

The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
11:00 a.m. Thursday, April 30, 2026

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

Remote Listen Line:

Dial: 213-282-4570 / Phone conference ID: 669 801 328#

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Meeting ID: 289 807 237 818 707 / Passcode: 5xU3be2B

Public Comment: comments must be directed to matters on the agenda.

-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 March 26, 2026 Regular Library Board Meeting
2. March 2026 Financial Report
3. Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

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

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Executive Director & Chief Librarian Vacation, Merit and Executive Leave Policy

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. Union Report
2. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
3. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. Chief Librarian Performance Review and Compensation

J. ADJOURN

K. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: May 28, 2026

(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
March 26, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on March 26, 2026. Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Vice President W. Tali Hairston, PhD and trustees Ron Chew and Faith Pettis were in attendance. Trustee Carmen Bendixen 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 with one correction to the spelling of Rick Sheridan's last name in item E.2.a.; 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 written public comment was received by email and shared with all trustees from Hyeun Park regarding security services at the Library.

CONSENT

It was noted that the date in the footnotes of the January meeting minutes had been corrected and included for the record in today's meeting packet. It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda as published; the motion carried unanimously.

CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

Chief Librarian Report

Executive Director and Chief Librarian Tom Fay thanked the Board, particularly Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi and Library Board Vice President W. Tali Hairston, PhD, for their meetings and efforts regarding the Library Levy proposal. Mr. Fay said the mayor's levy proposal has been submitted to City Council. He thanked Mayor Wilson, Deputy Mayor Surrat, and City Budget Office Director Ali Penucci for their work in developing the levy package, and thanked the City Council's Libraries, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee Chair Maritza Rivera and the Council Select Committee for organizing and calendaring the presentations to move through the process to meet the deadline for the August 4 ballot. Mr. Fay thanked Seattle City Councilmembers for their questions and attention. He said the mayor's proposal for \$410 million is now in the phase in which Councilmembers can add amendments. He said Central Staff will present amendments to the Select Committee who will vote on them. He said so far the levy proposal has been well received by the Councilmembers, who have asked great questions, and the Library is thankful for all of the work that has gone into the effort. He thanked the Library team for their work over many months, including quick turnarounds on nights and weekends.

Mr. Fay said that the Library has experienced two patron deaths in branches in the last 30 days. He said a patron passed away at the Rainier Beach Branch, and another at the Capitol Hill Branch. He acknowledged the life-saving efforts conducted by Library staff members prior to emergency services arriving. He acknowledged the experience and the stress of these events on staff. He said when these traumas occur, there are not short-term effects. He said he has also experienced this while providing library service, and the experience stays with a person always.

Mr. Fay said the Library's HR team, supervisors, and managers have been working with the branch teams over the last several weeks. He said the teams have put a great deal of work into trying to make the experience for patrons the best they can, and when they are needed to step in even to provide life-saving skills, they do so.

Mr. Fay said the Senior Management Team met for a full day off-site working retreat. He said it was the first opportunity for the group that includes new members to spend time together to better understand one another's work styles and skills, and to focus on how the team can improve communication practices to be more responsive to patrons and staff to build the type of library culture SPL would like to see. He said it was a productive session, and the team will hold additional mini-sessions for follow up.

Mr. Fay said he has been meeting with colleagues across the nation to develop a new steering committee that will be reimagining the National Platform for Digital Collections, formerly part of the Digital Public Library of America. He said the goal is to design a collaborative model for collecting, preserving, and expanding access to digital, cultural, and historical collections. He said he has great colleagues who have been picking up the work as he has been focused on SPL's levy. He thanked Ohio State Librarian Mandy Knapp for stepping in to lead, and said he hopes to return to that work in April.

Library Board Trustee Faith Pettis thanked Mr. Fay for all the work he is doing. Ms. Mehdi agreed. She thanked the full staff team who she said have been doing an incredible amount of work on presentations for the City Council Select Committee meetings on the levy. Ms. Mehdi said it is the role of the City Council to review the mayor's levy proposal and determine what funding levels they feel are correct before the package is put before the voters. Ms. Mehdi also acknowledged and thanked the staff present during the patron deaths. She said staff make a voluntary choice to administer Narcan to patrons in need. She said providing aid and witnessing the events are stressful and hard.

Library Board Trustee Ron Chew said he watched the Select Committee meeting on the Seattle Channel and found it interesting and engaging. He congratulated Mr. Fay and the staff team on a great presentation, and thoughtful questions by the Councilmembers. He said he appreciated the broad representation of speakers who gave public comment in support of amendments to the package.

Mr. Fay said staff reports in the meeting packet include a report from the Northeast region with a lot of great information on their work, a great report from the Human Resources (HR) Team, and a fourth quarter report from the Marketing and Online Services (MOS) team showing the work they do to ensure SPL is represented across many platforms. He said the amazing work they do often goes unnoticed in the sense that everything looks very good, as expected. He said it is because the MOS team does a massive amount of work. Mr. Fay said the reports show very good work by all of these teams.

Ms. Mehdi said she wanted to highlight the teen scavenger hunt at the Lake City Branch as a program as the epitome of what a library program ought to be. She said the program brings in teens and gives an opportunity to find things in the Library they didn't realize were there, which encourages them to return. She said this type of program could be funded by the levy as the Library works to increase services for teens.

Responding to reports contained in the meeting packet, Ms. Mehdi thanked Mr. Chew and Ms. Pettis for attending the Broadview Branch 50th anniversary celebration. She thanked Human Resources Director Brian Sharkey for his work in setting clear standards for performance reviews, as well as assisting the Board with structuring a performance review for the Chief Librarian. She said the Community Use Agreement (CUA) training that was highlighted in the

HR report was very helpful, and said the Board will receive a briefing on the CUA implementation at their June meeting. Ms. Mehdi said it is remarkable that the Library's newsletter has a 42% open rate. Regarding the Senior Management Team working retreat, she said she appreciates that the team is focusing on good communication with staff and patrons, as the Library is a large organization, spread across the city, so continuously improving communication is a great goal.

Dr. Hairston asked if the system reports could include how "belonging" is being included in the normal work of the Library, such as new hire onboarding. Mr. Fay said yes, and that Director of Inclusion and Belonging DeVante' Daniels would be reporting to the Board in the coming months regarding some of his work and how belonging is being integrated into public-facing work as well as internally with respect to issues like onboarding and retention. He said Mr. Sharkey and Mr. Daniels can talk about this, and Mr. Daniels can discuss some of the other frameworks he is putting together.

Systems Reports

2025 Foundation Grant Spending

Director of Institutional & Strategic Advancement Rick Sheridan thanked The Seattle Public Library Foundation their generosity, and that of their donors, in providing the Library with \$6 million of resources to use in critical areas around the system. He said the Library would not be where it is today without Foundation funding for programs such as Summer of Learning and the Global Reading Challenge programs, increases to the collection, and investment in the Library's facilities and capital improvements. He thanked the Foundation's Chief Executive Officer Brian Lawrence and the Foundation Executive Board and staff team for their work on behalf of the Library. Mr. Sheridan thanked staff throughout the Library system who work on a variety of service areas to ensure the resources are appropriately spent.

Community Partnerships & Government Relations Program Manager Kiersten Nelson said in 2025, the Foundation granted more than \$6 million to the Library which had been increased during the year. She said the Library spent approximately \$5.8 million, for a total expend rate of 96.6% of the grant. She said this exceeds past performance and the Library continues to drive toward a 100% expend rate.

Breaking spending targets down by area, Ms. Nelson said the Library spent nearly 100% of funds intended for books and materials, 101% for hours and access, 88% for literacy and early learning, 82% for technology and online services, 96% for capital and major maintenance, and 106% of funds allocated for administrative support.

Ms. Nelson said in the area of books and materials, the Foundation's grant supported the African American collection, biographies and literary classics, children's books, e-books, and the general collection, as well as the non-English collection, read-along books collection, and archival material for the Seattle Collection. She said Foundation funds also supported processing of the Paul Dorpat collection and entirely funded SPL's participation in Books Unbanned. She said funds received for collections purchased 88,413 items, including items for the Portuguese and Japanese collections, the low-visibility collection, and e-materials. Ms. Nelson said SPL was again in the top 10 libraries globally for number of digital checkouts via OverDrive.

In the area of hours and access, the largest funding area, efforts funded were enrichment programs such as lectures, author programs, and discussions on art, history and social justice. She said funds supported art, music, and performance programs with an emphasis on disadvantaged communities, and enabled career programming such as job and life skills, Library-to-Business, and workforce and career development. She said Foundation funding supported the Library's Mobile Services operations which provide monthly visits to more than 29 preschools, 75 adult

facilities, and two tiny house villages. She said the Library was also able to offer 123 older adult programs in 10 different languages across 19 branches or virtually to more than 3,000 patrons. She said the Library held more than 156 Library-to-Business programs with more than 4,100 participants getting support for their small businesses. She said SPL participated in the Black-Owned Business Excellence Symposium, and held more than 19 events in Spanish. Ms. Nelson said the Library hosted 3,581 hours of English conversation circles for 639 unique participants. She said SPL received a Carnegie grant, which runs through the Foundation, for ESOL programming that began in September and will continue over the next year and a half.

In the funding area of literacy and early learning, Ms. Nelson said Foundation grants have funded high profile youth programs including the Global Reading Challenge and Summer of Learning; enabled in-branch story times in English and other languages; facilitated youth development opportunities such as Learning Buddies, Service Learners and UW Library interns; and supported long-term planning to enhance current teen and youth programming. She said there are many quotes and stories that highlight the value of the programs and how important reading is for youth. Ms. Nelson said grant funding also allowed the Library to conduct 320 World Language Storytime sessions for more than 6,300 patrons, including the introduction of Mandarin Chinese Storytime at the International District/Chinatown and Northgate Branches. She said SPL offered literacy and early learning support through 566 Homework Help tutoring sessions reaching 6,088 students at nine branches, and supported 75 Learning Buddies, Service Learners, and UW Library interns at 53 programs and projects across the city.

Ms. Nelson said in the area of technology and online services, Foundation grants supported youth and adult technology learning including the Nourishing Minds program and Teen and Mental Health Work, which were both part of an IMLS grant. She said the grant also funded Kids Team and the Innovation Fund to incorporate virtual reality development and programming. She said SPL held 63 events supporting in-branch technology instruction including E-Sports, Kids Team, and virtual mental health programs, which allowed nearly 100 students to participate across these programs for a total attendance of more than 1,000 people. She said six intern spots in the Nourishing Minds Virtual Virtual Reality Development Internship program were also supported.

Ms. Nelson said in the area of capital and major maintenance, Foundation funding supported changes to the physical spaces to meet the needs of patrons and match how the community uses them. She said projects including fixed and movable shelving for the University Branch, furniture upgrades at the Delridge Branch, furniture repairs at the Magnolia Branch, and an interactive and exploratory sensory wall at the Northeast Branch.

Ms. Nelson said in the category of administrative support, the Foundation provided critical funding for Library operational needs including a new Inclusion and Belonging Director position to support public and staff needs, and a services and needs assessment for better understanding of patron interest. She said it also supported a portion of the SPL liaison to the Foundation, and a portion of Administrative Services resources to manage the Foundation grant.

Ms. Nelson said it was an exciting year of amazing programs, and the Foundation was able to add funds to the grant throughout the year, which was a huge benefit to the Library. She thanked the Foundation for their support. Mr. Fay thanked the Foundation, Foundation CEO Brian Lawrence, Library Experience and Engagement Director Kai Tang, Head of Finance and Accounting Nick Merkner, Ms. Nelson, and Mr. Sheridan who all work closely together to maximize and track the spending. Mr. Fay said it is great to have a fundraising partner like the Foundation who makes the Library better every day. He said Mr. Lawrence has had the goal of increasing the grant to the Library each year, and thanked him and his team for their work.

Ms. Mehdi thanked the team for the presentation. She said the Library would not be able to do what it does without the Foundation's support. She said it is astounding what is accomplished

with the \$6 million grant. She said programming is very important to bring patrons into the Library, make them feel welcome, and connect them to other people and resources, and the supporting funding is very important. She also thanked Mr. Fay and the staff who work along with the Foundation to spend the money appropriately and report back to the public. Ms. Pettis said the Library gets to do amazing projects because of the Foundation and said the Library is very grateful for those funds. She said the lineup of projects the Foundation funds is jaw-dropping and she thanked the Foundation.

OLD BUSINESS

Library Board Goals

Ms. Mehdi read the Library Board 2026 goals from the memo in the meeting packet. She said she hopes the Board will make it an annual practice to approve goals. She said some goals will be repeated yearly, and the goals will show how the Board is conducting itself with regard to the Strategic Plan and Operations Plan.

It was moved and seconded to approve the 2026 Library Board Goals as published; the motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report

Mr. Fay said Levy Administrator Jan Oscherwitz retired last month and wished her the best in her retirement. He said Digital Communications Strategist Elisa Murray had stepped into the role of reporting for today's report. Mr. Fay said Ms. Oscherwitz' position has been posted and the Library hopes to fill the position early this summer.

Ms. Murray thanked the Strategy and Performance Team for helping to collect and analyze numbers and helping to create the report; she thanked staff across the system for contributing and fact checking summaries of their areas. She said the team continues to work to make the report more visually compelling and easy to scan. She said this version includes an icon highlighting strategic plan initiatives, and a pull-out section on the first year of the Strategic Plan. She said the report is not shorter, but the team is trying to make it easier to digest.

Ms. Murray said the Library is required to submit the annual levy report for the prior year to the mayor and City Council by April 15. She said the Library Board approves quarterly reports that document the implementation of levy priorities and accomplishments, and the annual report covers the entire year with an emphasis on the fourth quarter. She said this is the sixth year of the seven-year 2019 levy, and this year accounted for about 37.4% of the total revised budget. She said SPL made progress on levy promises including expanding hours, improving access across the system, beginning the University Branch seismic retrofit project, adding to collections, and beginning the transition to a new integrated library system (ILS).

Ms. Murray said, in the area of Hours and Access, levy promises are focused on keeping libraries open when patrons need them. She said in late January 2025, the Library increased hours across the system above 2019 levels, and ensured all locations not under construction were open at least six days per week and one weekend day, which supported strong use across the system. She said 2025 saw 3.4 million in-person visits, 12.7 million digital and physical checkouts, 16,000 meeting room uses, and 5,800 programs. She said the Library also offered 24/7 access to holds pick-up lockers at seven locations, and those checkouts have been increasing since 2024.

Ms. Murray said the Library's Social Services Team, which includes a levy funded Community Resource Specialist for youth and young adults, continues to connect patrons to lifeline resources. She said in 2025, the Library distributed naloxone at all locations and provided over 4,500 boxes of nasal naloxone to the community. She said the levy funds nine of 24 Security Team members

who play an important role in keeping SPL spaces safe and welcoming. She said a big accomplishment in 2025 was transitioning to the new Community Use Agreement.

Ms. Murray said the Library continues to make significant investments in digital and physical materials. She said in 2025, the 2012 and 2019 levies funded 55% of the collections budget. She said while checkouts of digital materials increased by 13% from the previous year, weekly high demand spending on e-books decreased compared to 2023, which means the Library was able to provide a robust collection of digital materials, and also manage spending. She said the very popular Peak Picks program is 100% levy funded and accounts for all of the top ten circulating adult titles in non-fiction and fiction in 2025. Ms. Murray said there have been 1.2 million Peak Picks checkouts since the program launched in 2017. Ms. Murray said SPL piloted a Story Squad literacy program with Seattle Public Schools, and is offering physical materials in 19 languages and digital materials in 11 languages.

Ms. Murray said the levy funds the Seattle Room positions and collections. She said 1,700 items were added to the Seattle Room collection in 2025, and it was featured in a special episode of Mossback's Northwest on Cascade PBS. She said the Maintenance and Operations Center (MOC) and physical circulation was also highlighted in an in-depth article in the Seattle Times in the fall. She said 10,000 items a day are processed at the MOC, and after an item is returned, it takes two to four days for a hold to arrive at its next destination.

Ms. Murray said, in the area of Technology and Access, which promised improved computer and online services, substantial progress was made toward replacing the ILS, selecting a vendor and engaging in contract negotiations. Ms. Murray said in 2025, the Library's technology saw a use of 407,000 computer hours and 2.1 million pages printed. She said the Marketing and Online Services team launched a mobile app which was downloaded more than 25,000 times at the end of 2025. She said the levy-funded Hotspot program continues to provide essential internet access to community members.

Ms. Murray said in honoring a levy promise to add more programming for children zero to five, the Library offered 280 in-person weekly Play and Learn programs at seven locations with 7,100 attendees in four languages. She said the Library hosted 1,300 Story Times at Library locations and in the community.

In the area of Maintenance, Ms. Murray said much progress has been made on the University Branch seismic retrofit project. She said a roof replacement was completed at the Greenwood Branch, and the Columbia Branch retrofit project was deferred to address a general fund budget reduction. She said the Library's Facilities, Janitorial, and Custodial teams do essential work to keeping spaces safe, clean, and welcoming, and they completed more than 12,700 work orders in 2025.

Ms. Murray said in the area of Administration, the Library promised a plan for the future of the Library. She said 2025 was the first year of a 10-year Strategic Plan designed to build a community sense of belonging and organizational resiliency. She said the Library conducted a community use survey with consultant Olympic Research and Strategy which indicated that public perception of the Library has improved since 2018 and that the Library is making a positive impact on community members' lives.

Ms. Pettis said the reports show how carefully the Library tracks its levy promises and spending. Dr. Hairston said the effort put into measuring progress over time is very impressive. Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Murray for a great report.

Library Levy Replacement

Mr. Fay said the levy replacement resolution is one of the official components of moving the levy forward. He said the Library Board ultimately oversees the levy, and all expenditures are

approved through the annual Operations Plan. He said once the vote is taken and the money becomes available in 2027, it is the responsibility of the Library Board to manage those funds. Mr. Chew asked if the Board will need to take up another resolution if the total amount of the levy package is increased. Mr. Fay said he did not anticipate that.

Ms. Mehdi read the resolution, as contained in the meeting packet, into the record.

Ms. Mehdi said that by approving this resolution, the Board had endorsed the Mayor's proposed Library Levy at \$410 million; however, the Board acknowledges that this amount is deficient for the what is needed to address an aging infrastructure, and the reading and programming needs required to properly serve the community. She said the City Council was reviewing the Mayor's proposal and may make amendments to supplement the Mayor's proposal, which the Board would support. Ms. Mehdi thanked Mr. Fay and his team for their many hours of briefing the City Council's Libraries, Education and Neighborhoods Committee and Select Committee in support of the Mayor's proposal. He said they made a clear case that more funding is needed.

Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report

Sr. Executive Assistant Amy Lawson said the Board needed to approve the Annual Levy Report.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report; the motion carried unanimously.

Library Generated Revenue Market Assessment and Planned Rate Changes

Administrative Director Rob Gannon said his team has evaluated rates for electrical vehicle charging, parking in the Central Library garage, and private room rental rates at the Central Library. He said the Library Board has authorized the Chief Librarian to adjust fees within 50% of the current rate structure. He said proposed modifications to the electric vehicle charging fee exceed 50%, and will require Board approval. He said information on parking and room rental rates is provided for the Board's awareness.

Mr. Gannon said the Central Library garage has had electrical vehicle charging infrastructure since 2012. He said it functioned for a period of time before being taken out of service for repairs that could not be completed. He said, as the chargers have not been used, the rate structure has also remained unchanged since 2018. He said the Library received some grant funding in 2024 from the Washington State Department of Commerce to install new charging terminals at five locations including Beacon Hill, Green Lake, Broadview, Rainier Beach and the Central Library. He said the chargers will soon go into service, though the date is not yet confirmed, and construction is being finalized.

Mr. Gannon said staff completed an evaluation of electric vehicle charging rates in the surrounding areas of the five locations. He said Seattle City Light is undertaking a partnership with Seattle Department of Transportation to extend battery electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which was used as an important benchmark in understanding what SPL rates should be. He said the Library proposes to set the Library's rate at the City Light rate, which is \$0.21 per KW. He said the table in the meeting packet compares the current fee structure to a proposed flat rate fee at the \$0.21 per kWh rate.

Ms. Mehdi asked if the rate change accounts for a reserve to cover periodic infrastructure replacements in the future. Mr. Gannon said it does not. He said the service is being offered in partnership with other city departments, but the Library will not be making a profit. He said the Library will have ongoing maintenance costs. Mr. Gannon said the Library is cognizant of the role SPL can play and whether the Library wants to be an active part of the expansion of charging infrastructure and is exploring if there are other SPL locations that could take on charging

infrastructure. He said the long-term view would be for charging infrastructure be managed by Seattle City Light rather than the Library.

Mr. Gannon said the action line at the bottom of the memo in the meeting packet asks for approval of a rate change and for authorization for a study of the idling fees. He asked to remove the mention of idling fees from the motion, as it will be taken up in a later study.

It was moved and seconded to approve the rate schedule for electric vehicle charging terminals as published in the meeting packet; the motion carried unanimously.

Library Levy Replacement

Ms. Mehdi said the Board had neglected to entertain a motion and a second earlier in the meeting when voting on the Library Levy replacement resolution. She requested a motion to approve.

It was moved and seconded to approve the resolution in support of a Library Levy replacement; the motion carried unanimously.

Library Generated Revenue Market Assessment and Planned Rate Changes

Ms. Mehdi said the Board looks forward to hearing more about the idling fees study at some future time. Mr. Gannon said the Central Library parking garage rates information in the memo is provided for the Board's information. He said staff undertook a study of downtown parking rates and tried to remain competitive without overcharging. He said in resetting the rates, the Library wants to ensure the garage is available to patrons coming downtown and not oversubscribed by monthly parkers or early bird users.

Mr. Gannon said the memo on room rental rates for private rentals at the Central Library represents excellent work by Event Services Manager Camille Parker. He said this is a reordering of the rate structure to streamline it for customers and patrons. He said it is a nominal change that will serve patron and community interests. He thanked Ms. Parker, Mr. Merkner, and Capital Planning and Partnerships Manager Jay Donahue, who worked to determine the rate structures in these three categories.

Mr. Chew said the Central Library garage has availability at times, and is very full other times. He asked whether Mr. Gannon has a sense of the percentage of parkers who use the garage for visiting the Library as opposed to other uses. Mr. Gannon said he did not have that information available in the meeting, but would be glad to bring some analysis as a future information item for the Board. He said the rates have been set in attempt to balance the many different user types from monthly parkers to early bird users, to occasional users, to Central Library users. He said there is fluctuation across days of week and periods of the year and he would be happy to bring back more information. Mr. Chew said he would appreciate the insight. Ms. Mehdi said the Board looks forward to hearing more about the garage, and she thanked Mr. Gannon and his team for their work. She said these income streams help support a very small percentage of the Library's budget, but Mr. Gannon's team manages them carefully.

Union Report

Vice President of Librarians of the Union Anne Cisney said she was filling in for Union President Jessi Lucas who was away. Ms. Cisney said she is a Librarian in the Central Library in the Reference Services department and was previously the Union President for many years. She said it was wonderful to be back before the Board to say hello. She thanked the Board for their kind words in the meeting about the work of the Library and for all of their work in support of a levy, so that the levy can support Library staff in carrying out their work with the public. She thanked Mr. Fay and the Leadership Teams for taking the time to have conversations about communication internally and externally regarding how to foster belonging and staff support

within the Library and externally. She thanked Dr. Hairston and Ms. Mehdi for echoing those sentiments and thanked the group for acknowledging the difficulties that Library staff have gone through recently in branches with patron deaths. She said while it is not a core part of the work, it is a very difficult part of work with patrons. Ms. Cisney said the Union appreciates the support of the Library Leadership Team and the Library board in all of those areas and in the totality of their work moving forward into the levy. Ms. Cisney said she was there on behalf of the Union and herself, excited to work in partnership with the Board and leadership. She said she looks forward to future conversations about strengthening communication processes internally so that the system is really moving forward in the strongest way possible, to show up at its best for the public when the levy is approved.

Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Cisney for her report. She said without the Union, the Library cannot ensure the levy is approved. She said the Board appreciated Ms. Cisney being there and stating the Union's report.

Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates

Mr. Fay said the Friends Board meeting got off to a great start by going over their mission and sharing their reading lists. He said they spoke about the Library Levy campaign and how they would be involved in supporting it and ensuring that their members were available to attend City Council sessions and support the Library in other ways. He said the Friends Board had a membership benefits discussion and further defined what those benefits are. He said the Friends Board thanked the focus group that worked on this project, and said they will be looking at additional benefits for Friends members next year. Mr. Fay said the Friends' new Georgetown location, the "Workshop" has successfully opened and hosted their first Books for Teachers event. He said furniture was donated from a local technology company and delivered on March 24, and the expense for the additional handheld terminal for the shop has been covered through their current budget. Mr. Fay said the Friends are very excited about this space which has more room they definitely needed for the Books for Teachers events.

Mr. Chew said the Foundation Board meetings are always happy occasions, particularly when they meet and exceed their fundraising goals. He said 2025 was a strong year of giving that exceeded target goals, with more ambitious goals to come this year. He said a few highlights were Library Giving Day on April 1, the Library Levy campaign, and the meeting included an interesting presentation on the Carnegie Corporation grant, which was also mentioned at the City Council's Select Committee meeting. He said there was strong support in what SPL is doing, and a full report on the expansion of ESOL programming under the Carnegie grant. Mr. Chew said the bulk of the meeting focused on Foundation strategies to support the Library Levy.

Updates from Library Board Members

Ms. Mehdi shared that Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen had recently lost her mother, and Library Foundation CEO Brian Lawrence also lost his mother. Ms. Mehdi expressed condolences to Ms. Bendixen and Mr. Lawrence. She said losing a parent is never easy, irrespective of age. She wished them both well.

Mr. Chew said Foundation Emeritus Board member Grace Nordhoff had also recently lost her mother. He said Ms. Nordhoff attended the recent Council Select Committee meeting and testified eloquently about the value of the Library. He offered condolences to Ms. Nordhoff as well.

ADJOURN

Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: April 30, 2026

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

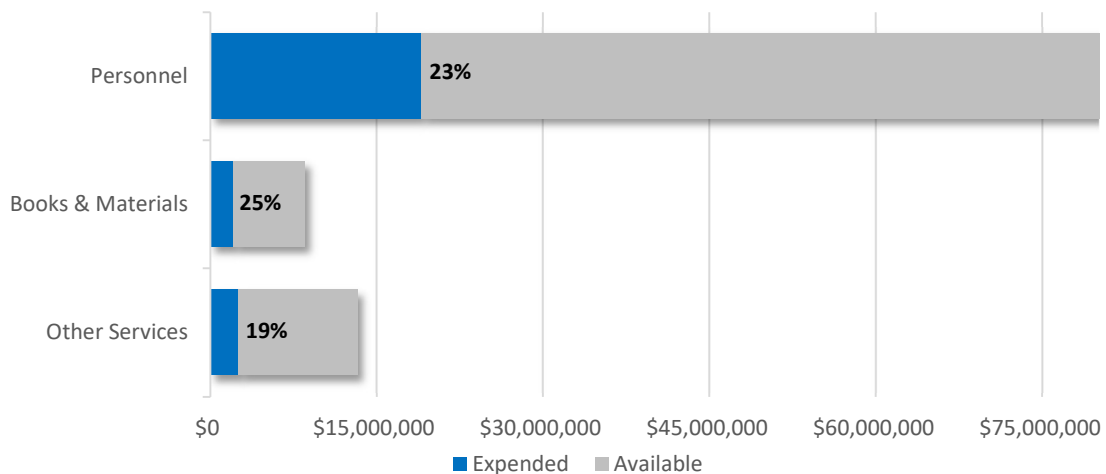
Subject: **March 2026 Financial Reporting**

Overview

Overall, the Library has expended **23%** of its operating budget with **25%** of the year elapsed. This is in line with the prior year when the Library also expended **23%** of the operating budget. Total expenditures at the end of the month were \$24 million.

The chart below provides a high-level overview of year-to-date spending by budget group and 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 79% of the operating budget. As of this report there have been **six pay periods processed**—as such we expect 23% of the personnel budget to be expended. Spending is on target at **23%**.

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 **25%**.

Other services which represent 13% of the operating budget—and include equipment, services, and supplies—are **19%** expended.

Revenues

Library generated revenues during the month of March were \$73,000, with total year-to-date collections at **\$211,000**—representing a 24% collected rate. This \$211,000 reflects a \$32,000 increase in revenues compared to the same period from 2025. As noted on the February report, this increase is mostly attributable to the Library restoring access to digital payments for lost materials fees.

Action Requested: Library Board consideration of March 2026 Operating Budget financial reporting for approval at April 30, 2026 meeting. Comments or feedback are welcome.

Expenditure Control for March 2026

Amounts in \$1,000s	Adopted Budget	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages	52,944	6,181	12,233	23%	40,710
Benefits	28,535	2,705	6,752	24%	21,784
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$81,479	\$8,886	\$18,985	23%	\$62,494
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,557	783	2,105	25%	6,453
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,557	\$783	\$2,105	25%	\$6,453
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,561	308	919	26%	2,642
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,471	101	266	18%	1,206
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	308	31	79	26%	229
Operating Supplies	620	66	104	17%	516
Other Expenses	744	36	115	15%	629
Other Maintenance	703	66	140	20%	563
Phone, Wireless & Internet	410	43	69	17%	341
Professional Services	542	31	45	8%	497
Software	1,030	21	221	21%	810
Staff Training & Travel	177	14	16	9%	161
Vehicle Costs	361	41	55	15%	306
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	2,085	103	407	20%	1,678
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,261	47	95	8%	1,165
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$13,273	\$906	\$2,531	19%	\$10,742
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$103,309	\$10,574	\$23,620	23%	\$79,688

Footnotes:

Revenue Control for March 2026

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	150,000	11,126	30,137	20%
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	390,000	30,057	89,560	23%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	140,000	12,843	39,173	28%
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	127,000	13,916	37,236	29%
Book Sale Consignment	67,000	4,089	13,345	20%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	6,000	521	1,270	21%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES				
	\$880,000	\$72,552	\$210,721	24%

Footnotes:

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The Seattle Public Library

Date: April 30, 2026

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

Re: **Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report - corrections**

Following the Library Board's approval of the Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report at the March 26, 2026 Library Board meeting, two minor errors were found and corrected.

The report, with corrections as reflected below, has been submitted to the Mayor and City Council, as is required by April 15 of each year.

The report, with corrections as reflected below, is presented in the April 30, 2026 meeting packet for re-approval by the Library Board to correct the written record.

The two corrections are as follows:

- **Page 6:** Under the heading "Meeting rooms supporting civic engagement," the number of meeting room uses changed from 16,000 to 10,000. (The larger number included staff uses.)
- **Page 16:** Under the heading "Technology use growing," the number of public computer hours in 2025 has changed from 407,000 to 400,000, due to a math error.

Action required/requested: Board review of the corrected Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report for approval at the April 30, 2026 Library Board meeting.

Annual 2025
The Seattle Public Library
LEVY REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Annual 2025 report

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 completes the sixth year of the Levy. In 2025, the 2019 Levy accounted for \$54.5 million (37.4%) of the Library's total revised budget of \$145.8 million. The 2012 Levy provides \$0.9 million (0.6 %). Other sources include the City's General Fund, state and federal grants, private funds, and Library fund balance.

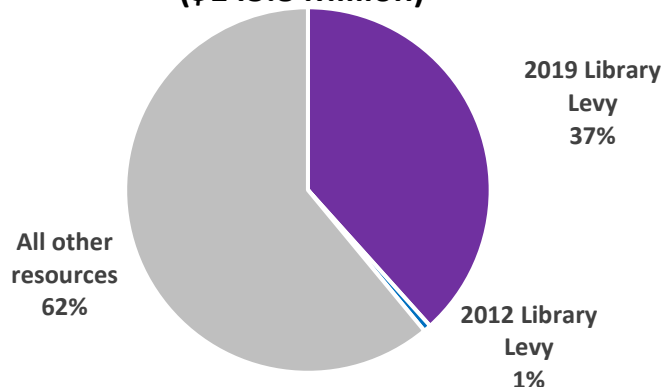
As part of its 2019 proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year Levy period. This report, which covers Levy activities and spending for 2025 and shares annual Q4 highlights as well, 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.

2025 highlights

During a year of a turbulent political landscape that created high levels of uncertainty regionally and nationally, the Library continued to focus on its role as a safe and welcoming space, creating programs and services that provide care, connection, and learning for our community. In 2025, almost 330,000 patrons used their Library card at least once online or in person to access collections, programs, and services, with 430,000 patrons using their Library in the last three years. In August 2025, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution to direct the Chief Librarian and library staff to begin planning a levy renewal package for 2026.

2025 Library Revised Budget
(\$145.8 Million)



Did you know?

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

Community use survey results: In late August, the Library worked with Olympic Research and Strategy (ORS) to create and conduct a comprehensive community use survey, available in multiple languages. The survey was available online, and we mailed 15,000 surveys to randomly selected Seattle residents, receiving over 1,000 responses that represented a statistically significant representative sample of the population of Seattle residents and exceeded our participation goals. Results shared by ORS indicated that respondents' perceptions of the Library have improved since 2018, and that the Library is making a positive impact on community members' lives. (See page 7.)

Stable open hours, robust Library use: Starting in late January, the Library implemented an expanded schedule of open hours that remained consistent throughout the year, which supported strong use of core Library services, spaces, and collections. Our 27 locations recorded more than 3.4 million Library visits, our staff answered over 37,000 patron questions through [Ask Us](#), and we offered over 5,800 programs and events. Digital checkouts continued to increase, with a total of 12.8 million physical and digital checkouts in 2025.

University Branch retrofit progress: The [Levy-funded safety upgrades and renovation](#) at the landmarked University Branch, which began in late January 2025, made significant progress. The building is expected to be reopened by Q3 2026. It includes retrofitting the branch against seismic events, significant accessibility improvements, and a climate-friendly HVAC system, while preserving its historic character.


Columbia Branch retrofit deferral. In the fall of 2025, the Seattle Mayor proposed and the City Council approved a \$5 million reduction to the Library from the General Fund. To address this reduction without impacting the Library's public services, we proposed deferring the Columbia Branch seismic retrofit, a goal of the 2019 Levy. The deferral was approved by the Library's Board of Trustees at its December 2025 meeting.

Strategic Plan progress: We have completed the first year of our [10-year Strategic Plan](#), an impact-focused effort funded by the Levy. 2025 milestones included hiring two Special Collections curators, piloting the Story Squad literacy program, and launching a new mobile app. (See page 3 for a more detailed look at Strategic Plan implementation.)

Community Voices

“Our kids have read hundreds of books that we would have not bought; **reading levels have greatly improved**. Our quality of life is better because of the Library and its resources.”



The  symbol highlights an initiative related to the Library's 10-year Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan 2025 Highlights

The Library 10-year Strategic Plan, an effort funded by the levy, seeks to build community belonging, increase resiliency, and improve community outcomes. Here are highlights of 2025 accomplishments.

Find more updates at www.spl.org/StrategicPlan



◆ Literacy

◆ Buildings, Technology, Sustainability

- Established a “Story Squad” pilot program with Seattle Public Schools (SPS) to deliver classroom sets in Title I schools
- Improved language access, including securing a \$450K Carnegie grant to expand English language learning programs

- Hired a cybersecurity analyst and Environment and Security Services Manager
- New mobile app launched and downloaded 25,000 times
- Progress on planning and selecting new integrated library system (ILS)

◆ Enrichment

◆ Funding

- Hired two Special Collections curators to develop the Seattle Room and the African American Collection
- The Books Unbanned program reached 730,000 checkouts

- Conducted community survey and other engagement to understand community needs for Library services
- Strengthened partnerships with The Seattle Public Library Foundation and Friends of The Seattle Public Library

◆ Empowerment

◆ Capacity

- Established new review and planning processes for Library programs

- Hired a Director of Belonging and Inclusion
- Increased staff access to available wellness resources

Stable open hours, strong library use

The 2019 Levy provided \$16.45 million in 2025 for investment in Hours and Access. This funding supports open 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, such as adding open hours, and creating new access points, such as holds pick-up lockers that are available 24/7. The levy-funded elimination of late fees in 2020 continues to have an impact. It immediately restored access for 18,000 patrons and continues to reduce financial stress for our patrons, without affecting the rate at which materials are returned.

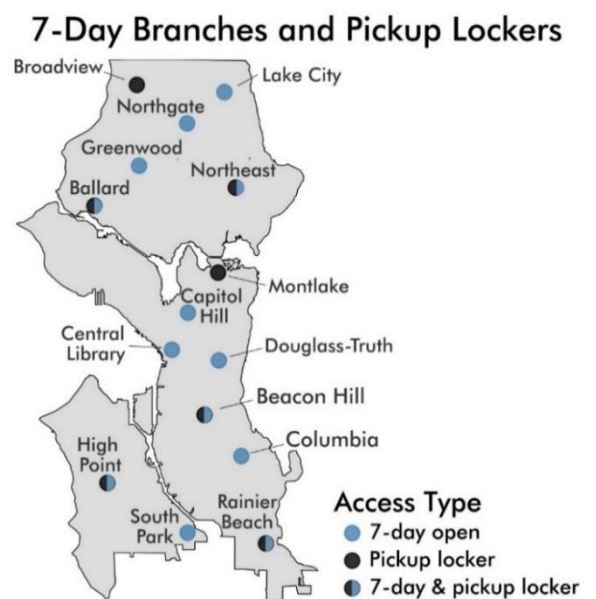
Total Levy spending in 2025 for the Hours and Access category was \$16 million.

Consistent open hours: The 2019 Levy promised expanded hours above 2019 levels, which increases community access to Library collections, information services, computers, printers, programs, and public spaces. After five years of navigating pandemic and post-pandemic challenges in restoring and expanding hours, we implemented a new schedule in late January 2025 that added hours across the system, ensuring all active locations are open at least six days a week and one weekend day. The Library recorded more than 3.4 million in-person visits in 2025 to 27 Library locations.

430,000 Library users: More than 430,000 people have used their Library cards to check out books, access resources, and attend online programs over the past three years, 330,000 just in 2025. In 2025, we launched improved online Library Card Application forms in five languages, and added 75,000 new borrowers.

Pick-up locker use growing: Patrons are using pick-up lockers more frequently, with checkouts doubling since 2024. In 2024, Levy-funded CIP and IT teams install and maintain the lockers, which were funded by state grants and Seattle Public Library Foundation donations.

More equitable borrowing practices: In 2025, we approved a change to clear unpaid patron fees older than three years to make our borrowing practices more equitable. In December, the Library cleared fees for 10,000 active patrons. The Library also restored [online payment](#) of lost-item fees.



Did you know?

In 2025, The Seattle Public Library was one of the [top 10 libraries](#) for digital circulation in the world.

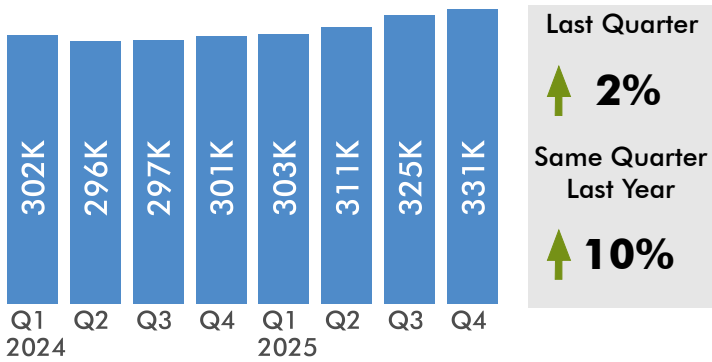
LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS AND ACCESS



IN FOCUS: Quarterly Usage Trends

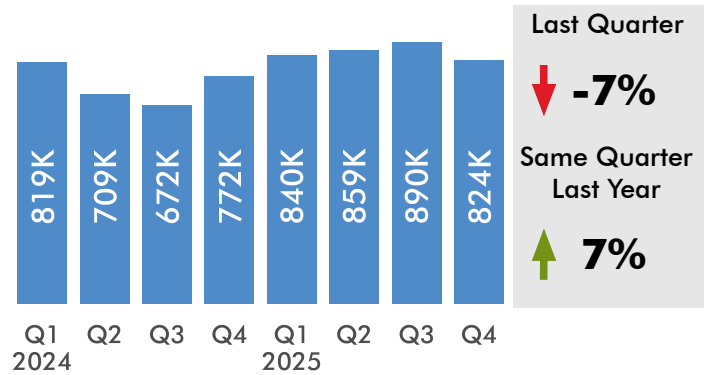
Active Library Users

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



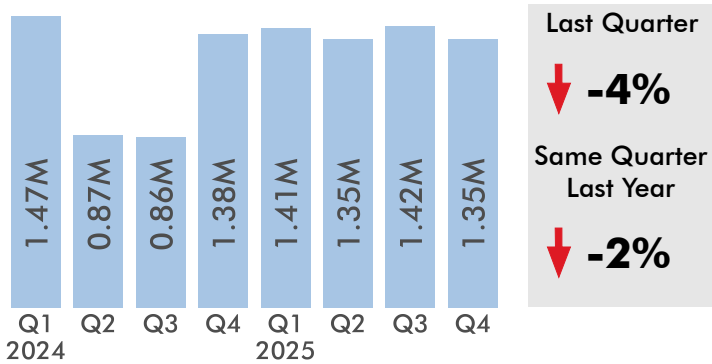
In-Person Visits

Number of in-person visits. Estimates applied at some locations due to sensor outages.



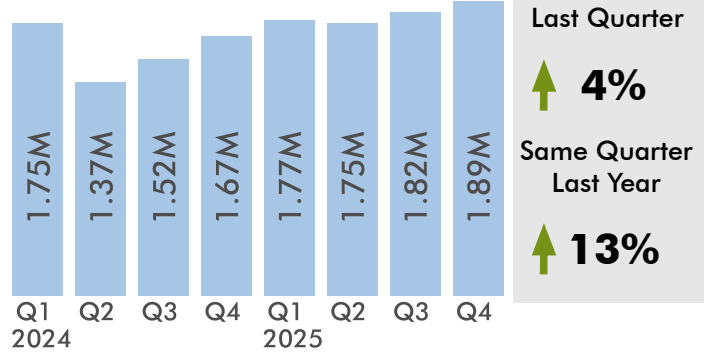
Physical Checkouts

Number of physical checkouts (including renewals)



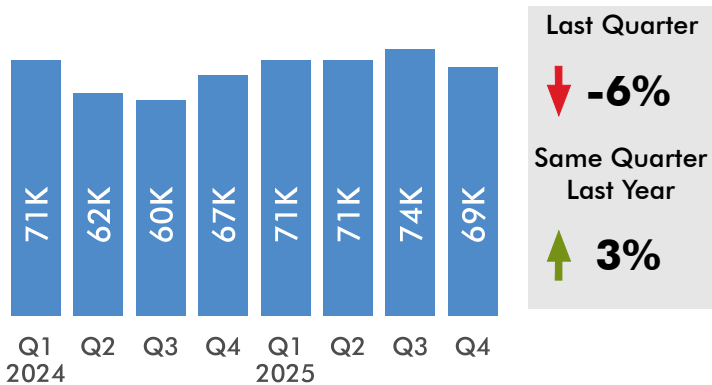
Digital Checkouts

Number of digital checkouts (including streams and views)



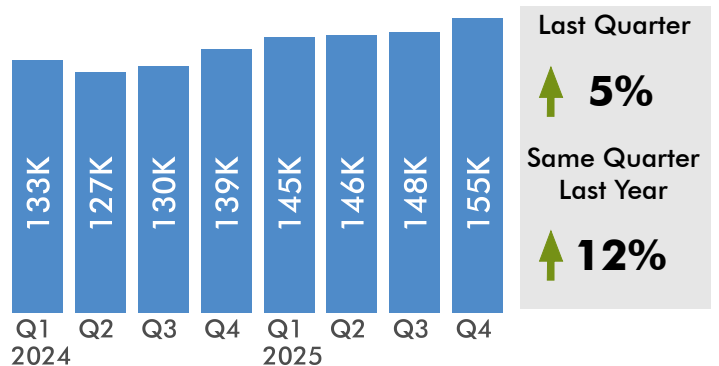
Borrowers - Physical

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. *Data from and following this period may change as delayed or corrected records are incorporated.

Programs and services

In 2025, the Library held more than 5,800 programs and events at the Library and in community spaces, with attendance of 130,000. Direct costs for many Library programs are supported by The Seattle Public Library Foundation. While the Levy provides direct financial support for a limited number of programs (Kaleidoscope Play and Learn and youth Social Services programming), it funds the staffing that make many other programs possible.

Central Library programs: More than 1,200 events, programs and classes were held at the Central Library in 2025, including more than 350 in Q4. Highlights of Q4 programs included ESOL classes, a Halloween Movie Marathon, a tribute to Seattle jazz legend Ernestine Anderson, the Bullitt Lecture in American History by Eve Ewing, and an at-capacity screening of the film “The Librarians.” We also offered free Central Library meeting room space to nonprofits and rented spaces for several significant private events. The sustained volume and diversity of activity at the Central Library highlight the Library’s role as a dynamic gathering place for learning, creativity, and connection.

Meeting rooms supporting civic engagement: The Levy supports the use of community meeting spaces, free at 22 neighborhood branches that have them. In 2025, meeting rooms were used more than 10,000 times by crafters, nonprofits, public agencies, Scout troops, music groups, and many other community groups.

🟢 **New programming process:** As part of a Strategic Plan priority, we established new review and planning processes for Library programs to better coordinate systemwide.

🟢 **Literacy and learning:** In 2025, around 1,300 story times with 43,000 attendees were held across 27 locations in 2025, including 190 story times in the community. Library locations also hosted 280 levy-funded Play and Learn sessions with attendance of 7,100.

🟢 **Banned Books Week:** During Banned Books Week (Oct. 5 to Oct. 11), we worked with five Books Unbanned partner libraries to promote the reach of the program, which has seen [more than one million checkouts](#) since 2022. [Books Unbanned](#) allows young people free access to our digital collection.

🟢 **Language access:** In 2025, we provided more translated and in-language materials, including [Library card applications](#), program flyers, transactional emails, [videos](#), and website content. We also developed a 2026-2027 Language Access Plan, and an internal data dashboard. We promoted a \$450,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York that the Library secured to significantly expand the Library’s free English language learning programs over the next two years.

Collectible postcards: As part of our “Here for You” campaign, we promoted [collectible postcards](#), one for each library location. In December, we added a postcard for Mobile Services.



Community Voices

“[The Library] helped keep my meet-up group alive when our old venue closed down.”

2025 Community Survey Results

In 2025, the Library conducted extensive engagement to understand community needs for Library services, including a survey that ran from August 25 to September 25.

- Mailed to 15K randomly selected residents, with **1,000+ responses**.
- 99% responded in English, but **25% spoke another language at home**.

Community voices

“I would not be where I am now without the resources the Library has provided to me at no cost.”

“[The Library] is one of the few third-place spots in the city where **we can gather without spending money.**”

Perceptions of the Library improve in 2025

Parentheses indicate increases since 2018

98% (+6) Improves overall quality of life in the city

97% (+5) Worth the money invested in it

97% (+9) Offers materials, services, & programs in my language

96% (+5) Critical educational resource in my community

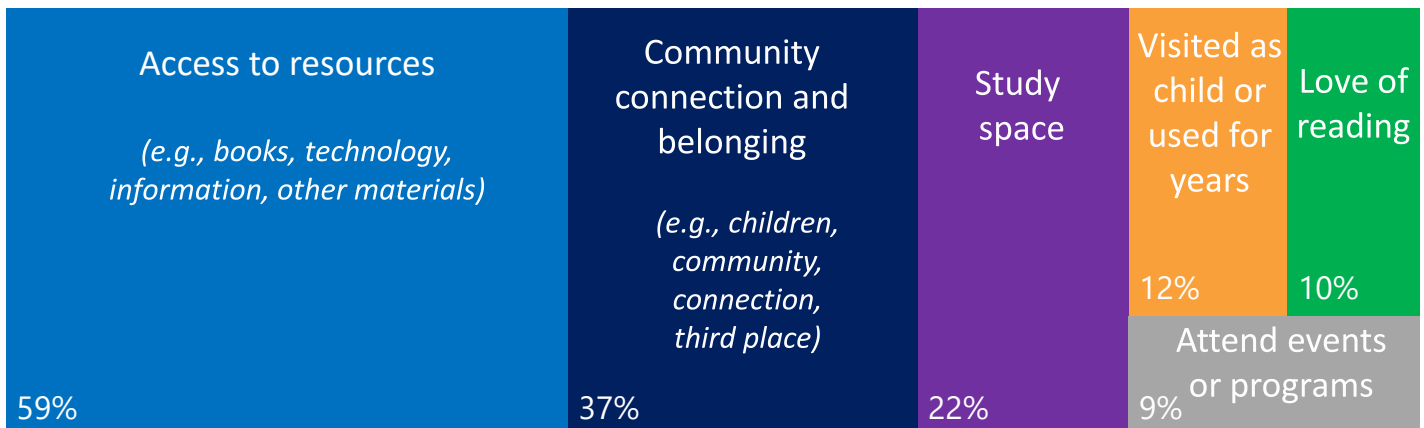
96% (+5) Welcoming to all

96% (+5) Important for students, job seekers, immigrants/refugees

89% (+9) Keeps its buildings clean and well maintained

86% (+8) Provides access to safe spaces

What positive impact, if any, has The Seattle Public Library had on your life?



Social Services: Connecting patrons to resources and community

Library staff who focus on social services include a Social Services librarian, a senior community resource specialist, and a Levy-funded community resource specialist focused on youth and young adults. Their work aims to understand and center patrons' interests and needs and help them connect to each other, to Seattle's civic and cultural communities, and to the Library. Questions about how to access shelter or navigate Social Security are as welcome at the Library as inquiries about World War II or genealogy. Here are highlights of their work in 2025.

Connecting patrons to resources: One-on-one work helps people of all ages navigate social systems by connecting them to necessary resources and assisting them in accessing resources and services. In 2025, social services-focused staff recorded 600 interactions with patrons. More than 110 occurred in Q4, 93 of which involved referral to resources such as shelter, housing, and day center services.

Life-saving overdose prevention supplies: Through a partnership with Public Health - Seattle & King County that started in April 2025, the Library distributed more than 4,500 free naloxone kits (two doses per kit), and 4,300 fentanyl test strips. This resource has been positively received by patrons and partners. We also provided 10 overdose prevention and response trainings, led by community partners.

Coffee, crafts, and community: In 2025, we held 35 Coffee & Conversations events, with over 1,600 attendees. Forty Crafternoon events drew 1,100 participants to mindfully create art in community. Patrons consistently say that these programs are the best part of their day. Branches have also developed Coffee & Conversations, offered at the Ballard, Capitol Hill, and International District/Chinatown branches.

Resource fairs and an ID clinic: In Q4, the Library supported a first-ever resource fair at the Ballard Branch, with more than 100 people in attendance to connect with providers, get an ID, eat food, and be in community. We also worked with the Washington State Department of Health and Human Services and DOL2Go to provide an ID Clinic at the Ballard Branch.

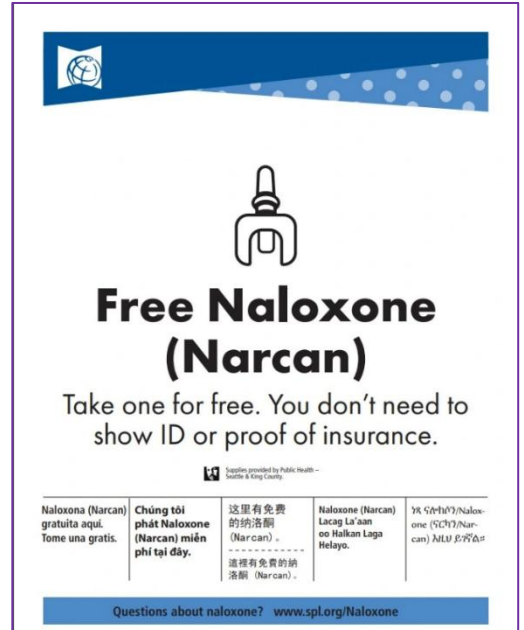
Food, health and transportation: Throughout 2025, we supported impactful branch programs such as a weekly FareStart Mobile Market at the NewHolly Branch, biweekly FamilyWorks Mobile Food Bank events at the Broadview and Green Lake branches; and ORCA LIFT events. We distributed 18,000 bus tickets and emergency supplies and snacks at all locations.

Staff training: We provide resources and training to staff across the system, including working with University of Washington iSchool researchers to provide a training on trauma-informed care.

Community voices

“This city hasn’t been kind to me but I can tell that you are really in my corner.”

– Patron comment



The poster features a blue header with a globe icon. Below it is a stylized icon of a hand holding a pill. The main text reads "Free Naloxone (Narcan)" in large, bold letters, followed by "Take one for free. You don't need to show ID or proof of insurance." Below this is a small logo for "Supplies provided by Public Health - Seattle & King County". At the bottom, there are four columns of text in different languages: English, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Hmong. The English text says "Naloxona (Narcan) gratuita aquí. Tome una gratis." The Vietnamese text says "Chúng tôi phát Naloxone (Narcan) miễn phí tại đây." The Chinese text says "这里有免费的纳洛酮 (Narcan) 。" The Hmong text says "Naloxone (Narcan) Loojag Lu'iam oo Halkan Laga Helayo." At the very bottom, it says "Questions about naloxone? www.spl.org/Naloxone".

Ensuring that Library spaces are safe and welcoming

The levy funds about one-third of the positions on our security team, 9 of 24, which oversees the security of Library buildings and public spaces. In 2025, the Library made significant progress in ensuring that our library spaces are safe and welcoming to all and that our security efforts are aligned with our commitment to equity and accessibility. Our security staff are on duty early morning until late evening, seven days a week.

Community Use Agreement rolled out. On August 1, 2025, the [Community Use Agreement](#) (CUA) replaced the Rules of Conduct. The CUA was developed in a multi-year long process that involved Library staff, leadership and community members in designing an updated Library code of conduct that was more equitable, welcoming, inclusive, and aligned with Library values. All Library staff participated in CUA training and receive ongoing support in implementing it.

Security leadership and training:

On August 4, we hired a Library Environment and Security Services Manager, a new leadership position that oversees the security team, coordinating safety, security, and emergency management for the Library system, including training. This is a Strategic Plan priority.

A key focus in Q4 was working with staff to continue to define and implement the CUA, new suspension guidelines, and related tools such as new incident reporting process. In collaboration with

Library leadership and managers, the Security team updated 911 call guidance and developed training on emergency notification procedures. We are seeing steady improvements in staff understanding of the CUA and incident reporting quality. In Q4, all security team members were also recertified in CPR and first aid, including proper administration of naloxone.

Security infrastructure improvements: The Library's Security and IT teams made progress on replacing non-functioning security cameras at the Central Library that were impacted by the 2024 cybersecurity event, with installation set for early 2026. The Security Services manager is working with the Capital Improvements Projects and Facilities teams to improve access control across locations.



Building robust collections


The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintain and expand the Library’s collection of physical and digital materials. This 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 provided \$6.4 million for Collections, including \$4.8 million for books and materials. Total 2019 Levy spending in 2025 for the Collections category was \$6.3 million. The 2012 levy also provided \$700,000 for books and materials. Together, the 2012 and 2019 levies fund about 55% of the Library’s Books and Materials budget.

Here are highlights of our collections work in 2025.

Growing digital checkouts, stable spending: Patron interest in digital books and materials continues to grow, with checkouts of digital materials increasing by 13% from the previous year. We purchased more than 21,000 copies of digital titles in Q4, and 94,000 copies in 2025.

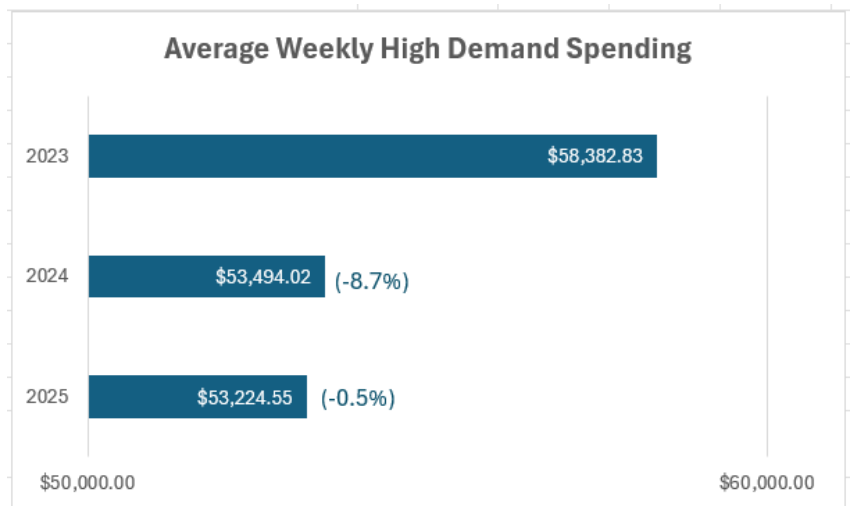
Because of the high cost of digital books compared to physical books, the Library has [made changes in recent years](#) to support growing digital checkouts while managing spending. In 2025, our weekly spending on multiple copies of high-demand e-books decreased compared to 2023.

 [Books Unbanned](#) is a Foundation-funded program that allows youth ages 13 to 26 across the country to check out e-books from our digital book collection for free. In Q4, 9,200

Books Unbanned cardholders checked out more than 100,000 digital books. Overall, 25,000 teens and young adults have signed up for a Books Unbanned card since 2023, checking out 730,000 books since the program began and 393,000 in 2025, with 14,000 unique users in 2025.



Readers at South Park Branch.



Physical collection: While patrons continue to check out e-books and other digital items at a growing rate, checkouts of physical materials remain steady. In Q4, checkouts of books, media, and equipment totaled 1.4 million, comparable to recent quarters, with 5.5 million total physical checkouts in 2025. We purchased 167,000 copies of print books in 2025, and 41,000 in Q4. In Q4, the closure of the book vendor Baker & Taylor resulted in shipment delays and difficulty in spending funds. However, as Baker & Taylor is not our primary vendor, the Library was not as affected as other libraries.

Peak Picks' popularity: Peak Picks, our popular no-holds, no wait collection of high-interest print titles, is fully funded by the levy and continues to be very popular. In 2025, Peak Picks titles were responsible for 148,000 physical checkouts, with 1.2 million checkouts since the program started in 2017.

We added 119 Peak Picks titles and 20,000 copies in 2025, including 23 titles and almost 4,000 copies in Q4. The Library's [10 most popular fiction and nonfiction titles](#) were Peak Picks.

🟢 **Story Squad:** We piloted a [Story Squad program](#) with Seattle Public Schools to deliver supplemental books for grades 2-4 in Title I schools, working with Bailey Gatzert Elementary. Popular subjects were selected, and titles identified that supported each subject. The kits have received positive feedback from teachers and students. The project advances the Library's strategic plan goal of increasing community literacy.

🟢 **Expanding language access:** In Q4, the Library added our first-ever [Portuguese language titles](#), a collection of 300 print books for children, teens and adults. We added these books to serve the needs of a growing number of Portuguese speaking immigrants and refugees, primarily from Angola. The Library collects physical materials in 19 languages and digital materials in 11 languages. In 2025, we added about 10,000 print books to our [World Languages Collection](#), and about 2,700 digital copies.

Streaming services: Hoopla is our most popular streaming service, with 255,000 checkouts in 2025 and 65,000 just in Q4. New York Times digital usage in Q4 (50,000) has almost doubled since Q4 2024, and was 165,000 for the year. Kanopy usage increased by 17% just since Q3. Hoopla and Kanopy spending increased in 2025 compared with 2024 and we shifted funds from e-books to cover the increase.

Why books matter

"Learning how to empathize with characters that are like you and unlike you – that's how you build empathy, learn about the world, learn about yourself, and learn how to be part of a community."

Technical and Collection Services manager Kate Sellers, quoted in [South Seattle Emerald article](#)



The Seattle Times “The Secret Lives of Library Books”



A pre-dawn delivery to the Columbia Branch.
Photo, The Seattle Public Library

On Nov. 2, 2025, the Seattle Times published an in-depth [article](#) on SPL's and KCLS' materials distribution operations, providing a behind-the-scenes glimpse into how millions of books move around the region each year to reach patrons.

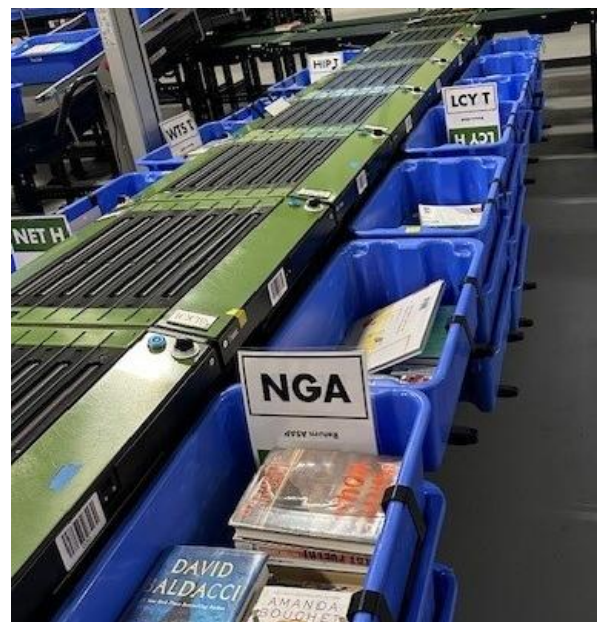
“The thrill of having a hold request arrive never gets old,” wrote one commenter.

Tony Lauricella, automated materials handling system lead, said managing the AHMS is like **“playing 20 consecutive games of Tetris in slow motion.”**



Did you know?

- In 2023, the Library used **levy funds** to replaced its **automated materials handling system (AHMS)** and install it in a new Maintenance and Operations center (MOC) in Georgetown.
- **10,000 items** a day are processed at the MOC.
- Library delivery drivers start loading at the MOC at **3 a.m., 4 a.m. and 5 a.m.**
- After an item is returned, it takes just **2-4 days** for a hold to arrive at its destination.



Local history collections



In November, the Cascade PBS show “Mossback’s Northwest” filmed an [episode](#) in the Seattle Room that featured an 1889 book ledger from our collections.

The [Seattle Room](#), located at the Central Library, provides in-person access to treasured local history materials, 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, both funded by the Levy, help researchers and community members use these unique collections to understand Seattle’s rich and varied history.

The Seattle Room hosted 536 research appointments in 2025, 125 of which occurred in Q4. A notable visitor was Cascade PBS host Knute Berger, aka Mossback, who used Seattle Room collections to develop a [“Mossback’s Northwest”](#) episode.

Special Collections staff also responded to 1,520 online inquiries regarding Seattle Room appointments, collection materials and research requests, a 7% increase from 2024.

The Seattle Room added more than 1,700 items in 2025, including books, manuscripts and archival materials. Highlights of Q4 purchasing included a set of issues of “The Seattle Group Bulletin,” essays published by the anarchist collective The Seattle Group, circa 1969, and an archival collection related to John H. Bolton’s (1906-1984) efforts to develop, design, fundraise, and construct the Christian Science Exhibit for the Seattle World’s Fair in 1962.

In October, [The Seattle Public Library Foundation](#) held a special donor event titled, “History Revealed: A Unique Look Inside The Seattle Public Library’s Special Collections.” It allowed guests to see unique materials from the Seattle Room, and learn about the acquisition, use, and

preservation of these materials from Seattle Room staff.

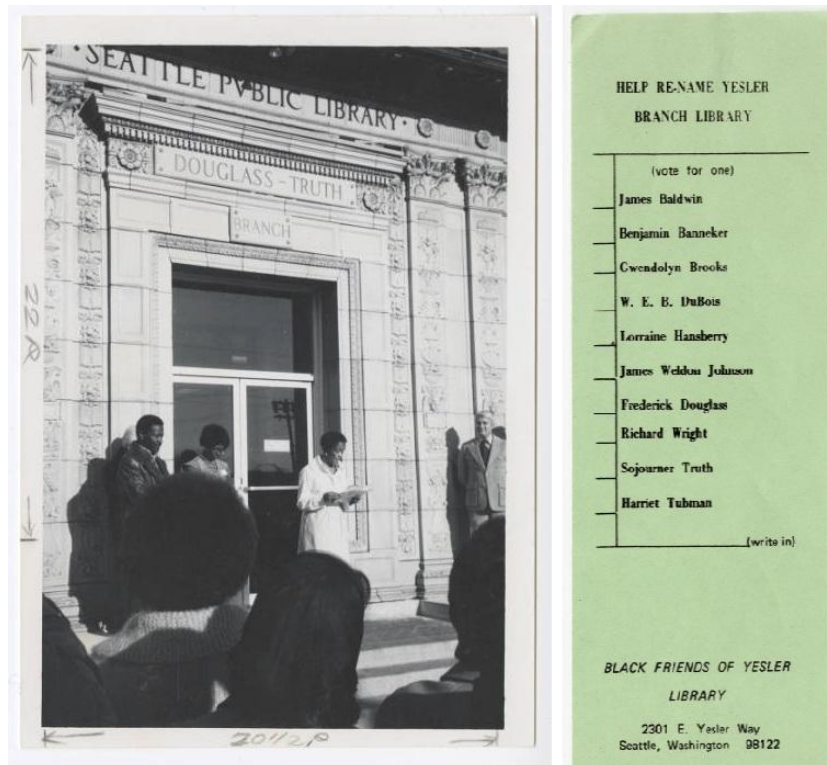
🟢 In September 2025, Special Collections welcomed a new Seattle Room Curator, located at the Central Library, and an African American Collection Curator at the Douglass-Truth Branch.

Seattle Room Digital Collections

This year we added 985 digitized local history items to our [Seattle Room Digital Collections](#), which now has more than 33,000 digital items. Additions included 255 images for our Seattle Historical Photograph Collection and 150 additional issues of Marine Digest. We also added over 269 fragile glass plate negative images of early Seattle scenes to the [Paul Dorpat Collection](#) and three early business directories to the [Seattle Sawdust Collection](#).

In Q4, we launched our [Seattle Public Library History Collection](#), which includes images of library branches as well as [digitized ephemera](#) related to the renaming of the Douglass-Truth Branch, which were used in [media coverage](#) about the anniversary. Originally called the Yesler Branch, the branch changed its name in 1975 to better reflect the community it served. It celebrated the 50th anniversary of its renaming in December with a day of festivities and community history.

In 2025, nearly 130,000 unique users visited our Seattle Room Digital Collections, accumulating almost 477,000 pageviews.



Seattle Room Digital Collections added [digitized ephemera](#) related to the Douglass-Truth Branch's renaming history, including a photograph of Dr. Millie Russell at the renaming ceremony in 1975 (left) and an image of the community renaming ballot (right).

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](https://www.spl.org). The Levy provided \$2.8 million of operating budget authority 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 Q4 2025 for technology operating expenses was \$2.6 million and \$546,000 for Capital IT infrastructure.

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.

In 2025, the Outreach Hotspot Team worked with 13 community partners in 2025 to make 317 hotspot loans to people disproportionately impacted to the digital divide, with 73 new checkouts in Q4.

Outreach staff continued to build relationships with partners, sharing opportunities to engage with library programs, collections, and resources. The Women's Housing Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL) wrote that library visits to WHEEL shelters "allow an outlet for individuals who are otherwise closed in. Know that the books and information you bring circulate far beyond the women you see."

In 2025, we upgraded the Outreach Hotspot inventory of 250 hotspots to a new model and internet service provider with minimal disruption.

The hotspots in our general circulation collection continued to be very popular, and were checked out more than 6,500 times in 2025 (1,600 times in Q4). In Q4, we added 50 Wi-Fi hotspots to the general circulation collection for a total of 900 hotspots, and finished replacing all damaged, lost, and stolen hotspots.

In 2025, outreach hotspots helped patrons ...

- Attend classes and do homework
- Connect with friends and family
- Learn about online safety
- Participate in a mentorship program
- Study English and digital literacy
- Attend telehealth appointments
- Obtain employment
- Register for college
- Complete financial aid applications
- Secure permanent housing
- Study and successfully get into a nursing program

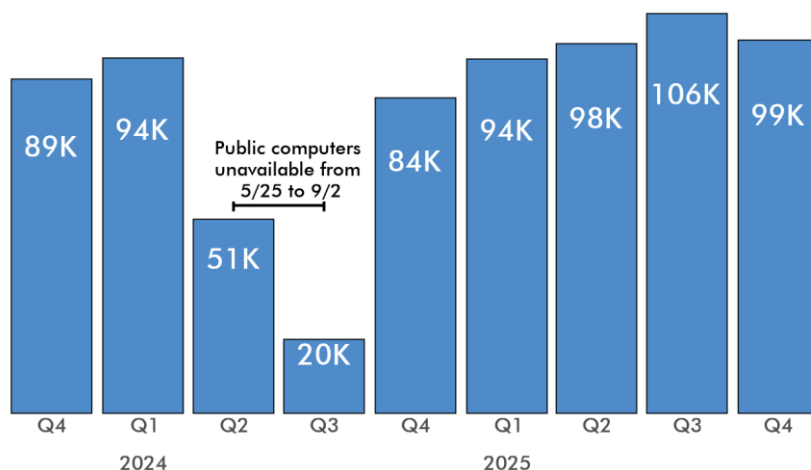
Maintaining access to technology and improving cybersecurity

Integrated Library System progress: The 2019 Levy included \$4 million to support the replacement of the existing Integrated Library System (ILS), the Library's central digital platform for managing collections materials, checkouts, patron accounts, and other services. In 2025, the Library began the project to identify a vendor for a new system that would be technologically stable and secure, more efficient and intuitive to use, better integrated with other Library systems, and capable of meeting critical needs well into the future. We conducted a needs assessment, oversaw a competitive bidding process, and selected a preferred vendor. Contract negotiations will be finalized in Q1 2026. Work to implement the new ILS in 2026 will involve migrating collections and patron information, integrating it with other systems, and guiding staff through intensive training.



Technology use growing: 2025 saw increased use of the Library's technology services. Sixty-five thousand patrons booked 400,000 computer hours in 2025, and 77,000 patrons printed almost 2.1 million pages on Library printers, including 530,000 just in Q4. Patrons used ScanEZ to scan almost 487,000 pages in 2025, including 130,000 in Q4.

Public Computer Hours Used Each Quarter



Did you know?

Patrons printed **2.1 million pages** on Library printers in 2025.

Mobile app: Since its April launch, our new mobile app has been downloaded more than 25,000 times on Apple and Android devices. Users can navigate the app in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Traditional and Simplified Chinese.

Cybersecurity program: In 2025, one of our strategic priorities was strengthening the Library's readiness and responsiveness to digital security threats. We expanded our team with a dedicated cybersecurity analyst, who has been actively developing, optimizing, and implementing new security measures to better protect the organization. SPL IT continues to advance our cybersecurity maturity by adopting industry best practices across identity management, infrastructure security, user education, and email protection. We remain committed to growing a modern, resilient cybersecurity program that safeguards Library systems, staff, and patrons.

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 Q4 2025 for supporting children was \$406,000.

The Levy directly funds Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, drop-in neighborhood-based programs that provide opportunities for young children and caregivers to gather in community spaces and participate in quality early learning experiences. In partnership with community organizations that provide trained facilitators, the Library offered weekly Play and Learn programs in four languages and at seven locations in 2025. More than 280 sessions in 2025 drew 7,100 attendees.

Kaleidoscope Play & Learn creates vibrant community spaces filled with learning, engagement, and connection for young children and their caregivers. Attendance remained consistent at all host branches in 2025 and partner organizations continued efforts to increase community awareness of the program. Facilitators reported that Play and Learn is attracting more participants that live close to the branch.

Each year, BrightSpark, the umbrella organization that administers Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, evaluates survey responses from program participants in King County. In 2025, 86% of respondents said they attended three or more sessions; 93% reported an increased understanding that play helps children develop school readiness; 91% reported that they feel more supported as a parent or caregiver in their community; and 84% said they read, look at books, or tell stories more often with the child in their care.



Parachute time at a Play & Learn session in Columbia City.

Community Voices

“By the end of 2025, Kaleidoscope Play & Learn ... became a shared space of trust, healing, and collective learning, and where Spanish was joyfully reclaimed.”

– Villa Comunitaria, Play & Learn partner

Protecting our investments

The 2019 Levy provided \$8 million in 2025 budget authority and \$13 million in carryforward authority for major maintenance, which includes crucial seismic retrofit work on the Library’s historically landmarked Carnegie buildings. Nearly \$8 million of the carryforward authority was allocated to seismic retrofit work. The 2012 levy provided an additional \$233,000 in remaining carryforward authority, most of which is committed to projects in their final phases. In Q4 2025, the Library spent \$2.1 million in 2019 levy funds on major maintenance and seismic retrofit work, for a total of \$4.8 million for the 2025 fiscal year. An additional \$5.3 million was committed or encumbered at the end of the year. As noted earlier, the Columbia Branch retrofit project has been deferred to address a \$5 million General Fund budget reduction without impacting the Library’s public services.

Did you know?

The renovated University Branch is expected to reduce carbon emissions by **20-30 metric tons per year**, as has the renovated Green Lake Branch.

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

University Branch renovation progress: In Q4, the University Branch renovations, which began in late January 2025, made steady progress. The branch is undergoing a comprehensive overhaul, including a seismic retrofit, the installation of a modern electric HVAC system, interior and exterior accessibility improvements, and the expansion and modernization of public spaces inside the branch. The new HVAC system, combined with an energy return ventilation upgrade and rooftop solar panels, will substantially reduce the Library’s carbon footprint while ensuring the branch remains open during extreme heat events.

By the end 2025, the seismic retrofit portion of the project was 90% complete, the interior framing was 80% complete, and the new elevator shaft was 50% complete. The new HVAC units for the branch have been successfully installed. We anticipate that the entire project will be completed by Q3 2026.

Greenwood Branch roof replacement: A long-planned roof replacement for the Greenwood Branch was completed in Q4. Like many branches that were renovated or funded from the Library’s 1998 “Libraries for All” bond measure, the Greenwood Branch’s roof was over 20 years old and at the end of its useful life. Several other neighborhood branches will also need roofs replaced over the next few years.



Reinforced concrete shear walls for future study rooms at the University Branch.

Capitol Hill HVAC system: The Capitol Hill HVAC and electrification project neared completion in Q4. During final commissioning earlier in 2025, a few pieces of the new mechanical system were revealed to be malfunctioning. Those repairs were finally completed in Q4, but the system requires testing and another commissioning.

Plans for air conditioning: Counting the University Branch, 23 out of 27 locations now have air conditioning. Partial funding for the remaining HVAC/electrification projects at the Columbia, Fremont, Queen Anne, and West Seattle branches is included in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazardous Mitigation Grant awarded in mid-2024. The West Seattle and Fremont branches are scheduled to be publicly bid late in Q1 2026, queuing up for construction in Q2 2026. The Queen Anne and Columbia Branches are in the design phase. Final timing of those projects is contingent upon supplemental funding decisions.

The Library continues to look for other federal and state funding opportunities to supplement levy funding for both seismic and HVAC/electrification projects. Timing of funding decisions is dependent upon factors beyond the Library's control.

Routine Maintenance

2025 was a busy year for the Library's Facilities and Custodial teams, which responded to an average of more than 1,000 work orders a month while facing staffing challenges. Facilities staff completed 10,580 work orders in 2025, including grounds clean-up, HVAC maintenance walkthroughs and filter replacements, door repairs, fire and sprinkler system inspections, maintenance, and repairs.

Custodial staff completed more than 2,100 work orders in 2025, including frequent requests for spot carpet and floor cleanings, deep cleaning projects, and events work at the Central Library. We also contracted with third-party vendors to provide regular pressure washing at multiple locations and to wash Central Library's nearly 10,000 windows, an annual occasion. The two teams also responded to over 1,800 requests for toilet/plumbing repairs and cleanups; 550 biological waste or hazardous materials cleanups; and 250 graffiti removals.

Our Facilities and Custodial teams are essential to maintaining the regular operations of the Library and providing safe and positive experiences for patrons.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead

Here is a quick preview of Q1 2026:

- 2026 Library Replacement Levy announced
 - Adjustments to Mid-City East hours
 - Official selection of vendor for Integrated Library System project
-

2025 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounted for \$54.5 million (37.4%) of the Library's total revised 2025 budget of \$145.8 million. The 2012 Levy accounted for \$933,000 (0.6%). The Library spent \$33 million from the 2019 Levy and \$710,000 from the 2012 Levy in 2025 through Q4. 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 \$17.5 million from the 2019 Levy and \$233,000 from the 2012 Levy was 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 Library Levy	Operations Plan	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditures	Remaining	% Spent
Hours & Access	16,450,000	16,466,931	15,986,611	480,320	97%
Providing Books & Materials	6,412,000	6,397,268	6,320,284	76,984	99%
Technology & Online Services	2,821,000	2,840,696	2,618,889	221,807	92%
Literacy & Early Learning	454,000	476,955	406,396	70,559	85%
Building & Facility Support	2,034,000	2,132,522	1,898,078	234,444	89%
Administration	723,000	722,929	664,301	58,628	92%
Major Maintenance	7,989,000	20,197,879	4,841,791	15,356,088	24%
Capital IT Infrastructure	-	4,418,334	546,062	3,872,272	12%
Capital to Operating Fund Swap	-	850,000	-	850,000	0%
Total	\$36,883,000	\$54,503,515	\$33,282,413	\$21,221,102	61%

Includes \$144k in operating carry-forward, \$17.5M in capital carry-forward budget authority, and \$850k for a capital-to-operating fund swap related to mid-year General Fund reductions.

2012 Library Levy	Operations Plan	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditures	Remaining	% Spent
Providing Books & Materials	-	700,000	700,000	-	100%
Major Maintenance	-	62,961	9,569	53,392	15%
Capital to Operating Fund Swap	-	170,000	-	170,000	0%
Total	\$0	\$932,961	\$709,569	\$223,392	76%

Includes \$700k one-time support for books and materials, \$63k in capital carry-forward, and \$170k for a capital-to-operating fund swap related to mid-year General Fund reductions.

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 from Jan. 29, 2025 <i>green=above 2019</i> <i>yellow=same as 2019</i> <i>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
Total Weekly Hours	1377	1283	1368	1398
% of 2019 baseline		93%	99%	102%

Capital Improvement Program & Building Maintenance

April 16, 2026

Dennis Reddinger, Head of Facilities and Capital Improvement Program

Jay Donahue, Capital Finance Manager

Capital Improvement Program

The Library's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects generally fall into one or more categories: asset preservation, operational efficiency, environmental stability, public service enhancements, and safety/security improvements. The overriding priority of the program is to extend the useful life of its buildings and capital equipment.

The CIP team continues to be busy with significant projects at the conclusion of the first quarter of 2026. The construction stage of the University branch seismic retrofit and remodel project is winding down, with a July substantial completion date and an estimated September reopening. This comprehensive project will not only retrofit the century-old building for seismic stability but will also feature sustainability enhancements (such as HVAC upgrades to eliminate reliance on fossil fuels and rooftop solar panels), interior and exterior accessibility improvements (including the addition of an elevator), and several interior renovations (additional public restrooms, along with improved lighting, shelving, carpets, and furniture).

Upon completion of the University project, 23 of 27 SPL locations will offer air-conditioned public spaces. Partial funding for the remaining HVAC/electrification projects (including Columbia, West Seattle, Queen Anne and Fremont branches) was included in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazardous Mitigation Grant (awarded in mid-2024), for which the Library had applied in 2022. The \$5.2 million FEMA grant does not cover the entire cost of each project; balance funding was supplemented via the 2019 Library Levy. Aside from University (detailed above), both West Seattle's and Fremont's HVAC/electrification projects are scheduled to be publicly bid in May for a Q3 start of construction. Architectural design continues for Columbia, while Queen Anne is in the permitting stage.

Additional current or upcoming projects include HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning) systems replacement at both the Rainer Beach branch and the Maintenance and Operations Center; Level 2 remodel of the former AMHS (Automated Materials Handling System) staff space, and upgrades of mechanical system controls at Rainer Beach, Fremont, University and West Seattle branches.

Facility Maintenance and Custodial

SPL's Facilities and Custodial/Janitorial are having yet another busy start to what looks like another busy year. Between the two departments, there were 4,347 work orders requested throughout the SPL system, which includes daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual tasks, inspections, and maintenance and service checks.

Facilities have had 1,814 work orders requested for building maintenance and repairs, grounds clean up, HVAC maintenance walkthroughs and filter replacements, and fire and sprinkler system maintenance and repairs. They also had 1,762 work order tasks involving routine maintenance.

Custodial has 726 work order requests with many of those requests being restroom related (biohazard clean ups, unclogs, etc).

Both departments have welcomed and onboarded several new staff to the library.

Strategic Goals: Literacy: Access to Books and Collections / Empowerment: Accessible and Inclusive Collections

Restoring Patron Access by Clearing Old Account Debt

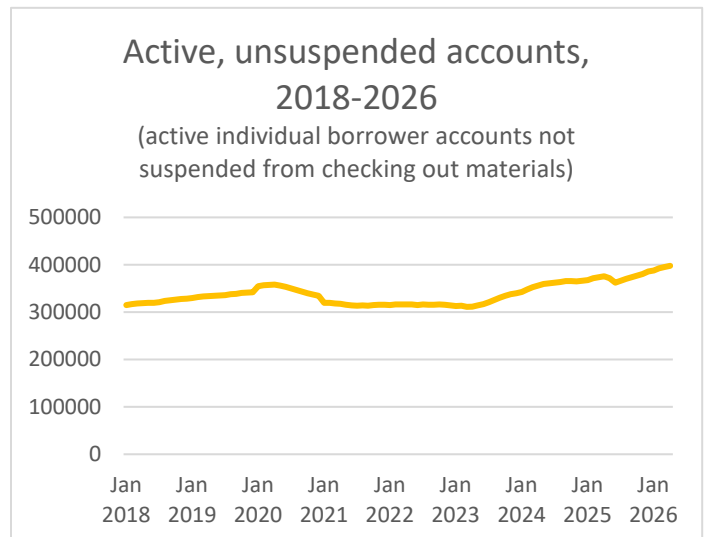
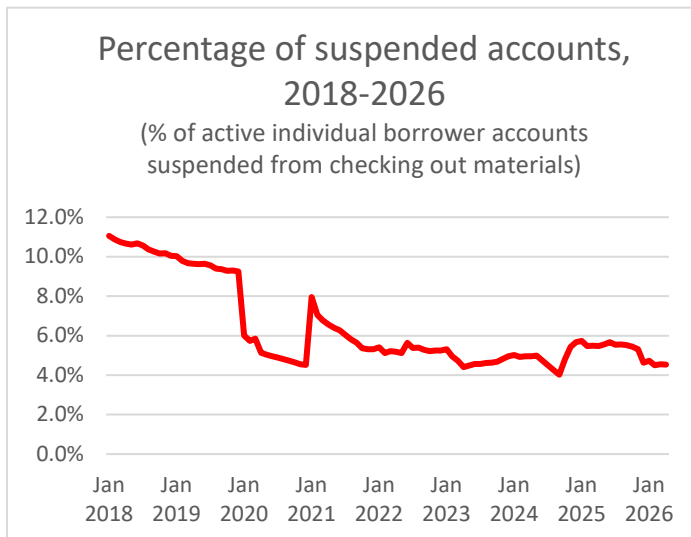
In 2025, The Seattle Public Library implemented a new procedure to clear unpaid fees older than 3 years from patron accounts. These old charges were very unlikely to ever be paid but were still preventing patrons from being able to access Library resources. Establishing a schedule for clearing fees brings SPL patron account practices in line with standard financial accounting practices and improves database management by removing outdated accounts. **More important, it improves patron access by welcoming back patrons whose old unpaid charges kept them from fully using the Library.**

“I am amazed and so relieved. I have not been able to use the library for at least five years. This will allow me to use the library again and I have been wanting to.”

Because this process had never been run before, there were many old and inactive accounts that were impacted. The oldest charges cleared were from 1992. Starting in 2026, this fee clearing process will happen on a regular schedule.

Over 100,000 patrons had old fees cleared from their accounts. The majority of those patrons had not used the Library in years, and these inactive accounts have now been removed from the database. About 9,000 were active patrons who had checked out items or logged in to their Library account within the past three years. **Clearing these fees resulted in a 12% decrease in the number of active patrons with suspended accounts. Over 95% of our active patrons now have full access to Library resources.**

At the same time, the number of active Library patrons continues to increase. **In the first quarter of 2026, the number of active, *unsuspended* Library patrons surpassed 397,000, the highest number on record, and a 16% increase compared to 2019, before the Library eliminated overdue fines.**



In early 2026, we contacted active patrons whose fees had been cleared to inform them that their account access was restored and to welcome them back. We invited them to share their stories via a short survey. **Patrons shared stories of appreciation and relief, and excitement about being able to access Library resources.** For example:

“I can check out e-books again! I have been battling cancer for the last year, and finances are very tight, so having access to library resources means a lot.”

“I can check out e-books again! I have been battling cancer for the last year, and finances are very tight, so having access to library resources means a lot.”

“I am amazed and so relieved. I have not been able to use the library for at least five years. This will allow me to use the library again and I have been wanting to.”

And Library staff shared a story of meeting a patron whose old fees had been cleared during a resource fair at the Compass Day Center, a resource center for people experiencing homelessness. Outreach Program Manager Nadiyah Browne reported: **“He was so happy! I wish you could have seen his smile and shift in energy.** We got him a new physical card and chatted a bit about some of the things he was excited to get back to. On our way out, at the end of the fair, several of the people we had a chance to meet with stopped their conversation, waved goodbye, and thanked us (so much!) for showing up.”

Clearing old fees from patron accounts is one more step in the Library’s ongoing effort to eliminate financial barriers to access. Other efforts have included eliminating overdue fines, simplifying and expanding fee waiver options, eliminating fees for interlibrary loans, and ending the practice of sending patrons to collections for unpaid fees. These changes have impacted thousands of Library patrons and made the Library more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive.



The Seattle Public Library

Date: April 30, 2026

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Brian Sharkey, Director of Human Resources

Re: **Proposed update to Executive Director & Chief Librarian Vacation, Merit and Executive Leave Policy**

Background

Per the Library's *Executive Director & Chief Librarian Vacation, Merit and Executive Leave Policy*, the Library Board, at its discretion, may award to the Executive Director and Chief Librarian up to six days of merit leave during the month of December of each year.

The Library Board realized late in 2025 that a merit leave award to the Chief Librarian for use during the 2025 calendar year had been overlooked in the course of conducting 2024 yearend business. As the maximum merit leave award is six days per year, the Board was unable to award additional merit days in the 2026 calendar year. The Library Board discussed this issue in their December 11, 2025 regular meeting and their intention to rectify the oversight.

Proposal

To offset the omission of awarding six days of merit leave for use in 2025, an edit to the *Executive Director & Chief Librarian Vacation, Merit and Executive Leave Policy* is proposed to strike the limitation to hold a maximum leave balance of 50 days. Because the policy states that the cumulative maximum holding for vacation, merit leave, and executive leave is 50 days, the Chief Librarian will have lost five vacation days during his 2025 rollover. An allotment in January 2026 of 30 vacation days, four executive leave days, and six merit leave days - for a total of 40 days of personal leave time - allowed a carry forward of ten unused vacation days from 2025 rather than the maximum carry forward allowance of 15 days. The proposed policy update, if approved with an effective date of December 31, 2025, would allow the Chief Librarian to carry forward 15 days of vacation from 2025 into 2026, effectively restoring five days of lost leave.

Action required/requested: Library Board consideration of proposed changes to the *Executive Director & Chief Librarian Vacation, Merit and Executive Leave Policy* for approval at the April 30, 2026 Library Board regular meeting, with an effective date of December 31, 2025.



Board Policy

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHIEF LIBRARIAN VACATION, MERIT AND EXECUTIVE LEAVE	Approved by the Library Board of Trustees April 30, 2026, effective December 31, 2025. Supersedes policy adopted October 27, 2018.
Owner: Human Resources Director	
Approved by: Yazmin Mehdi, Library Board President	

BACKGROUND

This policy describes how the Executive Director and Chief Librarian of The Seattle Public Library may earn and use vacation time, along with the allocation of executive and merit leave on an annual basis.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Seattle Public Library believes that staff members benefit from a reasonable period of time away from the intellectual and physical demands of their employment. This time is conducive to the good health and well-being of the staff member and may have a refreshing effect that is mutually beneficial for both the staff member and Library. Vacation, Executive Leave, and Merit Leave time shall be scheduled in a manner that permits the Executive Director and Chief Librarian to take time away from work and daily operations and takes into consideration the Library’s operational needs.

~~The maximum available leave balance between all three (3) kinds of leave the Executive Director and Chief Librarian may have at any time is 400 hours (50 days).~~

Accrual of vacation time

In January of each year 240 hours (30 days) will be loaded into the Executive Director and Chief Librarian’s available vacation balance.

The Executive Director and Chief Librarian may carry over a maximum of 120 hours (15 days) each year, in the event a balance remains from the prior year. If at the end of the calendar year the Executive Director and Chief Librarian has a vacation balance in excess of 120 hours, those excess hours will not be allowed to carry over into the next year and will be cleared from the Executive Director and Chief Librarian’s available vacation leave balance. The Executive Director and Chief Librarian may not request reinstatement of any lost vacation time in excess of the 120 hour carry over.

The maximum available vacation balance the Executive Director and Chief Librarian may have at any time is 360 hours.

Use of vacation time

Vacation time shall be scheduled in a manner that permits the Executive Director and Chief Librarian to take vacation time and takes into consideration the Library's operational needs.

As an FLSA exempt (salaried) employee, the Executive Director and Chief Librarian should only record absences of four (4) or more hours of vacation time.

If while on vacation, the Executive Director and Chief Librarian becomes ill for four (4) or more days and is under the care of a fully licensed health care practitioner, such days that the Executive Director and Chief Librarian is ill may be charged to sick leave. The Executive Director and Chief Librarian is required to provide medical documentation of such illness to Human Resources no later than the third day of such illness. However, if it is physically impossible to give the required notice by the third day, notice shall be provided as soon as possible and shall be accompanied by an acceptable showing of the reason for the delay. A health care practitioner's written statement verifying the illness and length of treatment must be submitted to Human Resources upon return to work.

Upon separation from the Library, if the Executive Director and Chief Librarian has accrued six months or longer of service, he/she will receive a lump sum payment for any unused vacation balance. In the event their service is concluded within the first 12 months of employment, any accrued time more than six (6) months but less than 12 months of service will be prorated based on the 30 day vacation allocation.

Upon leaving the Library and if the Executive Director and Chief Librarian is enrolled in the deferred compensation plan, an option of directing some or all available vacation to their deferred compensation account will be allowed. The amount of vacation that can be directed into a deferred compensation account is based on Seattle City's practice and the plan's annual maximums.

Upon resignation or retirement from the Library, the Executive Director and Chief Librarian is entitled to a cash out up to a maximum of 360 hours of available vacation balance provided he/she has completed 12 months on regular pay status with the Library.

Executive Leave

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Executive Director and Chief Librarian shall receive four (4) days of executive leave. The maximum available Executive leave that can be received is four (4) days and must be used in the calendar year for which it is given and cannot be cashed out or rolled over into deferred compensation.

Merit Leave

The Library Board, at its discretion, may award to the Executive Director and Chief Librarian up to six (6) days of merit leave during the month of December of each year.

The maximum available Merit Leave that can be received is up to six (6) days to be used in the subsequent calendar year from which it was awarded and cannot be cashed out or rolled over into deferred compensation.

Responsibilities

The Executive Director and Chief Librarian shall schedule his/her vacation time in a manner that accommodates his/her needs and avoids any adverse effect on Library service or business operations whenever practical.

The Executive Director and Chief Librarian is responsible for resolving intra-departmental and inter-departmental workload problems caused by his/her vacations.

The Human Resources Director provides accurate and current information on vacation accrual and provides interpretation of this policy to ensure accuracy.

The Library Board does not routinely approve the Executive Director and Chief Librarian's vacation time but has the ability to approve or deny the Executive Director and Chief Librarian's vacation time based on Library service or business operation needs.

APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to the Executive Director and Chief Librarian's accrual and use of paid vacation time.

DEFINITIONS

Vacation: Earned time off with pay granted to both full-time staff members and eligible part-time staff members.

RELATED LAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Board Policy, *Compensation Plan*

HISTORY

Supersedes *Executive Director & Chief Librarian Vacation, Merit and Executive Leave Policy* adopted Oct. 27, 2018; supersedes original policy adopted Oct. 25, 2017, effective Jan. 1, 2018.



The Seattle Public Library

Date: April 30, 2026
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083
Re: **April Union Report**

The Union and Library Management have begun the bargaining process. We are optimistic that through the interest-based bargaining (IBB) process we can come to an understanding that the Union's and Management's respective interests for the future of staff and the Library are closer together than further apart. Our hope is that employee morale is much improved by the time we see the culmination of bargaining, and that the Library truly becomes an employer of choice.

Another important event on the horizon is the levy renewal. We are happy to see the Mayor and City Council acknowledge the value the Library brings to the communities we serve by passing the Levy to voters in August. The Union is proud of how our colleagues step up to provide a welcoming place and a feeling of connection, whether they work at Central, one of the branches, or serve in a non-public facing role. The Seattle Public Library is truly a collective effort.

Action required/requested: Informational only.



The Seattle Public Library
March 2026 News Releases

Date	Title
31-Mar-2026	April and May 2026 Author and Community Events at The Seattle Public Library
05-Mar-2026	Spring 2026 Author and Community Events at The Seattle Public Library



The Seattle Public Library
March 2026 Media Coverage

Organization	Date	Headline	Details
Seattle City Council Blog	31-Mar-26	Councilmember Foster introduces Library Levy amendments focusing on children and families	"Proposals include much-needed renovation funds, English learning programs, Central Library support and community services." The amendments were submitted by Councilmember Dionne Foster (Position 9) , including one cosponsored with Councilmember Debora Juarez (District 5).
Seattle Rep	31-Mar-26	SPL's Appropriate Resource List	"Interested in learning more about the context for Appropriate [A Seattle Rep play]? Seattle Public Library has compiled an incredible resource list, just for you!"
Seattle City Council Blog	31-Mar-26	Public Hearing for 2026 Library Levy on Thursday, April 2	"Councilmember Maritza Rivera (District 4), chair of the Select Committee on the Library Levy, will host a public hearing beginning at 5:30 p.m. this Thursday to hear from constituents about the 2026 Library Levy proposal."
Secret Seattle	30-Mar-26	16 Seattle Museums And Gardens Offering Free Admission In April 2026	"Outside of Free First Thursday, you can also take advantage of the Seattle Public Library Museum Pass, which resumed in summer 2025 and allows library cardholders to visit many museums—as well as the Seattle Aquarium and Woodland Park Zoo—for free!"
KUOW	29-Mar-26	Sasha LaPointe: The 'reservation riot grrrr!' who's learning to be a 'language warrior'	"The KUOW Book Club is reading "Thunder Song" by Sasha LaPointe in March 2026. LaPointe will join KUOW's Katie Campbell for a live discussion at the Seattle Central Library on March 23, 2026."

West Seattle Blog	27-Mar-26	FOLLOWUP: Air-conditioning installation soon for West Seattle Library	<p>"...[W]e asked SPL spokesperson Laura Gentry about the project. Here's what she told WSB: 'The Library looks forward to installing a new HVAC system with air conditioning at the West Seattle Branch! We do not yet have a confirmed start date for the work as we await final permitting and begin the construction bidding process. We anticipate it will take approximately 3 months to complete the work, and the branch will be closed during that time. We will be sure to give West Seattle patrons as much advance notice as possible for this closure. We hope to have more information about a project timeline in the next couple of weeks.'"</p>
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The Seattle Times	25-Mar-26	Libraries are essential. Seattle’s library levy needs to reflect that	<p>"The proposed levy includes \$29 million in new funding for essential projects... But the library estimates that it needs at least \$75 million more over the coming decade to keep spaces safe, clean and welcoming. Unless the levy is increased, we will only scratch the surface of these needs.</p> <p>"We recognize Seattle’s affordability crisis and that the city is nearing its levy limit, but the library levy would constitute just 6% of that capacity — even if the mayor’s \$410 million proposal is increased to \$500 million as we recommend. The average homeowner would pay about \$15 a month to finance a \$500 million levy — less than the cost of a single book. A vibrant library system is the foundation of an affordable city; it is how we guarantee that books and knowledge belong to everyone.</p> <p>"The City Council can significantly improve the 2026 levy before it reaches voters for approval in August. Additional investment ensures the library expands access to books and literacy programs, supports education and enrichment for everyone, and keeps our treasured library spaces safe and inviting."</p> <p>Written by board presidents of The Seattle Public Library Foundation, Friends of The Seattle Public Library, and Board of Trustees of The Seattle Public Library.</p>
West Seattle Blog	18-Mar-26	20 event notes on our list for your West Seattle Wednesday	Family movie at the Southwest Branch, drop-in Homework Help and get help with reduced-fare transit pass enrollment at the High Point Branch

Seattle's Child	18-Mar-26	This Hits Home: News that impacts Washington Families	"Mayor Wilson pitches library levy: About \$90 million of an approved levy would go toward maintaining the system's 26 branches and the Central Library buildings, including needed repairs and upgrades. Another substantial portion would support cybersecurity efforts and technology needs. If approved by the city council and passed by voters, the proposed levy would cost homeowners \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed property value."
TikTok	14-Mar-26	Come with me to donate my PWHL zine to the Seattle Public Library!	Video: patron donates their women's hockey rules zine to the Seattle Public Library. They discuss the subcultures of zines and women's sports, and talk about SPL's collection of over 30,000 zines.
KUOW	12-Mar-26	Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson pitches \$410 million library levy	"'Our libraries remain at the heart of community life,' Wilson said. 'More than 600,000 Seattleites have a library card, and nearly 440,00 are actively using the system. That's actually amazing numbers.'"
The Seattle Times	12-Mar-26	4 poetry collections to check out ahead of National Poetry Month	"The Seattle Public Library loves to promote books and reading. This monthly column is a space to share reading and book trends from a librarian's perspective. Okunyi Böhree is a humanities librarian for The Seattle Public Library. Find more reading suggestions at spl.org , or submit a question at spl.org/ask ."
The Urbanist	11-Mar-26	Wilson's Library Levy Renewal Focuses on Maintaining Services	"By a three-to-one margin, voters approved the last library levy in 2019. Adjusted for inflation, the new levy is around 50% larger than the previous one, and will last the same amount of time – seven years. The spending plan would focus on providing dollars for core library services, in the face of looming pressure on Seattle's general fund in the coming years, but it also include a number of set-asides for new and expanded programs."

Capitol Hill Seattle Blog (CHSB)	11-Mar-26	Man's death at Capitol Hill branch comes hours after new Seattle library levy proposal that includes millions for security and social services — UPDATE	"The death was the second inside a city library branch reported in weeks in the system. A 41-year-old man died inside the Rainier Beach library in February in an incident that the medical examiner investigation ruled was due to 'chronic alcohol use.'"
Seattle Red 770 AM	11-Mar-26	Seattle's \$410M library levy also bankrolls Office of Inclusion and Belonging office	"Seattle taxpayers are being asked to open their wallets yet again. Mayor Katie Wilson announced a proposal for a \$410 million Library Levy, nearly double the \$219.1 million 2019 Library Levy it would replace, and she wants Seattle voters to approve it on the August 4, 2026 ballot."
FOX 13	10-Mar-26	Seattle Mayor proposes \$410M levy to fund city libraries	"The proposed replacement levy would provide 'critical funding' for the Seattle Public Library between 2027–2033, and would follow the \$219.1 million Library Levy which was adopted in 2019 and expires this year. According to the mayor's office, the 2019 Levy accounts for a third of Seattle Public Library's total budget."
West Seattle Blog	10-Mar-26	FOLLOWUP: Mayor's proposed library levy would almost double the expiring one	"Mayor Katie Wilson has gone public with her proposal for the Seattle Public Library levy's renewal/expansion, which she wants to send to voters on the August primary ballot. At \$410 million over seven years, it's almost double the \$219 million levy that's expired, which in turn had almost doubled the \$123 million levy it followed."
My Northwest	10-Mar-26	Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson pitches \$410 million library levy	"For homeowners, the levy — which would replace the expiring \$219 million levy approved in 2019 — would cost 19 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Wilson's office said that would amount to about \$163 a year for a home valued at \$872,000, the median value in Seattle."
The Seattle Times	10-Mar-26	Mayor Katie Wilson proposes new, nearly 50% larger library levy	"The proposal, which would be on the ballot this August upon approval by the Seattle City Council and go into effect in 2027, is nearly 50% larger than the 2019 levy expiring at the end of this year, when accounting for inflation. That measure passed with 76% of the vote."

Seattle City Council Blog	10-Mar-26	Councilmember Rivera receives Mayor's 2026 Seattle Library Levy renewal proposal	"Levy proposal continues 2019 investments in open hours, books and materials, technology access, and children's programming."
KING 5	10-Mar-26	Mayor Wilson proposes \$410 million levy to fund Seattle libraries	"If approved, the seven-year levy provide supplementary funding for the Seattle Public Library from 2027 through 2033. It would almost double the the current one, replacing the \$219 million library levy approved by voters in 2019, which passed with 76% support and currently accounts for about one-third of the library's total budget."
KOMO News	10-Mar-26	Mayor Katie Wilson proposes \$410 million Seattle Public Library Levy to city council	"Seattle voters could decide next year whether to dramatically expand dedicated funding for The Seattle Public Library under a proposed \$410 million Library Levy that Mayor Katie Wilson transmitted to the Seattle City Council on Tuesday."
City of Seattle	09-Mar-26	Press Release: Seattle Mayor Katie B. Wilson to Announce Library Levy	"If approved by voters, the Library Levy will provide critical supplementary funding for The Seattle Public Library from 2027 through 2033. It is a proposed replacement levy for the 2019 Library Levy, which expires at the end of 2026 and accounts for roughly one-third of the Library's budget."
West Seattle Blog	09-Mar-26	How much money will the next Seattle Public Library levy proposal ask for? We're about to find out	"The next major city levy to expire will be the one that provides a third of the funding for the Seattle Public Library system."
Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce	05-Mar-26	Magnolia library to close for upgrades	"Seattle Public Library's Magnolia Branch, located at 2801 34th Ave. W., will be closed March 9-11 for a small interior improvement project."
KUOW	03-Mar-26	KUOW, Seattle Public Library Book Talks continue with 'Coast Salish punk' Sasha LaPointe	"LaPointe will join us for a live interview at the Seattle Central Library on March 23."

The Stranger	02-Mar-26	March Things to Do: Literature	"Sasha taqwšblu LaPointe with Katie Campbell Mar 23, Seattle Public Library Central Branch, 6:30 pm, free"
KUOW	01-Mar-26	BONUS: How shipwrecks transformed the PNW with Coll Thrush	"The KUOW Book Club read Coll's latest book "Wrecked: Unsettling Histories of the Graveyard of the Pacific" in February, and KUOW's Katie Campbell sat down with him in front of a live audience at the Seattle Central Library to talk about how shipwrecks brought settlers and Indigenous peoples suddenly, violently together — and how we've made sense of time and space through the wreckage."