

The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
11:00 a.m. Thursday, March 26, 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: 640 487 906#

Watch Live:

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

Meeting ID: 246 613 241 988 9 / Passcode: E3CM7vN9

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 January 29, 2026 Regular Library Board Meeting (correction)
2. Minutes of February 26, 2026 Regular Library Board Meeting
3. January and February 2026 Financial Reports

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

1. Chief Librarian Report
2. System Report
 - a. 2025 Foundation Grant Spending – Rick Sherian, Director of Institutional & Strategic Advancement/ Kiersten Nelson, Community Partnerships & Government Relations Program Manager

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Library Board Goals

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. Fourth Quarter/Annual 2025 Levy Report
2. Library Levy Replacement
3. Library Generated Revenue Market Assessment and Planned Rate Changes
4. Union Report
5. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
6. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: April 30, 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
January 29, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on January 29, 2026. Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Vice President W. Tali Hairston, PhD and Trustees Carmen Bendixen, Ron Chew, and Faith Pettis were in attendance. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was accepted via email, in person at the Central Library, and online in the remote meeting. There was no public comment.

CONSENT

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 said the Library had been spending time learning the new mayor's processes. He said Mayor Wilson recently held her first full cabinet meeting, which was an opportunity to meet her staff. Mr. Fay said he Community Partnerships and Government Relations Program Manager Kiersten Nelson have been busy meeting with new City Council members. He said they met with Council President Hollingsworth and Councilmembers Rinck and Foster. He said the day before, they met with Councilmember Rivera who chairs the Libraries, Education, and Neighborhoods (LEN) Committee to which the Library often presents. He said they would be meeting with Councilmember Lin the following day. Mr. Fay said they continue to keep the Councilmembers up to date in this important year leading up to a potential levy renewal.

Mr. Fay said on January 14, he and Ms. Nelson gave a presentation to the LEN Committee to provide an overview of Library operations and service priorities, and the potential for a 2026 Library Levy renewal. He said on January 15, he and Director of Administrative Services Rob Gannon, Director of Library Experience and Engagement Kai Tang, and Head of Communications Laura Gentry provided a pipeline briefing to the Mayor's Office regarding the potential levy, sharing details of the Library's operations and priorities, and projected levy renewal resources necessary to maintain service levels across the city in upcoming years. Mr. Fay said On January 20, sixteen representatives from the Foundation, the Friends, and the Library Board of Trustees attended the Washington Library Association's Legislative Day in Olympia where they held face-to-face meetings with State Representatives Thomas, Reed, and Macri, and Senator Alvarado.

Mr. Fay said the Broadview Branch celebrated its 50th anniversary on January 20 and he thanked Library Board Trustees Ron Chew and Faith Pettis for attending. He said the event was heavily attended and the Friends hosted a table. He said Councilmember Rivera spoke to attendees about

the importance of libraries and that there would be a potential library renewal in 2026. Mr. Fay said he appreciated Councilmember Rivera joining in the celebration.

Mr. Fay said SPL is participating in the first ever ‘One Book, One Coast’ project in Spring 2026. He said the program is modeled after the popular One Book, One City programs that originated at SPL 1998. He said the programs encourage people to read and discuss the same book, and to deepen the engagement in literature and in the topic. He said One Book, One Coast is a collaborative effort that includes the ‘Big 10’ coastal libraries: Seattle, King County, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, Multnomah County, Sacramento, San Diego, San Diego County, San Francisco and San Jose. He said the book selection is George Takei’s graphic novel, “They Called Us Enemy,” which is a consumable format for all ages. He said the book features Mr. Takei’s experience as a youth in Japanese American internment camps. Mr. Fay said all library jurisdictions across the West Coast are encouraged to participate, and there are currently more than 100 library systems representing nearly 900 locations, towns, and cities on the West Coast that intend to participate. He thanked Dr. Skye Patrick and her team at LA County Library for their efforts in bringing libraries together and seeing this massive effort underway.

Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi said she loved the idea of the program and anything that brings people together around art is a positive step forward. She said it is exciting to go from One City, One Book to One Coast, One Book. She reiterated that SPL gets credit for starting the genre of events going back nearly 30 years.

Ms. Mehdi said she wanted to call attention to the staff report in the meeting packet from the Facilities Maintenance and Custodial Team. She said the work of Facilities Maintenance and Custodial Teams is paramount in ensuring that patrons and staff have safe and clean spaces. She said the 230 graffiti removals and 944 toilet-plumbing-restroom repairs were not fun, yet very important. She said she appreciates the staff reports and knowing about all the good work that is happening throughout the library system.

Mr. Fay said the day prior, he and Ms. Nelson had been hosting staff from the Mayor’s Office in an important meeting which included discussion on the topic of capital maintenance and improvement. He said just as the group was finishing a tour of the Central Library, every alarm in the building went off which sounded like a fire alarm, and the elevators stopped running. He said the issue ended up being a broken pipe that shut everything down and forced an evacuation, so the Mayor’s Office team got a sense of what can happen when there are maintenance issues. Mr. Fay said the Library’s building team got right to it, and within an hour the Central Library was able to reopen with functioning plumbing. Mr. Fay gave kudos the Facilities Team and Building Engineers who manage a very complex building. He thanked the Seattle Fire Department which is located nearby and was responsive in minutes. He also thanked Central Library staff who evacuated a building of approximately 3,000 people in a very timely way to ensure the safety of everyone in the building. Ms. Mehdi said it is a good reminder that the Central Library is more than 20 years old and systems can start to break down. She said this is why the Library needs to put funding into supporting the upkeep of the buildings.

Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen asked if there will be programming that goes along with the One Book, One Coast program, similar to the programming that is done with the Seattle Reads program. Mr. Fay said the Library hopes to have some programming. He said Literature and Humanities Program Manager Stesha Brandon would talk about that at an upcoming Board meeting. He said the Library will also hold its annual Seattle Reads program in 2026, and intends to partner with King County Library System to offer a Seattle/King County Reads program. He said Ms. Brandon will also present information to the Board closer to that program. He said the One Book, One Coast program is intended to be one in which people can participate in a light way with a low bar to participate. He said LA County Library put this together and had other systems sign up with an agreement to share how many folks attended or read the book. Mr. Fay

said news has been spreading, and East Coast library friends are also interested. He said it is a challenge to wrangle 100 to 150 library systems, but maybe in 2028 they will try to coordinate a big effort across the entire country. He said this is a very exciting program and he appreciates the efforts of Dr. Patrick and her team to move the program forward. He said LA County Library has a great team.

Library Board Vice President W. Tali Hairston, PhD, said in the last mayoral administration, Deputy Mayor Wong was the Library's direct connection with the administration. He asked who might be a similar designee on the new mayor's team. Mr. Fay said Mayor Wilson's initial structure has a single Deputy Mayor who is Brian Surratt. He said Chief of Operations Jen Chan will oversee a deputy and liaisons or operations managers who will oversee a portfolio of departments. Mr. Fay said the Library's operations manager is Rachel Shulkin. He said he has met in her previous capacity at the Parks Department, and she is a big Library user and supporter. He said as the Library needs to get information to the Mayor's Office, it will escalate issues through the operations manager and liaison as far up as is necessary. He said the pipeline process is generally what gets something like a levy renewal proposal in front of the mayor, which is a different process that involves other players.

Systems Reports

Washington Library Association Legislative Day Update

Community Partnerships and Government Relations Program Manager Kiersten Nelson said in addition to her position at the Library, she also serves as the Washington Library Association (WLA) Legislative Committee Co-Chair. She said this year, WLA and Puget Sound library leaders pushed to have Library Legislative Day scheduled earlier. She said the Washington State Legislature has a long session and a short session. She said it is not a full-time legislature, and members serve 60 to 120 days, which can be extended if the governor asks for special sessions. She said the long session, which was last year, is the biennium where they focus on the bulk of the budget. She said in the short session, which is this year, they often fix budgetary issues, but do not tend to focus heavily on legislation because it is only a 60-day session. Ms. Nelson said this schedule led to an earlier convening of Legislative Day to get in front of legislators before cut-off dates. She said the conversations were impactful to what legislators were hearing because there is still an opportunity to move issues forward. She said before the cut-off dates, bills that hadn't passed last year are not technically dead, so the cutoff dates are a milestone.

Ms. Nelson said the team put forward a slate of priorities informed by public libraries across the state with input from systems including SPL, King County Library System (KCLS), Sno-Isle Libraries, and Pierce County Library System, to push what the public library systems are seeing and legislation that they want to see move forward. She said the number one issue the group put forward was support for the Washington State Library which lost a large amount of funding last year, gravely affecting the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL). She said the group met with approximately 75% of legislators, or their staff members, that represent The Seattle Public Library system.

Ms. Nelson said there is a legislative special district, that includes the Broadview Branch, that has SPL, KCLS and Sno-Isle all technically within their district. She said rather than legislators hearing from all three systems, it is more powerful when the library systems have spoken with colleagues and represent the group. She said the group met with five legislative members, and with staff from other offices. She said they had many fantastic conversations.

Ms. Nelson said Representative Thomas was enthusiastic about ensuring that funding for WTBBL is restored. She said holding these meetings does make a difference. She said it was announced last week that Representative Thomas submitted a proviso for \$3 million to restore funding for WTBBL. She said the proviso is in the House and needs to pass through the Senate, which will be a harder sell. She said Senator Robinson has deep connections with the libraries,

having worked at Sno-Isle, so she understands what libraries face. Ms. Nelson said Senator Robinson has been in the Washington State Legislature for a long time and is adamant that funding should not be added unless funding is removed from somewhere else.

Ms. Nelson said the Foundation and their advocacy group are working on an effort to send letters to state legislators. She said one letter will thank Representative Thomas for fantastic work to get the proviso over the line, in effort to provide crucial funding for WTBBL. She said additional letters will ask the rest of the delegation to continue to support the effort both in the House and the Senate.

Ms. Nelson said the group also spoke about the increasing costs of e-books, and next steps to address the particular issue in Washington state and nationally. She said Mr. Fay is working at a national level for a broader, consensus-based push from urban libraries which acquire a larger proportion of digital materials than rural systems. She said the team is working to collect e-book and e-audiobook data across the state for the past 7 to 10 years. She said the data will be provided to state legislators by the end of the fiscal year, in June, to use as they are crafting the biennium budget next year with the hope of getting a study in place.

Ms. Nelson said Connecticut passed a law last year focused specifically on e-books. She said other states have tried to replicate it. She said Washington, DC had basically the same legislation, but their trigger was up to ten more states and various population restrictions. She said no one had seen pushback from publishers, literary distributors, or Overdrive. Ms. Nelson said, in December, Overdrive submitted and read 54 pages of testimony against the legislation. She said this supports the need for a study and the importance of providing monetary data to the State. She said libraries need to make a concerted effort to indicate to literary distributors the next step libraries are taking to approach the digital materials issue.

Ms. Nelson said the group also discussed a couple of other issues including TIFs, which isn't directly applicable to The Seattle Public Library, but is to some fellow libraries across the state; as well as protecting the personal and private information of staff through various public disclosure requests, and what can and cannot be disclosed.

Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Nelson for her work and doing a remarkable job of keeping track of tremendous amounts of information and detail of how processes work and where the Library is in each process. Ms. Mehdi said Ms. Nelson and the Foundation's Senior Communications & Advocacy Director Will Livesly-O'Neil do a tremendous job of making sure that Lobby Day is important and impactful, and also fun. She said the work Mr. Fay and Ms. Nelson are doing to build a case around why e-book licensing costs are unfair to libraries is a long-term vision and will take a while to see results. She thanked them for their work that, down the line, will yield helpful outcomes to all public libraries, including SPL.

Ms. Mehdi said the role of the State Library doesn't impact SPL greatly, yet it is incredibly important for rural libraries. She said when the State Library is doing well, the whole library ecosystem is doing well, so it is important for SPL to be part of the advocacy effort. Ms. Mehdi asked Ms. Nelson if it would be helpful for Library Board trustees to write letters to legislators as a group or individually. Ms. Nelson said either way is good. She said legislators very rarely hear thanks, so thanking them individually may be impactful for them. Ms. Nelson said SPL will thank Representative Thomas specifically at the end of the session once the outcome of that effort is known. She said individual thank you letters would probably mean a lot to the Representative. Ms. Mehdi asked Ms. Nelson to draft a suggested message outline to share with the trustees, along with Representative Thomas' email address.

Library Board Trustee Ron Chew said he himself has a visual impairment, and WTBBL is a great resource and asset. He said currently the doors are closed, which is demoralizing for staff. He said

he brought up the issue at a meeting of the Executive Council of AARP, and they were very interested in pursuing the issue. He said talking points would be helpful, and he asked if there are any other key legislators in the push to restore funding. Ms. Nelson said the proviso has been submitted on the House side, and the House seems fairly eager to pass it. She said on the Senate side, Senator Frame would be good to reach out to. Mr. Chew asked about Representative Santos and Senator Hasegawa. Ms. Nelson said every member has to vote on it, so every member is worth contacting. Ms. Nelson said, in addition to Senator Frame, Senator Saldaña and Senate Majority Leader Pederson would also be good contacts.

Mr. Fay said he wanted to note for the record that TIF refers to tax increment financing. He said this impacts county library districts and special districts established in the state. He said it generally does not have a direct impact to SPL as it does to other systems. He said libraries across the state, other than city or town systems, will have an issue with TIFs for a variety of reasons. He said SPL generally has an interest in supporting counter efforts for anything that takes money away from libraries.

Dr. Hairston said he doesn't make it to Olympia often, but when he does, he works with legislators on housing, education, and workforce development. He said he hasn't considered his role on the Library Board to be one that could add the Library to these conversations. Ms. Nelson said he can. She said workforce development and housing are both systems that are integrated through Library programming, and various Library staff have strong connections with those areas. Dr. Hairston asked for coaching from Ms. Nelson on how to incorporate that messaging.

Library Board Trustee Faith Pettis said if the group needs trustees to attend future Legislative Days, including in next year's long session, she would be happy to get that on the calendar. Ms. Nelson said WLA will set a new date once they get guidance on when the new session will begin. She said they will want to get the day scheduled before the first cut off, which will be later than January next year. She said she will make sure the Library Board knows when the next date is set.

NEW BUSINESS

Union Report

President of AFSCME Local 2083 Jessica Lucas said she was present to answer any questions the Board may have about the Union's report this month. Ms. Mehdi said all Library Board Trustees had read the report. Ms. Mehdi said she is hopeful the upcoming bargaining process will be the right place for the issues raised to be addressed. She thanked Ms. Lucas for sharing the Union's perspective. Ms. Lucas said she is not the only member to write the reports, and that she receives help from her leadership team, as it is difficult to write similar reports when there is no change.

Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates

Mr. Chew said on January 14, the Foundation Board held its annual meeting which is where the majority of business takes place such as election of officers and signing of annual compliance forms. He said the Foundation Board approved a new five-year strategic plan to guide their work in 2026 to 2030. He said financial reports showed 2025 was a strong year of giving, exceeding the targeted goal. He said preliminary numbers show that the Foundation raised more than \$6 million, and final figures will be shared in March. He said estate giving has been especially beneficial. He said the Foundation Board acknowledged all of their donors, some of whom were in the room, for their generosity and commitment to the Library. Mr. Chew said new 2026 Foundation Board officers are Matt Hillman as president, Julie Zunker as vice president, Nick Momyer as treasurer, and Karen Conover as secretary.

Mr. Fay thanked outgoing president Sarah Stanley for her great work over the past two years as Foundation Board president. He said he looks forward to working with Mr. Hillman and Ms. Zunker in this exiting time as they move into actualizing the strategic plan. Mr. Chew said he had

met with Ms. Stanley on a number of occasions. He said she is a strong advocate and will continue to be involved in Foundation work, and he thanked her for her advocacy. Ms. Mehdi said both Mr. Hillman and Ms. Stanley were at Library Legislative Day. She said Ms. Stanley has been incredibly devoted to the Foundation's work, both in raising money and giving her time. She said she sees Mr. Hillman following suit. Ms. Mehdi said the Foundation is an important key partner and the partnership is key to the Library's work with this year's potential levy renewal.

Ms. Pettis said she attended her first meeting of the Friends Board this week, which was also the first meeting led by the new Friends Board President Jennifer Lo. She said the meeting started with an overview of recent and upcoming volunteer activities and she was very impressed with the list of things the Friends organization does and activities they enthusiastically spend time on. Ms. Pettis said the Friends are developing a good relationship with the Stinson Green Mansion to host Silent Reading Nights at the mansion, with the first event coming up on January 29 and three more to follow. She said four Friends Board members attended Library Legislative Day, and she particularly enjoyed hearing from the members who were new to the event and were excited to be in the room with their representatives. She said having a \$3 million proviso introduced as a result of Legislative Day activities was a real boost for the Friends Board members and terrific to hear.

Ms. Pettis said the Friends Board approved their 2026 budget at the meeting. She said included in the budget is the new expense for an additional location in Georgetown, which they will move into on February 10. She said the new space will be called the Workshop, and is an addition to the FriendShop in the Central Library and the Bookshop in Georgetown. She said the Workshop is located one building south of the current Bookshop location in Georgetown. She said the new location will host community events such as Books For Teachers and member-only events. She said Mr. Fay also gave a report and there were questions and discussions about a potential upcoming levy renewal. Ms. Pettis said it was a great meeting, and she is really going to enjoy being the Library Board's liaison to the Friends Board.

Ms. Mehdi said the Friends are an amazing organization, running three locations with only two paid staff people, and otherwise a volunteer-driven organization. She said the Friends are also a key partner for a potential levy renewal as the Library's grassroots supporters. Ms. Pettis said the group is the Library's friends-makers, and are aptly named. She said she saw a Friends staffer at the Broadview Branch anniversary celebration, who was enthusiastic, happy, and a great ambassador.

Updates from Library Board Members

Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Pettis and Mr. Chew for attending the Broadview Branch anniversary celebration. Mr. Chew said it had been his first visit to the Broadview Branch, but staff recognized him from the photo on his memoir book that is on display at the library. He said staff asked him to pose for photos with his book, and they are interested in doing some program readings. Mr. Chew said it was a wonderful visit with a lot of great staff and a terrific occasion.

Ms. Pettis said the Broadview Branch was one of her home libraries as a child growing up. She said she hadn't been back in decades and when she walked in, she didn't recognize it because of the addition that had been added. She said it was fantastic to see how beautiful it is and how it has held up through the years. She said the branch staff had special baseball jerseys made for the event as a throwback nod to the history of that location where funding for the library had been diverted to the Seattle Pilots baseball team. She said it was a funny way to acknowledge that history and honor it, also creating something wonderful. Mr. Fay said the pulled funding disrupted the planning for the library by about eight years. He said the Library held the land in 1967 and couldn't build the branch until 1975. He said it had been a big hit to the Library when the money was diverted. Mr. Fay said the Broadview Branch team had their anniversary event

well-planned with the story, partners, and music. He encouraged trustees to attend other anniversary celebrations when they happen, as they are truly fun.

Referring to Ms. Bendixen's earlier question about programs associated with the upcoming One Book, One Coast program, Mr. Fay said he received information from Head of Marketing and Online Services Helen Tapping that there are currently four programs planned for One Book, One Coast and there will be more information available as marketing begins for that work.

ADJOURN

Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Unapproved Board Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting
The Seattle Public Library
February 26, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on February 26, 2026. Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Vice President W. Tali Hairston, PhD and Faith Pettis were in attendance. Trustees Carmen Bendixen and Ron Chew were unable to attend. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was accepted via email, in person at the Central Library, and online in the remote meeting. There was no public comment.

CONSENT

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 said he was joining the meeting remotely from the Tacoma Public Library where he was attending the two-day Statewide Library Directors meeting. Mr. Fay said he presented additional information to the City Council's Libraries, Education and Neighborhoods (LEN) Committee on February 10, 19, and 25. He said the Committee's Chair, Councilmember Maritza Rivera, is asking the Library to show its accomplishments and work conducted by the 2019 levy in preparation for the discussion of a potential 2026 renewal. He said teams at the Library have done a great deal of work to put large presentations together, most of which contain 60 or more slides with a lot of great data and information. He said the slide presentations will be available on the Library's website under the levy report area as well as included in the Seattle Channel's broadcast of the meeting.

Mr. Fay said on February 10-13, he attended the Knight Foundation Media Forum in Miami, which brings together leaders from across the country to share challenges, successes, and best practices. He said he spoke on a panel in a session titled Reimagining a National Platform for Digital Collections, along with Mandy Knapp, Director of the State Library of Ohio, and Felton Thomas, Director of the Cleveland Public Library, with moderation by Charles Thomas of the Knight Foundation, who is a trustee on the board of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. Mr. Fay said the panel discussion focused on designing a collaborative model for collecting, preserving and expanding access to the to the nation's digital cultural and historical collections that are transferring to the Cleveland Public Library. He said the steering committee is seeking to chart a path for how this collection can be maintained and run, and how it can grow into being a more modern product that allows history to be collected from large and small institutions. He said there is a lot of work to be done and exciting possibilities for these national historical collections.

Mr. Fay said he attended the Mayor's State of the City address on February 17 in which Mayor Wilson shared information about her priorities and vision for the city. He said this is also available for viewing on the Seattle Channel.

Mr Fay said, on February 19, the Library kicked off a new monthly internal “Coffee Chats” virtual meeting series that is open to all SPL staff. He said this meeting series replaces the monthly Leadership Open Office Hours series, and the new series is designed to encourage more system-wide discussion and connection. He said the first meeting featured the Technical and Collection Services and Special Collections teams sharing about their collections management direction efforts over the coming years. He said the Library hopes this and other internal communication channels and tools will encourage more staff to engage, discuss, and weigh in on projects of impact, as well as providing an opportunity to share kudos and good news across the system.

Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi said she believed that Seattle is not a Knight Foundation city, so it was an honor to be invited to join the Media Forum in Miami. Mr. Fay said SPL has been fortunate to be invited all the years he has served as interim and permanent Chief Librarian, as Seattle is considered one of the best library systems in the country. He said as part of the Knight Foundation’s efforts to understand libraries across the country, they want to be able to diversify and get a sense of what is going on in all corners of the country. He said it is an honor to be invited. He said the Media Forum covers all of all types of media and is fascinating, as it is very interesting to hear what other First Amendment warriors are currently experiencing. He said the sessions were an opportunity to talk as directors across the country, as well as with large national philanthropic organizations such as the Carnegie, Mellon, and others who are interested and are supporting projects.

Ms. Mehdi asked if there is a reason the national platform for digital collections isn't happening at the Library of Congress and asked if there was any distrust. Mr. Fay said it wasn't a matter of distrust, and the Library of Congress has a very large collection. He said the effort was originally designed for digital public libraries to have a way of aggregating a lot of small and mid-sized collections and then looking at how they could get supported. He said this work has a hub network approach as it currently exists. He said, for example, there may be a university as a major hub that has contributors outside of the university. Mr. Fay said future designs need to consider models that don't only rely on philanthropy, but that ultimately include memberships and contributors. He said philanthropy will be wanted in that mix, and a sustainable system that will continue to develop and grow needs to have a broader methodology for sustaining support. He said a steering committee is being formed to look at this issue, to look at what the hubs and contributors have experienced over the last decade, and to consider questions about what it can be, what can be improved, what kinds of tools and new technologies will create the best experience for users, and the exciting possibilities that exist. Ms. Mehdi said it will be great to hear how progress is made on the national platform.

Ms. Mehdi said she watched Mr. Fay’s presentations to City Council and the Mayor’s State of the City Address on the Seattle Channel. She said Mr. Fay’s presentations to the City Council included councilmembers who are not on the LEN Committee. She said they asked interesting questions that are important to consider in relation to how they may mold the mayor’s potential levy proposal to their interests.

Ms. Mehdi asked for SPL updates on the Coffee Chats, as staff are able to engage and ask questions. Mr. Fay said the Library will share what it is seeing and hearing, and whether the new series is determined to be a successful and valuable feedback loop. Mr. Fay said it is important for information sharing, as so much of what is done at the Library is not seen, even by other staff. He said the work of Technical Services in purchasing and processing material and Special Collections is unseen by the vast majority of staff. He said the series will be a great way to get the services and work more visible and to create a greater knowledge base for staff.

Systems Reports

One Book, One Coast 2026

Literature and Humanities Program Manager Stesha Brandon said this year SPL would host two one-book programs, one in the spring and one in the fall. She said this spring, SPL is participating with more than 140 other West Coast libraries in the first One Book, One Coast program. She

said the book selection is George Takei's "They Called Us Enemy." She said Mr. Takei has written several books, including this one which is a memoir in graphic novel format. Ms. Brandon said Mr. Takei was born to Japanese-American parents and his family was incarcerated in the Tule Lake Segregation Center during World War II. She said the graphic memoir was written for youth and recounts his childhood experience being imprisoned within the concentration camp during World War II. She said the book is an amazing first-hand account of Mr. Takei's years in the camp that focuses on the joys and terrors of growing up under this legalized racism. She said it asks questions that still resonate today, such as, "What is American and who gets to decide?" and "When the world is against you, what can one person do?" She said these are big questions that still resonate now.

Ms. Brandon said the Library is working on programming with partners at Densho and the Minidoka Pilgrimage Committee. She said SPL will do a program with Densho in April to celebrate their 30th anniversary that will focus on Densho's work to preserve the testimonies of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II. She said this work is essential to capture histories while survivors are alive. She said on April 8, the Library will host a program with Frank Abe. She said Abe is an amazing resource in Seattle and an expert on John Okada, an important Japanese American novelist. She said Mr. Abe edited a collection for Penguin Classics on literature that was written by people who were incarcerated in Japanese internment camps. She said Mr. Abe will be speaking about the literature and sharing with Library audiences. Ms. Brandon said on May 5, Tamiko Nimura will discuss her new memoir about losing her father who was also incarcerated at Tule Lake. Ms. Brandon said Ms. Nimura also co-authored another graphic memoir with Mr. Abe titled, "We Hereby Refuse," which is a biography of several Japanese American resisters who resisted incarceration during World War II. She said on May 30, the Library will host an event with Scott Kurashiga, who will be discussing his book, "American Peril," which is about anti-Asian racism specifically, its roots, and how it plays out today. Ms. Brandon said on May 31, the Library will provide a digital livestream of LA County's event with George Takei, which will feature a conversation between Mr. Takei and LA County Library Director Dr. Skye Patrick.

Ms. Brandon said the spring program is little different in that the Library will not have uncatalogued copies of the book in physical form. She said the Library is working with Hoopla and OverDrive to make digital copies available, and those deals are still being worked out. She said digital copies will be available through both Hoopla and OverDrive so people can access the book for the period of the programming, starting now, until the end of May.

Library Board Trustee Faith Pettis said Mr. Takei's book is a terrific choice and asked how it was chosen. She said Mr. Takei was a fantastic speaker at the American Library Association conference last summer and is a good messenger for this subject. Mr. Fay said LA County Library had already started working with Mr. Takei on this title, which they found very relevant to happenings today. He said when Dr. Patrick reached out to him with the idea, he thought it would be a good idea to try, and the effort grew from there. He said LA County had already mostly completed the work to secure the author and title at that point. Mr. Fay thanked Ms. Brandon, Library Experience and Engagement Director Kai Tang, and Technical and Collection Services Managing Librarian Kate Sellers for their work in helping to turn the idea into a program involving nearly 1,000 libraries spanning the West Coast. He said it has been a big effort with a quick turnaround time. Mr. Fay thanked Ms. Brandon for her skills to secure program elements and having great creative ideas. Mr. Fay thanked Ms. Sellers for her work in securing availability of e-books. He thanked the Library's partners at LA County for their great work. He said LA County has worked with the SPL's Marketing and Online Services and Communications teams on artwork and press releases.

Ms. Mehdi said the book seems very fitting because the Japanese internment mostly affected the West Coast, as Japanese people on the East Coast were not interned or incarcerated. She said the book is a good choice for a West Coast one book program. She asked if the graphic novels are

available in translation. Ms. Brandon said her understanding was that the books are available in English and Spanish, so the Library will be able to provide books in those languages.

NEW BUSINESS

Library Board Goals

Ms. Mehdi said she thought it would be useful for the Library Board to set its own work plan goals for the year to keep focused on what they are trying to achieve in this calendar year. She said, working with Mr. Fay's approval, the Board came up with six items: To steward the mayor's proposed levy renewal in partnership with the Friends and the Foundation; To support the Chief Librarian in developing enhanced staff engagement, retention, inclusion and belonging, communication and wellness strategies; To support the budget and fiscal policy development to address the city's ever-changing revenue landscape and support the continuation and development of alternative revenue; To complete a 360 degree performance evaluation for the Executive Director and Chief Librarian that covers his tenure to date, and determine a regular schedule for conducting future performance reviews; To provide guidance on the Strategic Plan implementation and progress; and To support the Chief Librarian to build innovative community partnerships. She said the last goal had been added by Library Board Trustee Ron Chew who was absent from today's meeting.

Ms. Mehdi said the Board's performance evaluation of Mr. Fay is well underway. She said the Board is almost finished with interviews, and will likely be discussing the item at the March and April Library Board meetings.

Ms. Mehdi asked for any thoughts or edits, and asked other trustees' thoughts on whether the Board should vote on adopting the goals. Ms. Pettis said she would like to hear from Mr. Chew his thoughts about the final goal. She said the goals are great and she appreciates that the Board is setting priority goals while also staying in its lane of working through Mr. Fay to accomplish this work. Library Board Trustee W. Tali Hairston, PhD, said he agreed that this is a great time for the Board to establish goals that give them a lane to build framework around interacting with the Chief Librarian to build goals, but also build mileposts to know when goals are accomplished. Ms. Mehdi agreed that it is not the Board's job to work with Library staff, but rather to work with Mr. Fay and support his work in managing and overseeing the entire organization. She said the Board will discuss the goals further at the next meeting when Trustees Carmen Bendixen and Ron Chew could also attend. She said the Board would decide at that time whether to vote on the goals or just have them available for guiding the work.

Union Report

President of AFSCME Local 2083 Jessica Lucas said she loves the Library Board's goals and looks forward to seeing how they manifest. She said, while the Union has many concerns, she was happy to say that management had proposed language around schedules for notifications and concurrence, which she appreciated. She said she is looking into how that will move forward, but she appreciates the effort in that space. Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Lucas for making time to talk with Dr. Hairston and her recently. Mr. Fay thanked Ms. Lucas for her report.

Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates

Ms. Mehdi said there was not a Foundation Board meeting in February. Ms. Pettis thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve in the liaison role for the Friends Board; she said it has been a lot of fun and she has enjoyed getting to know the Friends Board members and meeting with them in person. She said the Friends have successfully moved into their new third location in Georgetown which is located one block away from their other Georgetown location. She said they also continue to run the FriendShop in the Central Library. She said the Friends are excited to use the newest location for their Books for Teachers program. Ms. Pettis said the Friends will have a booth on the Overlook Bridge at the Seattle Waterfront events on Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends this summer. She thanked the Friends for putting the effort into being present and visible in a key downtown location. She said Will Livesley-Oneil from the

Foundation was a guest speaker at the Friends Board's February meeting, where he spoke about Legislative Day and other activities that will be happening in support of a potential levy over the course of the year. She said Mr. Livesley-Oneil's participation in the Friends Board meeting underscores the close relationship among the three organizations, which is terrific and powerful. Ms. Mehdi said Mr. Livesley-Oneil is a remarkable person and is doing terrific work.

Updates from Library Board Members

Ms. Pettis said as part of the Friends Board meeting, she has been invited to visit the book sorting location at the Library's Maintenance and Operations Center in late April. She said she was excited for the opportunity to see the facility, and she thanked the event organizers.

Ms. Mehdi said she discovered the day before that Levy Administrator Jan Oscherwitz will be retiring. She said Ms. Oscherwitz has done a remarkable job of providing the Board with updates about how the Library is meeting its levy commitments on a quarterly basis. She said it is very important for the Library to show that it is meeting its commitments as well as it can, and that cannot be done without the work that Ms. Oscherwitz does. Ms. Mehdi wished Ms. Oscherwitz a happy retirement. She thanked her for her terrific work, said she will miss her, and wished her well.

Ms. Mehdi thanked staff who provide reports for the meeting packets. She said there are great written reports provided in the meeting packets. She said this month there is a report on the Adult Services system work to develop and augment programs that meet the needs of adult patrons within the context of the Strategic Plan goals around enrichment and empowerment. She said this is very important, strong work. She said it is easy to want to help kids, so the need to focus on the work that children's and teen librarians do is self-evident. She said sometimes it can feel like the programming directed at adults can seem secondary, but it is not. Ms. Mehdi said there was also a report about the African American collection at the Douglass-Truth Branch. She said the new librarian, Brian Den Hartog-Lindsey, has stepped into big shoes and is doing a terrific job.

Mr. Fay said, as Board President, Ms. Mehdi has the option of having the staff reports come forward in a different way, if she would like. He said he would be happy to discuss options. He said there is a lot of great work that goes into producing the reports, and a lot of work being done every day that can be highlighted differently. He said he would be happy to discuss the information contained in the reports. Ms. Mehdi said she recognized that putting the reports together is not insignificant, and she would like to think about how to highlight some of that work.

ADJOURN

Library Board President Yazmin Mehdi adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: March 26, 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

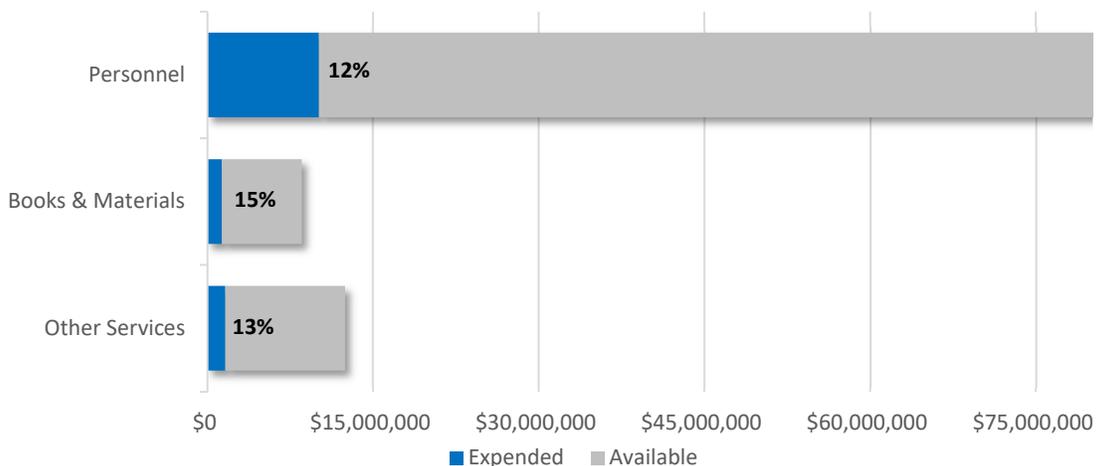
Subject: **February & January 2026 Financial Reporting**

Overview

Overall, the Library has expended **13%** of its operating budget with **16%** of the year elapsed. This is below the prior year when the Library had expended **16%** of the operating budget. However, this delta is attributable to delays on the City side in posting payroll costs related to Pay Period Ending 2/24/26. Employees were compensated for their time, this delay is only attributable to recording the expenditures in the financial system by the City. Total expenditures at the end of the month were \$13 million.

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

YTD Spending vs. Budget (% Spent)



Personnel Services

Personnel costs represent the largest category of expenses at the Library and make up 80% of the operating budget. As noted in the Overview section, the fourth pay period (2/24/26) is delayed in posting by the City. There were no issues with employees being paid on time, this is solely a technical issue which impacts the City-wide financial system.

We anticipate this issue being resolved by the time the March Board Financial Report is generated.

As of this report there have been **three pay periods processed**—as such we expect 11% of the personnel budget to be expended. Spending is on target at **12%**.

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 **15%**.

Other services which represent 12% of the operating budget—and include equipment, services, and supplies—are **13%** expended.

Revenues

Library generated revenues during the month of February were \$54,000, with total year-to-date collections at **\$125,000**—representing a 14% collected rate. This \$125,000 reflects an \$11,000 increase in revenues compared to the same period from 2025. This increase is largely attributable to the Library restoring access to digital payments related to lost materials fees. Of note, February Private Event Rental revenues were unavailable as of the date of this report—we anticipate these will be available and included as part of your March report.

Action Requested: Library Board consideration of January and February 2026 Operating Budget financial reporting for approval at March 26, 2026 meeting. Comments or feedback are welcome.

Expenditure Control for February 2026

Amounts in \$1,000s	Adopted Budget	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages	52,944	2,006	6,053	11% (A)	46,891
Benefits	28,535	1,779	4,046	14%	24,489
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$81,479	\$3,785	\$10,099	12%	\$71,380
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,557	678	1,322	15%	7,235
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,557	\$678	\$1,322	15%	\$7,235
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,561	304	612	17%	2,950
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,414	94	164	12%	1,250
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	302	37	48	16%	254
Operating Supplies	620	18	38	6%	582
Other Expenses	600	64	79	13%	521
Other Maintenance	490	58	74	15%	416
Phone, Wireless & Internet	403	23	26	6%	377
Professional Services	417	4	14	3%	403
Software	979	197	200	20%	779
Staff Training & Travel	177	2	2	1%	175
Vehicle Costs	361	-	14	4%	347
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	2,085	156	304	15%	1,781
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,060	41	49	5%	1,011
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$12,469	\$997	\$1,625	13%	\$10,844
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$102,505	\$5,460	\$13,046	13%	\$89,459

Footnotes:

(A) - Pay Period Ending 2/24/26 was delayed in posting by the City and was not available by the time the February Board Financial Report was generated. These costs are expected to post by the time the March report is prepared and will be reflected as part of that report.

Revenue Control for February 2026

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	150,000	8,109	19,010	13%
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	390,000	28,522	59,503	15%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	140,000	12,856	26,331	19%
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	127,000	10	9,691	8% (A)
Book Sale Consignment	67,000	4,495	9,255	14%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	6,000	699	749	12%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES	\$880,000	\$54,691	\$124,540	14%

Footnotes:

(A) - February Private Event Rental revenue information was not available by the time the February Board Financial Report was generated. These revenues are expected to post by the time the March report is prepared and will be reflected as part of that report.

Expenditure Control for January 2026

Amounts in \$1,000s	Adopted Budget	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages	52,944	4,047	4,047	8%	48,897
Benefits	28,535	2,267	2,267	8%	26,268
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$81,479	\$6,314	\$6,314	8%	\$75,165
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,557	644	644	8%	7,913
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,557	\$644	\$644	8%	\$7,913
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,561	308	308	9%	3,254
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,414	70	70	5%	1,344
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	302	12	12	4%	291
Operating Supplies	620	20	20	3%	600
Other Expenses	600	16	16	3%	584
Other Maintenance	490	16	16	3%	474
Phone, Wireless & Internet	403	2	2	1%	401
Professional Services	417	10	10	2%	407
Software	979	3	3	0%	976
Staff Training & Travel	177	-	-	0%	177
Vehicle Costs	361	14	14	4%	347
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	2,085	149	149	7%	1,937
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,060	8	8	1%	1,051
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$12,469	\$628	\$628	5%	\$11,841
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$102,505	\$7,586	\$7,586	8%	\$94,919

Footnotes:

Revenue Control for January 2026

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	150,000	10,901	10,901	7%
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	390,000	30,982	30,982	8%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	140,000	13,475	13,475	10%
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	127,000	9,681	9,681	8%
Book Sale Consignment	67,000	4,760	4,760	7%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	6,000	50	50	1%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES				
	\$880,000	\$69,849	\$69,849	8%

Footnotes:



The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 26, 2026
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Re: March 2026 Chief Librarian's Report

1. March has been a very busy month, largely focused on reporting on the work of the 2019 Library Levy and looking ahead to a proposed 2026 Library Levy. This month has seen a series of meetings with the City Council's Libraries, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee, Council Select Committee, Mayor Wilson, Councilmembers Rivera, Saka, Rinck, Foster, Strauss, and Kettle. The Library was pleased to host Mayor Wilson and Councilmember Rivera on Level 10 of the Central Library on May 10 when Mayor Wilson announced a \$410 million proposed Library Levy to replace the 2019 levy and offer additional enhancements. The Library Board and many leaders and staff members in every division in the Library have put a substantial amount of work into developing significant materials in support of this effort. I and the Senior Management Team held two one hour-long virtual drop-in information sessions for staff to be able to ask questions and learn more about the proposed levy. We have created an FAQ from these sessions so that staff can see the questions and the responses.
2. Sadly, the Library has seen two patron deaths in the last month. One patron passed away at Rainier Beach Branch and another patron passed away at Capitol Hill Branch. I want to acknowledge the lifesaving efforts conducted by our teams prior to emergency services arriving. I want to acknowledge that our staff experience considerable stress and trauma when these types of incidents occur. The effects are not short duration and can have an ongoing impact on our staff who experience these events.
3. This month, I am continuing to participate in a number of meetings with my colleagues across the nation as we work to develop a steering committee to begin the work of reimagining a national platform for digital collections. As discussed last month, the goal is to design a collaborative model for collecting, preserving, and expanding access to the nation's digital cultural and historical collections.
4. On March 13, the Senior Management Team held a full-day offsite working retreat to better understand how our management team can work together to better the Library's culture and improve communication practices to be more responsive to both patrons and staff.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:

- a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; Friends Board February meeting and Friends Board retreat; Foundation Board meeting; Board Executive Committee Meeting; monthly meeting with Foundation Board President.
- b. Standing Meetings: Compensation Committee; Senior Management Team; E-Team; Monthly Managers meeting; Union/Leadership meetings; Foundation CEO/Chief Librarian bi-monthly meetings.
- c. Library Meetings, Talks, Interviews and Visits: KCLS Director meetings; Metro area library director meetings; .
- d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: Mayor's Cabinet meeting; Councilmember Rivera monthly meeting and additional meetings on potential levy planning; Libraries, Education & Neighborhoods Committee presentations; Council Select Committee presentation; Mayor Wilson Levy Proposal Announcement.

Library Experience & Engagement - North Regions (NER, NWR)

March 16, 2026

Daniel Nguyen, Interim Northeast Regional Manager

Dawn Rutherford, Northwest Regional Manager

Impact and outcomes statements

- 1. We will champion and celebrate experiences and opportunities that build community and cultivate a sense of belonging.*
- 2. Our community becomes stronger because of library activities that are inclusive, draw diverse participants and promote understanding*

Broadview Branch 50th Anniversary Celebration

On January 24, 2026, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Broadview Branch with a full-day community celebration honoring the branch's history, civic roots and enduring role as a neighborhood hub. The event was widely attended with approximately 1,100 visitors over the course of the day. The celebration generated exceptionally high attendance and strong community visibility. Overall, the Broadview Branch 50th Anniversary Celebration successfully honored five decades of service while reaffirming the branch's role as a welcoming, community-centered space.

Press and Community Awareness

[KUOW - It took a community to get this Seattle library built. Now it's celebrating 50 years of service](#)

[Seattle DJC.com - SPL's Broadview Branch turns 50](#)

[Seattle's Child - SPL's Broadview Branch celebrates 5 decades](#)

Anniversary Programs

The day opened with Native storytelling by Siobhan Kekoa, drawing strong attendance from both adults and children. Live music performances took place throughout the branch, positioned in public reading areas to activate the space. A Youth in Focus photo booth invited patrons to document their participation, while gaming tables, a collaborative art banner and a large community puzzle encouraged informal engagement across age groups. Two local historians staffed an "Ask-a-Historian" table, where patrons asked questions about Broadview's history. The celebration concluded with a collective rendition of "Happy Birthday" for the branch.

Speakers and Guests

A speech was delivered by Operations Manager, Jonis Black, and Seattle City Councilmember Maritza Rivera. Notable attendees included Chief Librarian Tom Fay and Library Board Trustee Ron Chew. Numerous former Broadview staff members also attended, reinforcing continuity between past and present service.

Historical Theme and Staff Jerseys



Broadview staff wear baseball themed jerseys



Staff with Tom Fay and Maritza Rivera

As part of the anniversary, staff wore custom baseball-themed jerseys designed to reflect Broadview's founding era and civic activism. The branch was planned and constructed in the late 1960s, a period when city funding priorities favored renovations to Sick's Stadium for the Seattle Pilots baseball team. In response, Broadview residents organized the "Broadview Library Now" campaign led in part by local advocate Alfred Von Stubbe staging events such as a 200-person "Read-In" to successfully advocate for their neighborhood library. The baseball motif acknowledged this local history while symbolizing teamwork, resilience and community pride.

Youth-Led Art Series Brings Identity-Focused Creative Programming to Green Lake Branch

In January, the Green Lake Branch hosted a four-week all-ages art series, [Introduction to the Self-Portrait](#), inviting children and families to explore their identity through a variety of art mediums including vision boards, motivational mirrors, community paper quilt pieces and inside/outside box decorating. The series was created and taught by Lincoln High School 12th grader Elliot Karyo, who brought her experience from Push/Pull Art Studio and the UW Robinson Enrichment Center to Green Lake Library patrons. Participants were encouraged to take their art pieces home or contribute them to the new Green Lake Branch Art Gallery space, where the final exhibit championed identity, individual expression and the creativity of the Green Lake community.



Families explore identity through art



Art pieces displayed in Green Lake Branch art gallery space

Middle School / High School Club Creates Welcoming Space for Teen Connection and Skill-Building at Lake City Branch

The Lake City Branch's weekly Middle School / High School Club provided a welcoming space for students in grades 6–10 to gather for fun, friendship, learning and leadership development. Engagement was strong particularly during interactive and hands-on activities such as a financial literacy workshop, cooking workshop, board games, crafts and a library scavenger hunt. The program emphasized joy, skills-building and social-emotional learning, with opportunities for teens to collaborate across age groups and build connections with peers and mentors. High school service learners were invited to help facilitate activities to gain early leadership experience, communication and workplace readiness skills.

Siddhi, a high school student from [A Worthy Cause](#), led [Money Basics 101](#), an introductory workshop on saving, investing and the importance of starting early to achieve financial goals. Drawing on her experience presenting financial literacy topics to youth audiences, she incorporated handouts and QR codes that allowed teens to explore additional resources beyond the session. Siddhi is also the author of [What I Learned About Money](#), a financial literacy guide for young people that has since been added to the Library's collection.



Teens learn about financial literacy

Two presenters from our nonprofit partner, [Hunger Intervention Program](#), facilitated an [interactive cooking workshop](#) focused on affordable and healthy meal preparation. Teens learned about meal planning, gathering ingredients and reading recipes, skills especially useful for young people preparing for independence in college or adulthood. Using portable induction cooktops, the group prepared a simple pasta dish together and shared the meal. The session also sparked meaningful conversations about cultural food traditions. One parent brought injera for participants to share and another student discussed the importance of cilantro in Mexican-American cooking traditions.

Teens also explored the entire branch through a collaborative scavenger hunt designed to teach them about library services and programs. Participants followed clues throughout the building, interacted with staff and collected items or answered questions about the library. Teams intentionally mixed older and younger teens to promote cooperation and mentoring. Two students in 6th and 9th grade achieved a perfect score in the fastest time and won a \$5 gift card to Dick's Drive-In.

Aligning HR Services to Support Systemwide Goals March 10, 2026

With contributions by HR Manager Shawna Dennard, Training and Development Manager Morganne Denae, and Safety Officer Jessica Guy. Compiled and edited by HR Director Brian Sharkey.

In 2026 the SPL Human Resources (HR) team focuses on the stabilization of refreshed tools and systems to help all levels of SPL staff excel at work. Staff are engaged in a variety of online and in-person learning spaces, support organizational safety, and enter the second cycle of performance management on SPL's new workflow. This brief report will highlight some of the key plans and successes in these three areas.

Performance

The Library's annual performance review process is a key opportunity to reflect on accomplishments, provide meaningful feedback captured throughout the year, and align on future goals.

In 2024 the City of Seattle discontinued using the E3 system, the existing performance evaluation platform. Last year, in partnership with the Library's IT team, Human Resources developed a new performance evaluation workflow for the 2025 review cycle and beyond. This allows us to re-establish a reliable structure for meaningful performance conversations while we continue to assess longer-term technology solutions. The 2025 performance review cycle began with employee self-evaluations, followed by manager reviews and the development of 2026 goals.

This year, SPL will utilize the same workflow and process and will seek to further increase our engagement and completion rates. Our goal is to support and restore consistency, clarity, and accountability in performance management. Each step is designed to encourage thoughtful reflection, promote aligned goal-setting, and support constructive dialogue between employees and supervisors, ensuring all employees receive the meaningful and timely feedback they deserve.

To support this work, a Performance Review Resource Center was created on the Library's SharePoint site, which includes guidance, templates, timelines, and best practices to support both supervisors and employees. HR staff were available to guide staff through the new process. This work strengthens shared expectations, helps us align individual goals with systemwide priorities, and ensures that staff have the clarity and support needed to contribute to the Library's mission in 2026 and beyond.

Below: screenshot from the SPL Performance Management Resource Center on SharePoint.

Quick Links to Forms and Helpful Information



SPL Employee Goal Template 2026



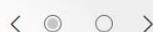
SPL Goal Setting Guide and Examples
2025-2026



Goal Setting Tips for Managers



For Managers Only: Upload Files Here



Training

Community Use Agreement Training

With the launch of our Community Use Agreement in 2025, we created a training plan for our staff that included:

- Two self-paced courses: Introduction to Community Use Agreement and Safety Strategies for Community Use Agreement
- 4-hour Train the Trainer workshops for all LEED management
- Community Use Agreement Playbook

We are continuing this work in 2026 with a brand-new Community Use Agreement self-paced course for all new staff members and updates to our Safe Environment training to reflect the CUA language and recommended safety strategies.

Below: screenshot from the Community Use Agreement self-paced introduction training



Training Partners

In 2025, we brought two highly requested training opportunities to all staff. We partnered with Right to Be to provide a 90 min Bystander Intervention virtual workshop during All Staff Day 2025. We worked closely with Right to Be to create customized scenarios for our staff to work through that were relevant to their day-to-day experiences. We also created guided discussion questions for staff to take back to their workgroups to continue conversations after the training. We are planning to hold three sessions of Right to Be's Bystander Intervention 2.0 workshop in 2026 to continue these important conversations.

We also partnered with Karen Fisher, chair of the MLIS program at University of Washington, and Phoebe Brand, MLIS graduate and researcher for UW, in 2025 to provide a four-hour Trauma Informed Care workshop for staff. This workshop was developed specifically for library staff and referenced the extensive research conducted by Karen and Phoebe. We hope to continue bringing these workshops to our staff in 2026, as we received fantastic feedback from staff who were able to attend.

New ACT Form and Updated External Training Guidelines

Last year, we launched our brand-new Authorization for Conferences and Training (ACT) Form after the previous form was taken offline during the cybersecurity incident. This new form is much easier to navigate and is more accessible and fully integrated with Microsoft Lists, making it easier to track and maintain. Since launching the new form, we were able to:

- Send 29 staff members to Library Conferences
- Provide 35 staff members with external training opportunities

2025 saw new Educational Development Guidelines as well, which were updated based on feedback from staff and input from the Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC). These new guidelines lowered the barrier of entry for staff to attend training events outside of library. We also removed restrictions on certification courses, allowing staff to obtain relevant certifications and allowing them to continue growing professionally.

Manager Self-Paced Training

During 2025, we began to transition all our required leadership training into virtual, self-paced formats. This work is continuing into 2026, with our plan being to launch the below courses for all leadership (existing and new) in 2026.

- Recruitment & Selection
- Payroll & Workday
- Leaves & Workday
- ADA & Accommodations
- Accident Investigations

New Hire Onboarding

Finally, our primary focus since mid-2025 and heading into 2026 is our New Hire Onboarding Strategic Plan initiative. We have divided this work into phases, with this first phase focused on the first week of a new hire's employment. The proposed onboarding program is a standardized, four-day introductory period for all newly hired employees, with a fifth day for all people managers. During this week, new hires will participate in scheduled onboarding sessions rather than being placed into regular operational schedules. The program is designed to ensure consistent, accurate, and complete delivery of essential information before employees assume full duties.

Key onboarding topics covered include, but are not limited to:

- Organizational structure and SPL culture
- Use of Workday and internal systems
- Benefits enrollment and employee resources
- Policies, procedures, and compliance requirements
- Completion of required Cornerstone trainings

The onboarding program is not intended to replace managerial support, but to strengthen it. Following the new hire's transition into their regular role, additional tools and resources will be provided to managers to support continued development and integration.

Planned post-onboarding support includes:

- New hire playbooks
- Manager coaching tools
- Structured 30, 60, and 90-day check-ins
- Ongoing guidance and resources released in the coming months

This proposed plan is still under development and pending Union and SMT approval. However, we are hopeful to launch this program by the end of 2026.

Safety

In October 2025 the Materials Operations Center (MOC) work location initiated a site-specific safety committee who meet monthly. The MOC serves as SPL's heartbeat as a vast number of library materials enter this facility to be sorted for redistribution in the library system. The MOC safety committee serves as a space to address safety hazards, review workplace injuries and track progress for longer term safety improvements. Notes from this safety committee are uploaded to the Safety SharePoint page for reference and to ensure alignment across work units.

In person inspections of each branch are carried out by the safety officer and members of the Safety Committee on a regular basis. In spring of 2025, Central Library, was inspected top to bottom including the underground parking garage and the roof of the 11-story structure. Central has many unique spaces and multipurpose rooms, including a music room equipped with a piano, conference and event spaces, and several computer labs. Safety walk throughs are an impactful way to identify safety hazards in real time and track progress of remediation. Meeting with staff during these walkthroughs give an opportunity for staff in address concerns specific to their work and present possible improvements. Safety Committee members are invited to accompany these walkthroughs.

In 2026, SPL Safety looks to more fully engage staff and remove barriers to accessing important safety resources and supplies. One good example of this is the revamp of the first aid supply request process. First aid supplies are available to all SPL staff, typically located in a staff break room or other common area. To ensure the consistent availability of first aid supplies, the Security team has established an online ordering system to track and fulfill requests for first aid supplies. In addition to the typical supplies such as band aids and burn gel, nasal Narcan is also available. SPL offers Narcan to the public to support the community in harm reduction efforts.

[Below: screenshot from the SPL Safety home page on SharePoint.](#)

Welcome!

This committee is responsible for reviewing reports of occupational illness and accidents, and compliance with safety rules and standards. This is a legislatively mandated committee comprised of three employee-selected (by the Union) members and three employer-selected members. This committee is not chartered by the Library's Leadership Team but is required via the Washington Administrative Code.

The committee meets on a monthly basis to review safety and health inspection reports, evaluate accident investigations, and review the workplace accident and illness prevention program.



Committee Members



Meeting Minutes



Important Links



Q4-2025 Marketing & Online Services | Projects Review

Overview of Q4

In addition to delivering on project requests from colleagues, Marketing & Online Services is making continual improvements following our team's roadmaps in the areas of:

- Accessibility
- Digital Signage
- Email Communications
- Language Strategy
- In-person Patron Experience
- Merchandising Display and Signage
- Social Media
- Video Production
- Wayfinding
- Website & App Maintenance and Optimization

Highlights/Learnings from Q4

In this report:

- Community Use Agreement Materials
- Books Unbanned
- Global Reading Challenge
- SPL Story Squad
- Holiday Card
- Social media highlights

Analytics Overview from Q4:

Email newsletters

- **Library Newsletter:** Sent twice a month, with an average of 159,657 newsletters distributed at a time and 67,298 newsletters opened, resulting in an average 42% total open rate.
- **Kids & Families Newsletter:** Sent once a month, with an average of 2,749 newsletters distributed per month and 1,924 newsletters opened, resulting in an average 70% total open rate.
- **Authors & Books Newsletter:** Sent once a month, with an average of 4,962 newsletters distributed per month and 3,617 newsletters opened, resulting in an average 73% total open rate.



Social media analytics

Profile	Audience	Net Audience Growth	Published Posts	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement Rate (per Impression)	Video Views
Reporting Period Oct 1, 2025 – Dec 31, 2025	151,045 ↗ 3.2%	1,721 ↗ 66.9%	133 ↘ 28.9%	525,003 ↘ 3.8%	17,663 ↗ 29.8%	3.3% ↗ 35.4%	96,168 ↗ 61%
Compare To Jul 1, 2025 – Sep 30, 2025	146,304	1,031	187	545,626	13,608	2.4%	59,714
@seattlepubliclibrary	61,788	1,383	93	394,695	12,352	3.1%	77,715
The Seattle Public Library	58,130	467	27	127,395	4,761	3.7%	6,395
Biblioteca Pública de S...	1,117	5	10	2,511	82	3.3%	23
@SPLBuzz	25,657	-186	—	402	20	5%	8
Seattle Public Library	3,060	43	2	N/A	361	N/A	7,596
Seattle Public Library K...	1,260	7	1	N/A	84	N/A	4,382
Seattle Public Library T...	33	2	0	N/A	3	N/A	49
SeattlePublicLibrary	0	0	0	N/A	—	N/A	—

Bluesky Analytics:

Totals for Q4 (Oct. 1 – Dec. 31)	Audience	Net Audience Growth	Published Posts
	2,131 followers	151 (7.6%)	13

Our social media priorities for Q4 were to:

- Continue promoting our "Here For You" campaign and postcard promotion.
- Highlight fall/winter programming including Nuestra Euforia, the Bullitt Lecture, Douglass-Truth's 50th renaming anniversary, and The Librarians screening.



www.spl.org analytics

During Q4 2025, the pages of spl.org received **2,367,172 pageviews** and had an average bounce rate* of **50.3%**.

What's trending?

During the fourth quarter, the most popular pages were:

Page	Pageviews	Bounce Rate
Museum Pass	57,554	42.93%
Event Calendar	56,919	27.20%
Get a Library Card	47,189	27.34%
Magazines & Newspapers	35,316	40.85%
The New York Times Digital	30,521	51.93%

*Bounce rate is % of visitors that leave page. It is a good KPI to track on individual pages- but different types of pages have different bounce rate goals. While the aim for pages to be below industry standard (40%) some of our pages have Call to Actions to external sites that count as a 'Bounce' but is the action we want/expect on that page.

SPL mobile app analytics

The SPL mobile app was downloaded nearly 5,000 times in Q4, bringing the all-time number of downloads to over 25,000.

Apple App Store (21.5k total downloads)

Q4 Total Downloads	Q4 Product Page Views
4.45k	2.04k

Google Play (1.8k total downloads)

Q4 Installs	Q4 Store Listing Visitors
420	1,399



Community Use Agreement Materials

The Community Use Agreement (CUA) materials represent the culmination of work led by the Rules of Conduct Task Force. The primary goal was to preserve the intent of the Agreement by emphasizing shared responsibility, mutual respect, and welcoming use of Seattle Public Library (SPL) spaces. Throughout the project, the team focused on communicating this message in a clear, friendly, and respectful tone, with the aim of informing patrons in a way that reflects SPL's values.

During Q4 2025, Marketing & Online Services partnered closely with the CUA implementation team to refine and strengthen the promotional strategy. This work incorporated direct feedback from SPL managers to improve the clarity, usability, and effectiveness of the messaging. As a result of this collaboration, the team produced a large format in-branch poster to communicate the key elements of the CUA, along with a more detailed informational brochure. To support accessibility and reach across diverse communities, all materials were translated into SPL's six prioritized languages.

The project progressed through several phases:

- a. Ideation and initial design concepts
- b. Feedback and iteration
- c. Secondary feedback and refinement
- d. First print run and final manager input
- e. Final printing and distribution
- e. Final printing

What went well:

Engaging staff and managers at multiple points in the process helped shape the final materials and surfaced important considerations for implementation. These conversations highlighted the need for training and leadership guidance to support a successful rollout of the new CUA framework.

What we learned:

Some staff expressed hesitation about initiating challenging conversations with patrons and requested additional signage or materials explaining specific situations. This feedback underscores the importance of continued training and support as staff transition from the previous "Rules of Conduct" framework to the CUA's shared-responsibility approach.





Books Unbanned



As one of Strategic Plan priorities, Marketing & Online Services has championed [Books Unbanned](#) as part of the Library's efforts to counter censorship and book banning nationally.

Our largest marketing push came in October, in celebration of Banned Books Week. We:

- Created, printed and distributed "Read What You Want" holographic stickers. We shared the design with Books Unbanned program partners, so they could print and distribute their own. We also shared with the Friends of The Seattle Public Library, who are selling "Read What You Want" [hoodies and t-shirts](#).
- Led a social media campaign sharing the cumulative impact of the coalition. This year, the coalition reached 1 million checkouts.
- Provided messaging for a joint campaign with Little Free Library, who promoted Books Unbanned through their social media channels and email newsletter.

What went well:

Books Unbanned signups jumped to 3,100+ in October—a 5 times increase over the previous month (582 signups) and triple the number of the next-highest month in 2025.

What we learned:

Collaborations with other organizations or influencers is a valuable tool for increasing the reach of Books Unbanned, both to potential cardholders and supporters of the program.



Global Reading Challenge



NEW GRC CREATIVE FOR WEB/PRINT

During Q4 2025, the Global Reading Challenge logo was refreshed to create a more versatile and contemporary visual identity that works seamlessly across both web and print creative. The updated design improves clarity, scalability, and readability, ensuring the logo remains impactful whether it appears on digital screens, promotional materials, or large-format print pieces. With a cleaner structure and more adaptable elements, the refreshed logo supports consistent branding while better reflecting the program's energy and accessibility.

What went well:

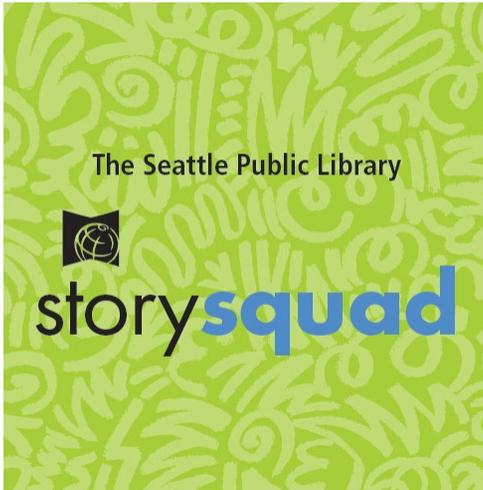
The new logo still feels familiar but is easier to use on websites and in print. We wanted to make sure the logo was modernized and cleaned up a bit, while still keeping the charm and character from the original version. The new logo lends itself to easier scannability while still appealing to the younger audience it is intended for.

What we learned:

We learned that having clear goals and early teamwork makes the design process smoother. We had great communication with the project owner with concise direction on refreshing the GRC branding. We wanted to make sure we kept the target audience in mind to be able to utilize our time wisely when brainstorming how to properly reenergize the logo. The outcome was very successful, and we look forward to seeing various deliverables with this new updated look.



SPL Story Squad



As part of a Strategic Plan initiative, we supported the launch of the [SPL Story Squad](#) pilot program. In partnership with Seattle Public Schools (SPS), this program delivers classroom sets for grades 2-4 in Title I schools.

Marketing & Online Services assisted with:

- Naming the program
- Creating signs and labels for classroom kits
- Building a program web page
- Designing an online feedback survey for teachers

What went well:

Working with the project lead and stakeholders at SPS helped us create assets that explain the program and clarify processes for participating SPL teachers.

What's Next:

As the pilot progresses, we will incorporate feedback from teachers to refine assets and create strategies and materials for expanding the program.



Holiday Card



This year, our annual end-of-year e-blast wrapped up our fall “Here For You” marketing campaign, which began during Library Card Sign-up Month (September). The message thanked patrons for helping us achieve several important milestones in 2025—such as launching our mobile app and having the highest Book Bingo participation ever—and announced a small gift: the new postcard for Outreach & Mobile Services.

In tandem with the email, we also created an [SPL Postcards](#) webpage, so patrons could view digital versions of all 28 postcards.

What went well:

The email was opened by nearly 40,000 recipients.

What’s Next:

Our concept for the email featured heavy use of graphics and illustrations. In designing and building the message, we had to work through challenges with responsiveness and accessibility. The lessons we’ve learned in doing so will carry over to next year’s holiday card, as well as ways to make our regular email newsletters more visually appealing, and will inform desired features and functionality as we investigate potential new email marketing platforms.



Social Media Highlights

In Q4, our most popular posts centered on programming. These posts not only received high views and engagement but drove patrons to participate off social media.

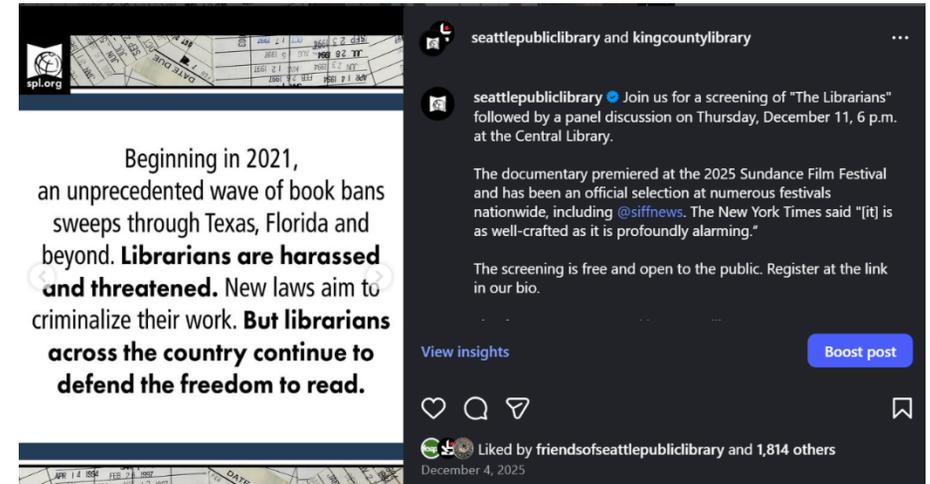
DTH 50th Renaming Anniversary

Brian Den Hartog-Lindsey, curator of the African American Collection, shared the history of DTH's community-driven renaming. The video was viewed nearly 50,000 times! [\[Post Link\]](#)



The Librarians Screening

Our carousel sharing the backstory of the documentary The Librarians received nearly 3,000 total engagements across Instagram and Facebook—but most importantly, increased registrations 125% the day it was published. [\[Post Link\]](#)

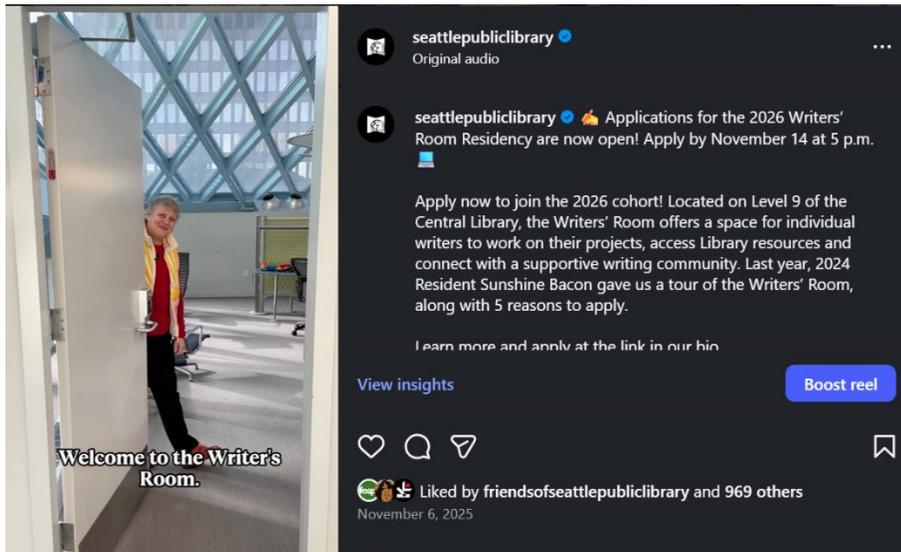




Writer's Room Tour

To help boost applications for 2026 Writer's Room Residencies, we re-posted this video from the previous year of a tour with resident Sunshine Bacon. The video was viewed over 25,000 times on Instagram.

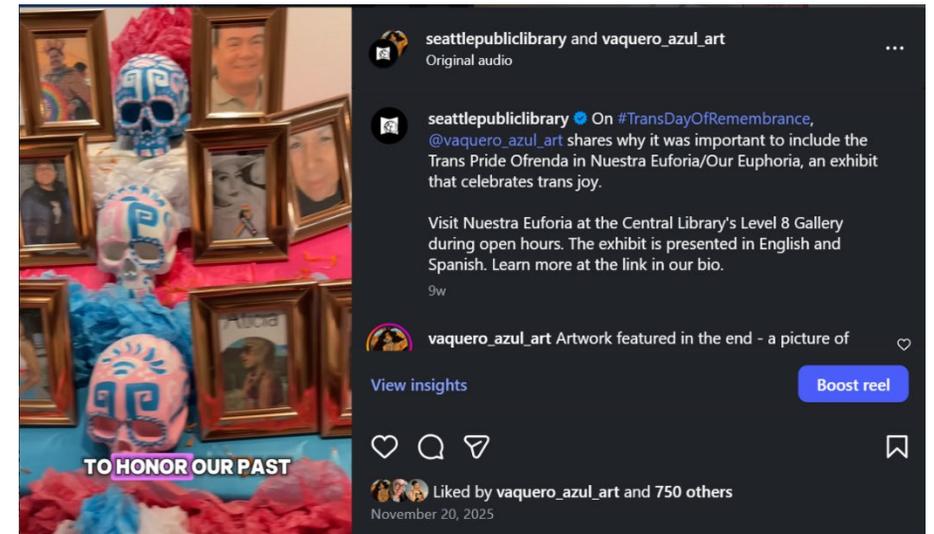
[\[Post Link\]](#)



Trans Pride Ofrenda

On Trans Day of Remembrance, artist Vaquero Azul shared why it was important to include the Trans Pride Ofrenda in the Nuestra Euforia exhibit. The reel was viewed over 10,000 times on Instagram and received over 1,200 total engagements across Facebook and Instagram.

[\[Post Link\]](#)





The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: March 6, 2026

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

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Kiersten Nelson, Community Partnerships & Government Relations Manager

Subject: 2025 Seattle Public Library Foundation Grant Award Summary Report

In 2025, The Seattle Public Library (SPL) expended almost 100 percent of The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF) \$6.1 million grant award, an amount that increased by 17 percent over the base funding awarded at the beginning of 2025. This memo summarizes both the Library's spending and programmatic outcomes.

Spending Summary -- 2025 Foundation Award

Funding Priority	2025 Award	2025 Spending	Balance Remaining
Providing Books & Materials	\$2,128,005	\$2,104,506	\$23,499
Hours & Access	\$1,498,134	\$1,520,284	(\$22,150)
Literacy & Early Learning	\$778,550	\$684,804	\$93,746
Technology & Online Services	\$753,598	\$615,426	\$138,172
Capital/Major Maintenance	\$269,269	\$259,774	\$9,495
Administrative Support	\$617,300	\$654,358	(\$37,058)
Branch Restricted Donations	\$25,026	\$23,059	\$1,967
Total¹	\$6,069,882	\$5,862,211	\$207,671

The Library is pleased to note that it utilized 96.6 percent of the grant award from The Seattle Public Library Foundation in 2025. This spending summary highlights the significant programmatic efforts undertaken by staff in 2025 thanks to the generosity of the Foundation and its donors, and the impacts seen from that work.

¹ External Grants was not included in the above chart because they run across multiple years. Here is the 2025 summary:

Funding Priority	2025 Award	2025 Spending	Balance Remaining
<i>External Grants</i>	\$567,052	\$130,582	\$436,471

The grant provided by The Seattle Public Library Foundation represents the most important programmatic funding for our Library system and is directly responsible for enhancing the library experience of our patrons. Especially when leveraged with resources from the City of Seattle and the voter approved Library levy, this funding maintains critical, system wide multi-year programs and initiatives.

2025 was a year marked by upheaval and uncertainty at the federal level and determination at the local level to maintain consistency. While DOGE cuts and executive orders at the Federal level caused chaos throughout government ranks, including an order to close the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), SPL stayed grounded and committed to providing crucial services to Seattle residents. The Library stabilized or expanded hours at branch locations, supported immigrants in knowing their rights, referred federal employees to various resources during the longest shutdown in federal government history, and relied more on the Foundation's support as the City's financial hardships required a shift in Library priorities and resources during the fall budget discussions.

In spite of these massive challenges, the public continues to highly value the services provided by the Library. The Foundation funding is extremely valuable, allowing the Library to remain nimble and focus on serving the needs of patrons. The Foundation graciously modifies standing grant restrictions as appropriate, enabling the Library to realign funds to address the dynamic service and budgetary environment posed by the fluidity of staffing and technology realities. Additionally, the Foundation increased the amount of its grant award from \$5.2 million to start 2025 to \$6.1 million by the end of the year. The Library appreciates the flexibility provided by the Foundation's trust-based philanthropy, which allowed the reprogramming of resources within a funding priority to support our work.

In 2025, \$5.86 million was expended from the \$6.1 million Foundation grant, achieving a spend rate of 96.6 percent. The increased funding level over the 2024 grant allocation included carry-forward grant funds from the previous year and increases in financial support for providing Books and Materials, Hours and Access, Literacy and Early Learning, and Administrative Support.

The Library team, partnering with Foundation staff, meets regularly throughout the year so as to be able to proactively reprogram funds on underspent programs, allowing the Library to maximize the spending of the grant. The Library achieved a spend rate of 106 percent for Administrative Services, 101 percent for Hours & Access, 99 percent for Providing Books & Materials, and 96 percent for Major Maintenance. Categories with meaningful underspend include Literacy & Early Learning with an 88 percent spend rate and Technology & Online Services with an 82 percent spend rate, both largely driven by open program positions.

Key reasons for overspend or underspend are as follows:

- Providing Books & Materials: The purchase of books for the Children's, Japanese, Summer of Learning, Global Reading Challenge, and Book Unbanned, drove spending.
- Hours & Access: A major reason for spend in this category related to labor expenses. Underspend from several categories including the Captioning Plan and the Artist in Residence Program covered the Entrepreneur and Not for Profit manager position.
- Technology & Online Services: The Library's underspend in this area stemmed from the Digital Media Program manager and coordinator roles not being filled until mid-year.
- Literacy & Early Learning: With a staff member's departure, the Youth Program manager role remained vacant driving the underspend in this category. While a portion of these unspent funds were able to be repurposed to cover staffing support for Early Learning Programs,

programmatic spending was successful in utilizing 95 percent of its grant award.

- **Administrative Support:** The overspend in this category resulted from the allocation of resources for a staff art fair, and a service level and needs assessment. This category also includes consideration costs, professional development, research & learning programs, and carry-forward funding for the Inclusion and Belonging Director who started in the fall.
- **Major Maintenance (CIP):** Remaining carry-forward funds for furniture, current furniture spending, and the HVAC project accounted for the spending of nearly all funds from this grant award category.

Below you will find information and stories from patrons on how the grants provided by The Seattle Public Library Foundation for 2025 impact our service priorities, the community, and our shared values.

Providing Books & Materials

Granted: \$2,128,005

Expended: \$2,104,506

2025 Foundation grants included contributions to the African American, Biography and Literary Classics, Children's, Seattle Room, Preservation of the Collection, eBooks, and General Collection areas. It also funded the Japanese Collection, processing the Dorpat Collection, the Read-Along Books Collection, and important archival materials for the Seattle Collection. This support allowed for the ongoing development of these respective collections to enhance community experiences with the Library. The Foundation also funded the Books Unbanned program that provides digital library cards to youth (ages 13-26) across the United States and its territories, and access to the Library's entire electronic collection. SPL was the first library system in the nation to join the Brooklyn Public Library in this endeavor to increase information access to children and young adults. There are now five participating systems across the US. Foundation funding also enabled the Library to meet customer expectations for electronic and physical materials, as patrons' content consumption continue to shift rapidly to more digital formats.

Community Impact:

By accessing and using the Library collection, Seattle's diverse communities are informed, entertained, and enriched.

Why this matters:

The collection is the Library's most visible and most used service. The Foundation enables SPL to achieve a level of collection excellence that would otherwise not be possible. In 2025, the Library continued to respond to community needs by increasing investment in digital materials, offering more ways to access physical materials through pick-up lockers, and expanding the breadth of the foreign language collection.

After recovering from the ransomware attack in 2024, the Library returned to the top 10 list of OverDrive e-materials checkouts in 2025. With a generous and specific grants, the Library continued to bolster the Japanese language collection, grew the large print/low visibility collection, and added Portuguese titles based on community feedback and demand.

The Library continues to assess opportunities to increase access to people across the city, from Book Lockers to digital materials. In tandem with the strategic plan, the Library will partner with the Foundation to look at new technology meant to expand access to places where a physical branch is not viable or does not make sense.

Patron Experience:

“My child is so excited to bring home their red bag each week. Even my older child is joining us in reading at night” - Parent, John Muir Head Start and Raising a Reader participant

“As a Seattle resident and writer, I just wanted to say a very belated thank you for your commitment to carrying all types of books, including those about LGBTQ+, immigrant, and BIPOC experiences. And also I commend you for participating in the Books Unbanned initiative so that more youths nationwide can access your titles. I urge you to keep doing what you're doing, and to resist any pressure from our current federal administration to remove books they don't like! I know you probably get complaints far more often than thanks, so this is just me sending thanks and support.” – Seattle resident

By the Numbers:

- SPL returned to the top 10 in the world for digital checkouts via OverDrive in 2025 thanks in part to Foundation support.
- 88,413 items were purchased and distributed directly from Foundation Funding.
- 6,650 items in the LGBTQ+ collection were checked out, a nearly 50% increase over 2024 circulation numbers.
- A \$10,000 one-time funding grant purchased 353 books for children, teens, and adults to develop the Portuguese language collection.
- 911 books were purchased through the Japanese Collection grant, including 208 patron suggested titles.

Hours & Access**Granted: \$1,498,134****Expended: \$1,520,284**

This category of 2025 Foundation awards included enrichment programming such as lectures, author programs, and discussions on art, history, and social justice. It also supported art, music, and performance programs, engaging communities of color, supporting Seattle's most disadvantaged communities, and ensuring community members and leaders have a voice in the curation of our work. It allowed for continued outreach in Job and Life Skills programming, Library 2 Business, as well as Workforce and Career Development. All of this work would not have been possible without Foundation support.

Community Impact:

Our community becomes stronger and access to opportunities becomes more equitable as a result of Library activities that are inclusive, draw diverse participants, and promote understanding.

Why this matters:

With a strong history of providing quality programs to patrons, The Seattle Public Library continues to focus on how to support the needs of the Seattle community. In the midst of unrest at the federal level, people continue to seek out connection and support through the Library. Knowing that a valued resource is focused on ways to support them where they are at continues to be recognized as a crucial service. The Library remains focused on finding ways in which its resources can be utilized to empower the lives of individuals and community groups, especially those furthest from racial, economic, digital, and social justice.

Patron Experience:

“It is important for me because once our legal status is solved, I will move to here forever and one day I hope to get a job and I have to take care of my baby and all of this will be in English.

I can talk with so many different people... learn English and the culture, so it is really helpful for me." – a Broadview patron

"I feel like I am part of the community at the library. I can use all sorts of things here: books, facility. So I feel like I am a part of this city. The people make me feel very comfortable." – a Rainier Beach patron

"Thank you all very, very much. I live in far north Seattle, without a car, and without enough extra income to hire someone to drive me into Seattle-proper with it's large libraries. So, mobile services is wonderful." -Home Service Patron

"I am a preschool teacher currently pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Education. I have been able to apply what I have learned both to my coursework and to my classroom observations, especially when preparing for parent-teacher conferences. Thank you so much for the support—it has made a meaningful difference in my journey." Alma R, Seattle resident

"The Garfield Jazz Band, were MEDICINE. AND SMOOTH, Thank You. Yes, the presence of the new Birds added to the GARDEN. Thank You for EXPERIENCE. For many years I have had 'Them' on my list to HEAR, A DREAM COME TRUE"

"I want to thank you especially for page 4 about the differences between symptoms and normal healthy aging. There is such a lot of fear around this topic, we are all going through it. I'm going to keep this in my purse and share with everyone I know!" – Dementia Friends presentation

"WE LOVE IT. The librarians have worked with us directly on content, topic, and format of books, and bring us exactly what we need. I have seen multiple students pick up a book independently for the first time since we started having these books for them to choose from. Thank you for bringing the first in-school independent reading experience of their lives to children, and making it so joyful for them." -Preschool Teacher

"Being an Artist in Residency has given me the wings I needed to soar. The platform of the library helped me reach my very specific community of Trans, Queer, Mesoamerican & Mexican peoples and connect through art with each other... Getting to achieve many dream projects of being a Producer & Designer for my first fashion show, first time curating, featuring, and producing an all Trans Mesoamerican Art Show... truly changed me. " Vaquero Azul, Artist in Residence 2023, 2024

By the Numbers:

- English Conversation Circles remain extremely popular. There were 639 unique participants with 2,753 class attendances for a total of 3,581 hours of conversation practice. Classes were held online and in person to serve a wide geographic area across the city.
- 22 adults participated in a Spanish basic computer class with all showing marked improvement in skill levels. They began with an average pre-assessment score of 54.74 and an average post-assessment score of 89.21.
- The Book Mobile provided monthly visits or deliveries to 29 preschools, 75 adult facilities/buildings, and 2 tiny house villages. They also provide service to 74 individuals through Books by Mail and monthly home deliveries to 23 patrons.
- SPL hosted 123 Older Adult programs across 19 branches (and virtually) in 10 different languages (Amharic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Oromo, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, Khmer, and English) for more than 3,000 people.
- Library to Business hosted 156 programs, including the Black-Owned Business Excellence

Symposium and 19 events in Spanish; they reached more than 4,100 participants. They assisted more than 100 people with legal consults in 2025.

Literacy & Early Learning

Granted: \$778,550

Expended: \$684,804

To succeed in life, all young people – from preschool through high school – need to be exposed to and engaged with a variety of high-quality learning experiences. As a leading learning institution, SPL provides these learning experiences as part of its commitment to serve youth and families.

Foundation funded projects for 2025 included high profile programs such as the Global Reading Challenge and the Summer of Learning. After seeing increased learning gaps for non-English speakers and school aged children, the Library focused on putting staff in place to develop long term plans to address youth and teen programming.

Community Impact:

By providing a welcoming and relevant place of learning, Seattle's diverse communities learn, grow, and problem solve together for a better community.

Why this matters:

Inequities inside and outside of Seattle's K-12 public schools have affected educational outcomes for historically marginalized students for generations. To address these disparities, youth need to have access to programs and services that affirm them, their language, and their culture; and opportunities to improve reading, gain digital literacy skills, and develop work and life skills to succeed in college and career pathways.

The Seattle Public Library's traditional slate of outreach and programming for Literacy & Early Learning faced some battles with staff vacancies due to retirements and extended leaves. In spite of this, most programmatic funds were expended, with the bulk of underspend due to staff vacancies.

As the school years are an important time of learning and development, the Library continues to find new and different ways to reach young students. SPL's Early Learning and Teen Program managers developed programs grounded in racial equity data and in response to the greatest needs for the community's students and families.

Patron Experience:

"I'm going to be an author one day just like her!" -Team Read Student, Winter Reading

During a Global Reading Challenge competition at Decatur Elementary School one of the scorekeepers (university professors from Minnesota who received a grant to come learn about our program) noticed "lots of feels, lots of anxious and invested kids. One of the girls on the winning team that I was sitting near first asked me, 'what happens if I mess up?' – I told her that she should shake it off and try again. After they won, she said to me, 'I can't believe it! I almost dropped out – a lot of people dropped out and I was thinking about it. And now look! I can do this' It was pretty powerful."

"Homework Help is great help for my 5th-grade student. I would like adult homework help for me, too." – Parent, Columbia Branch

[From a post-internship question: What have you taken away from your internship?] "I've learned how to fill out my first tax form, having group projects with little amount of time to work on, talking

and meeting new people we've never truly worked with before and having to learn how to manage our time and energy to finish things in a workspace. Also, just the amount of panels and connections and resources this internship shows the interns which is really helpful for the future for sure." – UW Library Intern

"Raising A Reader helped connect my classroom to their Children's Librarian at the branch and we now have regular visits." – Assistant Teacher, Emerson Head Start

"Team Read has pushed me outside of my comfort zone and taught me to be more outgoing and confident. Before I was a more closed off person and you would have to say hello to me. Now, I can be the one that says hello to other people, not be shy, and say hello because of Team Read." -Teen Site Assistant

By the Numbers:

- 72 schools throughout Seattle participated in this year's Global Reading Challenge creating 528 teams comprised of more than 3,200 4th and 5th graders reading eight different titles selected by staff. 32 of the participating schools were either entirely or partially recipients of Title 1 funding.
- School Age programs engaged 730 BiPoC youth and families through co-designed programming and disseminated 850 books to K-5 students.
- The Library offered 566 tutoring sessions and reached 6,088 students at nine branch locations (Broadview, Columbia, Douglass-Truth, High Point, Lake City, NewHolly, Northgate, Rainier Beach, and South Park).
- 320 World Language Story Time sessions served 6,300 patrons. Mandarin Chinese story time was introduced at the International District/Chinatown and Northgate branches.
- 75 Learning Buddies, Service Learners or UW Libraries Interns were deployed who developed, created, facilitated and/or supported 53 programs/projects with a total of 708 attendees at events.

Technology & Online Services

Granted: \$753,598

Expended: \$615,426

2025 Foundation funding supported Technology and Online Services, which provided SPL patrons with opportunities to learn and experience technology programs rooted in the principles of connected learning, design and computational thinking as well as Library technology upgrades. Programs funded through this priority area include Nourishing Minds and Arts for Community Voices. After some back and forth and maneuvers at the federal level, we were able to get the final funding for the IMLS Teen Mental Health programming. This category also funded KidsTeam at the Columbia Branch and the Innovation Fund to incorporate virtual reality development and programming.

Community Impact:

By building digital equity, The Seattle Public Library supports Seattle's diverse communities in building a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Why this matters:

Socio-economic disparities often limit underrepresented populations' access to technology, including to quality programs supporting design and computational thinking skills. Through relationship building with youth, parents, caregivers, elderly care facilities, community partners, and disadvantaged community advocates, the Library is responding to the desire for people to gain

technological skills, which are increasingly important in all aspects of the economy and society. To this end, the Library makes it a priority to provide access to current iterations of technological programs and devices, and utilizes funding from this grant category to do so.

Research shows that teen mental health has been greatly impacted since the start of the pandemic. The Seattle Public Library's teen mental health program, which launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to bring attention to the critical importance of mental health during this challenging time. Through a variety of initiatives and partnerships, the Library was able to raise national awareness of the mental health concerns faced by individuals and communities during the pandemic. This year marked the completion of SPL's funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) of nearly \$250,000.

While there was concern the Library would not receive its final tranche of IMLS funding due to an executive order issued that called for the dismantling of the IMLS and rescinding all its outstanding grants, this was deemed illegal by the courts and our funding was issued for the completion of the Nourishing Minds project.

The Library developed a cookbook, quick guide, and card deck as part of this project and a way to give teens skills to manage their health and wellbeing. The KidsTeam program at the Columbia Branch continued working with the University of Washington to co-design with teens and kids, and explore how younger kids can learn about misinformation and disinformation.

The Virtual Reality (VR) for Wellbeing project focused on leveraging Nourishing Minds' success in a new digital medium. This project aims to help bring mental health themes and coping strategies to youth through this immersive technology, encouraging greater enthusiasm and engagement.

Over the last nine years SPL has maintained a strong partnership with the UW's Louise Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation to provide internships to undergraduate minority students, enabling them to apply the knowledge gained through their university studies to develop solutions for impactful community projects. Through this pipeline, the Library has developed a robust conduit that not only delivers valuable hands-on opportunities for the undergraduate cohort to enrich their learning but also facilitates deeper connections between these students and communities across Seattle where the project implementation occurs.

Patron Experience:

"This was probably my favorite part of the program. I got to practice my Procreate knowledge and skills by helping the kids with creating their design digitally. As someone who is very passionate about art and design, it was a really enjoyable experience for me to see how all the teens were so excited to learn how to use these tools for their own art. I enjoyed helping the teens develop their own design, watching their ideas flow until they landed on a final design that represented their own values, culture and community. This program reminded me how important inclusive design is, especially for diverse youth. As an intended informatics student at the University of Washington, it felt good to be a part of a program that focused on creating digital literacy, and taught local youth how we can use technology for good."

"It was very nice to meet people who are currently studying and working in the same career field I am interested in. I got plenty of college and career advice, and learned a lot from all these people in the program. I also got to learn a lot from the group of teens we were working with. Through the art the teens created and with insightful discussions we had as a group, I was able to learn more about everyone's different cultures and values."

By the Numbers:

- Digital Media and Learning held 63 events across Esports, KidsTeam, VR Mental Health programs, and supported the Nourishing Minds VR Development Internship.
- Nearly 100 students participated across these programs for a total attendance of 1,018.
- Nourishing Minds received 46 applications from a wide array of diverse communities across the country, vying for just six available spots in the internship program.

Major Maintenance

Granted: \$269,269**Expended: \$259,774**

The Library spent these funds for interior upgrades to Library branch furniture. The bulk of this grant was spent on fixed and movable shelving ahead of the reopening of the University Branch. Other interior furniture upgrades included a seven-desk furniture system at Delridge, parts to repair existing furniture at Magnolia and a locking device with keys at Central. Additionally, funds from this category supported the interactive exploratory and sensory wall installed at the Northeast Branch at the end of 2024.

Community Impact:

By using Library facilities, Seattle's diverse communities are able to work, enjoy, and create together in spaces that meet their needs and challenge their minds.

Why this matters:

Libraries are truly one of the last free and democratic spaces in our country. There is no requirement of purchase, membership, or transaction. It is a place that is on the front lines of some of the most pressing issues facing cities across the nation. As a result, we need to adapt our physical spaces to meet the needs of our patrons and maximize our spaces to match how our community uses them. Also, by creating an environment that is able to sustain operations during extreme weather events, the Library will continue to serve all people of the community at times when they may need safe spaces the most.

Branch Restricted Donations

Granted: \$25,026**Expended: \$22,509**

On occasion, the Foundation receives grant funds directed for extremely specific services and branch locations. Annually, the South Park branch receives a \$10,500 program grant. Additionally, funds were used for branch specific items at the Northeast Branch Library for the sensory wall and at the West Seattle Branch Library for furniture upgrades.

Community Impact:

By providing a welcoming and relevant place of connection, Seattle's diverse communities learn, grow, and problem solve together creating a greater sense of community identity and understanding between people in the neighborhood.

Why this matters:

As the city faces greater challenges addressing socio-economic disparity, the Library serves as that true third place, the central point for people from all backgrounds to come together and connect with each other. Branch restricted donations are directed funds that can help a branch meet the needs of its specific micro-community.

Through South Park Branch's McNeil grant, staff were able to support numerous events tailored to the specific South Park community. This included a Family Day outreach event in partnership with Villa

Comunitaria. This was a bilingual and bicultural event rooted in expanding awareness of library programs and services to vulnerable communities through trusted organizations. Alongside the Social Services Team, South Park hosted a Resource Fair to assist South Park residents with needed resources and an opportunity to connect with neighborhood organizations like Duwamish River Community Coalition, Amigos de Seattle, and Villa Comunitaria. Along with FIFA Club World Cup Watch Party, Día de los niños, Verde que te Quiero Verde, South Park Play Street, and Flying Contraptions with the Museum of Flight to name a few, the South Park Branch diligently spent the grant award, building a strong and resilient community rooted in neighborhood connection.

The Northeast Branch was able to install eight sensory panels for kids and families to use. Listening to feedback from caregivers and children, the Library was able to ensure these panels met the needs of children and were durable enough to sustain repeated interaction with small hands. Through this pilot program funded by the Foundation, the Library received valuable feedback to successfully expand sensory walls throughout the system.

By the Numbers:

- 167 people attended the Resource Fair, providing 14 new government IDs, 20 free haircuts, ORCA passes, and connection to other resources.
- There were 2,000+ visits to the “Sensory Wall at Northeast” webpage, highlighting how excited people are about this service.

Administrative Support

Granted: \$617,300

Expended: \$654,358

This grant covers Foundation related support activities such as a portion of the SPL liaison to the Foundation, and a portion of Administrative Services (Business Office and Finance) resources to manage Foundation grants and related expenses. This year, thanks to the kind generosity of a Foundation donor, this grant also covered the first year’s costs for the new director of Inclusion and Belonging. This position started in Q4, thus the remaining funds will be carried forward to 2026. Additionally, overspend for this category occurred through a service level and needs assessment conducted to ensure that the Library is meeting patron expectations.

Administrative Support grant resources also enable senior leaders' conference attendance and professional development opportunities. The use of these funds continues to expand since pandemic restrictions have lifted. Broadly this grant also includes the Chief Librarian Office’s discretionary fund. This grant is managed directly through the Foundation and not tracked in the SPL financial system.

Community Impact:

With expert staff, The Seattle Public Library can provide innovative programs and services that reflect our community’s desires and steward the institution for future generations.

Why this matters:

As the Library developed its strategic plan to address the changing needs of the community, funding from The Seattle Public Library Foundation served a key role. These funds support effective grant oversight and management to address the evolving needs of our patrons. It also provides learning opportunities for key Library staff to share best-practices with other institutions and anticipate how to meet the future needs of Seattle.

Action Required/Requested: No action requested



The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 26, 2026
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Yazmin Mehdi, Library Board President
Re: **2026 Library Board Goals**

The Seattle Public Library has set forth a vision for the library system in its inspiring 10-year strategic plan. By articulating our own goals for the year, the Library Board demonstrates how we will contribute to the work of that plan. I hope we will make this standard annual practice so that we know what we are working toward, and how we are contributing to the overarching goals of the Library.

To that end, we introduced and began a discussion of the goals below at our February meeting.

2026 Library Board Goals

- Steward Mayor's proposed levy renewal in partnership with the Friends and Foundation.
- Support the Chief Librarian in developing enhanced staff engagement and retention, inclusion and belonging, communication and wellness strategies.
- Support budget and fiscal policy development to address the City's ever-changing revenue landscape, and support the continuation and development of alternative revenue.
- Complete a 360 performance evaluation for the Executive Director/Chief Librarian that covers his tenure to date, and determine a regular schedule for conducting future performance reviews.
- In development of the annual operations plan, provide guidance on the strategic plan implementation and its progress.

Action required/requested: Review and approval of 2026 Library Board Goals at March 2026 Library Board meeting.



The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 26, 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
David Christensen, Business Analyst and Policy Advisor

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

Background

By April 15 of each year, the Library is required to submit an annual levy report for the prior year to the Mayor and City Council. Each quarter, the Library Board of Trustees reviews and approves a quarterly report that documents implementation of levy priorities and accomplishments. The quarterly reports are intended to detail our progress in implementing the levy and describe how levy proceeds have been used to restore, maintain and improve core Library services. This annual report, which covers the whole year with an emphasis on the fourth quarter, will be shared with the Mayor and Council after Board approval.

2025 Annual / Q4 Levy Report

This completes the sixth year of the seven-year, \$219.1 million property tax levy, which voters overwhelmingly passed in 2019. 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 provided \$0.9 million (0.6 %) of the total revised budget. Underspensing was largely due to delays in implementing major maintenance and technology capital programs.

In its 2019 levy proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how levy proceeds would be used to maintain and enhance Library services in the areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Helping Children, and Maintenance. In 2025, the Library made progress on delivering key levy promises, including expanding hours and improving across the library system, embarking on the University Branch seismic retrofit and renovation, adding to collections, and beginning the transition to a new integrated library system (ILS).

Hours and Access: We promised to keep libraries open when patrons need them

Our libraries operated for most of the year on the schedule established on January 29, 2025. This new schedule increased hours across the system above 2019 levels and ensured all

locations not under construction were open at least six days a week and one weekend day. In addition to more open hours, the Library also offers 24/7 access to holds at pickup lockers at seven locations, with locker checkouts doubling since 2024.

The Library continues taking steps to improve the patron experience. In April, we launched a new simplified library card sign-up application form in five languages, and recorded 75,000 new cardholders in 2025. We also launched a mobile app that has seen more than 25,000 downloads since April on Apple and Android devices

Our Social Services team, which includes a levy-funded community resource specialist for youth and young adults, continues to connect patrons to lifeline resources and community. In partnership with Public Health-Seattle King County, the Library began distributing free lifesaving supplies of naloxone at all locations, providing over 4,500 boxes of nasal naloxone to the community in 2025.

Collections: We promised a robust collection of books and materials

We continued to make significant investments in both digital and physical materials while responding to increased interest in digital books.

In 2025, the 2012 and 2019 levies funded 55% of our collections budget. We purchased more than 94,000 copies of digital titles in 2025, and our weekly high-demand spending on e-books decreased compared to 2023, likely because of changes we have made in recent years. Patron interest in digital books and materials continues to grow, with checkouts of digital materials increasing by 13% from the previous year.

We purchased 167,000 copies of print books in 2025, including 20,000 copies of Peak Picks, the no-holds, no wait collection that is 100% levy funded. Since that collection's launch in 2017, Peak Picks titles have been checked out over 1.2 million times.

The Seattle Room added more than 1,700 items in 2025, including books, manuscripts and archival materials. In 2025, nearly 130,000 unique users visited our Seattle Room Digital Collections, accumulating almost 477,000 pageviews.

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

We made substantial progress on the levy-funded replacement of the Library's existing and out-of-date ILS, the central digital platform for managing our collections materials, checkouts, patron accounts, and other services. After an extensive process, we selected a vendor for a new ILS, with contract negotiations beginning in early 2026.

Patrons booked 407,000 computer hours in 2025, printed almost 2.1 million pages on Library printers, and used ScanEZ to scan almost 487,000 pages in 2025.

Our levy-funded hot spot program continues to provide internet access through our general collection and through targeted outreach with key community organizations, with nearly 6,500 loans of hot spots in 2025 through our general collection.

Helping Children: We promised to add more programming for children ages 0-5

In 2025, we offered over 280 in-person weekly Play and Learn programs at seven different locations, with 7,100 attendees. Sessions were conducted in Chinese, English, Somali, and Spanish. We also offered over 1,300 story times at our locations and in the community, with attendance of 43,000.

Maintenance: We promised to maintain buildings for the next generation

Renovations to the historically landmarked University Branch began in late January 2025 and made steady progress throughout 2025. 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. It is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2026.

We completed a long-planned roof replacement for the Greenwood Branch in the fourth quarter. The Columbia Branch retrofit project has been deferred to address a \$5 million General Fund budget reduction without impacting the Library's public services.

Our facilities and janitorial/custodial teams completed more than 12,700 work orders in 2025. Their work is essential to keeping our spaces safe and welcoming.

Administration: We promised to plan for the future of the Library

The Library completed the first year of its levy-funded 10-year strategic plan, which seeks to help the Library build the community's sense of belonging and the organization's resiliency. Highlights of 2025 Strategic Plan accomplishments include establishing a Story Squad literacy pilot program with Seattle Public Schools; hiring positions including two Special Collections curators, a director of Belonging and Inclusion, and an Environment and Security Services manager; and developing a new planning process for programs. We also conducted a community use survey with Olympic Research and Strategy (ORS). Results indicate that public perception of the Library have improved since 2018, and that the Library is making a positive impact on community members' lives.

Action required/requested: Board review and consideration of the 2025 Q4/Annual Levy Report for approval at the March 2026 Library Board meeting.

Q4/Annual 2025
The Seattle Public Library
LEVY REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q4/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.

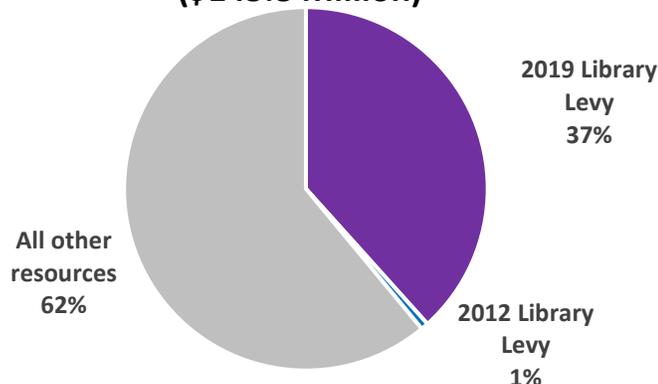
As part of its 2019 proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year Levy period. This report, which covers Levy activities and spending for 2025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

- 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

◆ Buildings, Technology, Sustainability

- 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

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

◆ Funding

- 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

- Established new review and planning processes for Library programs

◆ Capacity

- 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.

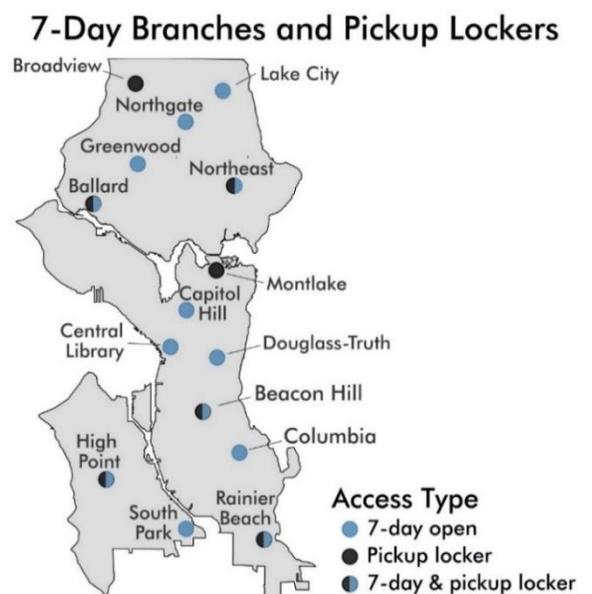
Total Levy spending in 2025 for the Hours and Access category was \$16 million.

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.

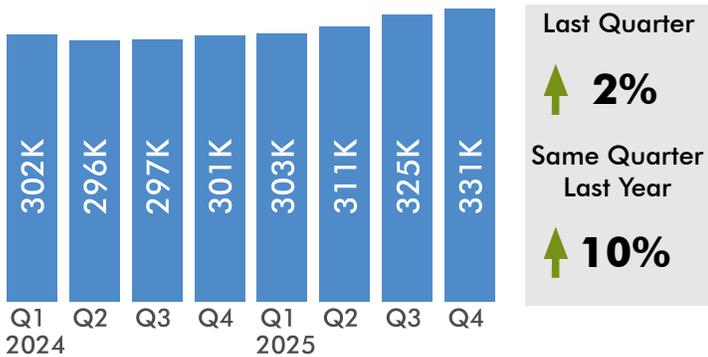
LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS AND ACCESS



IN FOCUS: Quarterly Usage Trends

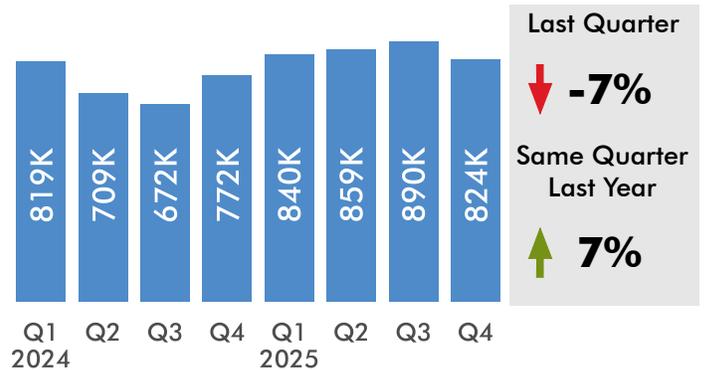
Active Library Users

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



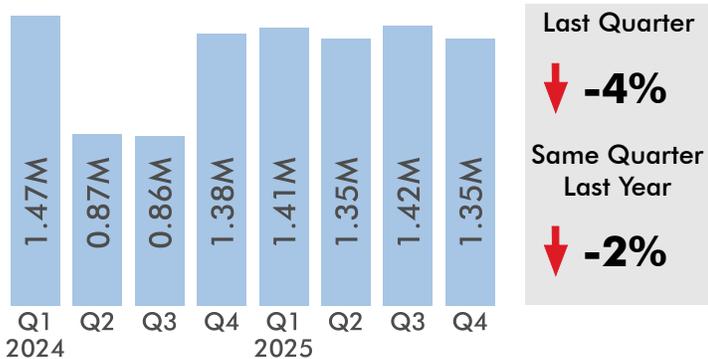
In-Person Visits

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



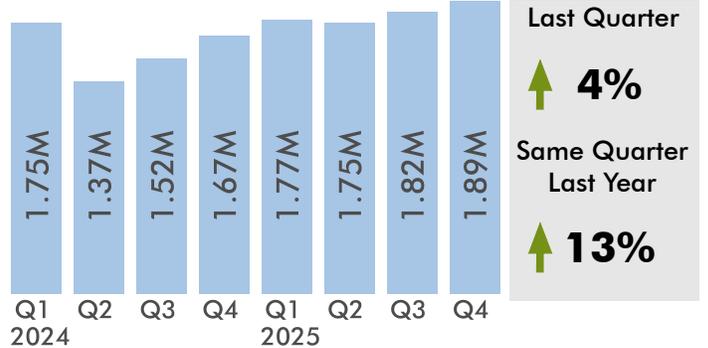
Physical Checkouts

Number of physical checkouts (including renewals)



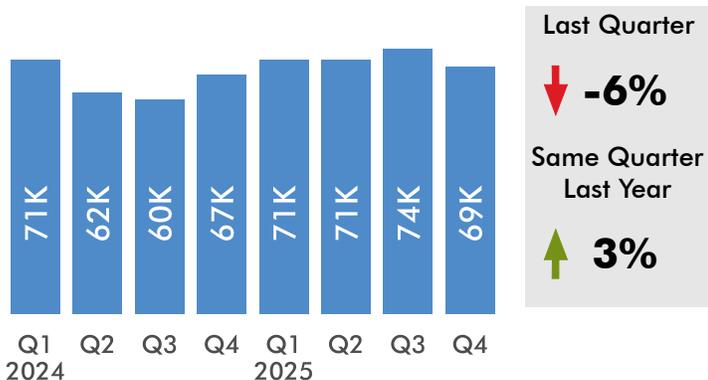
Digital Checkouts

Number of digital checkouts (including streams and views)



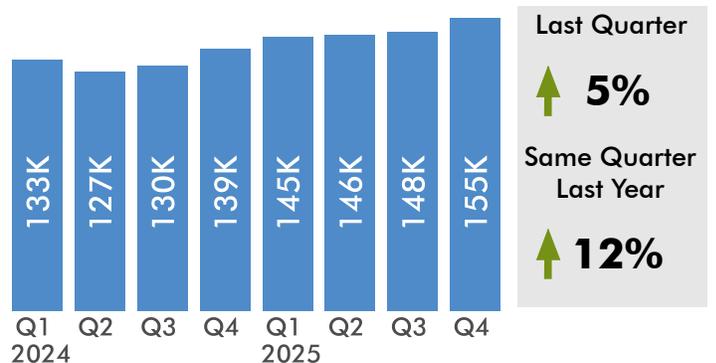
Borrowers - Physical

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 16,000 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

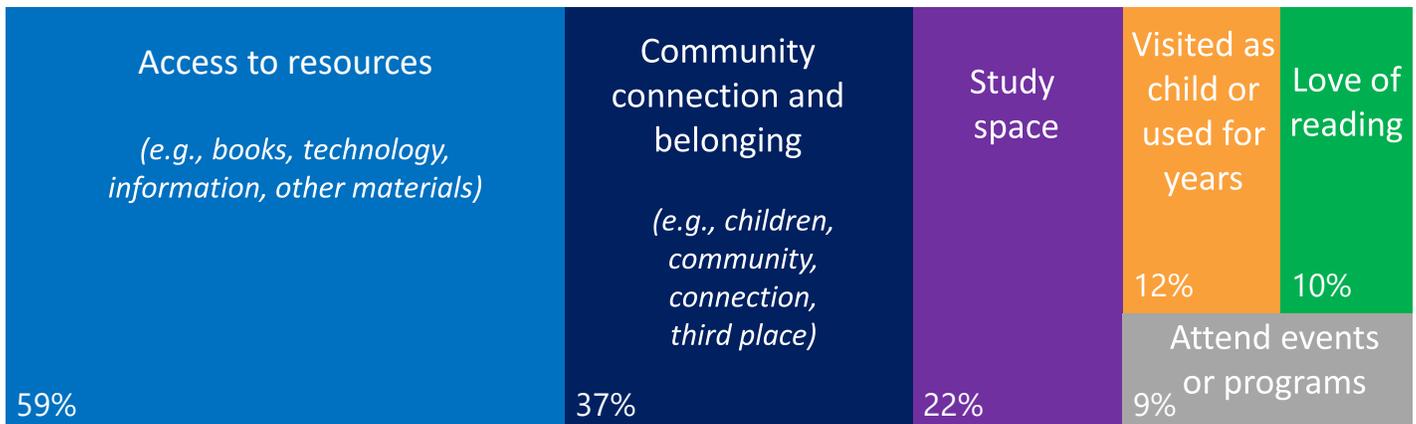
96% (+5) Welcoming to all

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.

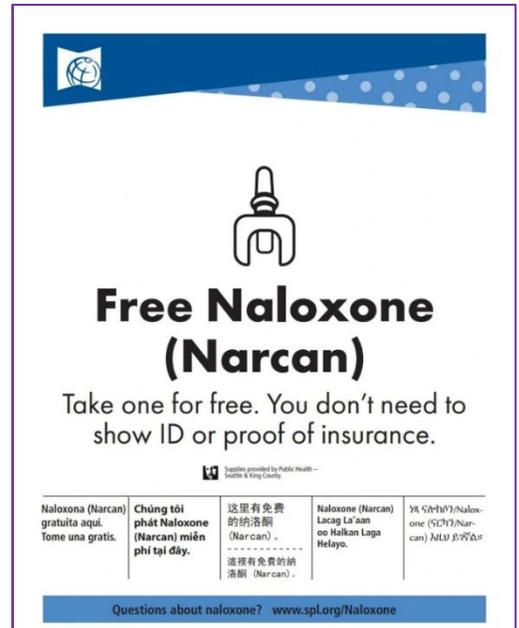
Food, health and transportation: Throughout 2025, we supported impactful branch programs such as a weekly FareStart Mobile Market at the NewHolly Branch, biweekly FamilyWorks Mobile Food Bank events at the Broadview and Green Lake branches; and ORCA LIFT events. We distributed 18,000 bus tickets and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

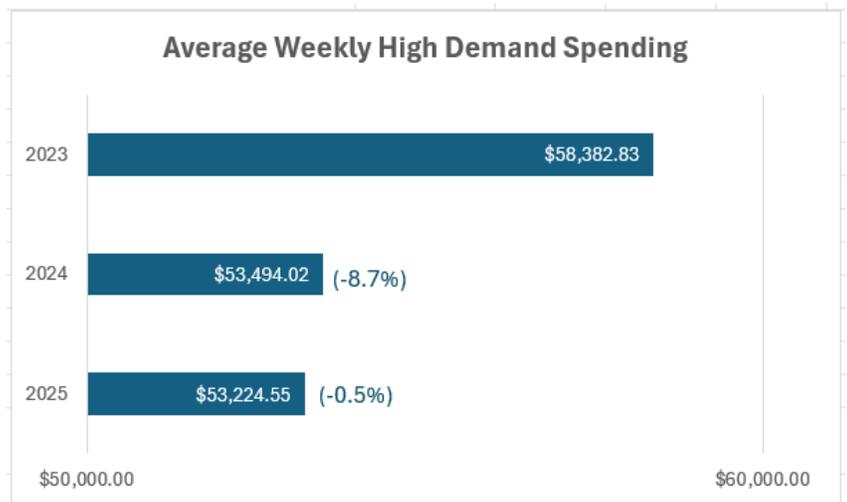
Because of the high cost of digital books compared to physical books, the Library has [made changes in recent years](#) to support growing digital checkouts while managing spending. In 2025, our weekly spending on multiple copies of high-demand e-books decreased compared to 2023.

 [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.

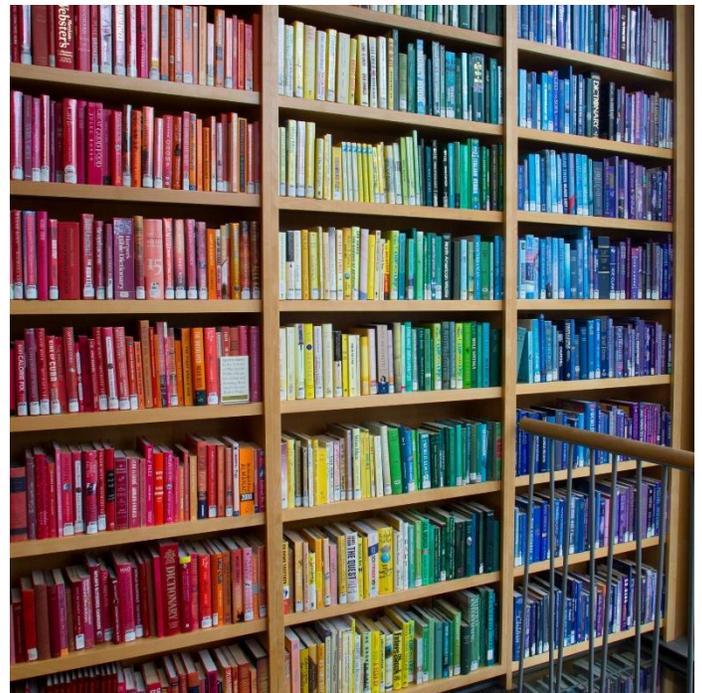
🟢 **Expanding language access:** In Q4, the Library added our first-ever [Portuguese language titles](#), a collection of 300 print books for children, teens and adults. We added these books to serve the needs of a growing number of Portuguese speaking immigrants and refugees, primarily from Angola. 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](#)



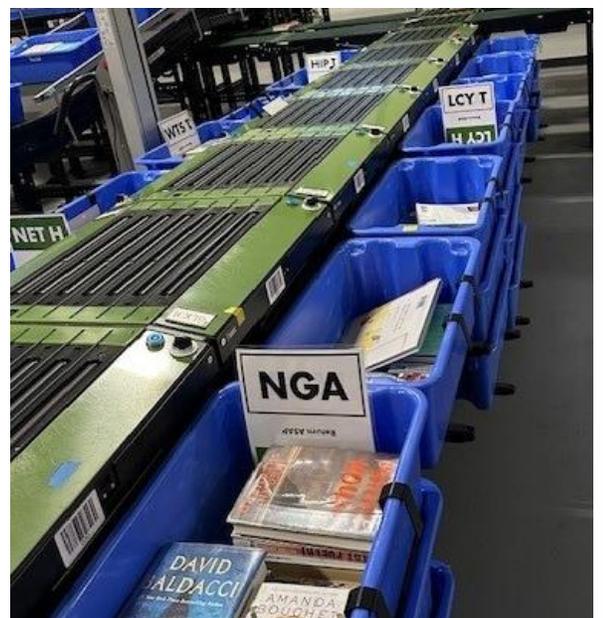


A pre-dawn delivery to the Columbia Branch.
Photo, The Seattle Public Library

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.

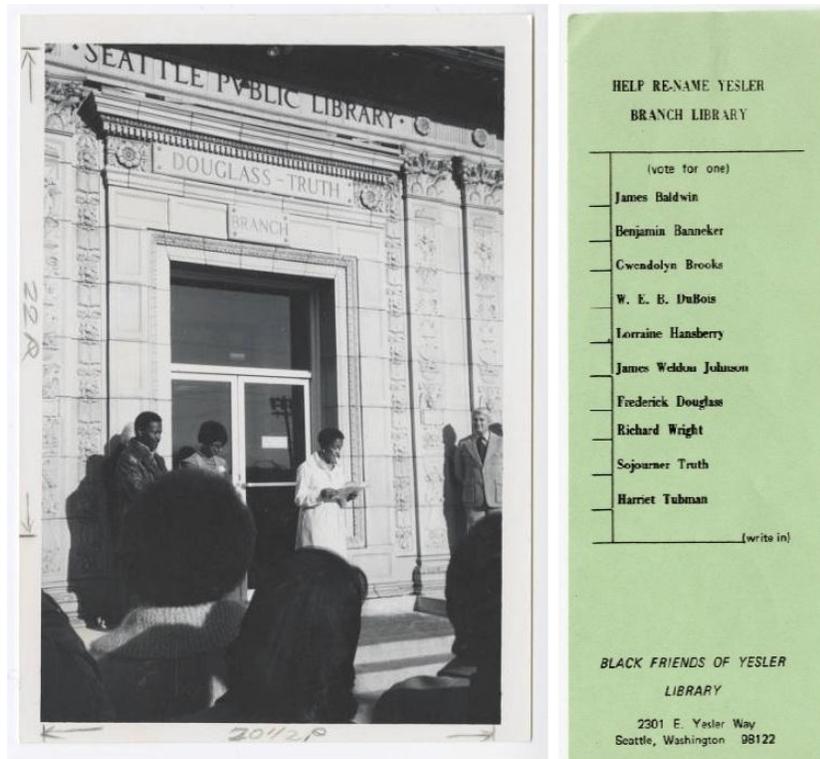
Seattle Room Digital Collections

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

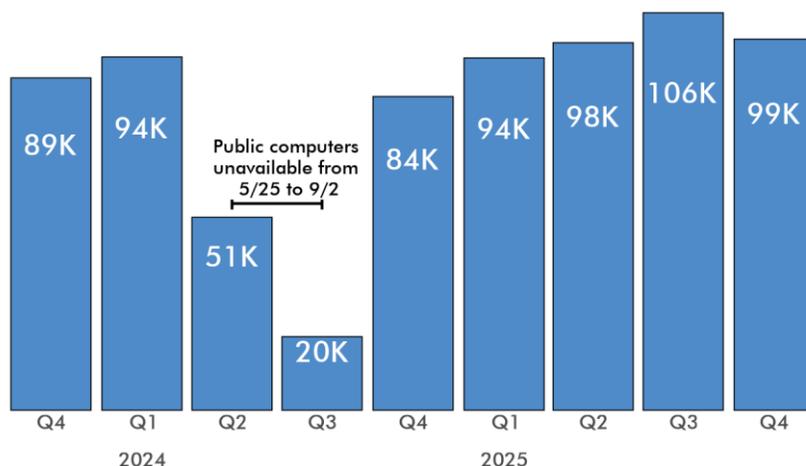
Maintaining access to technology and improving cybersecurity

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
-

Q4 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%



The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 26, 2026

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rick Sheridan, Institutional and Strategic Advancement Director
Rob Gannon, Administrative Services Director
Kai Tang, Library Experience and Engagement Director
Kiersten Nelson, Community Partnerships and Gov't. Relations Program Manager
Jessica Smith, Strategy and Policy Advisor
Laura Gentry, Head of Communications
Charles Wesley, Library Technology Officer

Re: Library Levy Replacement

2019 Library Levy

In 2019, Seattle voters passed a seven-year, \$219.1 million Library operating levy to maintain The Seattle Public Library's (SPL) core services, which were drastically cut during the Great Recession and necessitated the 2012 operating levy. The 2019 levy has five main promises: increase hours and access, provide more books and materials, support technology and online services access and innovation; maintain buildings through seismic retrofits, and boost early learning through Kaleidoscope Play and Learn.

The 2019 levy provides approximately one third of SPL's total budget, including nearly all of its baseline major maintenance budget, and expires at the end of 2026. If this levy is not replaced, the Library will face a major funding gap which would significantly impact current levels of service.

The 2019 levy, across the five key categories, enabled the Library to:

Hours and Access

- Add operational hours and stabilize schedules to provide increased predictability for patrons and staff.
- Support 14 locations being open seven days a week and 12 locations being open six days a week. (The University Branch Library will be open five days a week when its seismic retrofit is complete near the end of 2026.)
- Install pickup lockers at seven locations for 24-hour, seven day a week access.
- Eliminate fines for late returns.
- Renew automatically materials if not on hold for other patrons.
- Increase security staff with nine levy funded officers.

Collections

- Make significant investments in e-books and e-audiobooks to address growing demand. SPL is in the top 10 largest e-circulation libraries in the world.
- Expand our collection significantly, growing from 2.4 million items to 2.9 million items over the last seven years.
- Enhance the “Peak Picks” collection, which launched system wide in November 2017, creating immediate access for all patrons to current, popular and high demand materials.
- Increase access to local history resources by digitizing more of the Seattle Room Collection, growing to more than 33,000 items.
- Increase language access across the system. The Spanish collection is now present at all locations, and Dari, Pashto, Portuguese, and Ukrainian language collections have all been added.

Technology

- Support the Library Wi-Fi hotspot lending program by adding staff to manage over 900 devices, allowing patrons to “borrow” access to the internet at no charge – a critical resource in today’s tech-driven world.
- Release a new Library app to allow easier access for patrons.
- Accelerate our cybersecurity program to harden Library systems and protect access to information.
- Upgrade technology access including increased access to various meeting and program formats – in-person, virtual, or hybrid.
- Update network switches throughout the Library system to ensure better and more consistent access to the internet and our systems.
- Launch a new Integrated Library System (ILS) to meet new demands on our system and replace outdated technology with easier and more streamlined services to staff and patrons.

Maintenance

- Establish a regular preventive maintenance program for our buildings, inspecting our equipment and identifying and correcting problems before they became emergency repairs.
- Expand our in-house custodial service and support new cost-saving vendor contracts for floor, carpet and upholstery cleaning, escalator maintenance, and interior/exterior window washing at all branches.
- Complete needed capital repair through seismic retrofits of two historic Carnegie branches, Green Lake and University. These retrofits upgraded the exterior structure, remodeled interior spaces to meet community needs, and added ADA improvements to make the branches more accessible.
- Increase electrification of the Library system. 22 locations now have air conditioning, with the remaining five receiving funding from a FEMA grant to be completed in the next several years.

Early Learning – Kaleidoscope Play and Learn

- Host 300 sessions across seven branches to more than 7,000 participants annually. Kaleidoscope Play and Learn participants show high levels of satisfaction, with 83% of parent and caregiver participants reporting increased understanding of activities that help children develop school-readiness skills.

Public Input

In the spring of 2025, SPL conducted a number of human-centered design sessions with community partners and meeting room reservation users to better understand how patrons and partner organizations currently utilize The Seattle Public Library and how the Library can improve in the future. Additionally, a number of indirect or passive engagement sessions were conducted at SPL branch locations across the city, which solicited direct input from patrons about their experience and reasons for using the Library. The results from the facilitated sessions and passive engagement with patrons informed the development of the 2025 Community Survey.

In late summer of 2025, SPL completed a Library Community Survey to help understand residents' priorities for their library system. This community survey took two forms: an on-line and paper questionnaire in eight languages open to anyone who wanted to participate, and a statistically significant household survey mailed to 15,000 Seattle households. The mailed household survey received over 1,000 complete responses, exceeding the participation threshold to be considered statistically significant.

The survey indicated strong public support for the Library and confirmed that Seattle residents continue to support the core areas funded by the existing levy, including hours and access, collections and technology, children's programming, and facility and maintenance improvements for Library buildings. In addition, survey respondents provided guidance on how the Library can better support community and individual needs through expanded programming, sought increased selection and variety in collections, and recommended service changes and enhancements to physical and digital Library spaces. Specifically, survey respondents are interested in additional 24/7 pickup options, improved meeting room spaces and reservations, reduced wait times for physical and digital collections, and the ability to borrow non-traditional items from the Library.

Proposed Library Levy Replacement Package

On March 10, Mayor Wilson announced a proposed Library levy replacement package. This \$410 million, seven-year proposal seeks to replace the current levy expiring at the end of 2026. It supports the needs of The Seattle Public Library and its patrons and reflects the priorities of Seattle residents and Mayor Wilson. If approved as currently proposed, it would provide funding to maintain existing 2019 Library service levels, replacing the Library levy for another seven years, along with providing funding for needed enhancements which are described in more detail in this memo. Levy funding from 2027-2034 would be allocated across five levy categories as follows:

Hours and Access (\$218.4 million)

- Maintain hours to support 52 weeks a year operation.
- Increase security and emergency preparedness and add three new security officers. (\$7.7 million add)
- Increase funding support for programming and staffing by \$12.6 million.
- Establish an Office of Inclusion and Belonging focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. (\$2.4 million add)

Collections (\$58.5 million)

- Maintain our robust collection of physical and digital materials. (\$2.2 million add)
- Continue to buy more copies of popular materials and maintain the Peak Picks “no holds, no wait” collection.
- Continue to support our “Fine Free” program.
- Increase investment in e-books, e-audiobooks, and streaming and downloadable services for music, films, television, digital comics and magazines. (\$2.4 million add)

Technology (\$38.2 million)

- Continue to support our computing services (including computer, internet, and printing access).
- Provide equitable technology access, through technology such as Wi-Fi HotSpots, to ensure underserved communities are not left behind in an increasingly digital world.
- Enhance our cybersecurity systems by hardening technology infrastructure. (\$3 million add)
- Replace and upgrade our Capital Enterprise IT Equipment. (\$5 million add)
- Replace outdated enterprise software systems and support. (\$3.1 million add)
- Upgrade our mobile device management system. (\$1.2 million add)

Maintenance (\$85.9 million)

- Continue funding major maintenance work to keep existing facilities in good repair.
- Increase funding for the regular preventive maintenance program. (\$5.9 million add)
- Carry out seismic retrofit work at the Columbia Branch to protect this historic Carnegie-era building from earthquakes. (\$13 million add)
- Support priority and deferred maintenance to address potential life/safety concerns, replace end-of-life systems and infrastructure, and improve ADA accessibility. (\$10 million add)

Administration (\$8.97 million)

The cost of levy administration would be \$1,282,000 per year for a total of \$8.97 million over the seven-year life of the levy. It includes \$2.3 million for two additional full-time equivalent Human Resources staff.

Oversight

The Library Board of Trustees would continue its annual oversight of the Library levy and report to the Seattle City Council and the citizens of Seattle on Library levy promises and expenditures.

Next Steps

Tom Fay, executive director and chief librarian, requests that the Library Board of Trustees review and vote on a Library levy replacement resolution at its March 26 Board Meeting. The Seattle City Council’s Select Committee on the Library Levy will hold hearings on the proposal on March 25, March 31, and April 2 with a final vote potentially occurring by April 8, 2026.

Action required/requested: Board review and consideration and approval of resolution for proposed Library levy replacement at the March 26, 2026, Library Board meeting.

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC
LIBRARY BOARD OF
TRUSTEES RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION expressing support by The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees for a proposed Library Levy replacement to support access, hours, collections, services, technology and programs valued by Seattle residents, and to preserve the capital investments in Library buildings supported by the public.

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

WHEREAS, the Library plays an important role in the education of Seattle's youth through crucial literacy activities for young children, including story times, homework help, programs to retain and encourage learning over the summer, teen activities, partnerships with teachers and schools, and other vital services; and

WHEREAS, the Library's public computers and Wi-Fi provide free computer and internet access for Seattle residents, and Library staff are available to help residents find, evaluate and use information; and

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

WHEREAS, the Library helps level the playing field for underserved populations by connecting patrons to housing, food, health care and more; unlocking access to the collection by eliminating patron late fees; and providing internet access in city-sanctioned villages and more; and

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

WHEREAS, the Library has no dedicated funding source to keep operating budgets stable or keep pace with increasing maintenance costs; and

WHEREAS, the Library's reliance on the City's General Fund places it in competition for funding with other City of Seattle priorities, including public safety and services for the homeless; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, Seattle voters overwhelmingly passed a Library Levy with a 76% approval rate; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Library Levy provides approximately 33% of the Library's overall 2026 budget; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Library Levy expires December 31, 2026 and the loss of this funding source would have a major impact on core Library services and programs and the Library's ability to

maintain capital investments; and

WHEREAS, the Revised Code of Washington, RCW Chapter 27.12, and the City Charter authorizes the Library Board to oversee the Library's annual operating and capital budgets; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board recognizes the need for sustained revenue to support, maintain and improve core Library services, understands the current constraints on the City's General Fund and, therefore, supports a proposed property tax levy lid lift that would continue providing the Library with a revenue source that could be used in combination with General Fund and Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET); and

WHEREAS, in August 2025 the Library undertook a Community Survey to help understand residents', priorities for their library system; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board of Trustees reviewed Levy expenditures on a quarterly and annual basis for the past seven years and provided guidance on the Library's strategic direction; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2026, Mayor Katie Wilson transmitted legislation to the Seattle City Council for a \$410 million replacement levy from 2027-2034 to support the financial needs of the Library;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT:

1. The Library Board of Trustees, in collaboration with Mayor Katie Wilson, recommends the Seattle City Council approve no less than a \$410 million Levy replacement for the August 2026 Primary Election ballot.
2. Levy proceeds will be used, in combination with the annual budget appropriation of the City General Fund and REET to the Library, to support core Library services.
3. The proposed Levy supports continued funding for hours and access, collections, technology, and maintenance at 2026 services levels, along with Levy administration, at a cost of approximately \$410 million and includes the following added elements:
 - a. To ensure the Library promotes equity and access to opportunity, the Levy proposal includes increases of \$7.7 million for security and emergency preparedness, \$14.95 million for program staffing and support, and \$4.6 million across physical, electronic, and Peak Picks collections.
 - b. To ensure the Library is well-positioned for the future, the Levy proposal includes an increase of \$13 million for seismic upgrades to the Columbia branch, \$10 million for building life/safety, deferred and scheduled maintenance, \$5.9 million for custodial support, \$3 million for cyber security enhancements, and \$5 million for capital enterprise IT upgrades.
4. If approved by the City Council and voters, the Levy replacement would begin in 2027 and continue for seven years until the end of 2034.

5. To provide oversight, the Executive Director and Chief Librarian and the Library Board will submit to the City Council and residents of Seattle annual progress reports on the implementation of the Levy and how Levy proceeds were used to maintain and improve core Library services.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON THE 26TH DAY OF MARCH, 2026.

Yazmin Mehdi, President

W. Tali Hairston, PhD, Vice President

Carmen Bendixen, Trustee

Ron Chew, Trustee

Faith Pettis, Trustee



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: March 26, 2026

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director Administrative Services
Nicholas Merkner, Head of Finance & Accounting

Subject: **Library Generated Revenue Market Assessment and Planned Rate Changes**

Summary

The purpose of this memo is to discuss planned fee updates to three areas of Library operations:

- Electric Vehicle Charging Terminal rates
- Parking rates at the Central Library garage
- Private Room Rental rate schedule

The board has authorized the Executive Director and Chief Librarian to adjust fees—as long as changes are within 50% of the current rate. Modifications to the Electric Vehicle Charging Fee schedule exceed 50% and will require approval by the board in order to implement. Changes to Central Library Parking Garage and Room Rental rates do not exceed 50% and are included for informational purposes only.

A. Electric Vehicle Charging Fees

The Library was an initial participant in the City’s “Becoming Plug-in Ready” project, resulting in the installation of Eaton EV charging terminals at the Central Library in 2012. While these terminals have existed in our parking garage during this span, they have unfortunately been rendered largely inoperable due to a litany of service and ongoing equipment issues. 2012 also marks the last time the Library reviewed our fee structure to charge an electric vehicle—which currently sits at a flat fee of \$2.00 for 3 hours of charge time. The market has since largely moved away from a flat fee-based rate set and is now centered on a per kilowatt-hour (kWh) model. The cost per kWh approach accounts for differences in charging terminal capacity and provides clearer expectations for users regarding what the cost will be to charge their vehicle.

In 2024, the Library was awarded grant funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce to install new public charging terminals at five library locations (Beacon Hill, Green Lake, Broadview, Rainier Beach, and the Central Library). Most charging terminals to be installed

are classified as “Level 2” (rated at 6.6 kW per hour), although there are two “Level 3” fast chargers being added at the Central Library (rated for 100kW per hour). Construction and installation of these terminals is nearing completion, and they are nearly ready to be commissioned for public use.

Meanwhile, City Seattle Light has been developing their own EV charging network for use throughout the city—with many of their sites located in similar geographic areas as our library locations. So, when considering changes to the Library fee schedule, we reviewed City Light’s approach. We found the majority of their terminals use the per kWh model and are set at a utility rate of \$0.21 per kWh. **As such, we recommend revising the Library’s fee schedule to 1) use the per kWh model and 2) set our rate to align with City Light at \$0.21 per kWh.** This rate is not expected to generate excess revenue for the library, merely to cover the cost of electricity, processing fees, and administration of the program.

The above noted changes represents a more than 50% increase in the amount of this fee (Table 2) and as such, require approval by the Library Board of Trustees.

Table 2: Current Flat Fee Compared to \$0.21 per kWh Model

	Current	Level 2 (6.6kWh)	Level 3 (100kWh)
0 to 3 hours	\$2.00	\$4.16	\$63.00
up to 6 hours	\$4.00	\$8.32	\$126.00

B. Central Library Parking Garage

In reviewing rates for the garage, the Library maintains dual goals of providing access for patrons and generating revenue to support ongoing Library operations. The last time a rate review occurred for the Central Library parking garage was 2018, and in conducting the current market study, rates were compared with those of other downtown garages, while also considering the feasibility, desirability, and likely consequences of rate changes. Rate changes are planned for the following areas (full rate change schedule included as Attachment 1):

- **\$3.00 increase to the Early Bird¹ rate** (up from \$16 to \$19)
- **\$3.00 increase to all Weekday Parking Rates** (parking will remain free for visits of 20 minutes or less)
- **Flattening Evening Rates to a single \$7.00 tier and reducing Weekend rates to match as a single \$7.00 tier** (each currently carry two bands—one for 20 to 40 minutes, and one for 40+ minutes)

These adjustments are projected to generate **\$50,000 in gross revenues** (factors in a 7.5% attrition rate due to price increases). The fee changes are recommended to begin April 2026.

These changes are within the threshold for direct approval by the Executive Director and Chief Librarian. We will work with ABM to notify current parkers and update signage in the

¹ Early Bird is defined as vehicles that are in the garage before 9:30am and out prior to 6:00 pm

garage, and coordinate with other Library employees to update our website and post an internal announcement for staff.

C. Room Rental

The Event Services team reviewed the rental fee structure for room bookings at the Central Library and identified several good governance actions. These do not represent changes to the amount of fees users can be charged for renting our spaces and are revenue-neutral in nature. They will however simplify the existing rate schedule and eliminate reference to obsolete practices. These include the following (definitions for Event Services Use can be found on Attachment 2):

- Coming out of the pandemic, the Event Services team realigned how events were classified. Under this new structure, any time tickets are sold for an event the client is now categorized as “Corporate” use and therefore subject to room rental fees regardless of their business type. This change eliminated the need to separately identify ticket sales within the classification bands. The fee schedule can now be simplified to have the Mixing Chamber, Spiral 6, and Spiral 9 Meeting Rooms categorized as free to use by Non-Profit, Government, and Milestone Clients. **This change will not carry an impact on revenues generated by private events.**
- The current rates for the Central Library Auditorium have an optional charge for AV Tech support, however this type of charge is not optional, and AV Tech support is required for all bookings of this space. Event Services recommends simplifying the fee schedule to have this now represented as part of the baseline booking fee (Table 2). There are no additional changes to fee schedule at this time, and as such, **this change will not have an impact on revenues associated with rental of the Auditorium.**

Table 2: Current Rates Compared to Flattened Proposed Rate

	Current			Proposed (single rate)
	Space Cost	AV Tech	Total	
Non-Profit & Government Use*				
4 hours	\$500	\$400	\$900	\$900
8 hours	\$1,000	\$800	\$1,800	\$1,800
Milestone & Corporate Use*				
4 hours	\$600	\$500	\$1,100	\$1,100
8 hours	\$1,200	\$1,000	\$2,200	\$2,200

*Use classification definitions on Attachment 1

- The current room rental “Add-on Fee” schedule includes two obsolete line items in need of removal while also having one new, no cost item up for inclusion:
 - Remove “Media Carts” – these are no longer offered for room rentals with access to technology previously included on the carts now standard with each rental space.
 - Remove “Full PA” – this is no longer an option for clients. The Library only offers a single speaker system with two microphones.

- Add “FriendShop” – the FriendShop would remain open for private events to sell items to attendees. There is no surcharge for renters, this is only included to ensure there is communication between the Library and FriendShop staff.

These changes are within the threshold for direct approval by the Executive Director and Chief Librarian. We will update the published rate schedules on the Library website and communicate changes with impacted staff.

Action Required/Requested: Request Library Board review of rate schedule changes on EV Charging terminals, including the study and implementation of “Idling Fees,” for approval at March 2026 Board meeting. Information on parking rates and room rental rates provided for informational purposes only. Discussion and comments welcome.

Attachment 1

Garage Revenue Projections (at 7.5% attrition rate)

	Rate	Tix	12-Month Revenue			Rate	Tix	12-Month Revenue	
Early Bird	\$16	18,998	\$303,968		Early Bird	\$19	18,048	\$342,914	
Monthly Parking	\$315	16	\$60,480		Monthly Parking	\$315	16	\$60,480	
Weekday									
20 - 40 min	\$4	1,121	\$4,484		20 - 40 min	\$7	1,037	\$7,258	
40 - 60 min	\$8	743	\$5,944		40 - 60 min	\$11	687	\$7,560	
1 - 2 hr	\$12	2,487	\$29,844		1 - 2 hr	\$15	2,300	\$34,507	
2 - 3 hr	\$16	2,514	\$40,224		2 - 3 hr	\$19	2,325	\$44,184	
3 - 4 hr	\$22	696	\$15,312		3 - 4 hr	\$25	644	\$16,095	
4 - 5 hr	\$27	359	\$9,693		4 - 5 hr	\$30	332	\$9,962	
5 - 24 hr	\$32	1,631	\$52,192		5 - 24 hr	\$35	1,509	\$52,804	
Evening					Evening				
20-40 min	\$4	340	\$1,360		20-40 min	\$7	315	\$2,202	
Over 40 min	\$7	1,384	\$9,688		Over 40 min	\$7	1,384	\$9,688	
Weekend					Weekend				
20-40 min	\$4	1,033	\$4,132		20-40 min	\$7	981	\$6,869	
Over 40 min	\$8	6,562	\$52,496		Over 40 min	\$7	6,562	\$45,934	
Motorcycle	\$6	47	\$282		Motorcycle	\$6	47	\$282	
			Grand Total					Grand Total	\$640,739
								Proj Revenue Increase Scenario	\$50,640

Attachment 2

Definitions of Event Service Room Rental Classifications

Non-Profit/Government (former Class "A")

Rates apply to non-profit groups (501c3), government agencies, and City of Seattle departments

Milestone (former Class "B")

Personal or life events not tied to organizational goals

Corporate (former Class "C")

Business-related or for-profit events



The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 26, 2026
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083
Re: **March Union Report**

This month has brought frustration for many staff. The Urbanist piece brought forward concerns staff are feeling with the current state of the library. There was an opportunity for Library Leadership to open up more lines of communication with staff around this, but that did not happen. While a "chain of command" can be helpful in certain situations, it does not give staff the chance to speak directly to Management on topics that affect their jobs and communities and instead served to silence us. We have a lot to offer and there is a feeling that our expertise doesn't matter. While that may not be the intent of Library Leadership, that is the outcome of a lack of transparency and communication.

At two branches, patrons passed away and staff tried to perform lifesaving measures to resuscitate the patron that were unsuccessful in the end. Union Leadership can't say enough about how beautifully staff show up for the communities we serve. Library workers are increasingly being called on to fill the gaps left by the lack of social services available to our most vulnerable populations. And staff answer that call, often to the detriment of their mental and physical well-being. We want to give our deepest appreciation to all of our staff, especially those that worked diligently to revive the two deceased patrons, and our heartfelt condolences go out to all who knew them.

Action required/requested: Informational only.



The Seattle Public Library

February 2026 News Releases

Date	Title
25-Feb-26	The Seattle Public Library Joins One Book, One Coast, the West Coast's Largest Book Club, Connecting Across Three States
12-Feb-26	Dr. Ned Blackhawk to Present the Bullitt Lecture on American History at the Central Library on Tuesday, March 10
11-Feb-26	Bookish bet: Boston Public Library hosts The Seattle Public Library's Booklist after Super Bowl Wager
05-Feb-26	February and March 2026 Author and Community Events at The Seattle Public Library



The Seattle Public Library

February 2026 Media Coverage

Organization	Date	Headline	Details
PubliCola	27-Feb-26	In Rare Tragedy, Man Dies Inside Rainier Beach Library Branch	"A 41-year-old man died at the Rainier Beach library just after 3pm February 13 after library staffers tried but were unable to revive him with Narcan and CPR. The library shut down for the rest of the afternoon... The King County Medical Examiner's Office later reported that the man died of 'chronic alcohol use disorder,' not an overdose."
LA County Library	26-Feb-26	Coming This Spring: One Book, One Coast Unites 140+ Libraries for the West Coast's Largest Book Club Featuring George Takei	"LA County Library, Los Angeles Public Library, The Seattle Public Library, King County Library System, Multnomah County Library, and Long Beach Public Library will join more than 140 libraries across California, Oregon, and Washington this spring for One Book, One Coast, the largest book club on the West Coast."
The Urbanist	23-Feb-26	Seattle Library Workers Raise Alarm About Security Crackdown Hitting Homeless People	"Some library staff say that a new enforcement crackdown led by the Seattle Public Library's new head of security is turning librarians into part-time cops, and they're not happy about it."
KING 5	20-Feb-26	Olympics-inspired reading recommendations from Seattle Public Library - New Day NW	"Misha Stone and Lesley Garrett share a curated list of books that celebrate teamwork, triumph, and human potential."
Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce	20-Feb-26	Talk on history of Native activism	"Ned Blackhawk will present the annual Bullitt Lecture in American History on March 10, at the Seattle Public Library's Central Library."

International Examiner	13-Feb-26	Opinion: In the new year, let's scrub away some outdated ideas about the Chinatown International District	"While we're at it, we have one of the smallest libraries in the city. Let's expand the CID and get a larger library!"
ArchDaily	13-Feb-26	Why the Seattle Library Doesn't Have Floors? Seattle Central Library by Rem Koolhaas	"Can a library survive the digital age? Rem Koolhaas and OMA reimaged the Seattle Central Library as a "media manifold," where information is stored in a continuous, five-story Book Spiral. By breaking away from traditional floors and designing for a future of evolving technology, Koolhaas created a radical public space that remains one of the most influential buildings of the 21st century."
KUOW	12-Feb-26	Seattle Public Library intercepts Boston readers after Super Bowl bet	"The real winners of Super Bowl LX are the Boston readers who will now be exposed to some Seattle culture."
The Seattle Times	12-Feb-26	Unraveling mystery of early Japanese barbershop photo reflects Seattle library's care	"The barbershop of Kashiro Kawakami is shown circa 1911-14 at 125 Prefontaine Place S. One clue to the image's location is a painted sign across the street for Grand Union Hotel at upper left. Seattle Public Library's Sean Lanksbury delved into this image during an October talk to the library's foundation, which has funded archival work on the Paul Dorpat Collection."

The Seattle Times	11-Feb-26	Love 'Heated Rivalry'? 7 more hockey romance books to check out	"I know I'm not alone, because Kate Sellers, technical and collections services manager for The Seattle Public Library, says "Heated Rivalry" has undergone a sharp uptick in hold requests since the show premiered on Nov. 28. When we spoke, the e-book version had 1,183 holds on 163 copies. The audiobook is in the library's Always Available collection, meaning patrons can get it at any time. There were also 134 holds on the paper book, but Sellers says they've been waiting on additional copies to be shipped from a vendor to help meet demand."
MSN	10-Feb-26	Seattle Public Library schools the Boston Public Library with book recommendations for Patriots fans	"The Seattle Public Library gave the Boston Public Library some Seattle-themed book recommendations after the Patriots fell to the Seahawks in Super Bowl LX on Sunday."
Boston.com	10-Feb-26	Seattle Public Library schools the Boston Public Library with book recommendations for Patriots fans	"The book compilation has more than 35 titles, with one from former Seahawks defensive end Michael Bennett."
The Facts Newspaper	06-Feb-26	Send "Love Letters to the Library" at 90 Locations Citywide The Seattle Public Library Foundation Launches Campaign to Spread Love for SPL	"The Foundation is placing festive boxes and cards, designed by local artist Nina Painter, at 90 bookstores, breweries and bars, cafes, community centers, museums, and other locations around the city. Anyone can grab a card, write a note about why they love The Seattle Public Library, and drop it in the box – love letters will then be shared with library staff, displayed in branches, and featured on the Foundation's website and social media."
Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce	06-Feb-26	KUOW hosts library talks	"KUOW and The Seattle Public Library will present a new season of the 'KUOW Book Talks Live' series at the Central Library from February through May."

The Seattle Medium	04-Feb-26	Legacy, Leadership, And Wellness: BOBE Gathers Black Entrepreneurs In Seattle	"Black Owned Business Excellence (BOBE) convened entrepreneurs, business leaders, and ecosystem builders from across the Pacific Northwest last Sunday at the Seattle Public Library for its annual symposium. A statewide initiative, BOBE is dedicated to advancing Black-owned businesses while centering the health and sustainability of the people behind them."
EduTalkToday	01-Feb-26	Which Anthologized Writers and Books Get Checked Out Most Often From Seattle Public Library	"The most borrowed writers were not necessarily those most emphasized in traditional literary criticism. Instead, science fiction and genre writers dominated the list."
KUOW	01-Feb-26	Winter author series kicks off with Coll Thrush's examination of settler colonialism through shipwrecks	"The KUOW Book Club is reading "Wrecked: Unsettling Histories from the Graveyard of the Pacific" by Coll Thrush in February 2026. Thrush will join KUOW's Katie Campbell for a live discussion at the Seattle Central Library on Feb. 26, 2026."