

2021

The Seattle Public Library ANNUAL LEVY REPORT

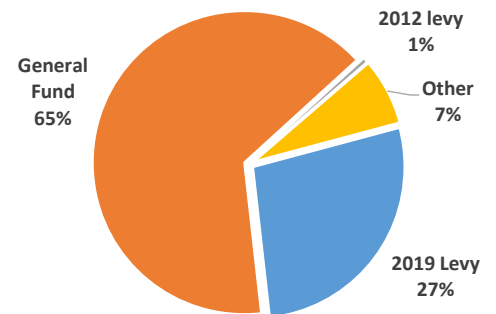


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Road to Reopening

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 \$123 million levy that expired at the end of 2019. In 2021, the 2019 Levy funded \$22.4 million (27%) of the Library's total spending of \$81.8 million. The City General Fund provided \$53 million (65%), the 2012 Levy provided \$0.4 million (0.5%) and other sources, including The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF), funded the remainder.

2021 Library Spending (\$81.8M)



While the Library laid out a clear framework for how 2019 Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services that had been funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive disruption across all sectors and impacted the way people interact with all institutions, including the Library. This report, which covers levy activities and spending for 2021 with a focus on the fourth quarter, describes the way the Library has responded to the pandemic and has shifted levy resources to meet emergent needs.

Beyond renewing 2012 levy commitments, the 2019 Levy provides support for additional Library hours (which have been delayed through 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic); elimination of overdue fines (implemented 1/2/2020); improved collections and technology; safer, cleaner buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and development of a plan for the future of Library service. As noted in this report, the Library also uses levy resources to leverage funding from other sources, in particular, The Seattle Public Library Foundation, to achieve levy objectives and stay connected and nimble in service to the residents of Seattle.

2021 Highlights: All libraries reopened, poised for more hours in 2022

At the beginning of 2021, the Library had 11 locations open for Curbside service. By mid-December 2021, we had reopened all 27 locations for in-building services, a massive effort, and our operating hours approached pre-pandemic service levels. By January 2022, after COVID-19 variants surged across the country, the Library was again forced to reduce operating hours, due to Omicron-related staffing shortages.

Despite the slowdown, we promoted 67 staff and filled 42 permanent and 63 temporary positions with new hires by the end of 2021. In the first two months of 2022, we hired an additional 19 permanent and 32 temporary employees. We expect to return to pre-pandemic operating hours and service levels in April and May of 2022 (with the exception of in-person programming and meeting rooms), and will begin adding levy-supported hours after that. In the fourth quarter of 2021, we began gathering data to plan our hours expansion. In October, we launched a public survey to help us understand how Seattle residents had shifted their use of the Library during the pandemic and their current preferences for Library hours. The survey, which was available in print and online in eight languages, received over 4,600 responses. Survey results provide current insights into how our patrons view Library programs and services and when they want to access them. As described in more detail in the body of this report, patrons indicated a strong preference for Library hours that matched the needs of their local neighborhoods over consistent hours system-wide, a preference for more weekend hours when compared to more weekday hours and some willingness to trade off some Library open hours for 24/7 availability of physical holds pickups. This information is crucial to determine how the Library plans to expand hours to meet the 2019 levy promise.

2021 also marked the beginning of a big transition for the Library. After nearly 10 years leading The Seattle Public Library, Chief Librarian Marcellus Turner left his position in March. Tom Fay, the Library's Director of Programs and Services, was appointed Interim Chief Librarian while the Board of Trustees conducted a year-long national search. Fay successfully steered the Library through many challenges in 2021. Fay was one of two finalist candidates for the position of Executive Director and Chief Librarian, and in March 2022, after an extensive process, the Board unanimously appointed him to the permanent role,

As has been the case since the start of the pandemic, the Library continues to focus on key levy investment areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children's Programming, and Maintenance, redirecting resources as appropriate.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS & ACCESS

Expanding access and equity during COVID-19

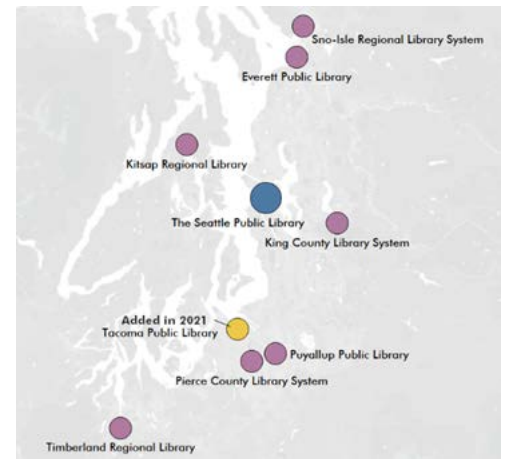
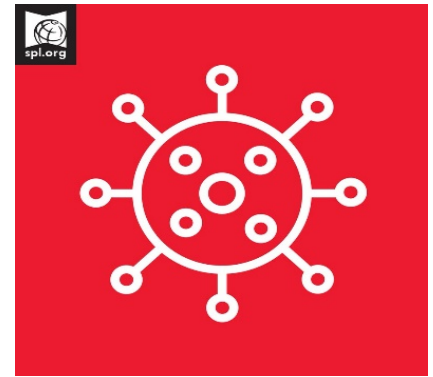
The Hours and Access category of the 2019 Levy supports operating hours in neighborhood branches and the Central Library; access to Library programs and services in the community; and outreach and engagement services throughout the city. Many elements of this levy category relate to increasing access, such as eliminating daily late fees and expanding open hours.

We started 2020 by eliminating fines for overdue materials and opening our branches one hour earlier on Sundays, the first step in what was intended to be more than 10,000 new Library hours each year funded by the 2019 levy renewal. However, because of COVID-19-related impacts on operations, we were unable to expand hours as originally planned through 2021.

Instead, as we did in 2020, we used levy resources first to support to Curbside service to provide patron access to physical books and materials under COVID-19 restrictions. Then, as staffing and safety protocols permitted, we reopened branches for in-building services. By the end of the year, all 27 Library locations were safely offering in-building services. Patrons once again entered buildings to pick up holds, use computers, charge their devices, browse collections, print and scan, get help from staff, and simply hang out and read.

Throughout 2021, we continued to adapt our policies and practices to safely increase access. In the first quarter, we modified our [online registration process](#) to make getting a new Library card a quick and seamless experience. In March, we added a new reciprocal borrowing agreement with the Tacoma Public Library. We now have [eight such agreements](#) with libraries in the Puget Sound region (see map at right).

We continued to make changes to our borrowing policies to improve access to Library resources and accommodate our patrons as they navigated the challenges of our pandemic service levels. Our fine-free borrowing supported by the 2019 Levy continues to provide important benefits to our patrons. During the pandemic, we temporarily increased how long physical items are on the holds shelf (two weeks instead of our one-week pre-pandemic holds policy) and extended the waiting period to suspend accounts with overdue items (one month instead of two weeks). We also implemented automatic renewal of checked-out physical materials. The system renews a patron's checked-out items up to three times as long as there are no holds on the item.



Libraries with reciprocal relationships with SPL

“I have not had a Library card in years and years. Thank you for making the application so simple.”

- Library patron

Increasing information access by reopening branches

Soon after the COVID-19 closure, planning began on how to safely loan physical materials to patrons and reopen our buildings. In 2020, we launched a new service model: a no-contact Curbside Pickup Service.

During 2021, the Library expanded Curbside pickup service then transitioned to in-building services. By the end of the first quarter we had increased the number of locations with Curbside pickup service from 11 to 15 and increased the number of return locations from 13 to 19. During the second quarter, we began shifting to in-building service and, by the end of the second quarter, we had re-opened 17 locations for in-building services, to the delight of our patrons, who entered our libraries on the first day of reopening with cheers and often tears.

In late June, just as we were reopening a number of our branches for in-building services, our region experienced an unprecedented heat event, with temperatures soaring to triple digits over three days. The Library played a critical role in providing cooling centers for our community. By redeploying staff across the system, we were able to open additional air-conditioned locations on the hottest days, providing needed respite from the heat to thousands of Seattle residents.

By the end of September 2021, we had reopened 26 libraries and had more than doubled open hours, from 588 weekly hours to 1,192. Most branches were open every day of the week. This expansion marked a major step toward full restoration of pre-pandemic Library open hours and was the result of funding provided by the Seattle Rescue Plan to restore Library staffing levels, which were reduced in 2020 and 2021 as part of citywide General Fund budget cuts.

In October, NewHolly, the final branch to reopen, once again opened its doors to the public. The reopening was welcome news for the surrounding community, particularly for students and other youth in the neighborhood that the branch focuses on serving. It was also a major milestone for the Library. (See Table 1 for reopening chronology by branch.)

In the second half of the year, the Library intensively hired to restore eliminated positions and allow for the return to pre-pandemic operating hours. We also added emphasis patrols at Library locations to keep patrons and staff safe in response to an increased number and heightened severity of security incidents. Unfortunately, with the surge of the Omicron variant, the Library was forced to reduce operations. During December, we had a number of unscheduled branch closures due to staff shortages, patron non-compliance with masking rules, vandalism and inclement weather (the last week of December was marked by extreme cold temperatures and snowstorms).

In January 2022, we formally rolled back hours at some locations on a temporary basis. As COVID rates decline, the Library anticipates gradually returning to pre-pandemic hours in April and May 2022.



Reintroducing our buildings to our community

As we reopened all of our libraries, patrons let us know how thrilled they were to be back in our buildings. Many have sent in unsolicited comments through our Ask Us email platform telling us how grateful they were, not just for the space and the services, but also for the kind, dedicated customer service they received from our staff.

“Thank you so much for providing the space and services that you do,” wrote one patron. “I’m currently going through a career transition, and it has been inspiring to sit in the Library to work, stay focused, and enjoy the company of strangers. You do great work -- thank you.”

“You have an amazing, diverse collection of books and DVDs,” wrote another. “[You have] easy access and always helpful staff, despite the tremendous stress they endure on the daily. We are so lucky to have this resource.”

As we reopened buildings, we made a concerted effort to re-engage our patrons and reintroduce them to our in-building services while also promoting our numerous digital programs and services.

In September in conjunction with Library Card Sign-Up month, we launched our “Hello Friends Rediscover your Library” campaign to target new patrons as well as encourage existing patrons to rediscover the Library. The campaign, which ran through the end of the year, highlighted many of the services the Library offers, and featured multilingual advertising in digital, print, radio, bus and train transit, as well as a station takeover at Mount Baker Link Station. Our messages were translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali and Amharic. During the campaign, the “Hello Friends” web page received 3,800+ pageviews, and we received over 21,000 Library card applications, including 89 in-language applications. [www.spl.org/Hello](http://www.spl.org>Hello)

“You make it so easy to borrow books, in large print and digital both. The problem is that I can't read fast enough! Thanks for making an old lady's life pleasant. My compliments to the staff at the High Point Branch for being friendly and helpful.”

- Library patron

Increasing information access with virtual programs and services

While the Library focused on reactivating our physical spaces, we also continued to hold virtual events as ongoing COVID restrictions prohibited the use of our meeting rooms and Library spaces for programming.

In 2021, we held an impressive 48 virtual author programs. Event highlights from the fourth quarter included a large-scale Seattle Reads event featuring “The Vanishing Half” author Brit Bennett; the Bullitt Lecture in American History with Laura E. Gomez, author of “Inventing Latinos”; and a fall guest curator series “Radical Self-Acceptance as Activism.”

In total, we hosted over 1,000 virtual programs, classes or events in 2021 ranging from author events and story times to weekly English conversation circles and Library to Business workshops. Over 22,000 people participated in our live programs in 2021 and these programs were watched at a later date through YouTube or other platforms over 19,000 times. Programs produced in 2020 were watched over 17,000 times in 2021.



Beyond offering virtual programs, we continued to enhance our website presence by making our website and numerous online services more accessible to all our patrons, especially non-English speakers. We launched the “Get Started with the Library” web pages and our online Library Card Application in Chinese as part of our systematic language strategy approach www.spl.org/ZH. Now these sections of www.spl.org are available in Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese as well as English. These sections provide patrons with carefully curated information to get the most out of the Library. Our Chinese “Get Started” web pages have had 1,800+ pageviews since their introduction in mid-October. We will continue this work with a paid advertising campaign to be launched in February 2022, to coincide with the implementation of Chinese transactional account notifications emails and texts.

At the end of the year, we launched our “Year of Wonder” campaign. Throughout 2022, we’ll highlight each season with a handpicked mix of programs, services and collections to celebrate the many wonders of the Library. We are collaborating with BIPOC local artists as part of this campaign, and will include printed materials in branches, as well as digital channels including social media, email and advertising. www.spl.org/Wonder

Providing resources to youth

As the COVID pandemic continued to upend school for Seattle students and race and income-based inequities became more apparent, the Library continued to offer virtual opportunities to help youth and families farthest away from educational and digital justice.

In direct response to community needs, and with financial support from The Seattle Public Library Foundation, in 2020, the Library launched a free, one-on-one virtual tutoring service for Seattle Public Schools students. Our subscription with Tutor.com provides students with live, multilingual academic support in over 300 subjects, 7 days a week. In 2021, students participated in over 3,000 virtual tutoring sessions. The service was primarily used by high school students, college students and adults, although we had nearly 500 sessions attended by students in grades K-8. We focused specific effort to reach younger students in three zip codes in South Seattle (98118, 98126, 98108) where the demographic based inequities were the highest by targeting a

marketing campaign to reach community partners, meal sites, and Seattle Super Reader schools in these zip codes.

To provide specific support to elementary school students, in September 2020, the Library used levy savings from program deferrals to hire to a project manager to support K-5 student success through 2021. The main goal of our K-5 programming efforts is to bridge existing race and income-based educational disparities by working with community partners to create culturally responsive spaces and resources that center the academic, social and developmental needs of youth.

We collaborated directly with six community agencies (Big Brother Big Sister MLK, Refugee Women's Alliance, Somali Family Safety Task Force, Somali Health Board, Washington Building Leaders of Change and the Delridge Neighborhood Development Association) and the Seattle Housing Authority to co-design K-5 Library programs and services.

In 2021, our co-designed programs reached 483 youth and families, offering them the opportunity to interact with authors, develop storytelling skills and engage in activities that affirmed their identities and cultures. To allow all families, regardless of income, to engage meaningfully in our virtual programs, we provided participants with learning supplies and materials in advance.

For example, we partnered with the Refugee Women's Alliance to co-design a seven-week summer program with 30 immigrant and refugee K-5 students, predominantly Latinx and Somali. This collaboration included children's librarian visits, distribution of correlated Library materials and books and a talk with award-winning author Victoria Jamieson. All students participating in this program reported an increase in awareness of Library programs, services and resources.

We also worked with Washington Building Leaders of Change K-5 Freedom School in Rainier Beach to co-design a five-week intensive program that centered storytelling, identity, culture, activism and joy. We hired and recruited a BIPOC teaching artist who led 34 BIPOC K-5 youth from South Seattle through weekly lessons culminating in a book of poems called "Myself, My Family and My Community."

Other programs included support of the Somali Health Board's Family Health and Literacy program, which reached over 100+ refugee and immigrant families in South Seattle; and a partnership with Seattle Housing Authority and the Delridge Neighborhood Development Association to engage 123 K-3 youth and families in NewHolly and Rainier Vista in culturally and language specific readings and art activities led by nine paid Seattle Housing Authority teen interns from the community.

"We need free tutors especially for very low income students. Even when libraries open, I prefer to have an online free tutoring because it's hard to go places at night and with no transportation. So online tutoring is very helpful."

-7th grade Tutor.com user

We leaned heavily on community partners for program recruitment and promotion. Partners were able to use strategies such as mass texting, school data, phone call reminders and community newsletters to reduce program barriers and increase success in reaching the intended audiences. One hundred percent of the K-5 youth and families served this year were from our prioritized audiences.

Our efforts to share in the design of our programs with our community partners resulted in deeper and more trusting relationships with BIPOC leaders and community organizations. All six community agencies we partnered with expressed interest in continued collaboration.

Surveying patrons about Library open hours

In preparation for adding levy-supported hours in 2022 and beyond, we launched a public survey in October 2021 to help us understand how Library use and patron preferences for open hours had changed during the pandemic. The survey, which received over 4,600 responses, was available in print and online in eight languages and was open for a four-week period. This survey asked some of the same questions as our 2018 survey to inform the 2019 levy proposal, but we also focused more sharply on the specific hours Seattle residents wanted their libraries to be open.

Survey responses indicated a strong preference for Library hours that match the needs of local neighborhoods over consistent hours system-wide; a willingness in many parts of the City to trade off some Library open hours for 24/7 physical holds pickups; more interest in additional weekend hours than in weekday hours before 10 a.m. or after 8 p.m., and, depending on the branch, a preference for Monday or Sunday closures over Friday closures for six-day-a-week branch schedules. It was clear from survey responses that different parts of the City had different needs. We intend to use the information gathered from the survey along with other data and considerations to determine how we will expand Library hours to meet the 2019 levy promise in 2022 and beyond.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: COLLECTIONS

Building robust collections in print and digital formats

The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintaining and expanding the Library's collection of physical and digital materials. The levy includes additional funding for e-books, e-audiobooks and streaming services; money to continue and expand the Peak Picks collection and buy additional copies of popular titles; and funds for the acquisition and digitization of local history items. In 2021, the levy funded 49% of the Library's spending of \$8.9 million for books and materials.

Digital collections reaching more people

The pandemic accelerated the long-term trend of patrons' shift from physical to digital materials. The Library now has 318,000 titles and 792,000 copies in its digital collection, including 30,000 copies we added in 2021. More than 137,000 patrons checked out e-books or e-audiobooks in 2021, including nearly 95,000 in the fourth quarter alone, an increase of 4.3% over fourth quarter 2020 and slightly more than last year when patrons had very limited access to physical materials.

We also continued to offer Freegal, Kanopy, Hoopla, Flipster and New York Times digital access to patrons to stream or download music, TV shows and movies, magazines and newspapers. More than 16,000 unique patrons used Kanopy, 13,000 patrons used Hoopla and 3,000 used Freegal to stream or download movies, comics, TV shows and music. Patrons also accessed our subscription magazine service, Flipster, more than 81,000 times and our New York Times digital database over 36,000 times. In total, patrons checked out nearly 6.2 million digital items, slightly more than in 2020.

Building physical collections while restoring access

In 2021, the Library loaned over 4.5 million physical items. We added 237,000 items to the physical collection, including over 18,000 copies of Peak Picks titles. In November, after all branches reopened, the Library resumed floating collections, a materials distribution model where materials are shelved in the branch where they are returned by patrons rather than a "home branch." Floating collections, which we use for highly browsed collections such as mysteries and DVDs, reduce the number of items in transit and can improve the browsing experience for patrons, as well as reduce staff time and expenses. We estimate by re-instituting floating collections, transit times are reduced by 3-5 days per item.

Peak Picks during a pandemic

Peak Picks – the Library's popular no-holds, no-wait collection of high-interest titles -- relaunched in August 2020 along with Curbside service. By mid-October 2021, Peak Picks titles were available at all Library locations after the last remaining branches opened their doors to the public. Peak Picks allows patrons to immediately check out popular titles that typically have long waits, as well as serendipitously discover interesting books.



The Library added 101 Peak Picks titles in 2021, including 21 in the fourth quarter. The most popular Peak Picks titles in 2021 were "Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know," by Adam Grant; the 2021 Seattle Reads selection, "The Vanishing Half" by Brit Bennett; and Kazuo Ishiguro's novel "Klara & the Sun." Copies of these Peak Picks titles were checked out more than 2,000 times last year.

Nearly 116,000 Peak Picks books were checked out in 2021, including 34,000 during the fourth quarter. The most popular titles in the fourth quarter were "Silverview" by John LeCarré (886 checkouts) and "Harlem Shuffle," by Colson Whitehead (868 checkouts). Checkouts in the fourth quarter were up slightly (3%) over the third quarter with circulation likely hampered by branch

closures due to weather as well as staff shortages related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Peak Picks remains one of the most popular services at the Library

Testing pick-up lockers

With the generous support of the Seattle Public Library Foundation, SPL purchased and deployed two holds [pick-up lockers](#) at Rainier Beach and High Point branches to enhance access to collections, while also testing a new technology for broader application. The units were installed in July 2021 and were available on a trial basis to the public in the fourth quarter. In early 2022, the lockers were pulled from service for hardware and software upgrades. We restarted our SPL Lockers service (www.spl.org/Lockers) in mid-March 2022.



Adding to local history collections

In 2021, we added 1,270 items to our digital local history and culture collections with additions to our [Black Culture and History Collection](#), [Covid-19 Community Collection](#), [Earshot Jazz Collection](#), [Northwest Photograph Collection](#) and [Seattle Historical Photograph Collection](#). Over the course of the year, our digital collections were accessed by over 37,000 unique users, an increase of 33 percent over 2020. These users visited the site over 51,000 times.

Highlights from the fourth quarter included the addition of the [Marjorie Sotero Photograph Collection](#) to our Black Culture and History Collection. This collection, which includes 43 photos showing social activities at Camp Jordan, Fort Lewis and Fort Lawton in the 1940s and 1950s, was amassed by Marjorie Polk Sotero, director of the Camp Jordan Service Club along with her sister, Kathryn Polk Lazard. Camp Jordan, an Army camp for Black soldiers which operated at First Avenue S. and Spokane Street in Seattle from 1944 to 1947, housed soldiers who drove troops from Fort Lewis and Fort Lawton to and from points of embarkation for overseas service; and loaded and unloaded of cargo between ships, trains and warehouses, taking on difficult and physical work with little recognition or glory. The collection includes photographs from dances and other entertainment events organized by the sisters.

We also started work on our Digital Heritage Grant from the Washington State Library for continuing digitization of our [Northwest Photograph Collection](#). We digitized 249 photos for the collection, including



Ernestine Anderson singing at Fort Lawton service club, February 14, 1950

views of the ill-fated [Mount Baker Lodge](#) which was constructed in 1927 and burned down in 1931; a series of photos showing scenes at [Tillicum Village on Blake Island](#) and a small collection of images featuring [Ernest Lister](#), who served as governor of Washington from 1913 to 1919, leading the state through the influenza epidemic and World War I.

We also now have over 12,000 items from our digital collections available through the [Digital Public Library of America \(DPLA\)](#), which is a collaborative effort featuring digitized historical materials from institutions across the country.

Another 2021 highlight was the addition of materials to the Seattle Room's Seattle Collection that document the experiences of underrepresented communities. During the fourth quarter, we purchased an album of 125 photographs from a dealer in Australia, featuring photographs of members of the newly-founded Hotaka Club, established in 1913 by 25 Japanese immigrants. The club ran reading groups, organized lectures and hosted outings for members and their families. Other recent purchases include the program for the 1936 farewell concert of Seattle's Japanese composer Shisui Miyashita at the Nippon Kan Theater; and a surviving piece of ephemera -- a movie ticket -- from the Minidoka Internment Camp, where American Japanese from Seattle and Bainbridge were incarcerated, was added to our growing collection of material documenting this painful chapter in our history.

Finally, we added a long-sought item -- the exceptionally rare 1890 cabinet photo of Kikisoblu (or Angeline), daughter of Chief Seattle, taken by Seattle photographer Frank La Roche.



Kikisoblu, daughter of Chief Seattle, 1890

In December 2021, the Central Library's [Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room](#) reopened to patrons by appointment only, two afternoons a week. Patrons could book up to two hours of time, and Special Collections librarians were available during appointments to assist patrons with their research needs.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TECHNOLOGY

Keeping our technology up to date

The 2019 Levy promises around technology include dedicated funding for digital equity offerings; replacing infrastructure for public internet access; replacing outdated technology for acquisition

and circulation; and maintaining/upgrading public technologies and the spl.org website. The Library spent over \$2 million of levy funds on Technology and Online Services in 2021.

Digital equity and the HotSpot circulation program

Internet access remained a critical need throughout the year for everything from job-seeking help to social connection to remote learning, as the pandemic continued to cause disruption to many of the services Seattle residents depend on. The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for the Library's HotSpot program. In 2021, the Library was able to leverage levy funding with additional federal resources to offer more hot spots in the community.

The Library offered 1,335 hotspots in 2021, including 775 that were available to all patrons via our catalogue and holds, and an additional 325 available to patrons and community partners through our outreach team. We loaned another 235 hotspots with the support of federal COVID relief funding to partners like the Seattle World School, the Chief Seattle Club, and Seattle Parks and Recreation's youth program. We also worked with the City of Seattle Human Services Department (HSD) to provide hotspots funded by HSD to residents of senior housing facilities. By the end of 2021, all Library hotspots were upgraded to the new Franklin T9 model and the 235 hotspots supported by leveraged funding were folded into our outreach program for 2022. Hot spots were checked out over 6,800 times in 2021.

In 2021, the Outreach Hotspot team worked to foster new relationships and reinforce existing partnerships. We worked in partnership with community-based organizations and groups providing direct support and services geared towards building power, skills, connections, knowledge, well-being and ultimately increasing access to opportunities in communities disproportionately impacted by the digital divide. In the fourth quarter, we began new partnerships with MENA X, a Middle Eastern/North African Exchange mentorship program led by students at Cleveland STEM high school and Neighborhood House High Point to support Ready-To-Work classes.

Our work was informed by ongoing community conversations, interdepartmental City workgroups and data from sources including, Seattle King County Public Health and the City's most recent Technology Access and Adoption Study. Through strategic partnerships, we centered people from BIPOC communities, immigrants, refugees, people experiencing housing insecurity, diverse linguistic communities, people with low/no income, members of LGBTQIA+ communities and survivors of domestic violence.

Close to 400 Outreach hotspots were loaned on a long-term basis through 24 partnerships that enabled participants to connect with a community of support and learn about relevant resources and information available at the Library and beyond. The Library team also shared key information about pathways to more sustainable long-term access to the internet and devices as

“OMG! The library hotspots have enabled our shelter participants to do EVERYTHING needed to safely shelter in place during the pandemic and beyond.... They've been an invaluable resource for our grassroots organization and our participants!

- SHARE/Wheel staff

low-cost and discount programs developed throughout the year.

Participants and partners shared heartfelt stories about what they were able to do with the support of this program, including attending virtual school, obtaining a GED, learning new skills, improving employment readiness, creating resumes, connecting with case managers, finding essential services, connecting with family and friends and finding entertainment.

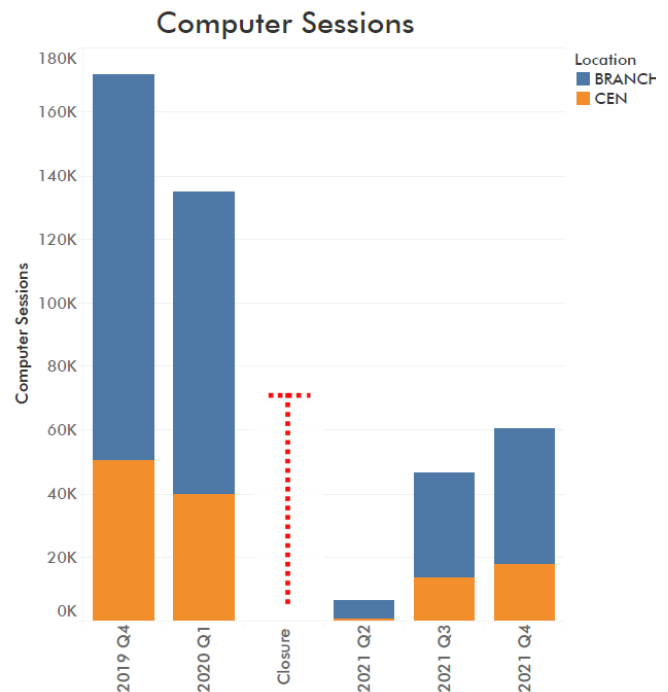
Replacing hardware and software

Our efforts to enhance Library technology continued with the reopening of all Library branches to in-building services. We made a limited number of public PCs and laptops available to patrons at all locations, with guidelines for social-distancing and safety. We provided a virtual assistance tool to allow Library staff to provide computer help from a distance. We installed new Wi-Fi technology at all branches to provide patrons increased coverage and faster performance. Public PC usage is gradually increasing, though it remains below pre-pandemic levels.

While reintroducing technology services in branches, we also continued to improve the remote work experience for our staff. We deployed WebEx virtual meeting software to all staff. We completed phase one of our Microsoft 365 upgrade project, which included migration of all email data from SPL servers to the Microsoft Cloud, and replaced outdated PCs, servers, network switches and other equipment to reduce hardware outages and costs.

In the fourth quarter, our technology team continued to support Library reopening by making additional public desktop and laptop computers available and reintroducing a reservation system for patrons to reserve a PC in advance. We reopened the LEAP (Library Equal Access Program) lab, which offers specialized computer workstations to accommodate various disabilities at the Central Library. We purchased new state-of-the-art scanners for several branches, with more planned. These units will be deployed in early 2022 and will offer high-speed scanning, copying and faxing, language translation to text and audio, and restoration of faded photos and documents.

We continued to upgrade PCs, servers, network switches and other hardware, though supply chain issues and computer chip shortages have caused delays in receiving new equipment. We kicked off the project to develop a strategic technology roadmap. The scope includes replacement of our Integrated Library System (ILS) that manages procurement and patron access to our physical and digital collections. The roadmap project is expected to complete in mid-2022.



LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Expanding early learning options for children

Planned programs delayed, virtual programs launched

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5. The levy goal was to add up to six additional Kaleidoscope Play and Learn programs each week at Library locations starting in June 2020, but this effort has been delayed due to the suspension of in-building programming through 2021 and well into 2022.

In 2021, our early learning programming manager continued to work with existing Kaleidoscope Play and Learn partners, which offered their weekly programs online. Many families commented that, especially during such a chaotic and stressful time, Play and Learn was a “bright spot” of their week. The Library promoted these live virtual programs through our website and provided resources to address technology barriers and materials/books needed to deliver programs. The Library also added 14 pre-recorded early learning videos created by one of our partners, the Chinese Information and Service Center, to SPL’s Kids’ YouTube channel that could be accessed anytime. These videos are offered in Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Vietnamese and Russian.

Beyond supporting our Kaleidoscope Play and Learn partners, the Library provided programming to children 0-5 by posting pre-recorded story times and children’s activities on the [SPL Kids’ YouTube channel](#). In 2021, we offered 95 different virtual story times in English, Spanish, and Mandarin, including 69 added in 2021. These programs were viewed over 14,000 times. We also offered 45 different early learning videos, including 25 added in 2021. These videos were viewed over 2,400 times.

Our children’s librarians also hosted 83 live virtual story times partnering with local preschools, including Neighborhood House at Yesler Terrace, High Point and NewHolly, ReWA, Chinese Information and Service Center.

With a continued moratorium on in-person programming, we continued to deliver our work in new and innovative ways. Community partners have repeatedly stressed the importance of providing

Early Learning Together

“The bilingual Play and Learn videos have provided immigrant families the vital opportunity to participate in early learning while honoring their cultural identities and home language.”

Chinese Information and Services Center staff

“tangibles” in addition to access to programs, such as books that are written by and for members of the community from which they identify. We devoted considerable effort to providing access to requested books in 2021. Library staff developed customized kits for families to support extended learning opportunities at home. We also expanded the availability of our Early Learning at Home booklets to Oromo.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

Protecting our investments

The 2019 Levy promised to maintain Library buildings, preserve funding for major maintenance and add resources to undertake earthquake retrofits for the [historic Columbia, Green Lake and University branches](#).

Routine maintenance: Keeping our facilities clean and safe

The Library spent \$1.5 million in 2019 levy funds for routine maintenance in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented some unique challenges and opportunities for keeping the Library clean, safe, and accessible. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, in 2021, the facility maintenance and janitorial/custodial teams successfully met the shifting operational demands of the Library.

During an exceptionally busy year, the facility maintenance team worked tirelessly to get the Central Library and 26 branches ready for reopening in-building services to the public. This required reconfiguring all branches from the floor layouts previously arranged for Curbside service, rearranging furniture for social distancing, installing Plexiglas barriers at patron access points and ensuring appropriate air circulation. Due to the diligence and expertise of the facilities maintenance team, the Library was able to reopen all of its locations to the public in 2021.

The facility maintenance team also managed two major moves for the Maintenance and Operations Center in 2021, culminating in the move to its new permanent location on Corson Avenue. By the end of 2021, the facility maintenance team had quickly programmed the Corson Avenue space to house all of the Library's facility and janitorial/custodial equipment and supplies.

While undertaking this work, this extraordinary team of 19 employees also performed more than 14,000 work orders. This work involved maintenance of the automated materials handling system, exterior and interior building improvements and maintenance, electrical and mechanical work, fire/life safety checks, ground maintenance, vertical transportation repair and maintenance, plumbing and roof repairs, and undertaking repairs to address a wide-range of property damage due to vandalism. This work was essential to keeping the Library operational, safe and open to the public.

It was also a busy year for the janitorial/custodial team, particularly around issues relating to restroom service, expansion of in-building services and cleaning up branch exteriors impacted by unsanctioned encampments. Most importantly, this team led the enhanced cleanings that were central to our public health response to the spread of COVID-19.

As the Library prepared to reopen to the public, the janitorial/custodial team spent countless hours deep cleaning the Central Library and 20+ branches — scrubbing steps, risers, vents and paths, pressure washing exteriors, and removing graffiti to get our libraries ready to open their doors again to the public. The need was particularly acute at the Central Library due to large and frequent gatherings at the Central Library's Spring Street plaza, where the team continually worked to remove graffiti, trash and litter. At the Central Library, Ballard Branch, and other Library locations, the dedication and commitment of the janitorial/custodial team was crucial to maintaining a safe and welcoming atmosphere for patrons and staff.

As COVID-19 continued to spread throughout our communities, the janitorial/custodial team was always there to provide enhanced COVID-19 cleaning to ensure staff were safe to return to the building after a reported COVID-19 exposure. In addition to the routine clean-up work that the janitorial/custodial team manages, there were more than 1,200 additional cleaning requests made of the team to keep our libraries clean and safe.

Without our facility maintenance and janitorial/custodial teams, we would not be able to keep our libraries open. Their dedication and hard work amid the fear and uncertainty of the pandemic enables the Library to provide the services our patrons and the community rely on.

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

The 2019 Levy provided \$6.8 million in 2021 budget authority and \$3.6 million in carryforward authority for major maintenance. The 2012 levy provided an additional \$3.2 million in carryforward authority. Due to supply chain issues, labor shortages and other pandemic-related construction delays, only \$2.1 million of 2019 levy funds and \$0.2 million of 2012 levy funds were spent.

During the fourth quarter of 2021, the Library continued progress on several larger projects. The Green Lake Branch seismic retrofit has entered the permitting phase. The roof replacement project at the Queen Anne Branch has received approval from the Landmarks Board and the Library has been issued a construction permit. We are finishing Queen Anne roof bid documents so we can conduct the public bid in time for favorable weather conditions.

As noted earlier, the Library has completed its move to the Maintenance and Operations Center space acquired earlier in 2021. The space continues to take shape, as we build out the space and plan for additional improvements that will increase the site's functionality.

The construction phase of the Douglass-Truth Branch exterior access improvements project was scheduled to begin in early Q1 2022, but the timeline has been delayed because of a strike by concrete delivery drivers. Construction documents and the bid package have been completed for the Capitol Hill Branch roof and mechanical systems replacement project, and the public bid package was issued in March 2022.

The second public bid for the multi-site ADA restroom compliance project has been extended into Q1 2022 to allow for contractor responses. The construction phase of the Montlake Branch parking lot ADA accessibility project has reached substantial completion; final punch list items should be completed during Q1 2022.

In addition to planned projects, the Library continues to address unexpected and emerging issues. Emergency repairs to replace failing HVAC equipment at the Broadview Branch have been completed and permanent replacement equipment is scheduled to be installed Q1 2022. Glass panels at the southwest corner of the Central Library near Fourth Ave and Madison, damaged by a previous automobile accident, were replaced in Q1 2022. Madison Street repairs necessitated by a sewer leak near Central Library are still being negotiated with the City's Department of Transportation.

Much like in 2020, most Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) encountered unfortunate delays during 2021. Widespread supply chain issues played a role in slowing -- or temporarily suspending -- progress, as did labor shortages created by the ongoing COVID pandemic. Heightened construction inflation has also added pressure to already tight project budgets. It's unclear whether 2022 will finally see these issues recede.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead

The unprecedented events of the pandemic have changed what Seattle residents want and expect from the Library and how they are using our programs and services. Some of these changes, such as increased reliance on virtual services, are likely to be permanent. In the year ahead, we will assess how we can best use levy dollars to deliver on priorities and meet emerging needs.

As you'll read in our 2022 first quarter report, our staff continued to adapt, enhance, and launch services and programs to help our community respond to the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Here's a quick preview:

- Selection of Tom Fay, Interim Chief Librarian as Chief Librarian
 - Omicron impacts on pre-pandemic service restoration and Library's plan for levy-supported expansion of operating hours
 - Plan for expanded levy programming for at-risk youth and children 0-5
 - Relaunch and expansion of pickup lockers
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2021 Financials

The Library spent \$22.4 million of 2019 Levy proceeds and \$368,000 of 2012 Levy proceeds out of a total of \$81.8 million from all sources in 2021. There were some significant revisions to the Library's budget over the course of the year.

Due to a steep decline of City revenues and a sharp increase in spending related to the pandemic, as part of the 2021 budget process, the City reduced the Library's general fund resources by \$5.8 million (10%) from the projected 2021 baseline. The 2021 budget was built on the assumption that the Library would not return to pre-pandemic operations before July 2021. In June 2021, the City Council approved an allocation of \$1.1 million in American Rescue Act funds to support reopening Library facilities for the remainder of the year and, in November, the City Council approved Mayor Jenny Durkan's proposal for full restoration of the Library general fund budget in 2022.

Spending tables below reflect budget realignments. Unspent funds will either carryforward into the 2022 budget or will be re-appropriated in future budgets.

2019 Levy	2021 Revised Budget*	2021 Exp	Available	% Spent
Hours & Access	11,797,118	10,630,080	1,167,039	90%
Providing Books & Materials	5,958,677	5,831,118	127,559	98%
Technology & Online Services	2,734,188	1,966,043	768,145	72%
Building & Facility Support	2,022,713	1,451,633	571,080	72%
Administration	516,335	290,972	225,363	56%
CIP **	12,477,723	2,087,424	10,390,299	17%
Children's Programming	277,323	153,130	124,193	55%
Total	35,784,076	22,410,400	13,373,677	63%

*\$4,604,076 in total carry-forward authority

**includes Major Maintenance and Information Technology capital projects

2012 Levy	2021 Revised Budget*	2021 Exp	Available	% Spent
Providing Books & Materials	138,000	137,999	1	100%
Technology & Online Services	479,999	55,109	424,890	11%
Buildings & Facilities Support	35,000	23,038	11,962	66%
Administration	-	-	-	N/A
CIP	3,691,203	151,876	3,539,327	4%
Total	4,344,202	368,023	3,976,179	8%

*\$4,206,202 in total carry-forward authority

Table 1. Service restoration by location since COVID-19 closure

	Restroom Service	Book Return	Curbside Pickup	In-Building
Ballard Branch	April 2020	July 2020	August 2020	June 2021
Beacon Hill Branch	April 2020	July 2020	November 2020	April 2021
Broadview Branch		July 2020	August 2020	May 2021
Capitol Hill Branch	April 2020	March 2021	March 2021	July 2021
Central Library	April 2020	July 2020	August 2020	June 2021
Columbia Branch		July 2020		June 2021
Delridge Branch		June 2021		June 2021
Douglass-Truth Branch		July 2020	August 2020	June 2021
Fremont Branch		August 2021		August 2021
Green Lake Branch		July 2020		July 2021
Greenwood Branch		October 2020	October 2020	June 2021
High Point Branch		July 2020	August 2020	June 2021
International District/Chinatown Branch		June 2021		June 2021
Lake City Branch		July 2020	August 2020	April 2021
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch		September 2021		September 2021
Magnolia Branch		Jan. 2021	Jan. 2021	June 2021
Montlake Branch		September 2021		September 2021
NewHolly Branch		October 2021		October 2021
Northeast Branch		July 2020	Oct. 2020	July 2021
Northgate Branch		Jan. 2021	Jan. 2021	July 2021
Queen Anne Branch		June 2021		June 2021
Rainier Beach Branch		July 2020	August 2020	June 2021
South Park Branch		March 2021	March 2021	June 2021
Southwest Branch		November 2020	November 2020	April 2021
University Branch	April 2020	June 2021		June 2021
Wallingford Branch		September 2021		September 2021
West Seattle Branch		April 2021	April 2021	July 2021

Q4 expansion