

2022 Annual  
The Seattle Public Library  
LEVY REPORT



Year of Wonder art by Kellie Kawahara-Niimi

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Expanding services and navigating transitions

### 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.

In 2022, the 2019 Levy accounted for \$43.6 million (34%) of the Library's total revised budget of \$129.2 million. The City General Fund accounted for \$67.3 million (52%), and other sources, including The Seattle Public Library Foundation, federal grants, and Library fund balance provided the remainder. The Library spent \$93.6 million (72% of its revised budget) in 2022, including \$23.8 million of 2019 Levy funds and \$2 million of 2012 Levy funds. Most of the levy budget underspend was related to multiyear projects in the Library's Capital Improvement Program and those funds carry over into 2023.

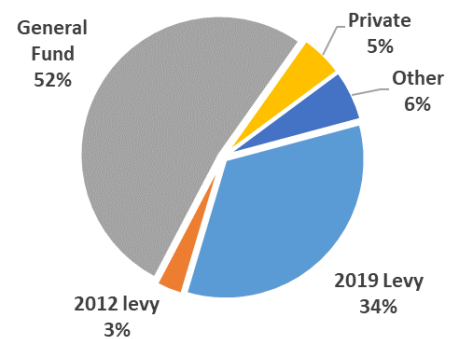
As part of its proposal to voters, **the Library laid out a clear framework for how 2019 Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services that had been funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year levy period.** This report, which covers levy activities and spending for 2022 with an emphasis on Q4, continues the series of quarterly levy 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 Library hours; elimination of overdue fines; improved collections and technology; safer, cleaner buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and development of a plan for the future of library service.

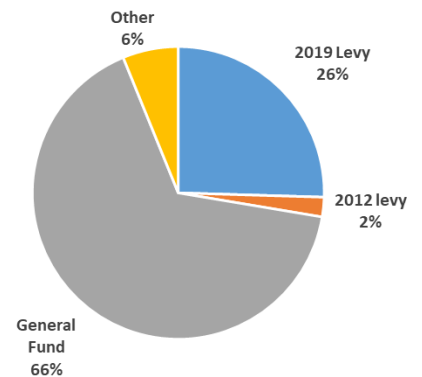
### 2022 highlights: staffing and weather challenges

In 2022, the Library experienced staffing, operational and environmental challenges that were similar to other government agencies, businesses and organizations around the region, country and world. The ripple effects of COVID-19 continued to disrupt day-to-day operations. COVID challenges were compounded by extreme weather in both summer and winter, which resulted in unexpected branch

**2022 Library Revised Budget (\$129.2 M)**



**2022 Library Spending (\$93.6 M)**



closures at a time when we were already experiencing staffing shortages. Our goals within this challenging environment were to keep most locations open every day, gradually increase hours and service levels, and offer our patrons a robust portfolio of resources and services that they could access both in person and online.

As you'll read in this report, we have continued to adapt to our new operating environment to meet the needs of Seattle residents in the levy investment areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children's Programming and Maintenance. Although we again deferred the levy promise of expanded hours, we restored some in-person programming and laid the groundwork to make more in-person services available in the years to come, including our community resource specialist program for youth and adults and our weekly Play and Learn programs for children ages 0 - 5.

## **Planning for the future of the Library**

Over the course of the year, Executive Director and Chief Librarian Tom Fay focused on guiding the Library in advancing the priorities he had outlined at the beginning of the year. These included:

- developing a sustainable building improvement strategy;
- creating and implementing an organizational roadmap that advances equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility;
- engaging with community members to inform the future of Library services;
- preserving intellectual freedom in Library collections, programs and services;
- maintaining safe and inclusive spaces where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Fay will present the Library's 2023 Goals and Priorities to the Library Board of Trustees in early 2023.

In Q4, Fay began wrapping up the Library's Strategic Foresight process, which invited community partners, staff and other key Library stakeholders to envision the likely future impacts and potential scenarios facing of the Library in the next 10 years. This report will be presented to the Library's Board of Trustees in Q1 2023, and it will be shared with the Library's strategic planning consultant, [Territory North America, Inc.](#), which was selected in the final months of 2022. Informed by the Foresight process and stakeholder and community engagement, Territory will help the Library develop a new long-term strategic plan.

In Q3 and throughout the Strategic Foresight process, Fay worked with consultant Houston Foresight to engage patrons, staff, stakeholders, and community in discussing the future of the Library through workshops, interviews and surveys. Similar outreach and engagement work will be conducted in 2023 with Territory and the Strategic Planning process. Fay also held Community Conversations in Q3 at the High Point and Rainier Beach branches, which patrons and community partners attended and shared feedback on everything from how Library meeting rooms can be used for Library services they'd like to see in the future to how the Library conducts community outreach. Additional Community Conversations may be planned for 2023.

### Opening doors and increasing access

The Hours and Access category of the 2019 Levy supports operating hours in neighborhood branches and the Central Library; providing 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 to Library services through measures such as eliminating late fees and adding open hours. The revised levy budget in 2022 for the Hours and Access category is \$13.9 million.

We started 2020 by opening our branches one hour earlier on Sundays, which was intended to be the first step in adding more than 10,000 new Library hours each year funded by the levy. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, unfortunately, we have had to defer our promise of providing additional open hours as we continue to work toward re-establishing pre-pandemic service levels.

At the start of 2022, our locations were operating at 95% of our pre-pandemic schedules. Due to a surge in cases in the winter, however, in late January, we temporarily reduced schedules to 75% of pre-pandemic hours. By the end of March, we were able to restore hours to 93%, but another COVID surge forced us to reduce hours again at the beginning of July. Through the summer, Library locations' scheduled hours were at 90% or more of our pre-pandemic levels; libraries, however, were only open at about 87% of our pre-pandemic levels due to unexpected closures in non-air conditioned branches related to heat as well as ongoing staffing issues. By the end of the year, except for a week of extreme weather in late December, we had stabilized actual open hours at around 90% of pre-pandemic schedules.

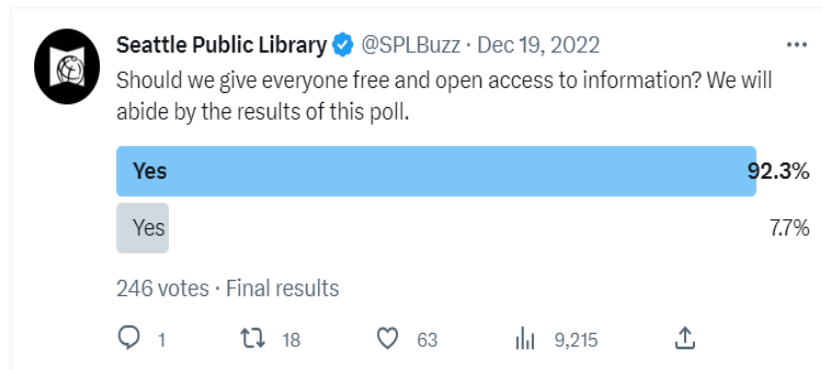
**“Shutting down the branches proved simpler than ramping back up.”**

- Andrew Harbison, SPL Director of Public Services, quoted in the [Seattle Times](#)

Throughout the year, we worked hard to communicate schedule changes to the public. We created a new page on our blog, [spl.org/today](https://spl.org/today) that provides up-to-date information on unexpected closures or changes, and updated our [Hours and Schedules web page](#) to also provide up-to-date alerts. As the Library's operating hours have stabilized, patrons are returning to our branches to check out books and other resources. Over 113,000 people checked out physical Library materials in 2022, compared to 84,000 in 2021, an increase of 34%. We are still below our pre-pandemic baseline of 158,000, but in-person checkouts are steadily increasing as we add hours and restore in-person programming.

As patrons return to the Library, our marketing staff have realigned promotional strategies to increase engagement, especially among young adults. The team developed customized content for each of our four main social media channels – [Facebook](#), [Spanish Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). For Instagram, for example, we began a strategy of creating short videos (90 seconds or less) that provided a behind-the-scenes look at Library

operations (see this [day in the life of a student assistant](#)), promoted specific events in ways that would resonate with our followers (such as this [Legendary Children video series](#)) or aligned promotion with what [was trending](#) on Instagram. On Twitter, we used timely, in-the-moment content humor to showcase the Library’s brand ([see this crafty tweet](#)).



A creative approach for our Library Card Sign-up Month campaign in September featured retro-inspired graphics and other unexpected imagery and visuals to promote the Library, which we can continue to evolve to engage audiences in 2023. During September, nearly 6,000 people signed up for Library cards.

## Reducing barriers to Library services

Beyond opening doors, the levy supports improving access to Library services for everyone, especially those who face barriers to using Library resources. A key element of our 2019 levy included the elimination of overdue fines for Library materials, which had disproportionate impacts on lower-income communities.

With levy funding, in January 2020, we [stopped charging fines](#) and eliminated all past due balances associated with late fees. This had the immediate impact of restoring access for nearly 18,000 patrons whose accounts had previously been suspended. The percentage of patrons with suspended Library accounts due to overdue items decreased by half — from 10% to 5% — which has remained steady throughout 2022. This was accomplished without impacting access to the collections. In 2022, Library items were returned, on average, six days before they were due, similar to when late fines were in place. Return rates in 2022 for books and other items were also similar to 2019, with 87% of items returned on time or early in 2022 compared to 88% in 2019.

“Being able to reassure people they’re OK to return books without a punitive policy or letting them know there’s no need for them to feel shame helps transform a negative experience into a positive one.”

- Bo Kinney, Circulation Services Manager, quoted in the [Seattle Times](#)

Unfortunately, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic shortly after the elimination of fines counteracted some of the expected impacts of the policy change, specifically the expectations that lapsed patrons would return to the Library and that use of the Library’s collection would

increase. Throughout 2022, we have seen overall Library use steadily increase since our pandemic closure but there are still disparities. Evaluation of use data since 2020 shows that Library patrons living in the lowest-opportunity neighborhoods (as defined by the City's [Office of Planning and Community Development](#)) have been slower to resume borrowing Library materials post pandemic than residents of higher-opportunity areas. We plan to conduct additional research with patrons to better understand what barriers to Library use still remain, and what steps we can take to address them.

In addition to eliminating late fees, we have eliminated other Library fees, including the request fee for Interlibrary Loan materials. This change has increased the number of patrons using the [Interlibrary Loan service](#), which allows Seattle residents to request materials from any library in the world. We continue to evaluate financial policies and are reviewing debt collection practices for lost items in 2023 with the goal of further reducing financial barriers to access while maintaining our responsible stewardship of the Library's collection.

Beyond reviewing our borrowing policies, we are trying to reduce barriers for patrons who speak languages other than English. As part of a Limited English Proficiency pilot program, in the fall of 2022, we installed five Language Access kiosks at branches that serve multilingual patrons and provide patrons with materials in their native language: International District/Chinatown, Beacon Hill, South Park, Columbia and Lake City branches. An additional kiosk will be installed at the Northgate Branch in Q1 2023. The kiosks include our core brochures that have been translated in three languages, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese. In addition, we have translated the "Get Started with the Library" brochure into Somali and Amharic.



Language kiosk at the Chinatown/  
International District Branch

## **Relaunching priority in-person programs and services**

The Library continues to make strides in bringing back in-person services. We restarted our popular in-person tutoring program, [Homework Help](#), at six branches in September. Seventy-five trained volunteers provided a total of 62.5 hours per week of academic tutoring and social-emotional learning support for students in grades K-12 at Columbia, Douglass-Truth, High Point, Lake City, NewHolly and Rainier Beach branches. Over 290 students attended 900+ Homework Help sessions between September and December 2022.

In determining where to host Homework Help sessions this past fall, we evaluated school data and community assets to ensure we were continuing to prioritize locations that serve BIPOC youth and families furthest away from economic and educational justice. Based on recent surveys of our Homework Help participants, we are reaching students who live in households where a language other than English is spoken at home (88%) and who attend schools where 40% or more students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (40%).



Homework Help restarted at six branches. Photo - Anthony Martinez

Surveys also indicate that Homework Help is helping these students. Seventy-seven percent reported that the program helped them get better grades and 74% said Homework Help helped them complete their schoolwork. In 2023, we will expand the program to two more branch locations – South Park and Northgate – and expand hours at three existing locations.

## **Building an in-house Social Services team**

In 2022, we hired staff for our new Social Services team, which includes a social services librarian, a senior community resource specialist and a community resource specialist, funded by the levy (not yet hired), who will be the expert on services for youth up to age 26. This team provides expertise to the Library on social service resources, coordinates with other providers, works closely with our security team to support staff in de-escalation and trauma-informed practices and assists patrons in need of referrals or who are in crisis.

With the addition of this team, we have shifted from a contract model (with Downtown Emergency Service Center) to an in-house model. Our hope is that this shift will promote greater integration with our structure and services, more flexibility and longer staff tenure.

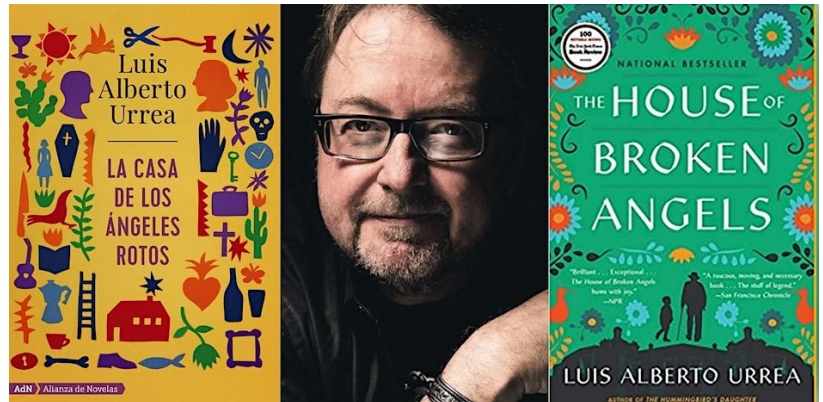
In November and December, the Social Services team provided 99 referrals and support to patrons at the Central Library in housing, food, clothing, mental health, employment and other areas. We also distributed emergency winter supplies through branches and the Level 5 Mixing Chamber at the Central Library. Over 270 individuals received supplies out of the Mixing Chamber alone, providing needed warmth during December's record cold days.

As an example, Library staff built a relationship with a couple who were experiencing homelessness and dealing with serious physical and mental health issues. The Library provided them a tent, sleeping bags, and food appropriate for their medical condition. This support helped the couple stabilize enough to access a Veterans Administration (VA) Supportive Housing voucher and, with the help of the Lived Experience Coalition, find hotel accommodations until they were able to move into their VA permanent housing support.

Our Social Services team is also focused on building the capacity of our frontline staff to better address the needs of our patrons. They have created many resource guides and lists for staff on topics including food access, gender-based violence support, eviction prevention and where to get assistance completing forms, and emergency shelters.

## Library programs continue to be offered in multiple formats

We continued to offer in-person programming in our libraries and in the community, hosting several notable events in the fourth quarter. In mid October, we held our first in-person Seattle Reads program since 2019, featuring “The House of Broken Angels” by Luis Alberto Urrea. [Seattle Reads](#), which is funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF), offered three public events, including one in Spanish. These events drew audiences of between 40 and 115 people. The event at the Central Library was live-streamed and watched by 90 additional people. The Levy provided additional copies of the title to the collection, including physical copies as a Peak Picks selection and digital copies through the Always Available collection.



We resumed our monthly programming of Ladies Musical Club Concerts at the Central Library in October and the West Seattle Branch in November. Since September, we have offered the Low Vision Book group at the Central Library.

We also reactivated gallery spaces at the Central Library. The Library is committed to creating a platform for regional artists by supporting the Washington artist community and acting as a pathway for upcoming artists to show their talent, gain experience and profit from their artistic point of view. In December, we opened a [six-week exhibit](#) at Central Library in the Level 8 gallery, featuring the works of the local artists we worked with throughout the year. We actively seek out BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists to highlight the experiences of traditionally under-represented people as well as encourage art that expresses the artist’s “own voice.” The exhibit was well-received and 75+ patrons visited the opening artist reception.



Year of Wonder Artist Exhibit, Level 8 Gallery, Central Library



In addition to bringing programs back to our branches and the Central Library, we have re-established our presence in the community. In 2022, library staff visited preschools to offer outreach story time, elementary schools to promote the Summer of Learning and Global Reading Challenge programs, middle and high schools to support reading and literacy efforts and tiny house villages to support digital literacy.

As we restore in-person programs and services, we continue to offer essential services and programs in virtual formats. We offered over 100 virtual programs in the fourth quarter, and over 400 for the year including weekly English classes, workshops to support aspiring entrepreneurs and art classes for people over age 50. In November, we offered the Bullitt Lecture in American History featuring Pulitzer Prize winning historian Ada Ferrer on her book “Cuba: An American History.”

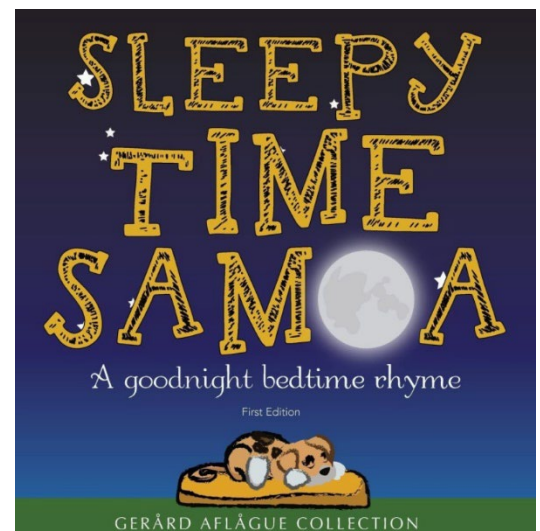
## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: COLLECTIONS

### 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; continuation of Peak Picks; and funds to support the acquisition and digitization of local history items. In 2022, the 2019 Levy provided 45% of the Library’s total spending of \$9.5 million for books and materials.

#### A more inclusive collection

In 2022, the Library conducted diversity audits of its print and digital collections. Working with vendors for print books (Ingram, Baker & Taylor) and digital books (OverDrive), the Library added 867 titles and 1,800+ copies to the collection that increase representation by BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ authors, along with titles promoting greater understanding of disability and neurodiversity, substance abuse and addiction, and equity and social issues. We also added 20 titles and 85 copies to the children’s collection with some fiction and nonfiction titles focusing on the Pacific Island nations of Samoa and Tonga. To ensure our collection maintains its diversity, we’ve added software to allow us to monitor the collection on a quarterly basis.



#### Digital collections reaching more people

An increasing number of library users continue to access our electronic resources. Over 151,000 patrons downloaded more than 4.7 million digital books (e-books and e-audiobooks) through OverDrive in 2022, including 108,000 in Q4 alone. These annual numbers represent a 10%

increase in users and an 8% increase in items checked out compared to 2021. Use of our streaming services held steady in 2022, with over 16,000 patrons using Kanopy, our video streaming service, and nearly 14,000 using hoopla, our service for streaming music and comics. E-materials accounted for 6.4 million (52%) of 12.3 million total circulation in 2022.

We purchased nearly 110,000 digital copies during 2022, 12.5% more than we purchased in 2021, creating a selection of new materials of greater depth and breadth. We also used levy funds to provide unlimited access during September and October to the e-book and e-audiobook versions of “The House of Broken Angels” by Luis Alberto Urrea in advance of the Seattle Reads programs. During this period, this title was checked out over 6,000 times, making it one of the most popular items in our collection in 2022.

## **Building physical collections, adding language, and making holds available 24/7**

In Q4, patrons checked out more than 1.4 million physical items (including renewals), bringing the year’s total to nearly 6 million, up 32% from 2021. More than 113,000 people checked out physical Library materials in 2022, compared to 84,000 in 2021, an increase of 34%. We added over 203,000 physical items to our collection using funds from all sources. As patrons return to physical materials, we continue to deliver on our levy promise of more materials when patrons want them.

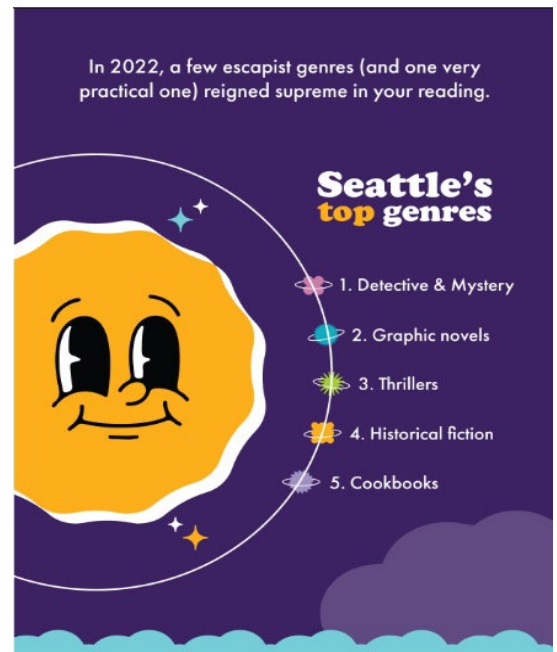
[Peak Picks](#) – the Library’s popular no-holds, no-wait collection of high-interest titles funded by the levy — celebrated its 5-year anniversary in 2022. In 2022, we added 112 Peak Picks titles and over 13,000 copies, including 30 new titles in Q4 alone. Q4 fiction highlights include “Afterlives”, Nobel Prize-winner Abdulrazak Gurnah’s latest novel about an East African family fractured by German colonization in the 1800s; Bonnie Garmus’ blockbuster debut about a woman scientist in the 1960’s, “Lessons in Chemistry”; “The Passenger” by Cormac McCarthy; and the dystopian novel by Celeste Ng, “Our Missing Hearts.” Nonfiction highlights include “I’m Glad My Mom Died”, Jennette McCurdy’s provocative memoir about being a child actor with a domineering stage mother; “Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands”, Kate Beaton’s graphic novel/memoir chronicling her experiences as a woman working in the mines of Northern Canada; and “Seattle from the Margins: Exclusion, Erasure, and the Making of a Pacific Coast City”, Megan Asaka’s history of the Emerald City told through the lenses of labor, race and migration.

Checkouts of Peak Picks continued to rebound in Q4, and November’s circulation topped 13,000, the highest monthly total since March 2020. For the year, nearly 31,000 people checked out Peak Picks copies over 141,000 times, up 22% from 2021. Since the collection’s inception, Peak Pick copies have been checked out more than 800,000 times.



To help tell the story of how the community used the Library in 2022, our marketing team created an engaging infographic spin on Spotify's year-end tradition called "Your [2022 Checked Out.](#)" We distributed it on our website, in a holiday\_email to more than 200,000 subscribers and on social media. The infographic and related content, such as our year-end blog post, also sparked interest in several media stories, including on KUOW and in the Seattle Times.

With the generous support of SPLF, the Library purchased and installed [holds pick-up lockers](#) at Rainier Beach and High Point branches in 2021. These lockers provide access to our physical collection when branches are closed by allowing patrons to pick up materials at any time of day. In 2023, we will add lockers at Northeast, Beacon Hill and Broadview branches. Two of the new lockers are funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through the Washington State Library and a third is being funded by SPLF.



## Adding to local history collections

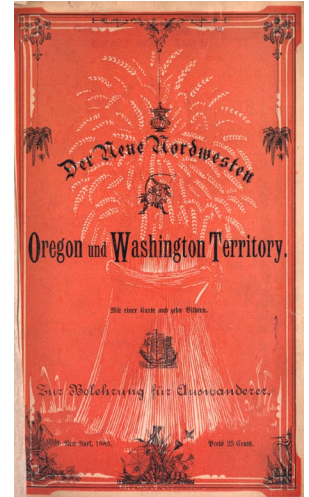
In 2022, we added over 1,100 items to our digital local history and culture collections with additions to our [Black Culture and History Collection](#), [Seattle Historical Photograph Collection](#), [Northwest Photograph Collection](#), and [Covid-19 Community Collection](#). Over the course of the year, our digital collections were accessed by over 40,000 unique users, an increase of 8 percent over 2021. These users visited the site nearly 54,000 times.

Highlights from Q4 include the addition of the [Maid Adams Collection of Seattle Congress of Racial Equality Materials](#) to our [Black Culture and History Collection](#). Maid Adams was member of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) during the 1960s. The collection includes a variety of rich materials including [picket signs](#) created for CORE's boycotts of local businesses with racist employment practices and advocacy around the integration of schools; correspondence and clippings from the [Crosstown Bus Campaign](#), which advocated for the establishment of better bus service for the Central District, resulting in the creation of the 48 bus line; posters for CORE fundraising events including [James Baldwin's 1963 Seattle speaking engagement](#); and materials from national organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and The Black Panthers. This is part of a grant-funded project supported by the Washington State Library that will continue through April 2023.



In November, we completed archiving and cataloging the digital collection of the [Helix](#), Seattle's first underground newspaper which was published from March 1967 to June 1970. The paper was founded by Paul Dorpat with the help of many others, including Walt Crowley, who was a regular contributor and later editor. The contents cover events such as police misconduct and brutality, riots in American cities, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and others, the Vietnam War, debate over Native American fishing rights, and other local issues such as the fight to save Seattle's Pike Place Market.

We continued to acquire physical material of significance to our region's history to the Seattle Collection, including 600+ postcards, 400 photographs, 110 books and pamphlets, 50+ menus and several important maps. Important additions in Q4 include a photograph a young Black student being bussed as part of Seattle's desegregation program and several photographs of the African American East Madison/East Union Mardi Gras Festival parade in the 1950s. We also acquired a rare 1883 illustrated promotional pamphlet, *Ner Neue Nordwesten*, intended to encourage German migration to Washington and Oregon Territories by touting the advantages of the area with information on available real estate, land laws, and routes to the region.



Pamphlet encouraging German migration, 1883

Of special interest, over the course of the year, we also acquired 250 early Seattle business cards, which provide insight into the commercial history of the city. Finally, we added several important archival collections, including the archives of the Seattle Music Study Club (founded 1938), the Seattle Antiquarian Society (founded 1916), the Peter Blecha Ravenna Park Collection, and the papers of Seattle activist Dennis Saxman (2003-2021).

## 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 and upgrading public technologies and the spl.org website. Since the start of the pandemic, our presence online has grown. The levy provided \$2.5 million in budget authority to support technology operating expenses in 2022 and \$5.7 million, including \$2.5 million in carryforward, for the technology capital program.

## Digital equity and the HotSpot circulation program

Internet access is a critical need for everything from job-seeking help to social connection to remote learning. The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for our [HotSpot program](#), and we have been able to leverage levy funding with additional Foundation and federal funds to offer more hotspots in the community.

The Library offered 1,270 hot spots in 2022, including 775 that were available to all patrons via our catalogue and holds, 30 that were available through our Mobile Services team and an additional 465 available to patrons and community partners through our outreach team. Hot spots were checked out over 8,200 times in 2022 and average wait times for a hot spot through our catalogue stayed steady at 3-4 weeks over the course of the year, with an average of 1.5 patron holds per hot spot, the lowest holds to items ratio for any item in the Library's collection.

Through strategic partnerships, the Outreach Hotspot team centered people from BIPOC communities, immigrants, refugees, people experiencing housing insecurity, diverse linguistic communities, people with low/no income, people impacted by the legal system, members of LGBTQIA+ communities and survivors of domestic violence. The team worked to strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations and groups that provide support and services to communities disproportionately impacted by the digital divide. This year, we strove to build more direct connections with the people they serve. In 2022 we worked with 17 different partners, including four new ones in 2022: Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center, Lambert House, University Beyond Bars and Chief Seattle Club – Eagle Village.

Many of our partners continued to operate virtually due to accessibility needs and ongoing safety measures in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Others, after careful consideration, offered in-person options. The Library expanded outreach in alignment with our partners' practices. Staff met virtually with students attending online digital literacy classes, and in person with immigrants connecting with job and education resources as well as residents of Tiny House Villages.

**This has made such a difference in my life - I wouldn't be able to contact my family without it"**

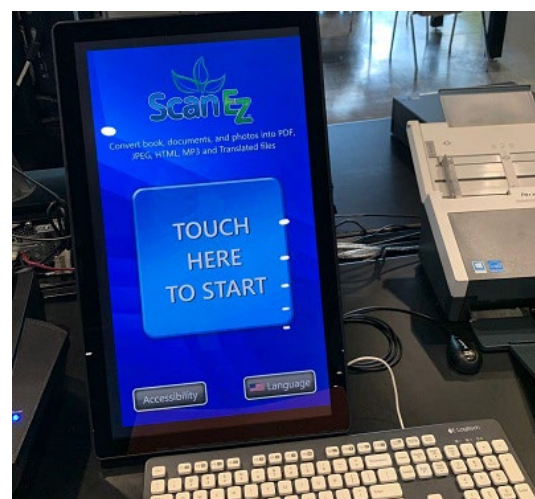
- API Chaya hot spot borrower

Over 350 outreach hotspots were checked out in 2022. These hot spots enabled participants to connect with a community of support while learning about relevant resources and information at the Library and beyond. The Library outreach team also shared vetted information outlining pathways to more sustainable long-term access to the internet and devices via low-cost and discount programs. We recognize the ongoing need for patrons to have this critical tool enabling people to convene and pursue their goals.

## Expanding access to computers, scanners and more

In 2022, our technology team continued to modernize and improve patron-facing technology. We upgraded 219 public computers in 2022. Another 200 are scheduled for upgrade in 2023 as part of our planned refresh cycle. These computers replace existing stations that have reached the end of their useful lives. In 2022, over 35,000 people used Library computers nearly 300,000 times. This is about double the number of people who used Library computers and nearly three times the number of sessions compared with 2021. Average session length increased from an average of 48 minutes in 2021 to 55 minutes in 2022. This increase is likely due to modifications we have made in our computer policies. Based on staff suggestions, we extended session limits on the express internet computers in our branches and at the Central Library from 15 to 30 minutes. This gives computer users more time on the express terminals, which is especially helpful when the computers with two-hour use limits are at capacity.

Other public-facing technology improvements include the upgrade of self-checkout stations in 11 branches in Q4. System-wide, patrons used 79 self-check stations to take home over 741,000 items. We installed ScanEZ stations early in the year, which have proved popular with patrons who can use them to make free scans and copies, send faxes and translate scanned text to 100 different languages. We currently have 22 stations in place and plan, in early 2023, to install five additional units at branches that do not currently have them. Over the course of the year patrons printed over 146,000 pages at our Scan-EZ stations. We also added seven public multi-function printers (MFP) in 2022. Patrons printed over 1.2 million pages on our 84 MFP printers.



Behind the scenes, we completed a long-planned upgrade to the automated checkout system that installed new RFID hardware and checkout software for staff work rooms and service desks at all Library branches. We also added five new core infrastructure servers, which increased our server fleet by 22%. This expanded capacity supports outreach, helps us prepare for the Integrated Library System (ILS) upgrade or replacement, improves public computing and printing resiliency, and supports other key Library functions. As we look ahead to future technology infrastructure purchases, we plan to leverage levy funds with funds available through the E-Rate program, a federal program that provides rebates for eligible internet service and hardware expenses. In Q4, as part of this effort, we issued and awarded RFPs for core switches, wireless access points, and universal power supplies at branch locations and the Central Library. These are significant investments that ensure our libraries have dependable internet access.

In 2022, the Library worked with a consultant to develop a roadmap to replace the existing Integrated Library System (ILS), upgrade the discovery layer and make investments in digital asset management. This process included in-depth discovery sessions across all library functions. The Library will begin the RFP process to solicit responses from the ILS market in 2023. The 2019 Levy includes \$4 million to support these system upgrades.

### Expanding early learning options for children

#### Play and Learn programs gearing up, virtual programs continue

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5, providing about \$280,000 to support this effort in 2022. A key element of our early learning program is our continued support for the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program, which offers drop-in neighborhood-based play groups for the Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregiver (FFN) community. Weekly sessions, which are facilitated by early childhood educators, are available to children between the ages of birth to 5. Parents, caregivers, and children are guided through a variety of developmental activities that promote early learning. The Library has historically partnered with local community-based organizations and agencies to offer these programs by providing meeting room space and access to group supplies. Additionally, our children's librarians have provided early literacy support, promoted library programs and services and built connections with family, friend and neighbor caregivers. Prior to the pandemic, five Play and Learn programs were offered weekly at Beacon Hill, Broadview, Columbia, Lake City, and Rainier Beach branches.



As part of the 2019 levy, the Library had planned to establish up to six additional weekly sessions, either offering a second session per week at branches that already had programs or at branches that had previously not offered Play and Learn. The plan was to launch the new groups in late 2020. With the closures of library facilities in March 2020, all in-person children's programming went on hiatus, and some levy funding for Play and Learn was re-directed to address other emergent needs, including support for remote learning for children in grades K-5.

During this hiatus, the SPL Early Learning program manager worked with existing Play and Learn partners to support their work and to help resume in-person programming in the fall of 2022. We have moved at the speed of trust and capacity of our partners, which has resulted in a slow rollout of programming in our branches. One longtime partner, Denise Louie Education Center, began offering weekly programming online in 2020 and in October 2022, restarted in-person

programs at Columbia, Lake City and Rainier Beach branches. Another partner, the Chinese Information and Service Center, began a weekly group in Mandarin and English at the Beacon Hill Branch in November. Also in November, a new partner, Villa Comunitaria, started a weekly group in Spanish at South Park Branch. Library spaces are beginning to be filled with young children and caregivers again. As programs resume, we have been providing materials and curriculum support. Needs assessment at each location is ongoing. While we have had success in bringing back some of our partners who operated pre-pandemic, the financial landscape has changed and additional support is necessary to continue pre-pandemic programming.

Through 2022, we continued to offer a robust menu of virtual programs through our [Kids' YouTube channel](#), including over 200 different videos of story times, Play and Learn programs, Early Learning at Home programs, and children's activities online that are available to the public to enjoy at any time. We have a total of 92 virtual story times in English, 36 in Mandarin and 18 in Spanish. Overall, our children's videos were viewed 25,000 times. Our most popular video, first published in 2020, "What Firefighters Wear" garnered over 2,300 of those views.

"Play and Learn is a strong program because it is offered in the community and delivered by community members. Partnering with the Library allows us to introduce more resources for families. Connecting communities to libraries reinforces that these are their spaces too."

- Xiomara Melgar  
South Park Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Facilitator

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

### Protecting our investments

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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](#). The 2019 Levy provided about \$2 million in budget authority in 2022 to support routine maintenance and \$12.9 million to support major maintenance and seismic work.



## **Routine maintenance: Keeping our facilities clean and safe**

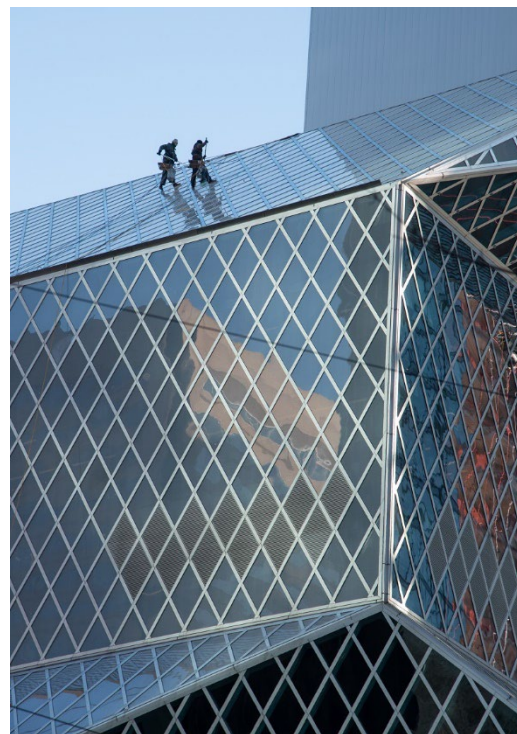
The COVID-19 pandemic continued to present unique challenges and opportunities for keeping the Library clean, safe and accessible, another important levy priority. The members of janitorial/custodial team were busy this past year, completing approximately 1,600 work orders. In addition to their daily job duties, they responded to numerous requests for deep cleaning related to COVID-19 exposure and illegal drug activity in restrooms. They also put an emphasis on keeping the exterior of the Central Library clean by frequently pressure washing the Fourth Avenue, Spring Street and Fifth Avenue plazas. Other important maintenance work was performed by our vendors, including window washing and deep cleaning of all hard surface floors and carpets in branches and at the Central Library.

The facilities team was also busy in 2022. The 19 team members completed over 6,000 work orders, performing activities that ranged from maintaining the Automated Materials Handling System (AMHS) to performing fire/safety checks to undertaking plumbing and roof repairs. They also converted all the lighting at the Greenwood Branch to LED and retrofit the lighting on Level 4 and in all the elevator lobbies at the Central Library to LED. The team was also able to reconfigure furnishings within each branch back to pre-COVID layouts.

Both the facilities team and the custodial/janitorial team partnered to address an increase in vandalism at Library properties and other challenges in the past year. Several branches experienced broken windows, graffiti and damage to the exterior grounds. Facilities were repaired, glass replaced building surfaces were cleaned and/or painted over and additional safety and anti-graffiti window film was installed. At the Ballard Branch, the teams worked together to address the impacts of an increase in encampments of the insecurely housed near Library property. Daily pick-up of garbage and weekly pressure washing of the exterior plaza were required to keep the Library and the adjacent Neighborhood Service Center presentable and accessible to the public.

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

The 2019 Levy provided \$5 million in 2022 budget authority and \$7.9 million in carryforward authority for major maintenance and seismic work. The 2012 levy provided an additional \$3.5 million in carryforward authority. In Q4, the Library spent nearly \$600,000 of 2019 levy funds on seismic and major maintenance work (nearly \$2.2 million for the year) and \$867,000 of 2012 levy funds (\$1.8 million for the year).



Window washers doing their annual feat at the Central Library

Much like the past two years, our Capital Improvement Program continued to experience unfortunate delays. Widespread supply chain issues slowed -- or temporarily suspended -- progress, as did labor shortages created by the COVID pandemic. Heightened materials cost/scarcity and general construction inflation also added pressure to already tight project budgets.

Despite these challenges, the Library completed several small projects, including the replacement of HVAC equipment at the Broadview Branch and the reinstallation of the [Soul Pole at Douglass-Truth Branch](#) in April 2022, after it had undergone a successful conservation project. The Soul Pole project, which was funded by the 2012 levy, generated a lot of community and media interest, including a [10-minute documentary by Converge Media](#). The documentary focused on the history and the conservation of the Soul Pole and its importance to Seattle's Black community.

We also made progress on several of the largest projects in our capital improvement program, the seismic retrofit projects at Green Lake and University branches. Construction for the Green Lake project will begin in February 2023 and continue through Q1 2024. The University Branch seismic retrofit project was in the schematic design phase at the end of 2022; the public construction bid is tentatively scheduled for late Q4 2023.

Progress on other significant projects included the roof replacement at the Queen Anne branch, which we expect to complete in Q1 2023. We neared completion on exterior access improvements at the Douglass-Truth Branch as we awaited materials to repave the branch driveway. Likewise, we are awaiting IT materials and equipment to complete the installation of the Library's new automated materials handling system (AMHS) at the Maintenance and Operations Center (MOC). The new location for the AMHS moves our delivery and distribution operations from the downtown core to a less congested area in Georgetown where our delivery trucks are parked.



New ADA walkway at Douglass-Truth Branch

Finally, construction on the Capitol Hill Branch roof and mechanical systems replacement project is scheduled to begin during Q1 2023. We awarded the contract in July 2022 but construction was delayed due to HVAC equipment shortages and permitting issues. Electrification upgrades for the Northeast and Southwest branches, notably the addition of air conditioning, are in design, with a target construction date of Q3 2023. We are addressing punch list items for our multi-site restroom accessibility project and expect completion in Q1 2023. This project makes high-priority ADA adjustments to the restrooms at the Capitol Hill, Madrona-Sally Goldmark, Montlake, Northeast and Rainier Beach branches.

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

Ongoing challenges related to enduring COVID impacts, staffing and extreme weather have delayed the delivery of some of our levy promises, particularly in the area of expanded hours and completion of construction projects. At the same time, we are making good progress on restoring and expanding our in-person services.

As you'll read in our 2023 first quarter report, our staff continue 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:

- Expanded Library open hours
  - Launch of Strategic Planning effort
  - New locations for pick up lockers
  - In-person tax help at 8 Library locations
  - Development of Library app
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## 2022 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounted for \$43.6 million (34%) of the Library's total revised 2022 budget of \$129.2 million. The City General Fund provided \$67.3 million (52%), and other sources, including The Seattle Public Library Foundation, accounted for the remainder. The Library spent \$93.6 million in 2022, including \$23.8 million of funds from the 2019 Levy and \$2.0 million of funds from the 2012 Levy.

Spending tables below show the 2022 Operations Plan Budget plus encumbrances and unspent budget authority from 2021 in the revised budget columns. Carryover budget authority of \$12.2 million from the 2019 levy and nearly \$4 million from the 2012 levy were available for spending in 2022. We spent 55% of the 2019 Levy's revised 2022 budget authority and 51% of the 2012 Levy's revised 2022 budget authority.

2019 Levy	2022 Ops Plan Budget	2022 Revised Budget*	2022 Expenses	Available	% Revised Budget Spent
Hours & Access	12,671,000	13,855,390	11,211,941	2,643,449	81%
Collections	5,648,000	5,801,139	5,595,316	205,824	96%
Technology & Online Services	2,461,000	2,519,078	2,293,315	225,763	91%
Children's Programming	284,000	280,397	146,294	134,103	52%
Maintenance	1,883,000	2,026,880	1,667,464	359,416	82%
Administration	289,000	495,232	288,081	207,150	58%
CIP	8,215,000	18,642,499	2,632,370	16,010,129	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,451,000</b>	<b>43,620,614</b>	<b>23,834,780</b>	<b>19,785,834</b>	<b>55%</b>

\* Revised budget includes encumbrances and carryforward authority from 2021. Unspent CIP funds at the end of 2022 automatically carryforward into 2023. CIP includes Major Maintenance and Technology CIP projects.

2012 Levy	2022 Ops Plan Budget	2022 Revised Budget*	2022 Expenses	Available	% Revised Budget Spent
Technology & Online Services		424,711	166,451	258,259	39%
Buildings & Facilities Support		12,000	2,690	9,310	22%
CIP		3,539,327	1,854,705	1,684,622	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,976,038</b>	<b>2,023,847</b>	<b>1,952,191</b>	<b>51%</b>

\* Revised budget includes carryforward authority from 2021. Unspent CIP funds at the end of 2022 automatically carryforward into 2023.

**Table 1. Weekly hours in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic service levels**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Pre Pandemic</b>	Jan 1 - Jan 20, 2022	Jan 21 - Mar 29, 2022	Mar 30 - May 10, 2022	May 11 Jul 4, 2022	Jul 5 - Aug 20, 2022	Aug 21 - Oct 11, 2022	Oct 12 - Dec 31, 2022
Ballard Branch	61	61	57	61	61	57	57	59
Beacon Hill Branch	61	61	53	59	59	57	57	57
Broadview Branch	61	61	57	61	61	57	57	57
Capitol Hill Branch	61	53	40	53	53	53	53	55
Central Library	62	58	58	58	58	54	54	54
Columbia Branch	61	61	45	59	59	53	53	53
Delridge Branch	40	40	33	40	40	40	40	40
Douglass-Truth Branch	61	53	45	53	53	53	53	55
Fremont Branch	40	40	26	40	40	40	40	40
Green Lake Branch	40	40	28	40	40	33	33	33
Greenwood Branch	61	61	45	61	61	61	61	61
High Point Branch	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
International District/Chinatown Branch	47	47	35	47	47	42	42	42
Lake City Branch	61	61	52	53	61	61	61	61
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch	40	40	26	33	40	33	33	40
Magnolia Branch	40	40	19	40	33	33	33	33
Montlake Branch	40	40	21	40	40	35	35	40
NewHolly Branch	40	40	28	28	28	28	33	33
Northeast Branch	61	45	45	53	61	57	57	57
Northgate Branch	61	45	29	45	61	57	57	57
Queen Anne Branch	40	40	28	35	35	35	35	35
Rainier Beach Branch	61	61	53	59	59	57	57	59
South Park Branch	47	47	42	47	47	47	47	47
Southwest Branch	61	53	53	53	53	45	45	45
University Branch	47	47	28	40	47	47	47	47
Wallingford Branch	40	40	21	40	40	40	40	40
West Seattle Branch	61	53	45	53	53	45	45	45
<b>Total Weekly Hours</b>	1,403	1,335	1,059	1,298	1337	1,267	1,272	1,292
<b>Hours as a % of pre-pandemic</b>		<b>95%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>92%</b>