanks go out to Head of Marketing and Online Services Helen Tapping, and the entire App Team (Bennett

Barr, Leo Galvez, Joe Gustav, Kreg Hasegawa, Margie Huth, Bo Kinney, Kate Sellers, Geof Starr, Kevin Tracey, Annie Vasquez, and Charles Wesley) for their diligent and thoughtful work on this complex project!

5. The Library continues to reach out to the community, offering a wide breadth of supportive programming. Examples of community-focused programs offered at SPL this summer:

   - Our Social Services Team and our Ballard Branch staff recently teamed up to offer a mini-resource day that brought together the Department of Social & Human Services, Department of Licensing and homeless outreach organization, REACH. DSHS and DOL2Go worked with more than 30 patrons, most of whom were able to get IDs, many of which were free of charge, thanks to REACH.

   - In both June and July, the Library offered overdose prevention education events at the Lake City, Beacon Hill, Capitol Hill, and Broadview branches. The trainings were offered in collaboration with community partners Overdose Prevention Collective and United Indians of All Tribes Foundation.

   - The second annual Young Adult Resource Fair returned to the Central Library on July 30, providing opportunities for youth through the age of 26 to enroll in public benefits, learn about job/apprenticeship opportunities, connect with their peers, get a haircut or find pet care, and more.

   - The Lake City Branch will host the Lake City Community Resource Fair on August 8.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:
   a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; Friends Board 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; ULC Director/CEO weekly meetings; monthly meeting with King County Library Executive Director; American Library Association Annual Conference.

   d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: Deputy Mayor and department heads quarterly meeting; Mayor's Cabinet meeting.

Collections and Access Services
Collection and Technical Services
July 16, 2025
Frank Brasile, Selection Services Librarian

Impact Areas

Access: *Making sure our public has access to all that we offer. This means encouraging everyone to get Library cards, providing great collections that serve every age and making sure patrons have access to our staff, resources, programs and services.*

Literacy, Learning, and Achievement: *Providing assistance to support the personal pursuit of educational, informational and recreational interests for formative and lifelong learning.*

Recognizing the LGBTQ+ Collection as an official Special Collection

Seattle has a large and vibrant LGBTQ+ community, and has been a magnet and a haven for queer people to move to and live in; in 2013, Seattle surpassed San Francisco as the city with the largest percentage of households with gay and lesbian couples[i] while a more recent analysis conducted by the Puget Sound Regional Council that mined U.S. Census data reveals that between July 2021 and May 2023, about 17% of residents in the Seattle Metropolitan Area (which includes Bellevue and Tacoma) identified as LGBTQ+.[ii]

Figure 1: Rainbow crosswalk at Broadway and Pine St in Seattle's Capitol Hill.

The Seattle Public Library has been serving the queer community for some time as well. The Capitol Hill branch, situated in the city's historically gay neighborhood, collaborated with the library's technical services department and the Washington Center for the Book to define the parameters for a collection focused on LGBTQ+ themes in the early 2000s, and with the help of The Seattle Public Library Foundation launched the Gay and Lesbian collection. Since then, this unique collection has been primarily supported by the Library's general collections budget.

Over the past several years, nationwide book challenges and bans have increased, thanks to organized efforts from groups like Moms for Liberty; from 2020 to 2021 the number of books challenged increased 1,309%. Books with queer characters and themes are among the most challenged books, and the top 2 most challenged books in 2024 fit the bill – *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson and *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe.[iii]

As a result of the new culture of hostility towards books by, about, and for queer folks, the Library officially recognized the LGBTQ+ collection as an official special collection, along with the Seattle Room at the Central Library and the African American collection at the Douglass-Truth branch library. This recognition establishes it as a core part of the library collection and the queer community as a prioritized audience that the library serves. The library's commitment was

expanded with a $5,000 award from the Foundation following a fundraising event for the collection at the Capitol Hill branch.

Figure 2: The Gender Studies section of the LGBTQ+ collection at the Capitol Hill branch.

The LGBTQ+ collection contains nearly 2,500 unique titles for adults and teens across fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels and poetry. In the past year, more than half of those titles (approximately 1,400 books) were checked out by patrons throughout the city at all locations, indicating that interest in queer books extends to every corner of the city, not just Capitol Hill.

So far this year, the selection services department has ordered nearly 150 titles for this collection. New fiction for adults includes literary fiction (*Ordinary Love* by Marie Rutkoski, which explores second chances at love) and genre fiction (*Cosmic Love at the Multiverse Hair Salon* by Annie Mare, a mashup of science fiction and romance). New teen titles merge genre with politics and current events with books such as *The Dead of Summer* by Ryan LaSala, which marries climate fiction with horror.

In adult nonfiction, approximately 100 titles were refurbished; these are books that were once part of the LGBTQ+ collection but were no longer. Nonfiction added back to the collection reflect the wide range of topics and intersectionality within the queer community: lives of gay men and lesbians (*No Modernism without Lesbians);* queer and bisexual interest (*When Brooklyn Was Queer);* transgender studies *(Black Trans Feminism);* asexuality *(Hopelessly Aromantic);* politics *(Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique);* community-specific queer stories *(Indigiqueerness, The Queer Arab Glossary);* and much more.

Figure 3: A selection of recently acquired LGBTQ+ books.

The expansion of the LGBTQ+ collection is happening at a crucial time. As queer people are under assault and the Trump administration's concerted effort to remove mention of queer people in history[iv], access to information about queer histories, vital medical and legal information, and inclusive stories are more important than ever, and The Seattle Public Library is proud to invest in a collection that serves a community that is vulnerable.

[i] Seattle overtakes San Francisco as No.1 city for gay couples | The Seattle Times
[ii] Puget Sound Trends: LGBTQ+ Population and the Household Travel Survey - Jun 2023
[iii] American Library Association kicks off National Library Week with the Top 10 Most Challenged Books of 2024 and the State of America's Libraries Report | ALA
[iv] Government agencies scrub LGBTQ web pages and remove info about trans and intersex people

GATEWAY TO HISTORY
July 16, 2025
Jade D'Addario, Digital Projects Librarian, Special Collections
Emily DiPaulo, Special Collections Librarian
Seattle History: Travel and Tourism Exhibit

The Special Collections department is fortunate to have multiple vitrines in the highly trafficked area just outside of the Seattle Room collection. Located on level 10 of the Central Library, these cases allow staff to highlight materials representing varying parts of Seattle's culture and history.

The decision-making process behind exhibiting certain materials is complex and multifaceted. Materials are often chosen based on their ability to create a dynamic and captivating experience for visitors, inclusion of diverse and culturally representative materials, conservation considerations, and the ability to contribute to an exhibit's story.

In tandem with the summer tourist season, staff recently deinstalled the continuously popular Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition exhibit and installed a new exhibit, Travel in Seattle Through the Decades, which showcases how Seattle's travel and tourism industry has changed through the ages. As visitors browse the exhibit, they will notice how Seattle's tourism industry grew over time, reflected by the selected materials representing decades in Seattle from the 1890s through the 1960s.

Featured Collections

Seattle Travel and Tourism Guide Collection, ca. 1894 -2022
The Travel in Seattle Through the Decades exhibit showcases materials mostly from the *Seattle Travel and Tourism Guide Collection, ca. 1894-2022*. Materials from this archival collection include brochures, pamphlets, and other materials which provide details about popular sightseeing locations, historic sites, museums, guided tours, and local businesses and attractions. In the photograph to the right, representing Seattle in the 1920s, materials include *Seeing Seattle by Water: Anderson Water Tours*, *Seattle Chamber of Commerce: A Guide to Seattle*, and *Greeters Tourist and Shopping Guide*. These items highlight tourist activities and interests of the time.

Mt. Rainier Travel and Tourism Guide Collection, ca. 1904-1986

A significant tourist attraction, visible from Seattle but not within the city limits, is Mount Rainier. The Travel in Seattle Through the Decades exhibit continues in two additional display cases and contains materials on view highlighting Mount Rainier National Park including trail maps, brochures, photographs, and pamphlets.

The *Mt. Rainier Travel and Tourism Guide Collection, ca. 1904-1986* materials represented in this photograph include a 1946 trail map, *Mount Rainier National Park: America's Mountain Glacier Wonderland in Natural Color* 1960 magazine issue, and a Mount Rainier brochure from 1967.

[Seattle Room Collections](#)

In addition to the featured travel and tourism guide archival collections, the exhibit features items from the shelves of the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room such as the *Seattle Pioneer Pocket Guide*, a book designed to be just small enough to fit in a pocket and reference on the go! Published in 1913, *Night in Seattle* by Theodore Newcomb is a collection of photographs that encompass a rare glimpse of the unique beauty of Seattle's urban landscape under the cloak of darkness. *Selected Photographs to Mail or Mount in Your Album* is a 7 x 9 cm envelope enclosed around a collection of 10 black and white photographs portraying the Paradise area, located on the south side of Mount Rainier National Park.

Collections Processing

Behind the scenes, staff take extra care and thought while processing collections to help make materials accessible to the public and preserve them for future generations. Many of the travel and tourism materials were previously bound together in volumes which were assembled as materials were acquired. Although they were meant to protect documents from wear and tear when they were created, the volumes became increasingly problematic as time passed.

As they aged, the tight bindings and adhesives used to create the volumes began to expedite the deterioration of the materials, making it increasingly difficult to access them without causing further harm. The lack of organization within the volumes themselves also meant someone may need to look through as many as 20 volumes to find a specific item. In 2018, Special Collections staff disbound these volumes, removing old tape and glue from items as they were processed. We flattened and repaired materials where necessary and rehoused them in acid-free boxes and folders. Materials were also organized chronologically, making it easier for patrons to find and use the materials. This project also allowed us to display the materials more readily in exhibits.

Digital Collections Highlights

Travel to our collections online! Not only have staff highlighted Seattle's historic travel and tourism in the display cases on level 10 of the Central Library, but they have also shone the spotlight on digitized materials available to anyone with a device that can access the internet.

Every quarter we collaborate with the Marketing and Online Services team to feature a new digital collection. Special Collections staff also create corresponding physical exhibits of featured items in the display cases of the silver floor area on Level 10. This quarter, we are featuring our Seattle Room Postcard Collection which compliments the tourism materials on display in the Seattle Room.

Discovery and Access of Materials

Allowing patrons to interact more easily with our collections, finding aids for the *Seattle Travel and Tourism Guide Collection, ca. 1894-2022* and the *Mt. Rainier Travel and Tourism Guide Collection, ca. 1904-1986* are discoverable in Seattle Public Library's online catalog and the Seattle Room Digital Collections page. Both collections are viewable by making a Seattle Room appointment. Furthermore, library visitors interested in browsing additional historical Seattle travel materials can find them shelved in the Seattle Room under the Dewey Decimal number 917.972.

The Seattle Public Library

Date: July 31, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services
Charles Wesley, Library Technology Officer
Jim Loter, Strategic Technology Advisor

Re: **Library Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy**

On February 27, 2025, the Library Board of Trustees was briefed about the intent of The Seattle Public Library to develop and implement policy and procedures related to the Library's use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

On June 26, 2025, the Board was presented with a draft of the Library Use of Artificial Intelligence policy.

Today, we are sharing with the Board a final version of the policy for consideration.

This policy establishes standards that staff and representatives of the Library shall observe when acquiring and using AI technologies to perform Library functions and deliver Library services.

The policy incorporates additional feedback from the Library's Senior Management Team and differs from the draft shared with the Board in June in the following ways:

- Throughout, responsibility for developing AI review and approval procedures is assigned to the AI Governance Committee instead of the Library Technology Officer (LTO)
- In Section C, clarified that attribution of computer code applies to code generated by Library employees, and includes an example of attribution language
- In Section C, clarified that non-material use of AI technologies such as spell- and grammar-check software does not require attribution
- In Section E, included an allowance for certain free-speech protected uses of Generative AI
- In Section F, clarified that the AI Governance Committee has the responsibility to develop methodology to evaluate AI technologies for environmental impact

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Action required/requested: Library Board consideration of Library Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy for approval at July 2025 meeting.

Board Policy

LIBRARY USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	Adopted by the Library Board July 31, 2025
Owner: Executive Director and Chief Librarian	
Approved by: W. Tali Hairston, Library Board President	

BACKGROUND

This policy establishes the standards that staff and representatives of The Seattle Public Library shall observe when acquiring and using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to perform Library functions and deliver Library services. These standards are intended to ensure effective, secure, and responsible practices that are consistent with the Library's mission, principles, and values.

DEFINITIONS

Artificial Intelligence (AI): A machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems use machine and human-based inputs to: perceive real and virtual environments; abstract such perceptions into models through analysis in an automated manner; and use model inference to formulate options for information or action.[1]

Generative AI: A class of AI systems, including algorithms, deep-learning, and machine learning models, capable of generating new content (text, images, video, and audio) based on the inputs of training datasets. This also includes systems capable of ingesting input and translating that input into another form, such as text-to-code systems.

POLICY STATEMENT

AI technologies have the potential to solve meaningful challenges and enhance the delivery of Library services. However, they also have the ability to make mistakes, falsify information, and rely on biased or faulty data. Due to their design, the operations of AI systems are more difficult to predict, inspect, decode, or understand than traditional technology systems. Failures in, or inappropriate uses of, AI systems can erode public trust and cause harm to people and communities, potentially at a greater scale than with traditional technologies.
All AI technologies acquired, configured, developed, operated, or maintained by or on behalf of the Library shall align with requirements outlined in this policy.

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[1] 15 USC Ch. 119 "National Artificial Intelligence Initiative"

A. Use and Operation

- Library staff shall acquire and use only those AI products that have been approved for Library use via a process developed by the AI Governance Committee. Approval is required for free software, software-as-a-service (SaaS) products, web-based software services, and AI components that are embedded within or added to non-AI software products, even if those products have otherwise been approved.

- In determining if an AI product is approved for Library use, the AI Governance Committee shall:
    - Determine if the product is consistent with all relevant IT and Library standards and policies.
    - Document technical information about the AI models used in the product by requiring a vendor to provide a completed GovAI AI Factsheet, by consulting an existing AI Factsheet on file with the GovAI AI Registry, or by using an equivalent process.

- Library staff or its representatives shall not input Library data that has been classified as "sensitive" or "confidential" into an AI product or service without approval by the AI Governance Committee or via an exception process developed by the Committee.
    - If the classification of data is absent or unclear, the employee shall assume it is sensitive and seek further clarification and approval from the AI Governance Committee or the authorized steward of the data in question.

B. Oversight and Accountability

- The Library shall establish an AI Governance Committee, which will be tasked with reviewing requests to acquire and use AI technologies, assessing how the practical use of these approved tools will be in keeping within the guardrails defined by policy, and making regular recommendations on how the organization should adjust its practices in this space.

- Outputs of Generative AI systems must be reviewed by a Library employee who is familiar with the subject matter prior to use in an official Library capacity, including through patron reference question responses, online publication, or other sharing methods with the public, partners, and others.

- Output reviews shall determine that the output is accurate, is free from errors or "AI hallucinations," does not contain unlicensed intellectual property, is not discriminatory or biased against protected classes, and meets Library standards for communication.

- Output reviews must be documented and shall demonstrate how the review was conducted, how the determination to use the output was made, and who made the determination.

- Documentation of output reviews shall be retained by the employee who conducted the review, and must be produced upon request to any Library employee seeking relevant information in an official capacity.

- The Library may establish a central repository for output review documentation.

C.   Attribution

- All material produced by Generative AI systems that is published by or on behalf of the Library must be attributed to the AI product that was used, including the specific model and its version. Attributions must also denote that the material was reviewed by a Library employee.

    o   Example attribution: "This blog post was co-written with OpenAI's GPT-3.5 model and was reviewed for accuracy by a member of Library staff."

    o   Attribution is not required for material that was initially produced by a Library employee or an authorized party on behalf of the Library, and was merely altered or edited by AI for spelling, grammar, usage, or style unless those modifications are substantial or significantly alter the nature of the original material.

- Computer code generated using AI by a Library employee and used in software, databases, scripts, formulas, or other automation functions must be documented and attributed via comments in the source code or, if necessary, in separate product documentation. In such documentation, the name of the Library employee who is responsible for the AI-generated code must be included.

    o   Example attribution: "Code was generated using Anthropic Claude Code 1.0.32 and was reviewed for accuracy by Mike Wallace."

D.   Records Retention and Disclosure

The Library is subject to RCW 40.14, which governs Preservation and Destruction of Public Records for state and local agencies, and RCW 42.56, known as the Washington State Public Records Act, which requires agencies to make public records available to members of the public with limited, narrow exemptions. Library staff must follow the laws and current procedures and policies for records retention and disclosure.

Retention requirements are based on the content of the records, not their format. Regardless of the required retention period, if records responsive to a public disclosure request exist, they must be disclosed.

When using an AI system, Library staff must preserve or destroy records created when using AI products pursuant to the relevant retention schedule, and are responsible for searching for and retrieving them if a public disclosure request is received.

E.   Prohibited Uses

The following uses of AI technology are prohibited.

- **Identity Determination or Behavioral Prediction.** Applications that use computer vision or other AI/machine-learning techniques to analyze or classify people's facial and body characteristics or movements into emotions or sentiments, or that attempt to determine an identifiable person's protected class information, or predict an identifiable person's future behaviors.

- **Misleading or Deceptive Content.** Creation or distribution of any content that was created with the purpose or intent of misleading or deceiving Library employees or members of the public.

- **Nonconsensual Depictions or Alterations.** Creation or distribution, even with attribution or disclosure, of digitally generated or digitally altered depictions of a private individual without their consent.
     - The use of AI-generated or AI-altered depictions of public individuals within free-speech protected contexts, such as use for parody or satire, is permissible provided that the use does not violate other policies, standards, laws, or norms.

- **Automated Decision-Making.** Consequential decisions made solely by AI systems with no human oversight including hiring, performance reviews, discipline, conduct enforcement, exclusions, suspensions, investigations, terminations, policy making, and financial awards.

F.   Other Considerations

- Environmental Impact

     AI technologies may rely on data processing facilities that utilize non-sustainable energy sources, consume inordinate amounts of resources, or otherwise have adverse impacts on the environment or nearby residents. The AI Governance Committee shall develop and apply criteria to minimize these impacts, balanced with the purported benefits of an AI technology, prior to approving an AI technology for acquisition or use.

- Intellectual Property

     AI models may be trained using information that is protected by copyright or other intellectual property laws. In addition, AI systems may produce outputs that contain legally-protected content. Library employees are already expected to abide by intellectual property laws and avoid violating copyright in Library publications. Library staff who use AI systems should take steps to ensure that AI outputs do not violate intellectual property laws.

- Intended and Optimal Domains

     Some AI models are optimized to perform better in certain use cases or under certain configurations. A completed AI FactSheet should detail the specific domains in which an AI system is intended to operate. Library staff should follow the guidelines and recommendations for appropriate and optimal use of AI systems as described in the system's FactSheet on file with the GovAI Registry.[2]

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Library staff (full-time, part-time), interns, consultants, vendors, contractors, partners, and volunteers who provide Library services or otherwise act on behalf of the Library.

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[2] GovAI Coalition Factsheet Registry. https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/information-technology/artificial-intelligence-inventory/govai-coalition/templates-resources. Retrieved June 17, 2025.

The Chief Librarian is responsible for compliance with this policy. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, restriction of access, or more severe penalties up to and including termination of employment or vendor contract.

Related Laws, Policies and Procedures

- City of Seattle's Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy
- RCW 40.14: Preservation and Destruction of Public Records
- RCW 42.56: Washington State Public Records Act
- 15 USC Ch. 119 "National Artificial Intelligence Initiative"
- GovAI Coalition AI Vendor FactSheet and Repository

HISTORY

Adopted July 31, 2025.

The Seattle Public Library

Date:	July 31, 2025
To:	Library Board of Trustees
From:	Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083
Re:	**July Union Report**

This summer has already been hot, and we give gratitude to all of our members who have shown up to provide a space for Library patrons. Fortunately, the majority of our branches have air conditioning, and our patrons are thankful for this upgrade. We look forward to when all locations will have air conditioning to offer and appreciate the work done by the Library Management Team to find the funding to make this possible in the next few years.

In other areas, we are still working to improve communication between Library Administrators and Union Leadership. We look forward to learning more about the recently announced plan for Library Programs and Services Division restructuring and hope that it will not cause undue burden on our members. We will continue to advocate for our members and ensure that the contract is followed. Library Leadership and Union Leadership have the shared goal of making The Seattle Public Library an employer of choice, and we believe that we will reach that goal with time and dedication. We want to believe that this restructuring is a step in that direction, but there are a lot of unknowns and uncertainties at the moment.

The work staff do at the Library is critical to the City and fills in gaps left by a scarcity of social services and resources. Staff would not work here if they did not care about our patrons and the mission of the Library. We look to a future where that care is fully acknowledged and rewarded, and where staff are seen as part of the team that makes the Library and the City a vibrant experience for those who live here or visit.

Action required/requested: Informational only.

The Seattle Public Library

NEWS RELEASES

Date	Title
30-Jun-2025	Summer Author & Community Events at The Seattle Public Library
16-Jun-2025	Read, Learn and Grow With the Library's 106th Summer of Learning
10-Jun-2025	The Seattle Public Library to receive $450K Carnegie grant to expand free English language learning programs
10-Jun-2025	La Biblioteca Pública de Seattle ampliará sus programas gratuitos de aprendizaje del idioma inglés, gracias a una subvención de $450,000 de la Corporación Carnegie de Nueva York
10-Jun-2025	Seattle Public Library sẽ mở thêm các chương trình học tiếng Anh miễn phí, nhờ vào khoản tài trợ trị giá 450.000 đô la từ Carnegie Corporation of New York
10-Jun-2025	The Seattle Public Library hCarnegie Corporation of New York ባገኘው የ450ሺህ ዶላር ድጋፍ የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ የመማሪያ ፕሮግራሞችን ማስፋፋት ያደርጋል
10-Jun-2025	The Seattle Public Library waxay balaarin doontaa barnaamijyada barashada luuqada Ingiriisiga ee lacag la'aanta ah, iyadoo ay ugu wacan tahay deeq $450k ee ay bixisay Carnegie Corporation of New York
10-Jun-2025	得益于 Carnegie Corporation of New York 提供的 450,000 美元资助金，The Seattle Public Library 将扩展免费英语语言学习计划
02-Jun-2025	KUOW Book Club and The Seattle Public Library Partner on Summer Reading Series Featuring Local Authors

The Seattle Public Library
MEDIA COVERAGE

Organization	Date	Headline	Details
KUOW	30-Jun-25	The revolution is written in the latest book from Ijeoma Oluo, bestselling author of 'So You Want to Talk About Race'	"This month, the KUOW Book Club read Ijeoma Oluo's "Be A Revolution: How Everyday People Are Fighting Oppression and Changing the World — and How You Can, Too." Oluo joined KUOW's Katie Campbell for a live conversation at the Seattle Central Library, the first in a three-part summer series in partnership with Seattle Public Library."
Daily Journal of Commerce	30-Jun-25	Seattle Public Library Green Lake Branch	"The Seattle Public Library's historic Green Lake Branch, located at 7364 East Green Lake Drive N., was recently renovated."
West Seattle Blog	24-Jun-25	Life-saving lesson for little ones at next Firefighter Story Time in West Seattle	"... it's meant not only for kids to learn about fire safety but also to see firefighters and their gear up close, so that they might be less scared in an emergency situation."
Queen Anne & Magnolia News	24-Jun-25	Your Seattle Public Library Card: More than just books	"If you think your Seattle Public Library (SPL) card is just for checking out books, you're missing out on one of the most powerful, free tools in the city. Beyond shelves of stories, your SPL card unlocks access to events, experiences, education, and technology—all without spending a dime."
The Seattle Medium	18-Jun-25	Read, Learn and Grow with Seattle Public Library's 106th Summer of Learning	Library's press release reprinted

Philanthropy News Digest	16-Jun-25	Carnegie awards $5 million for public library services initiative	"Recipients include the Boston Public Library Fund (Massachusetts), the Gwinnett County Public Library (Georgia), the Harris County Public Library (Texas), the Kansas City Public Library (Missouri), the Library Foundation of Los Angeles (California), the Nashville Public Library (Tennessee), the Plainfield Public Library (New Jersey), the Prince William Public Libraries (Virginia), the San Diego Library Foundation (California), the San José Public Library Foundation (California), and the Seattle Public Library Foundation (Washington)."
South Seattle Emerald	13-Jun-25	How to Win Summer Book Bingo 2025	"Ready to fire up your summer reading? Summer Book Bingo is ON, and we have everything you need to "win" this annual reading challenge, however you might define that."
KNKX Public Radio	12-Jun-25	English language learning programs in WA state have spiked in recent years	"Seattle Public Library has received a $450-million grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to expand those programs. In addition to new online and more in-person classes, the money will also pay for free on-site childcare."
Secret Seattle	12-Jun-25	The Seattle Public Library Museum Pass Program Is Back And Better Than Ever	"The Seattle Public Library Museum Pass program is back and running now after being on hiatus for several months."
Daily Journal of Commerce	12-Jun-25	Carnegie grant will expand English language programs at the Seattle Public Library	"The Seattle Public Library (SPL) will significantly increase its free English language learning programs over the next two years, thanks to a $450,000 grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York awarded to The Seattle Public Library Foundation."
The Seattle Times	10-Jun-25	Celebrate Pride with these 4 books about queer joy and resilience	"This month, the library and Charlie Hunts, owner of Charlie's Queer Books in Fremont, are sharing books that highlight the resilience and euphoria of the LGBTQ+ community."
The Stranger	09-Jun-25	The Stranger's Summer Book Bingo Guide	"The Seattle Public Library's Summer Book Bingo, which runs from May to September, is my Super Bowl."

USA Today	06-Jun-25	Librarians, teachers and others plan day of action to fight book bans and preserve history	"The Seattle Public Library, for example, is hosting anti-book banning events on June 7, 14 and 21. 'The country is experiencing unprecedented levels of censorship,' said Kristy Gale, a teen services librarian there. 'So many people wanted to get tapped into something like this. I think we're going to get a lot of interest from folks who want to support libraries … and the work that we do.' In 2023, the library launched 'Books Unbanned,' a free digital collection of audio and e-books, including some that are banned. More than 440,000 books have been checked out, library officials said. 'It's our way of taking our resources that we have and making them available to people in other parts of the nation who don't have the kind of support for libraries or are experiencing censorship,' said library spokeswoman Elisa Murray."
KUOW	02-Jun-25	Summertime and the readin's easy: KUOW Book Club and Seattle Public Library partner for live author series	"'We are delighted to invite all of Seattle to read along with KUOW's Book Club this summer, and then meet these amazing authors in person at the Central Library,' said Stesha Brandon, literature and humanities manager at The Seattle Public Library."
The New York Times	30-May-25	Summer Reading Challenges Aren't Just for Kids	"Since 2017, Sarah Sinclair, a Seattle resident, has participated alongside her mother and sister in the city's Summer Book Bingo. The women all live in different states, but love continuing their childhood tradition of reading as a family. 'One of the highlights of it is that we're doing it together and swapping recommendations,' Sinclair said."