

Q4/Annual 2025 The Seattle Public Library **LEVY REPORT**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q4/annual 2025 report

Levy background

In August 2019, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved (76%) a seven-year, \$219.1 million property tax levy to maintain and enhance Library services from 2020 through 2026, renewing a seven-year, \$122.6 million levy that expired at the end of 2019.

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

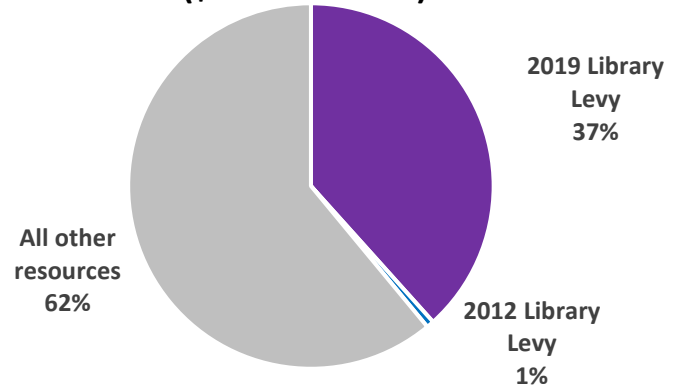
As part of its 2019 proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year Levy period. This report, which covers Levy activities and spending for 2025 and shares annual Q4 highlights as well, continues the series of [quarterly updates](#) the Library has provided for the Board of Trustees and the public since 2013.

Beyond renewing 2012 Levy commitments, the 2019 Levy provides support for additional open hours; elimination of overdue fines; improved collections and technology; safe, clean, and well-maintained buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and Library strategic planning.

2025 highlights

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

**2025 Library Revised Budget
(\$145.8 Million)**



Did you know?

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

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

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

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


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

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

Community Voices

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



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

Strategic Plan 2025 Highlights

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

Find more updates at www.spl.org/StrategicPlan



◆ Literacy

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

◆ Buildings, Technology, Sustainability

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

◆ Enrichment

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

◆ Funding

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

◆ Empowerment

- Established new review and planning processes for Library programs

◆ Capacity

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

Stable open hours, strong library use

The 2019 Levy provided \$16.45 million in 2025 for investment in Hours and Access. This funding supports open hours at our 27 libraries; community access to Library learning programs and services; and citywide community outreach and engagement. Many elements of this Levy category relate to increasing access to Library resources. We achieve this in several ways, such as adding open hours, and creating new access points, such as holds pick-up lockers that are available 24/7. The levy-funded elimination of late fees in 2020 continues to have an impact. It immediately restored access for 18,000 patrons and continues to reduce financial stress for our patrons, without affecting the rate at which materials are returned.

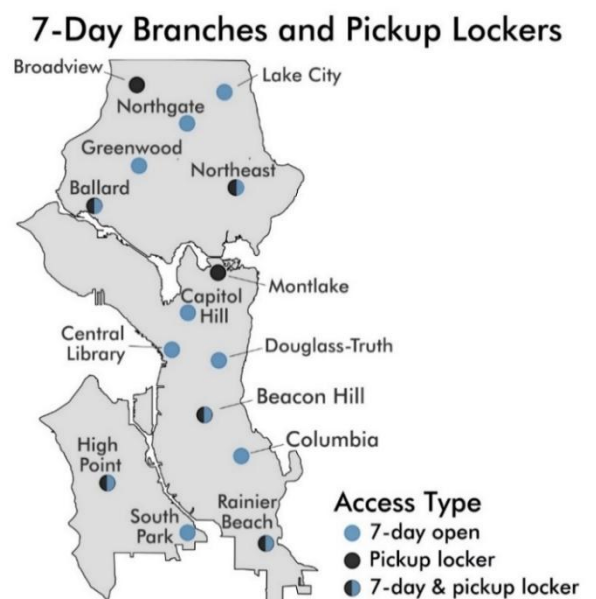
Total Levy spending in 2025 for the Hours and Access category was \$16 million.

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

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

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

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



Did you know?

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

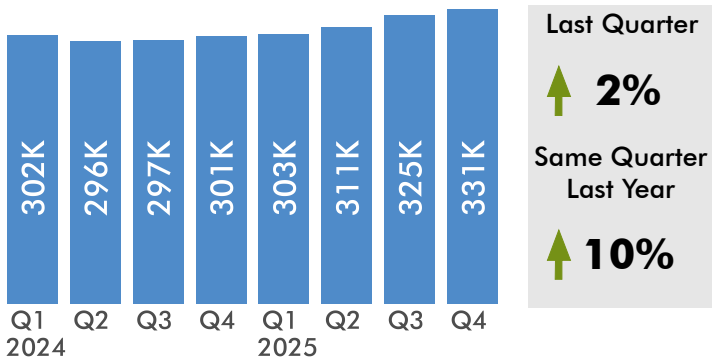
LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS AND ACCESS



IN FOCUS: Quarterly Usage Trends

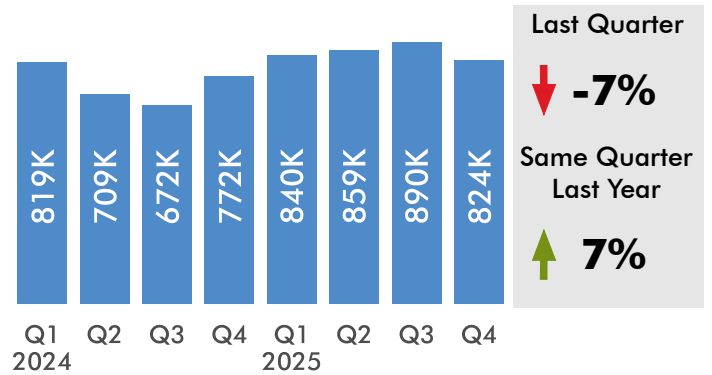
Active Library Users

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



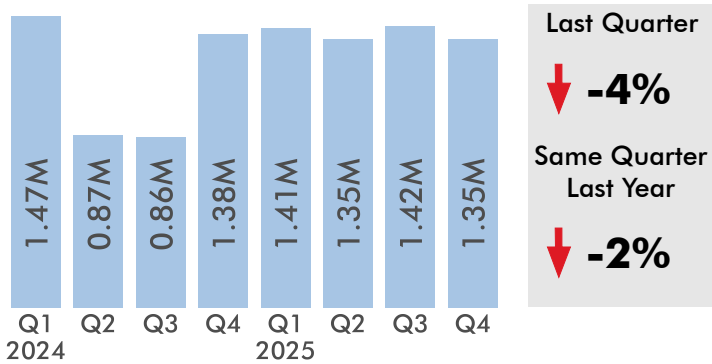
In-Person Visits

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



Physical Checkouts

Number of physical checkouts (including renewals)



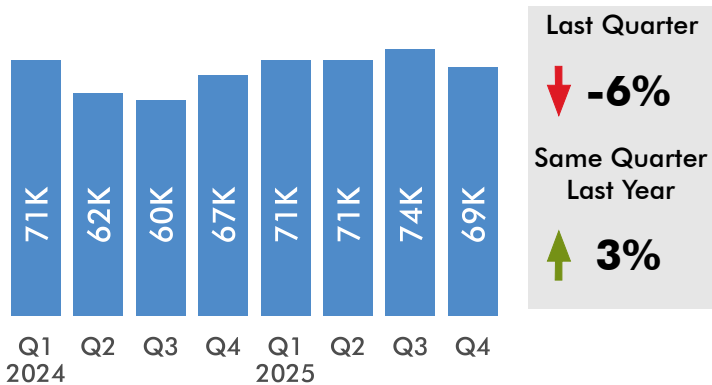
Digital Checkouts

Number of digital checkouts (including streams and views)



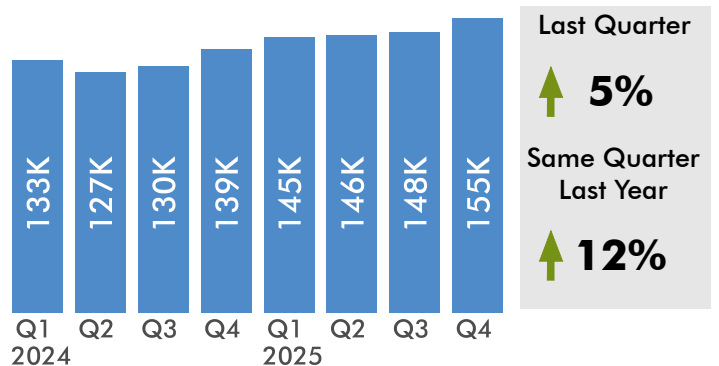
Borrowers - Physical

Number of patrons who borrowed physical materials



Borrowers - Digital

Number of patrons who borrowed digital materials



A ransomware outage significantly disrupted borrowing and overall library use from May to September 2024. *Data from and following this period may change as delayed or corrected records are incorporated.

Programs and services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Community Voices

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

2025 Community Survey Results

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

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

Community voices

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

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

Perceptions of the Library improve in 2025

Parentheses indicate increases since 2018

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

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

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

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

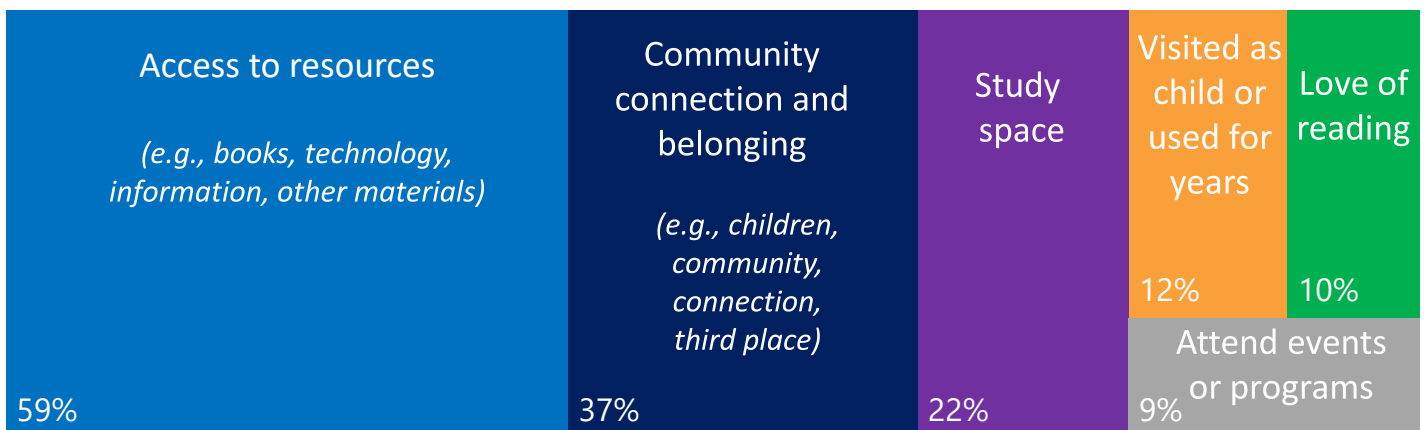
96% (+5) Welcoming to all

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

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

86% (+8) Provides access to safe spaces

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



Social Services: Connecting patrons to resources and community

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

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

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

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

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

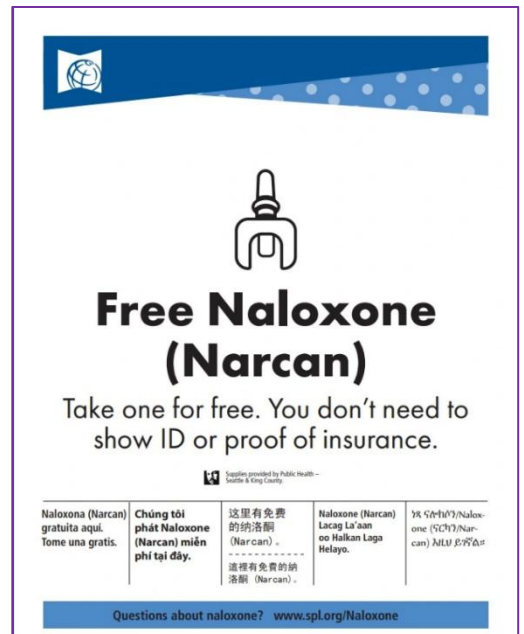
Food, health and transportation: Throughout 2025, we supported impactful branch programs such as a weekly FareStart Mobile Market at the NewHolly Branch, biweekly FamilyWorks Mobile Food Bank events at the Broadview and Green Lake branches; and ORCA LIFT events. We distributed 18,000 bus tickets and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

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

Community voices

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

– Patron comment



The poster features a blue header with a globe icon. Below it is a stylized icon of a hand holding a pill. The main text reads "Free Naloxone (Narcan)" in large, bold letters, followed by "Take one for free. You don't need to show ID or proof of insurance." Below this is a small logo for "Supplies provided by Public Health - Seattle & King County". At the bottom, there are four columns of text in different languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Hmong. A footer contains the text "Questions about naloxone? www.spl.org/Naloxone".

Naloxona (Narcan) gratuita aquí. Tome una gratis.	Chúng tôi phát Naloxone (Narcan) miễn phí tại đây.	这里有免费的纳洛酮 (Narcan)。这里有免费的纳洛酮 (Narcan)。	Naloxone (Narcan) Lacag Lu'iam oo Halkan Lago Helayo.	Y8 5(4h0')Naloxone (Narcan) MUD 5(4h0')
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Questions about naloxone? www.spl.org/Naloxone

Ensuring that Library spaces are safe and welcoming

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

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

Security leadership and training:

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

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

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

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



Building robust collections


The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintain and expand the Library’s collection of physical and digital materials. This includes funding for e-books, e-audiobooks, streaming services, the Peak Picks collection, and the acquisition and digitization of local history materials.

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

Here are highlights of our collections work in 2025.

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

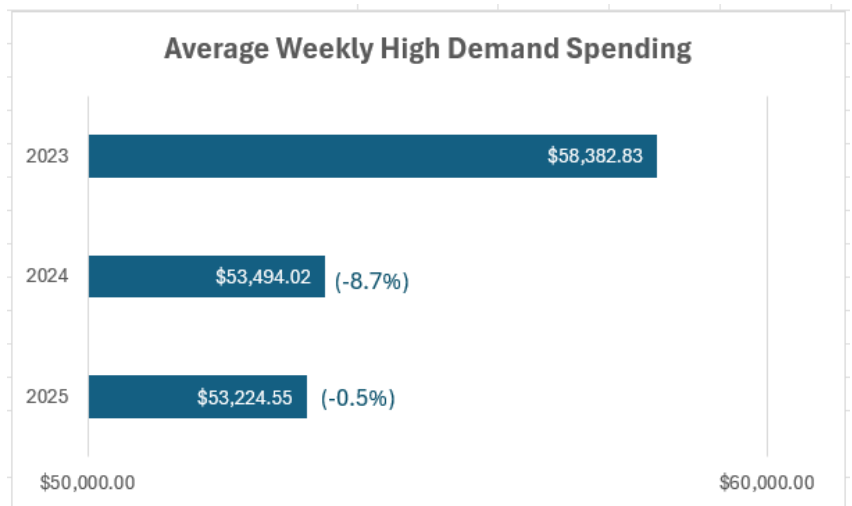
Because of the high cost of digital books compared to physical books, the Library has [made changes in recent years](#) to support growing digital checkouts while managing spending. In 2025, our weekly spending on multiple copies of high-demand e-books decreased compared to 2023.

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

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



Readers at South Park Branch.



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

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

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

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

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

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

Why books matter

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

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





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

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

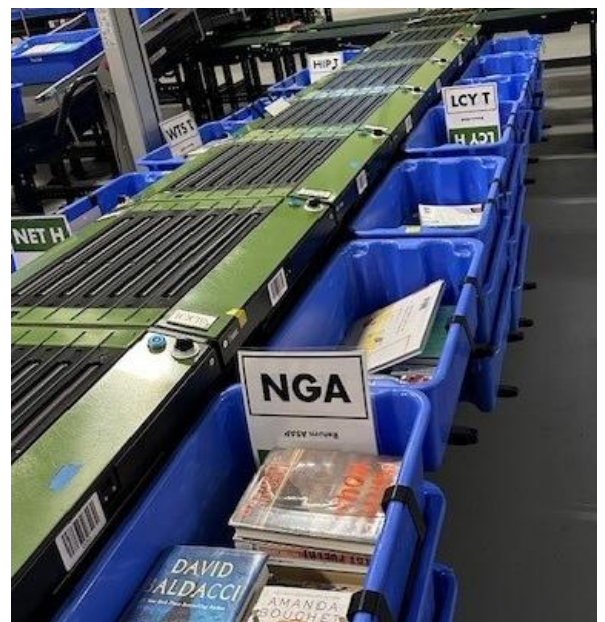
“The thrill of having a hold request arrive never gets old,” wrote one commenter.

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



Did you know?

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



Local history collections



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

The [Seattle Room](#), located at the Central Library, provides in-person access to treasured local history materials, including local manuscripts, menus, photos, postcards, books, and more. Our digital Seattle Room collections make Seattle history easier to access for students, researchers, historians, and others. The Seattle Room curator and Special Collections digital librarian positions, both funded by the Levy, help researchers and community members use these unique collections to understand Seattle’s rich and varied history.

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

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

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

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

preservation of these materials from Seattle Room staff.

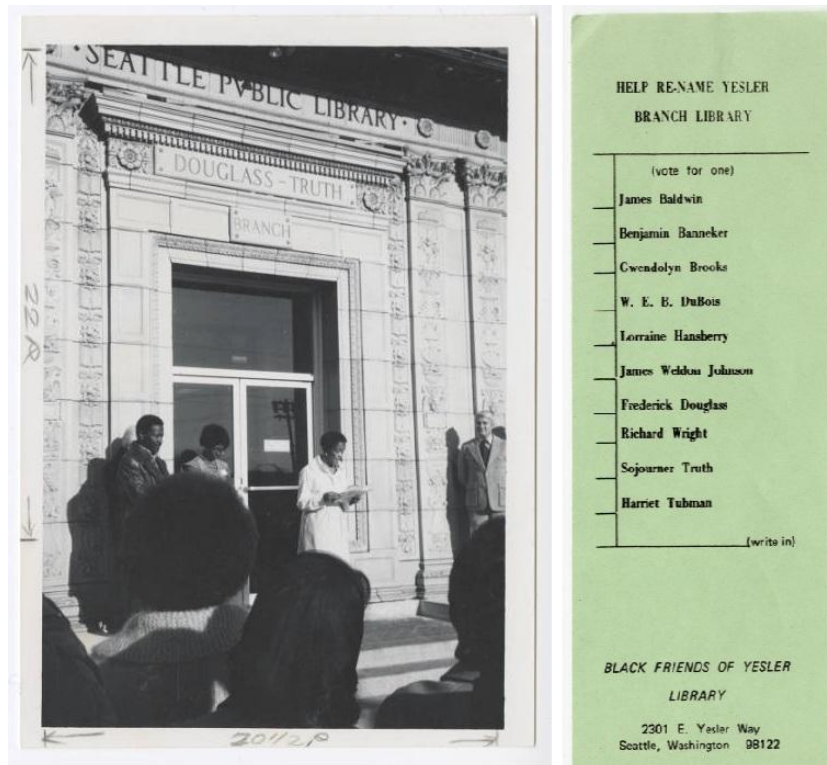
🟢 In September 2025, Special Collections welcomed a new Seattle Room Curator, located at the Central Library, and an African American Collection Curator at the Douglass-Truth Branch.

Seattle Room Digital Collections

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

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

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



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

Keeping our technology up to date

The 2019 Levy promised dedicated funding for digital equity offerings, updated infrastructure for public internet access, updated technology for acquisition and circulation, and continued maintenance and upgrading of public technologies and the [spl.org website](https://www.spl.org). The Levy provided \$2.8 million of operating budget authority related to technology and online services in 2025 and \$4.4 million of unspent technology capital budget authority from prior years. Total Levy spending through Q4 2025 for technology operating expenses was \$2.6 million and \$546,000 for Capital IT infrastructure.

Digital equity and the HotSpot program

The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for our [HotSpot program](#), which provides internet access through our general collection and through focused outreach with community organizations.

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

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

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

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

In 2025, outreach hotspots helped patrons ...

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

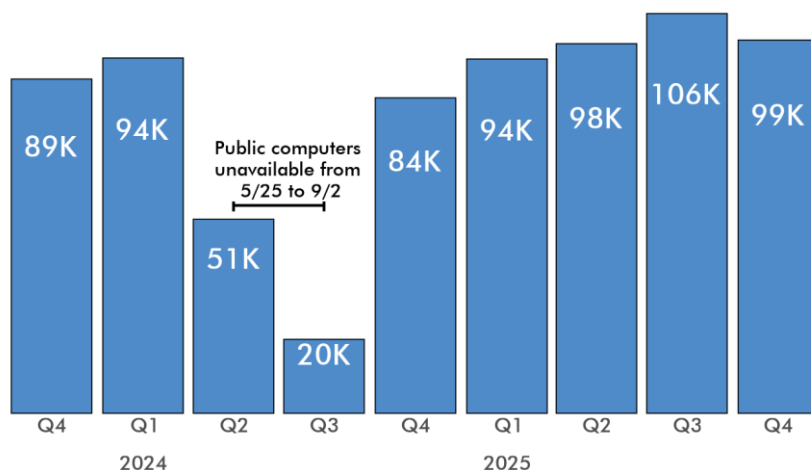
Maintaining access to technology and improving cybersecurity

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



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

Public Computer Hours Used Each Quarter



Did you know?

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

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

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

Expanding early learning options for children

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children, ages birth to 5, providing about \$476,000 to support this effort in 2025. Total Levy spending through Q4 2025 for supporting children was \$406,000.

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

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

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



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

Community Voices

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

– Villa Comunitaria, Play & Learn partner

Protecting our investments

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

Did you know?

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

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Routine Maintenance

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

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

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

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead

Here is a quick preview of Q1 2026:

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

Q4 2025 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounted for \$54.5 million (37.4%) of the Library's total revised 2025 budget of \$145.8 million. The 2012 Levy accounted for \$933,000 (0.6%). The Library spent \$33 million from the 2019 Levy and \$710,000 from the 2012 Levy in 2025 through Q4. Underspending was largely due to delays in implementing major maintenance and technology capital programs.

Spending tables below show the Library's 2025 Operations Plan budget plus encumbrances and unspent budget authority from prior years in the revised budget columns. Carryover budget authority of \$17.5 million from the 2019 Levy and \$233,000 from the 2012 Levy was designated for spending in 2025. The revised 2025 budget also includes an additional appropriation of \$700,000 in remaining funds from the 2012 Levy.

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

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

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

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

Appendix 1. Scheduled weekly hours in 2025 compared to 2019 baseline

Location	2019	Jun 19, 2024 – Sept. 24, 2024	Sep 25, 2024 – Jan. 28, 2025	Current schedule from Jan. 29, 2025 <i>green=above 2019</i> <i>yellow=same as 2019</i> <i>red=below 2019</i>
Ballard Branch	60	62	62	62
Beacon Hill Branch	60	56	56	56
Broadview Branch	60	54	54	54
Capitol Hill Branch	60	60	60	60
Central Library	62	62	62	62
Columbia Branch	60	48	56	56
Delridge Branch	39	48	48	48
Douglass-Truth Branch	60	62	60	60
Fremont Branch	39	40	40	48
Green Lake Branch	39	CLOSED	48	48
Greenwood Branch	60	62	62	62
High Point Branch	46	58	56	56
International District/Chinatown Branch	46	46	48	48
Lake City Branch	60	54	62	62
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch	39	32	40	48
Magnolia Branch	39	40	40	48
Montlake Branch	39	37	40	48
NewHolly Branch	39	40	48	48
Northeast Branch	60	48	48	60
Northgate Branch	60	40	48	58
Queen Anne Branch	39	40	40	48
Rainier Beach Branch	60	56	56	56
South Park Branch	46	62	58	58
Southwest Branch	60	48	48	48
University Branch	46	40	40	CLOSED
Wallingford Branch	39	40	40	48
West Seattle Branch	60	48	48	48
Total Weekly Hours	1377	1283	1368	1398
% of 2019 baseline		93%	99%	102%